



# Ontario Provincial Police 2021 Value-for-Money Audit

## Why we did this audit

- The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is one of the largest police forces in North America, with about 5,600 police officers and 2,500 civilian employees.
- The OPP's operating expenditures totalled more than \$1.2 billion in the 2020/21 fiscal year, an increase of 26% since our last audit in 2011/12. Salaries and benefits represented 88% of these expenditures.

## Why it matters

- In 2020, the OPP provided policing services to 327, or 74%, of Ontario's 444 municipalities, and approximately 16.3% of Ontario's population.
- The OPP is responsible for patrolling over 1 million square kilometres across Ontario.
- In 2020, OPP officers laid over 424,000 charges, including over 104,000 charges for violations of the Canadian Criminal Code, and over 269,000 charges related to the Highway Traffic Act.

## What we found

### Significant Vacancies, Stress Leaves and Increasing WSIB Costs

- OPP detachments are increasingly understaffed with frontline officers. In 2020, over 1,000 frontline constable positions were vacant, representing 26% of the total funded frontline constable positions at the OPP. Constables on long-term leave make up 33% of these vacancies.
- Stress-related officer leaves are contributing to rising vacancies at OPP detachments.
- The OPP is incurring rapidly increasing financial costs, reaching \$42.7 million in 2020, related to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claims made by officers, largely due post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) claims.

### RECOMMENDATION 1

### OPP Providing Far Fewer Patrol Hours

- The OPP is providing less proactive policing in the province.
- In 2020, the OPP provided 28% fewer patrol hours than it did in 2016 (from 1.36 million hours to just over 975,000 hours), despite increasing reported incidents of crime and calls for service in recent years.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

### Vacancies Vary by Region and Detachments, Affect Ability to Resolve Crimes

- Frontline officer vacancy rates vary considerably between OPP regions and detachments. While the west and east regions had 28% and 27% of these frontline constable positions vacant in 2020, the northwest region had only 17%.
- Regions with higher frontline officer vacancies resolve fewer crimes.
- In 2020, the crime clearance rate was 63.5% at the highest staffed region, and 33.7% at the lowest staffed region.

### RECOMMENDATION 6

### OPP Providing Municipalities Less Service Than Its Deployment Model Requires

- The OPP is not delivering service levels to municipalities identified in its own deployment model.
- Specifically, for municipalities where data was available, we found that 111 or 48% of these municipalities received less than 75% of the constable hours and full-time equivalent (FTE) staff the OPP identified were needed to respond to calls for service on a timely basis, including 26 municipalities that received less than 50% of the needed hours and FTEs.

### RECOMMENDATION 5

<b>Officer Scheduling Not Aligned with Calls for Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frontline officer schedules are not aligned with calls for service.</li> <li>OPP detachments receive their peak number of calls between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. They receive the fewest calls between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m. – 75% lower than during peak hours. However, the number of frontline constables on duty during this much less busy time was only 25% lower than during peak hours.</li> </ul>
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 6</b>
<b>Consequences Limited for Officers with Violations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detachment inspections lack authority to drive improvement.</li> <li>Officers at detachments who were found with significant violations that posed a safety or liability risk appeared to face limited consequences.</li> </ul>
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 7</b>
<b>Many OPP Frontline Vehicles Underutilized</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many OPP vehicles are underutilized.</li> <li>We found that where the OPP had recorded the kilometric travel of its frontline vehicles, from 2018/19 to 2020/21 between 16% and 34% of them were underutilized relative to the Ministry of Transportation's utilization guideline of 14,400 annual kilometres (the OPP does not have its own internal benchmark).</li> </ul>
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 12</b>
<b>Response Times Not Tracked</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The OPP does not accurately track or monitor call response times.</li> <li>An important indicator of public safety is how quickly a police service responds to calls, particularly high-priority, urgent calls.</li> </ul>
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 14</b>
<b>No Performance Indicators with Targets to Measure Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The OPP has not identified key performance indicators with targets, and does not use such indicators to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations.</li> </ul>
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 13</b>

## Conclusions

- The OPP did not have processes in place to consistently deliver provincial and municipal police services efficiently and effectively.
- The OPP does not have performance indicators with targets to measure and publicly report on the effectiveness of the police services it delivers.

Read the report at [www.auditor.on.ca](http://www.auditor.on.ca)