

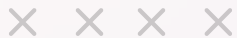
2025 TRENDS

Top 5 Public Safety Workforce Management Trends in 2025

x x x x



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Introduction

Public safety workforce management is on the cusp of transformational change.

01

Modern (and Effective) Recruiting Strategies

Staffing shortages remain a critical issue for 65% of public safety agencies today, with over half expecting these challenges to persist for three or more years.

04

Scarce Budgets and Resources

Budgets have always been tight in public safety but with rising costs, uncertainty of federal funding, and growing community needs agencies are walking a tightrope.

Key Takeaways

In 2025 there is a massive opportunity to improve overall public safety efficiency through the use of modern technology.

02

Focus on Employee Well-Being and Retention

Nearly 40% of public safety agencies are prioritizing responder wellness in 2025—and for good reason.

05

Integrated Systems for Data-Driven Decision Making

First responders use a number of different computer-based systems each day to complete their core job functions.

03

AI and Technology for Operational Efficiency

It's no secret that generative AI is transforming the world of work. The question isn't if agencies should adopt AI, but when – and how quickly.

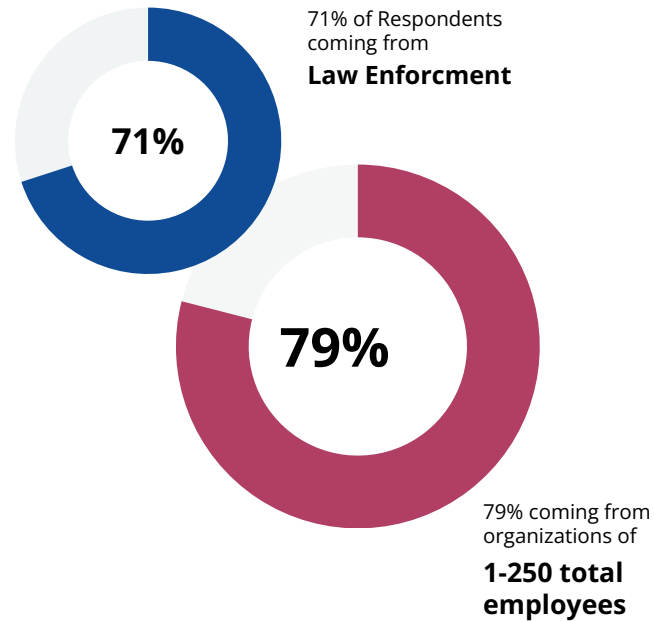
Introduction

Transformational Change

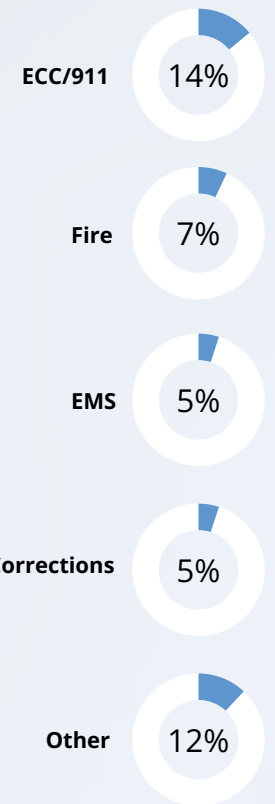
Public safety workforce management is on the cusp of transformational change. Going into 2025, leaders are facing the unique challenge of adapting to rapidly evolving technology while addressing staff shortages, high turnover, and operational inefficiencies.

By embracing innovative solutions public safety agencies can begin to overcome some of these challenges while building resilient, future-ready workforces. This report explores the key trends shaping public safety workforce management and provides actionable strategies for success in the coming months and year.

For this survey, nearly 100 public safety respondents provided unique and valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of their work. Sharing their feedback in January 2025, these respondents represent agencies ranging in size from 1 to over 1,000 full-time employees – with the majority (79%) coming from organizations of 1-250 total employees. With representatives from multiple verticals, Law Enforcement (71%), ECC/911 (14%), Fire (7%), EMS (5%), Corrections (5%) and Other (12%), insights across each of these agency types were utilized to identify the top public safety workforce trends for 2025.



Respondents By Vertical



Who We Surveyed

For this survey, nearly 100 public safety respondents provided unique and valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of their work.

Key Takeaways

Though the public sector has finally begun to see improvements in applicant volume post-pandemic, public safety agencies continue to face challenges when it comes to recruitment. That hasn't stopped agencies from getting creative to ensure they bring the best and brightest candidates onboard.

Responder well-being is top of mind for public safety leaders with over 37% identifying wellness as a key priority for their agencies in 2025. Despite the need, keeping staff from burning out remains a near-impossible task. A staggering 87% of agencies report an increase in overtime hours as a result of staffing shortages, while many others are struggling with low morale among responders.

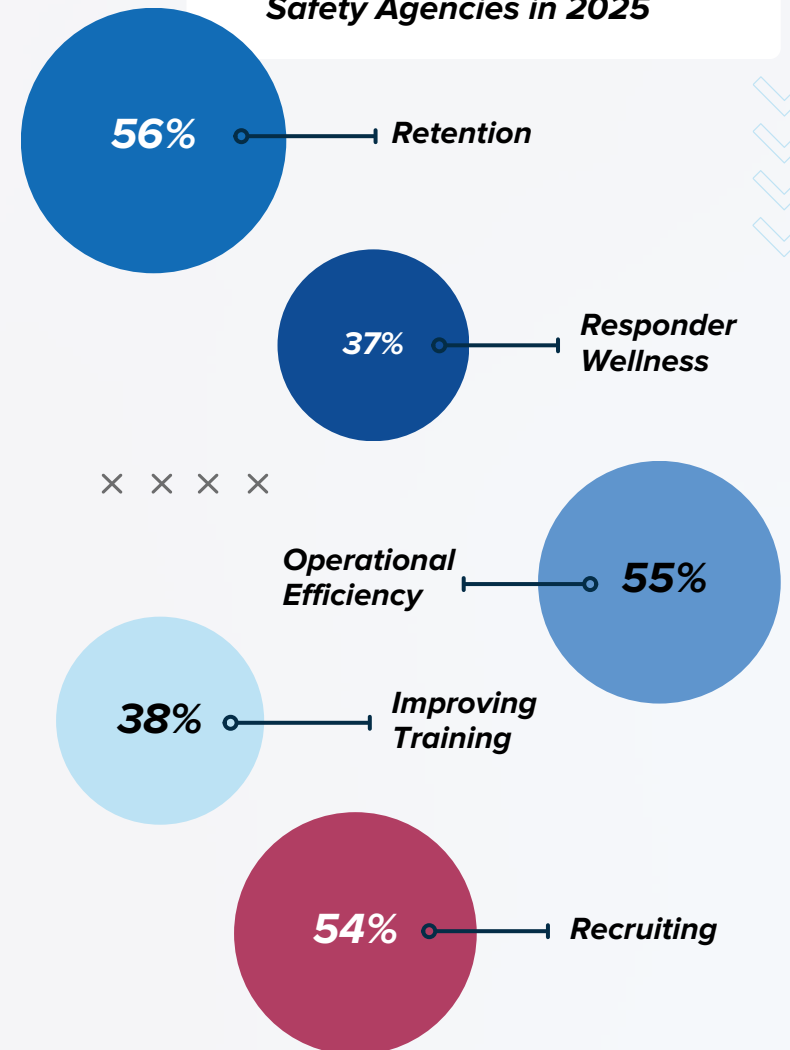
Additionally, there's no denying the impact that AI has had on the workforce over the past year and that it will continue to shape the employee experience for years to come. That said, with nearly 70% of agencies reporting that adopting AI is not a top priority for them in 2025, it's clear that AI skepticism amongst public safety professionals remains.

There is room to improve the use of these innovations to bring new efficiencies into public safety agencies nationwide.

In addition to hesitation around new technologies, uncertainty around funding sources and overall budget concerns are likely to play a major role in public safety workforce management this year. Survey respondents indicated that their most critical resources — money, people, and time — are also their most scarce.

Lastly, while paper processes are problematic at best, software systems that aren't configurable, integrated, or easy-to-use are just as bad for agencies. Without integrated systems in 2025, agencies and, more importantly, their staff, will suffer under the weight of inefficient and outdated processes. In 2025 there is a massive opportunity to improve overall public safety efficiency through the use of modern technology.

Top Priorities for Public Safety Agencies in 2025



The following report provides further insights into the top workforce management trends shaping public safety in 2025. **Read on to learn more about what the data means for you and your agency.**

01

Modern (and Effective) Recruiting Strategies

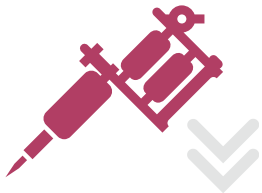
Staffing shortages remain a critical issue for 65% of public safety agencies today, with over half expecting these challenges to persist for three or more years. A majority report that 6-15% of their positions remain unfilled, which is causing significant strain on operations and staff.

Amidst critical workforce vacancies, finding qualified candidates is the top recruiting challenge for 84% of agencies. To address this, many are implementing creative solutions, such as revising internal policies to allow tattoos or relaxing residency requirements (48%), and enhancing health and wellness benefits (43%) to attract talent.



A majority report that 6-15% of their positions remain unfilled.

Implementing Creative Solutions



48%

Revising Internal Policies

48% of respondents are implementing creative solutions, such as revising internal policies to allow tattoos or relaxing residency requirements



43%

Enhancing Health and Wellness

43% of respondents are enhancing health and wellness benefits to attract talent.

01 Strategies for Recruitment in a Competitive Landscape



Invest in Your Brand

Have a Deep Understanding of Community Needs. Think about the populations you serve and the needs of your community. The needs of a densely populated urban area are different from that of a quiet suburb. Being honest about what the job is and isn't will help you target the right candidates and set the right expectations early on.

Tell Your Agency Story. Once you clearly outline what your community needs and the best fit candidates, make sure your messaging, visuals, and tactics align. For example, showing images of helicopters and crisis response vehicles when your agency primarily interacts with the elderly is not reflective of the job.



Look Critically at Your Process

Put Yourself in the Candidate's Shoes. When is the last time someone at your agency took themselves through your own hiring process? Are your applicant systems clunky? Do you have a documented flowchart of the applicant's journey and understand everything you are asking of them? We sometimes forget how our processes are perceived to an outsider and might deter great candidates.

Remove Unnecessary Barriers. Reconsider your eligibility criteria to make sure they are reflective of current societal norms (e.g. tattoos, facial hair, education requirements) and are strong predictors of success in the job. Also make automatic disqualifiers publicly available to cut down on unqualified applicants.

Optimize Your Background Investigation Process. Background investigation software, like Vetted, significantly reduces the time it takes to complete the investigation process. It makes it easier for candidates to complete their PHS and for you to be the quickest agency getting an offer into their hands.



Court Your Applicants

Incorporate Personal Outreach. It's important to remind candidates why they should pick your agency over another. Personalizing outreach and adding thoughtful touches can go a long way when someone has multiple offers to choose from.

Provide Candidate Resources. When recruiting candidates that are new to the industry, it's important to provide them a "map" of what to expect from the recruitment process. Provide materials that help candidates prepare for each stage of hiring.

Personalize Feedback. Give feedback throughout the process to build trust and strengthen your relationship with candidates. It also shows your agency's commitment to continuous improvement and transparency.

02

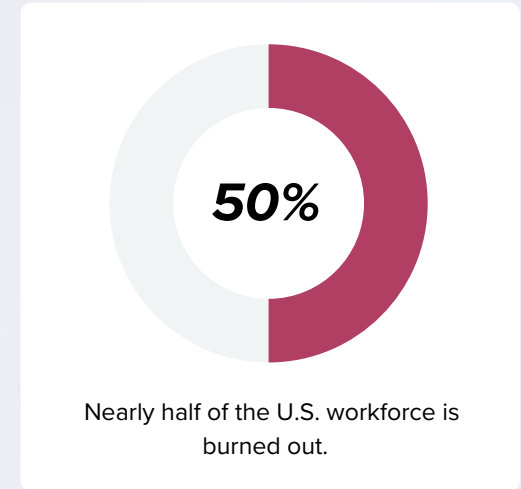
Focus on Employee Well-Being and Retention

Nearly 40% of public safety agencies are prioritizing responder wellness in 2025—and for good reason. While exact numbers vary, many sources report that nearly half of the U.S. workforce is burned out.

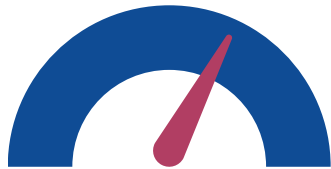
Unfortunately, the inherent stress of public safety work combined with chronic staffing shortages is a recipe for burnout.

Research shows that workers who are burned out are three times more likely to leave their organization and are significantly less likely to perform well at work. Burnout and personal reasons made up 57% of all reported reasons for voluntary turnover over the past 1-2 years in our latest survey.

Technology has emerged as a powerful tool to combat burnout by supporting employee mental health and fostering engagement. Cloud-based platforms, wellness apps, and AI-driven tools are being used to enhance access to mental health resources and reduce the stigma associated with seeking help.



Prioritizing responder wellness in 2025



Burnout is on the Rise

Burnout and personal reasons made up 57% of all reported reasons for voluntary turnover over the past 1-2 years in our latest survey.



Worker Turnover

Research shows that workers who are burned out are three times more likely to leave their organization and are significantly less likely to perform well at work

02 Strategies to Integrate Well-Being Tools into Operations



Convenient and Anonymous

Offer Convenient and Anonymous Wellness Apps. Provide access to apps that support mental health and wellness of responders, such as [PowerLine](#), which offers 24/7 anonymous peer support for first responders. These tools allow employees to seek help or guidance discreetly and foster a culture of care and support.



Incorporate Wellness Training

Incorporate Wellness into Responder Training. Embed wellness modules into training programs to help your responders develop stress management techniques alongside technical and tactical skills. Additionally, scenario-based training that simulates high stress situations exposes employees to the realities of the job and helps them develop resilience prior to being faced with the real thing.



Anytime Schedule Visibility

Offer Set Schedules and Anytime Schedule Visibility. When the job itself is stressful and unpredictable, offering set schedules can create a sense of stability, helping responders feel more in control of their lives. Shift scheduling software, like [PowerTime](#), gives responders visibility into their schedule months in advance. Mobile access to request time off and shift bidding capabilities means they can plan with their families, providing more balance between work and home.



Wellness-forward early intervention

Use AI to Identify When Responders are Struggling. Wellness-forward early intervention (EI) tools such as [PowerVitals](#) use AI to monitor multiple indicators and create a score that quantifies responder stress over time. Modern EI tools use agency call data and appropriately assess multiple dimensions of a first responder's life rather than taking a "one size fits all" approach.

03

AI and Technology for Operational Efficiency

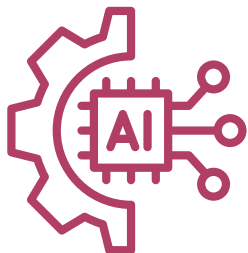
It's no secret that generative AI is transforming the world of work. The question isn't *if* agencies should adopt AI, **but when – and how quickly.**

There is an incredible opportunity to use this advanced technology to improve efficiencies across operational areas.

Many agencies may be hesitant to adopt AI due to security and accuracy concerns. The truth is, AI is already being used for criminal activity, so it's critical to understand what it can and cannot do.

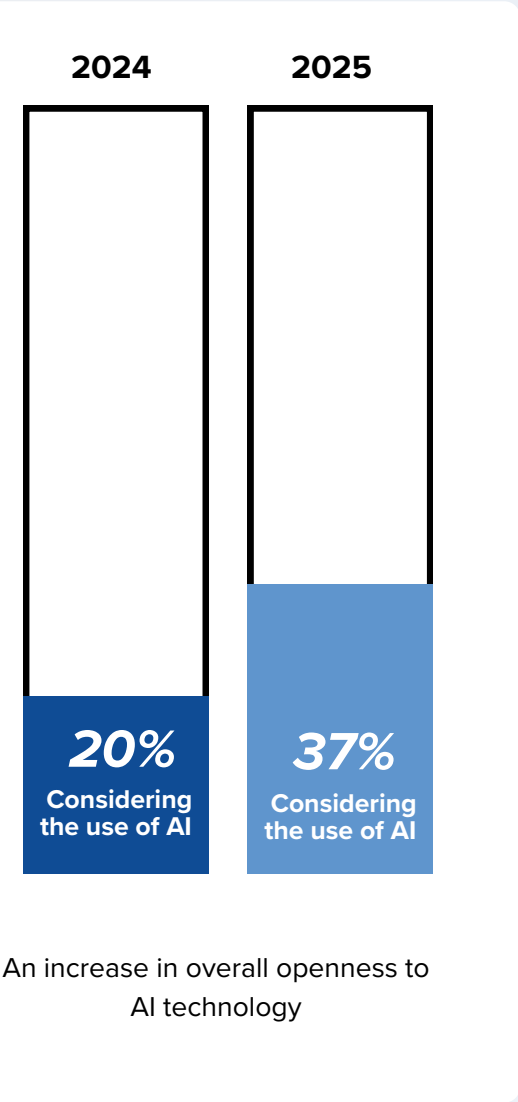
In 2024, 80% of survey respondents indicated that they were *not* considering the use of AI within their agencies, compared to only 68% this year. This suggests an increase in overall openness to the technology, but doesn't come without hesitation.

Generative AI is best for automating repetitive work tasks, like analyzing CAD and RMS data, crafting emails, and developing training content. Automating routine aspects of work can improve workflows, reduce errors, enhance compliance, and free-up time for serving the community. While AI can help address the constant call to “do more with less,” it's important to be thoughtful before selecting and purchasing AI technology.



Automating repetitive work tasks

Generative AI is best for automating repetitive work tasks, like analyzing CAD and RMS data, crafting emails, and developing training content.



Strategies to Adopt AI Technology Effectively



Conduct a Needs Assessment.

Identify specific operational challenges and goals within your agency that a cloud-based system or AI-powered technology might address. Engage relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with your agency's needs.



Invest in Employee AI Education.

Your team will be most successful when they have the skills to use AI tools effectively. Be sure to provide a framework and training for employees to discern when, what, and how to use AI in their day-to-day.



Look for Tools with a “Human” Component.

AI is great for first drafts, but it's unknown how it may hold up in court in the long term for things like report writing. When choosing AI technology look for tools that require a human to validate and approve the information before it's finalized.



Choose a Trusted Vendor.

Partner with trusted vendors with a strong track record of offering public safety-specific solutions. Prioritize robust security measures and user-friendly platforms that integrate seamlessly with your existing systems.



Ensure Data Security.

Look for tools that comply with the highest levels of data security (e.g. CJIS, SOC 2) and don't share your organization's personal protected information (PII) with others. Get in writing whether or not your data is shared or used to train their AI model.



Start Small and Scale Gradually.

Identify low-risk, high-impact areas to pilot AI and mobile-first tools in your agency. Consider tasks that can be neglected due to lack of time or resources to manage (e.g. QAing calls, Body cam footage review). Once proven effective, gradually expand to more complex areas of operations.



Develop Policy Language Around AI Usage.

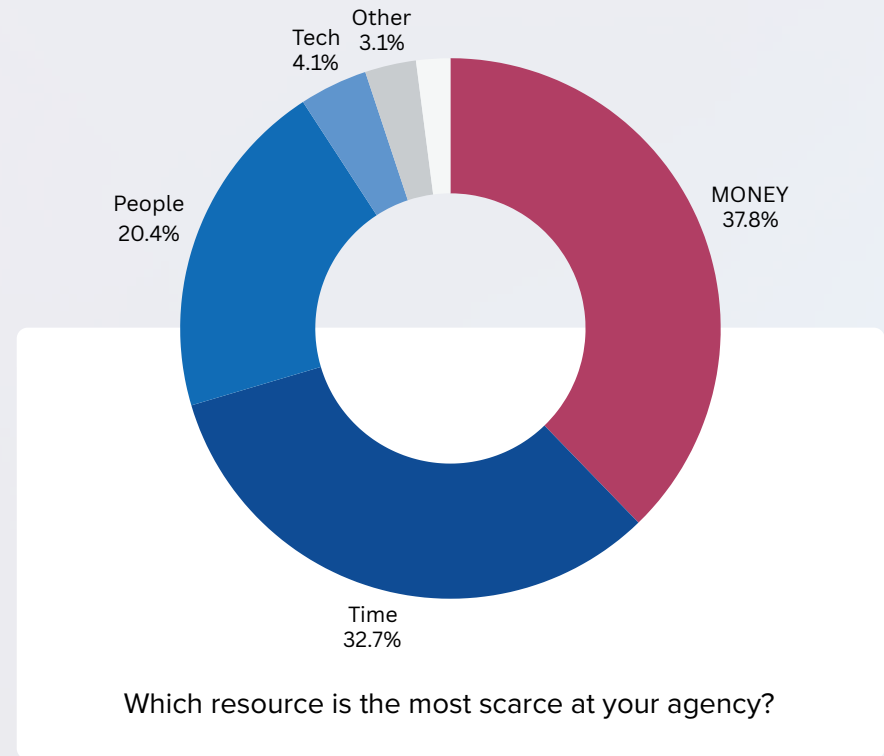
Review your organization's Acceptable Use Policy and provide clear guidelines on the [classifications of agency data](#) (e.g. personal identifiable information or PII) and what should be kept secure. If your organization uses free AI tools, employees should understand that anything they input can be made public and available to anyone. For example, if you input your agency's security protocols in a free AI tool, you have created unnecessary risk. Asking AI to help you write a recruiting email saves you time and won't share any information publicly that could be harmful to the agency.

04

Scarce Budgets and Resources

Budgets have always been tight in public safety but with rising costs, uncertainty of federal funding, and growing community needs agencies are walking a tightrope.

37% of survey respondents cited money, followed by time (33%), and people (20%) as their most scarce resource. While technology can help agencies do more with less time, it still requires people to implement and budget to purchase.



Strategies to Make the Case For Investing in Technology



Quantify Time Spent on Manual Tasks

While the agency doesn't necessarily save money if something is completed faster, it does allow for a re-allocation of resources. Document how long certain manual tasks take to complete and consider how those hours may be re-allocated on more high-value, service oriented tasks.



Build Your Case.

Get both quantitative and qualitative insights from your employees to develop a case of why technology will benefit your organization. Consider calling peer agencies to ask their advice on how they were able to make the case and secure funds. Additionally, many technology companies will partner with you to develop a justification with data around time savings that can be presented to budget approvers.



Present to Leadership.

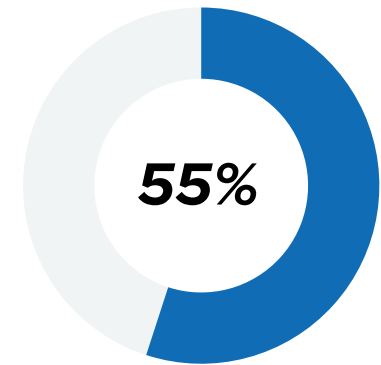
Once you've built your case, present your findings, benefits of purchasing new technology, the cost, and anticipated benefits. Ideally you can include quotes or direct testimonials from similar agencies.

05

Integrated Systems for Data-Driven Decision Making

First responders use a number of different computer-based systems each day to complete their core job functions. When these systems aren't integrated or require separate logins first responders waste time on duplicate data entry and administrators have incomplete data to make decisions with.

According to our survey, 55% of agencies list operational efficiency as a top priority in 2025. Systems that are clunky, don't allow for single-sign-on (SSO) (or one login), and are unable to share data, slow employees down. When data is siloed, agency leaders don't get a full picture of what's working and what's not. If the system is hard to use, employees may not input data correctly leading to a "garbage in, garbage out" when it comes to reporting and data analysis.



55% of agencies list operational efficiency as a top priority in 2025.

Incomplete Data



Integration is needed

When these systems aren't integrated or require separate logins first responders waste time on duplicate data entry and administrators have incomplete data to make decisions with.



Clunky Systems

Systems that are clunky, don't allow for single-sign-on (SSO) (or one login), and are unable to share data, slow employees down.

05 Strategies to Integrate New Systems to Improve Decision Making



Audit the Legacy System.

Assess the functionality, integrations, and limitations of your legacy platforms. Document existing processes, workflows, and integrations to understand how systems operate. Having a complete picture of the gaps that exist in current systems helps you avoid choosing a vendor with similar limitations.



Research Integrated Solutions.

Look for technology that either integrates with multiple systems or can bring in data from other systems. For example, more and more systems can pull in CAD and RMS (e.g. action reporting, FTO/CTO/JTO) data so responders aren't entering call data multiple times.



Consider Usability.

If the system is reliant on employees inputting information, focus on ease-of-use to cut down data entry errors that cause reporting to be inaccurate.



Implement Data Cleansing Processes.

Regularly audit and clean data to eliminate errors, duplicates, and outdated information to ensure only high-quality, reliable data is being used in your systems.



Don't Forget to Look at the Data.

Modern systems are great at compiling data but if you never spend the time to review or analyze them, they can't tell you ways to improve. Secure AI tools are helpful when needing to summarize large amounts of data. Or consider reporting tools that provide visualization of datasets.

Strategic Recommendations for Public Safety Leaders

In 2025, technology plays a pivotal role in enabling public safety agencies to thrive.

Public safety leaders who begin to adopt technology-driven strategies will transform workforce management for the better.



Assess Current Gaps in Technology Adoption.

Map out existing processes of key workforce management areas, like scheduling, training, compliance, or responder wellness, and identify areas that can benefit from automation.



Invest in Training to Maximize Technology Benefits.

Provide thorough and ongoing training to responders and leadership to promote buy-in and ensure effective use of new tools. Equip leaders to advocate for adoption and foster a workplace culture that embraces technology.



Build a Roadmap for Transitioning to Modern Solutions.

Develop a phased implementation plan for new technologies, prioritizing areas with the highest impact. Include timelines, resources, process owners, and milestones to keep track of progress.

Solutions like PowerDMS by NEOGOV offer public safety agencies quick and effective tools for meeting their complex workforce management needs.

With comprehensive software like PowerDMS, the public safety platform by NEOGOV, public safety leaders can recruit the best talent with the shortest time-to-hire, train teams as if lives depend on it (because they do), and effortlessly manage and update policies—all while staying focused on protecting their staff and communities.



Conclusion & Next Steps

Over the next decade, thriving public safety agencies will be defined by their ability to be creative in their recruitment strategies, proactive in their turnover mitigation efforts, and committed to the well-being of their responders. Agencies will increasingly rely on AI and integrated systems to improve their data-driven decision-making and overall operational efficiency.

With forward-thinking leadership and a commitment to modernizing workforce management, public safety agencies will be prepared for whatever challenges lie ahead.

Embrace this opportunity to lead your agency into the future.

PowerDMS
by NEOGOV

PowerDMS by NEOGOV serves over 5,500 law enforcement, fire, EMS, and emergency communications agencies annually with tools for managing, training, and supporting employees across their careers.

