

# 2024 – 2025 Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury

## Staffing Challenges Facing the Richmond Police Department: Diminishing Funds and Fewer Officers

Report 2503  
April 26, 2025

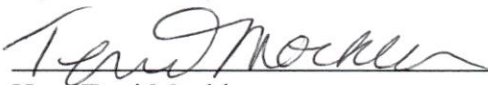
Approved by the Grand Jury

  
Peter Appert  
GRAND JURY FOREPERSON

Date

5/1/25

Accepted for Filing

  
Hon. Terri Mockler  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

Date

4/30/25



## SUMMARY

This Grand Jury chose to undertake an investigation after becoming aware of continuing police department hiring and retention challenges following the reallocation of City of Richmond Police Department (RPD) funds.

In its investigation, the Grand Jury found that hiring RPD officers has been and continues to be a challenge. Although improved hiring results can be seen in recent years police officer staffing remains below the approved level of 146 with a current vacancy of 23 officers.

Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. (Raftelis) and Matrix Consulting Group (Matrix), provided the City with two expert reports on staffing levels. Both recommended an increase in RPD sworn officers. Neither report has been fully discussed by the City Council in a public meeting. The recommendations to increase RPD officers have not been implemented.

Additionally, the Raftelis report noted that the death of George Floyd in 2020 created a negative perception of police officers which increased the difficulty for police agencies across the country, including RPD, to successfully recruit, hire and retain officers. Furthermore, the Raftelis report noted that there is a perception that the majority of the City Council does not support the police department based on the reduction in staffing and budget and comments made by certain Council members.

In 2021, the City Council approved a reallocation of \$3 million from the RPD budget and directed these funds to support the YouthWORKS Program, unhoused services, the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS), and a new alternative non-police community response team, ultimately known as the Community Crisis Response Program (CCRP). The CCRP has yet to become fully operational and has been unable to fulfill its mission to channel non-emergency calls to alternative policing methods and to reduce the demand on police services.

Based on our investigation, the City of Richmond should consider taking a two-pronged approach to addressing the issues of police staffing and implementation of an alternative non-police response program. The City should also consider continuing to invest in and move forward with implementing alternative policing methods such as the CCRP and the ONS. These groups, working together with the RPD, will help the community at large feel more supported, safer, and benefit from a better overall quality of life in the City. Additionally, the City should consider investing in and supporting the efforts of the RPD, with a goal of filling all vacancies and having enough police officers appropriate for a city of its size and complexity.

## BACKGROUND

The killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police officers on May 25, 2020, resulted in violent protests across much of the country. In the immediate wake of Floyd's death, protests arose in cities across the United States, some violent. Many protesters viewed the killing as racially motivated and called for either the defunding of, or complete elimination, of police forces.

While nearby Oakland and Vallejo experienced violent protests, Richmond weathered the storm with minimal violence. In October 2020, the Richmond City Council voted to establish a “Reimagining Public Safety Community Task Force.” The 21-member Task Force was directed to find ways to transition the RPD from its “community policing” model (a proactive philosophy that emphasizes the importance of building community-police relationships and working together to combat crime) to an alternative consistent with a smaller police force.

In June 2021, the City Council approved four Task Force recommendations. Two of the recommendations provided additional funds to existing programs, YouthWORKS and the Office of Neighborhood Safety. Two new recommendations were aimed at finding safe spaces for the unhoused population and to create a non-police alternative to public safety using community-based resources—the CCRP.

To provide funding for these activities, the Task Force presented several choices to the City Council. The Council ultimately approved the reallocation of \$3 million from the RPD budget which was achieved by leaving approximately 14 vacant sworn officer positions unfilled. Based on the reduced numbers, the RPD eliminated or downsized most of its specialized investigative units. The size of the Richmond police force had been in decline for several years, but post reallocation experienced a more significant drop. The following chart shows the number of approved sworn officer’s positions over the years as well as actual filled numbers.

	<b>FY’20</b>	<b>FY’21</b>	<b>FY’22</b>	<b>FY’23</b>	<b>FY’24</b>
Approved	178*	157*	145*	145*	146**
Actual	149**	142**	120**	107**	113**

\* From Raftelis report

\*\* Provided by the City

Following the reallocation, the RPD experienced an increase in departures due to retirements and resignations. This table illustrates the departures.

	<b>FY’20</b>	<b>FY’21</b>	<b>FY’22</b>	<b>FY’23</b>	<b>FY’24</b>
Resigned	7	13	12	3	9
Retired	6	13	14	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>13*</b>	<b>26*</b>	<b>26*</b>	<b>6*</b>	<b>13*</b>

\* Provided by the City

Insofar as it already was becoming difficult to attract new officers—a growing trend nationwide—the RPD was faced with an ongoing hiring crisis. Overall, the smaller RPD footprint resulted in increased mandatory overtime, leaving many officers exhausted.

The Raftelis report showed that in 2021 each patrol officer worked an average of 300 overtime hours. In 2022, the average rose to 358 hours. At the time of the report, the overtime hours in 2023 were projected to be 420 hours. This results in an additional eight hours per week,

effectively resulting in a six-day work week. The report highlighted the effects of overtime, indicating that fatigue can impact decision making and reaction time, potentially impacting the officers' effectiveness, as well as the safety of the officers and the public.

Finally, fewer officers on the force and many with less experience result in fewer Field Training Officers (FTO) to train new officers fresh out of the academy.

## METHODOLOGY

The methods used by the Grand Jury in this investigation include:

- Interviews with current or previous employees and government officials of the City of Richmond
- Review of City Council agendas, staff reports, and minutes of meetings and review of the audio/video archive of the Richmond City Council's past meetings
- Review of two expert reports, "The Citywide Workforce Analysis Report" dated May 3, 2024, by Raftelis Financial Consulting Inc and "Police Department Emergency Services Review" dated March 6, 2023, by Matrix Consulting Group
- Review of various periodicals and online community websites

## DISCUSSION

### **Reallocation of Police Funds**

Following the murder of George Floyd in May of 2020, as well as other high-profile police actions resulting in deaths, there was a movement across the county to reduce or eliminate funding to police departments and to re-allocate those funds to alternative methods of policing. In 2021, the Richmond City Council re-allocated \$3 million from the RPD budget. The City Council used a portion of that money to increase funding to an existing agency, the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS).

Established in 2007, the ONS's primary mission is to reduce gun violence and murders. The Council directed another portion of the money to create a new agency, the Community Crisis Response Program (CCRP). The CCRP's purpose is to respond to calls that do not appear to require a police response. The Council also allocated funds to the YouthWORKS program which aims to equip every Richmond youth ages 16-24 with the knowledge and experience they will need to be successful in real-world work environments through work-based learning, financial literacy/work-readiness workshops, and personalized one-on-one career counseling. Last, a portion of the re-allocated funds were used to provide more services for the unhoused.

The reallocation resulted in the loss of some officers to early retirement and transfer to other police departments due to a perceived lack of support for the RPD. This perception also made it more difficult to recruit new officers. The subsequent reduction of sworn officers resulted in the downsizing or elimination of specialized investigative units including the regulatory, robbery,

property crime, gang, and narcotics units. The loss of resources to these specialized units results in a more reactive police force in these areas. With fewer officers in these areas the RPD is unable to be proactive and attempt to prevent the crimes. Additionally, the reduction in officers resulted in mandatory overtime.

Since the 2021 reallocation, data reported by the City and RPD points to an increase in some categories of crime. Homicides have trended downward, as well as burglary, larceny-theft, and arson. However, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and vehicle-theft have all increased. It is beyond the ability of this report to determine whether or to what extent the reallocation and/or reduction in police officers caused the increase in crime. Based on the reported statistics, it is undisputed that crime in Richmond has increased since 2021. The following is a chart of reported crimes on the City’s monthly crime reporting website ([ci.richmond.ca.us/4010/Crime-Stat-Reports](https://ci.richmond.ca.us/4010/Crime-Stat-Reports)). The Grand Jury added a column to show the change from 2021 to 2024.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021-24 Change
Homicide	18	18	8	11	-38.8%
Sexual Assault	86	114	100	104	+20.9%
Robbery	243	258	298	334	+37.4%
Aggravated Assault	832	857	941	997	+19.8%
Burglary	311	262	343	303	-2.5%
Larceny-Theft	1,849	1,993	1,696	1,741	-5.8%
Vehicle-Theft	1,044	1,068	1,258	1,139	+9.1%
Arson	44	34	30	33	-25%
<b>Crime Totals</b>	<b>4,471</b>	<b>4,604</b>	<b>4,674</b>	<b>4,662</b>	<b>+4.3%</b>

The FBI defines violent crimes to include homicide, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault. The chart below shows those crime numbers in Richmond from 2021 to 2024. It illustrates an increase in violent crimes every year since 2021 and an overall increase of 22.6% from 2021-2024.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021-24 Change
Homicide	18	18	8	11	-38.8%
Sexual Assault	86	114	100	104	+20.9%
Robbery	243	258	298	334	+37.4%
Aggravated Assault	832	857	941	997	+19.8%
<b>Violent Crime Totals</b>	<b>1179</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>1347</b>	<b>1446</b>	<b>+22.6%</b>

RPD authorities believe that many crimes go unreported since, based on limited staffing, the RPD is unable to respond to all calls. Online reporting is the only option for reporting crimes to which the RPD cannot respond. The online system is not always available, making it impossible to report these crimes in any way. This results in frustration on the part of the citizens and a sentiment that the police are not fully supporting the community. This also suggests that the level of crime in Richmond is underreported in the statistics above.

### **City Council Lack of Support for RPD**

The Richmond City Council is composed of six Council members elected by district who serve four-year alternating terms. The Mayor serves as a seventh member of the Council, is elected at large, and also serves a four-year term.

The City Council's lack of support for the RPD was highlighted by the Raftelis report which says, "However, many RPD officers reported a perception that the City Council wishes to reduce the number of staff in the Department, and that this perception has influenced officers to leave and has deterred potential candidates from applying to the Department. If the City opted to increase staffing, it could change this perception, potentially supporting recruitment and retention."

The Raftelis report provides further support by stating "another factor in Richmond is the perception the City Council does not support the Police Department, due to reductions in staffing and budget and comments made by some Councilmembers."

### **CCRP Establishment, Current Status**

Following the 2021 budget reallocation, and subsequent creation of CCRP, the City did not hire a program manager for the CCRP until May 2024. As of April 2025, there are only three employees, the program manager and two staff members.

Leadership of the Richmond Police Officers Association (RPOA), the union that represents RPD officers, has expressed concerns that some of the proposed duties for CCRP infringe on those belonging to police officers. Because the CCRP incident response proposal represents a change in working conditions for the officers, the City and the RPOA must negotiate to resolve the issues before the CCRP program can be fully implemented. In addition, the RPOA has expressed disagreement with the fact that the City has determined that CCRP employees will become members of the SEIU Local 1021. The RPOA believes they should be represented by the RPOA based on the job duties. As of April 1, 2025, the issues remain unresolved, further delaying the CCRP full rollout.

The goal of the CCRP is to reduce the number of calls requiring a response of police officers to mental health calls, noise issues, and other similar quality of life incidents. Because of the slow rollout of the program, the CCRP has not been able to reduce the number of calls requiring RPD response. The CCRP has not yet achieved its stated goals.

The relationship between the CCRP and RPD is evolving. Originally, the City Council directed the CCRP to work independently of the RPD. However, the RPD has expressed concern that independent operation could result in CCRP being dispatched to a mental health call that results in an encounter with an armed and dangerous individual. Therefore, there have been discussions between the CCRP and the RPD to be more collaborative to determine how to respond to calls. The dispatchers will need to become fully trained so that the correct personnel will be sent to calls.

### **Raftelis and Matrix Reports-Staffing Recommendations**

Matrix Consulting Group (March 2023) and Raftelis Financial Consulting Inc. (May 2024) delivered reports to the City. The Matrix report, commissioned by the City, deals specifically with staffing in the RPD. The Raftelis report was broader in scope, examining staffing in all areas of the City, including the RPD. The Raftelis report was mandated by the state of California following a report by the California State Auditor in 2022. Both studies recommended an increase in Richmond sworn officers. The Raftelis report recommended 27 additional police officers. The Matrix report recommended 30 additional patrol officers.

This recommendation for additional police officers is consistent with the Grand Jury's finding that the RPD is understaffed even if all open positions are filled. Based on national benchmarks the City should have 1.6 police officers per 1,000 residents. This translates to 182 police officers in Richmond. This exceeds the current budgeted approved level of 146 and is consistent with the recommendations made by both Raftelis and Matrix.

As of April 2025, the Council has not taken any action to increase the number of RPD sworn officers as recommended in the reports.

### **Police Recruiting and Hiring**

The hiring of police officers in the RPD is challenging. The RPD has increased their recruiting success primarily with the use of social media. The RPD still has a 23% vacancy rate in sworn officers. To improve recruiting, at the December 17, 2024, Council meeting, the RPD presented an agenda item to offer various incentives to increase lateral hires of sworn officers. The incentives included are \$45,000 bonus to new officers, allowing vacation accrual to recognize time spent in previous agencies, and a \$5,000 bonus paid to current RPD officers who successfully recruit a lateral officer hired by the RPD.

Other jurisdictions in the Bay Area are using similar incentives to attract and retain officers. Some of the police agencies offering bonuses include Contra Costa County Sheriff (\$15,000 per lateral officer hired), Antioch Police Department (\$30,000 per lateral police officer hired), and Alameda Police Department (\$75,000 per lateral police officer hired). This agenda item was tabled at the Council meeting. It has yet to come back for further discussion and decision.

The RPD lacks sufficient field training officers (FTO) who are qualified and willing to do field training of new officers. As a consequence, the RPD has the capability to train 10 new officers at a time. The number of officers qualified to perform field training is limited by two factors: the

police officers' length of service and the police officers' willingness to participate. Three years of service is required to perform the duties of an FTO. According to the RPD and the RPOA, some of those eligible to train others do not participate due to lack of incentive pay and the strain of mandatory overtime.

### **Chevron Settlement Funds**

In August of 2024, the City reached an agreement with Chevron Corporation which will result in \$550 million being paid to the City over the next 10 years. This represents approximately a 20 percent increase to the City's annual budget. This settles litigation between the City of Richmond and Chevron and results in an agreement to remove the Business Refining Tax measure from the ballot. The settlement payments will begin in June of 2025. The City Council has begun discussions on where these dollars will be allocated. Areas discussed by the City Council include road improvements and funding pension liabilities. As of April 2025, there have been no decisions made of how to use these funds.

## **FINDINGS**

- F1. Despite a decrease in absolute number of homicides from 18 to 11, violent crimes in Richmond, which include homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault have increased from 2021-2024.
- F2. In 2021, the City of Richmond reallocated \$3 million in Richmond Police Department (RPD) funding to community services and alternative policing proposals in Richmond.
- F3. The City received two expert reports that studied staffing levels in Richmond, the Matrix report (March 2023) and the Raftelis report (May 2024).
- F4. Both the Matrix and Raftelis reports found that there should be an increase in RPD sworn officers.
- F5. The City Council has not taken any action on police staffing as recommended in the Matrix and Raftelis reports.
- F6. An improvement in recruiting measures has resulted in an increase of hiring of new RPD officers, although staffing remains below approved levels.
- F7. The RPD has the ability to train only 10 new officers at a time, using the available Field Training Officers, resulting in a limitation on the number of officers that could be hired.
- F8. Reallocation of RPD funds resulted in the downsizing or elimination of specialized investigative units.
- F9. Since the reallocation of RPD funds, mandatory overtime for police officers has increased.

- F10. Subsequent to the reallocation of RPD funds in 2021 the City Council approved the formation of the Community Crisis Response Program (CCRP).
- F11. The CCRP was formed to respond to calls involving mental health and quality of life incidents not requiring the RPD.
- F12. As of April 2025, the CCRP is staffed with three people, a program manager and two staffers.
- F13. As of April 2025, the CCRP is not receiving calls for service via police dispatch.
- F14. The need for agreement between the City and RPOA on duties to be performed and union representation of the CCRP is contributing to CCRP's slow rollout.
- F15. As a result of a legal settlement between the City and Chevron Corporation, \$550 million will be coming to the City of Richmond over the next 10 years, starting in June 2025, resulting in increased revenue for the City.
- F16. As of April 2025, The City Council has not determined how any of the Chevron settlement funds will be used.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. By January 1, 2026, the City Council should consider placing a review of the Matrix and Raftelis reports on a City Council agenda.
- R2. By January 1, 2026, after a City Council meeting review of the reports, the City Council should consider following the recommendations for police officer staffing and hiring made in the Matrix and Raftelis reports.
- R3. By January 1, 2026, the City Council should consider directing the City Manager to establish a timeline to implement the operations and functions of the CCRP.
- R4. By January 1, 2026, the City Council should consider directing the City Manager to work with the RPD to establish a training program for dispatchers to enable dispatchers to properly send appropriate personnel to incidents for CCRP and RPD.
- R5. By January 1, 2026, the City Council should consider directing the City Manager to work with the RPD to develop a plan to increase the number of Field Training Officers.
- R6. By January 1, 2026, the City Council should consider directing the City Manager to work with the RPD to establish a plan to reduce officer mandatory overtime.
- R7. By January 1, 2026, the City Council should consider whether to allocate some of the Chevron Corporation settlement funds to the RPD to hire and retain more officers.

## REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to California Penal Code § 933(b) et seq. and California Penal Code § 933.05, the 2024-2025 Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury requests responses from the following governing bodies:

<b>Responding Agency</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Richmond City Council	F1-F16	R1-R7

## INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to California Penal Code § 933(b) et seq. and California Penal Code § 933.05, the 2024-2025 Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury invites responses from the following governing bodies:

<b>Responding Agency</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Richmond Chief of Police	F1-F16	R1-R7

These responses must be provided in the format and by the date set forth in the cover letter that accompanies this report. An electronic copy of these responses in the form of a Word document should be sent by e-mail to [ctadmin@contracosta.courts.ca.gov](mailto:ctadmin@contracosta.courts.ca.gov) and a hard (paper) copy should be sent to:

Civil Grand Jury – Foreperson

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