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# Knowledge and Innovation Site Profile

## Community Trust and Partnerships at the Knoxville Police Department



### KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION SITE PROFILES

This is one in a series of profiles being published as part of the Knowledge and Innovation (KI) Site Network. The agencies highlighted in these profiles are part of the KI Site Network and have demonstrated exemplary practice in a core area of policing. The KI Site Network provides resources and peer engagement opportunities at no cost to law enforcement agencies. Visit [www.leknowledgelab.org](http://www.leknowledgelab.org) to learn more.



## THE APPROACH

The Knoxville Police Department (KPD) views community trust as foundational to its broader public safety strategy and has worked to strengthen community engagement while supporting efforts to reduce crime and violence. The department employs a data-informed approach that integrates community engagement with operational decision-making, recognizing that trust, legitimacy, and effectiveness are closely connected.

KPD invests in ongoing training, workshops, conferences, and other professional development opportunities. The incorporation of crime analysts across multiple units embeds data into daily operations, helping inform staffing, problem-solving strategies, and assessments of what is working.

In recent years, KPD has prioritized strengthening its relationships with the community through sustained, routine engagement. Officers are encouraged to interact regularly with residents, neighborhood leaders, and community organizations to build familiarity and credibility over time. These efforts include commander walks, neighborhood forums, and foot patrols to promote direct, two-way communication. KPD has further emphasized maintaining partnerships with local government and community-based organizations to ensure a broad range of stakeholders are engaged in public safety efforts.

### Knowledge Lab Core Practice Areas

- **Community Trust & Partnerships**
- Crime Investigations
- Crime and Violence Reduction
- Crime Victim Support
- Mass Critical Incident Response
- Mass Demonstration Response
- Mental Health & Crisis Response
- Office Safety & Wellness
- Public Transparency
- Recruitment and Retention
- Stops, Searches & Arrests
- Technology Implementation
- Training & Education
- Use of Force

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## KEY ELEMENTS

### Community Trust and Partnerships

- Increased visibility through commander walks, neighborhood forums, and foot patrol touchpoints
- Collaboration with community based organizations
- Multiple avenues for complaints, commendations, and general feedback
- Strong relationship with the other government agencies to connect community members with services for substance use disorders, trauma support, and youth programming

### Data-Driven Policing and Analytics

- Daily briefings, interactive dashboards, and the integration of analysts into different units enhance real-time decision-making capabilities

### Training

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design training embedded across the department through in-house academy, reinforcing a shared problem-solving framework among all officers
- Co-founder and regional anchor of the Tri-City Police Leadership Academy with Metro Nashville and Louisville, using a model that develops sworn and non-sworn leaders together and strengthens cross-jurisdictional leadership pipelines
- Analysts integrated into operational decision-making and supported by executive leadership in pursuing advanced training and professional conferences, expanding analytical capacity

### Public Transparency and Communication

- Multi-platform social media approach to reach broad audiences
- Monthly updates from the Chief on TV and radio, including outreach to Black radio stations for broader community engagement



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## THE BENEFITS

Trust-building is a long-term effort. Relationship-based practices and data-informed strategies can facilitate strengthened relationships with residents and increased confidence in public safety efforts. These collaborative approaches support safer outcomes for both the community and officers while reinforcing mutual respect and understanding.

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## AGENCY AT A GLANCE

The Knoxville Police Department serves the City of Knoxville, Tennessee, which has a population of approximately 190,000 residents. With 416 sworn officers and a number of skilled professional staff, KPD is structured into four primary bureaus: Field Operations, Investigations, Management Services, and Professional Standards, all committed to upholding the Department's mission to Safeguard the Public and Prevent Crime.

“We don’t define success only by the numbers. We want to understand how people feel and whether they believe they are safer.”

– Office of Community Safety and Empowerment

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### PHOTO CREDITS

- Photos provided by the Knoxville Police Department and obtained from Betty Krachey on Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/aerial-view-of-sunsphere-in-knoxville-tennessee-29797718/>