

MEDIA RELEASE

Update: Sheriff's Office Begins Review of Report by Polis Solutions

January 21, 2022

In August of 2020, the Washington County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) proactively contracted with [Polis Solutions](#) to thoroughly review all elements of Washington County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) operations, and administration related to the use of force. This forward-thinking decision ensures WCSO policies, procedures, standards, training, evaluation, and accountability related to the use of force strongly align with best practices.

As stated in the report, "Sheriff Pat Garrett gave clear directions to the Polis team to generate a report that would include practical, actionable recommendations with significant potential to measurably improve how WCSO manages the use of force." Additionally, Polis stated their "...primary recommendation would eventually be this: work deliberately to foster internal trust within the Sheriff's Office, and external trust between WCSO and the people of Washington County." Notably, the Sheriff's Office's Vision is in alignment, "Enhancing public safety by fostering a culture of professionalism, compassion and trust within the communities we serve and our Sheriff's Office team."

In December 2021, WCSO received the final report from Polis Solutions and has been actively evaluating all the recommendations. Over the next several months, WCSO will assess each recommendation and begin implementation. While some of the recommendations will be implemented in the near future, other recommendations will take longer to implement. WCSO asks the community to allow time to assess the recommended changes and make any appropriate decisions.

Polis Solutions' review found "Overall, reported use of force rates in Washington County [Sheriff's Office] are significantly lower than the estimated national average of police use of force, which is generally thought to occur or be threatened in approximately 1 - 2% of police-community contacts."

Sheriff Garrett said he was not surprised when he initially reviewed the report from Polis Solutions and read, "...throughout all of our interviews and conversations with the members of the WCSO, deputies spoke of the Washington County community with gratitude, respect, and appreciation for the level of public support they feel they have. The Polis team is hard-pressed to think of another agency where personnel express such unequivocal high regard for the community they serve."

You can find a copy of the report from Polis Solutions on the [Washington County Sheriff's Office Accountability web page](#).



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"CONSERVING THE PEACE THROUGH VALUES DRIVEN SERVICE"

MEDIA RELEASE

Sheriff's Office Partners With Nationally Recognized Use of Force Experts

November 17, 2020

The Washington County Sheriff's Office recognizes public trust and accountability are of the utmost importance.

To ensure that all Washington County Sheriff's Office policies, procedures, standards, training, evaluation, and accountability related to the use of force align with best practices, the Sheriff's Office has contracted with [Polis Solutions](#). After conducting a national search, receiving proposals from five vendors, and conducting a thorough evaluation, Polis was awarded the \$149,700 contract. Under the contract, Polis will thoroughly review all elements of WCSO operations and administration related to the use of force.

Polis Solutions is a national research and training company that develops and implements customized, evidence-based programs for police, criminal justice, and other government and private organizations designed to improve public trust and safety. Polis Solutions' diverse team integrates experience and expertise in policing, training and education, social science, technology development, and organizational leadership and reform. Polis is nationally known for its innovative programs in areas such as de-escalation, community trust-building, use of force, and officer decision-making.

For the past 175 years, the Washington County Sheriff's Office has been pioneers in law enforcement. We continuously strive to facilitate deeper engagement with internal and external stakeholders across our community. The Sheriff's Office commits to assess and improve practices in order to foster community trust and safety.

Sheriff Pat Garrett stated, "Our decision to invite nationally recognized experts to review our use of force training and policy supports our vision of enhancing public safety by fostering a culture of professionalism, compassion, and trust within our Sheriff's Office team and the communities we serve. This project aligns with our community's interest regarding police use of force, and our commitment to being a learning organization focused on continuous improvement."

Over the next six months, Polis Solutions will interview key Sheriff's Office stakeholders and a diverse range of community members, visit our facilities, review policies and procedures, and analyze use of force data. In April 2021, Polis Solutions will present a final report with their findings and recommendations and will work with the Sheriff's Office to develop an implementation plan. The report will be made available to the public.

We look forward to working with Polis Solutions on this progressive effort and invite inquiries from the media and all interested parties. Polis also invites direct inquiries, comments, and questions about this project via email at info@polis-solutions.com.



SHERIFF
WASHINGTON COUNTY

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