

City of Springfield & Springfield Police Department: Massey Commission Calls to Action Response

The City of Springfield and the Springfield Police Department have been actively reviewing and responding to the Massey Commission's Calls to Action (CTAs). Many of these recommendations speak directly to first responder agencies throughout Sangamon County and align with efforts already underway within our community. This document includes the City of Springfield and the Springfield Police Department responses to the Massey Commission's Calls to Action that directly pertain to the City.

Call to Action #1: Establish a Commemorative Plaque Honoring Sonya Massey and Those Affected by Systemic Injustice

The City of Springfield is currently planning the placement of a commemorative plaque honoring Sonya Massey and others affected by systemic injustice. The City dedicated the Massey Memorial Bridge and protected her mural through ordinance 368-09-24.

Call to Action #3: Expand Crisis Response Qualifications and Integrate Individuals with Lived Experience into Behavioral Health Response

The City of Springfield and Springfield Police Department have made significant investments in alternative response programs and behavioral health initiatives.

In 2019, the City established the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) in response to the growing number of unhoused individuals in our community. HOT is a collaborative effort between the Springfield Police Department and the City's Office of Community Relations. The team currently consists of one full-time Springfield police officer trained in de-escalation and crisis intervention and three full-time social workers. The program has produced positive outcomes and has contributed to a reduction in the unhoused population through direct outreach, support services, and resource coordination.

In late 2023, Springfield launched SEED (Springfield Engage, Empower, Deflect), a pre-arrest diversion and deflection program developed in partnership with numerous community stakeholders under the direction of TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities). Following nearly a year of planning and collaboration, SEED was created to connect individuals with treatment, recovery, harm reduction, and support services before they enter the criminal justice system. The program utilizes a "warm handoff" approach, helping individuals access the services they need while reducing future justice involvement and promoting long-term stability.

Also in 2023, the Springfield Police Department was awarded grant funding to establish the Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) program. CORE pairs a Crisis Intervention Team-trained Springfield police officer with a Memorial Behavioral Health specialist. Together, they respond to calls involving individuals experiencing mental health crises. The program is designed to improve safety, enhance outcomes, reduce repeat calls for service, minimize unnecessary emergency room visits, and connect individuals with appropriate care. CORE

remains fully operational today and provides coverage for more than 60 hours each week during peak service periods.

Through the same funding source, the Springfield Police Department also supports Springfield School District's MOSAIC Program, which embeds licensed mental and behavioral health clinicians directly into local schools. The program provides students and families with on-site counseling, therapy, and mental health support during the school day.

In 2025, the City announced the BEACON Project, a collaborative initiative involving the Springfield Police Department, Springfield Fire Department, Office of Community Relations, and local behavioral health partners. BEACON creates a unified crisis response system through co-responder teams that include first responders and licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs), providing both immediate intervention and connections to long-term treatment and recovery services.

As part of the BEACON initiative, the Springfield Fire Department will deploy a specially equipped Behavioral Health Emergency and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) Outreach Life-Saving Treatment vehicle. The unit will serve as a mobile response and stabilization platform for behavioral health emergencies.

Additionally, Mayor Buscher has announced plans for a new initiative, known as the TIGER Team, which is expected to launch later this year and will focus on addressing substance use disorder and mental health challenges within the community.

Call to Action #4: Enhance Law Enforcement Vetting and Hiring Standards

The Springfield Police Department maintains rigorous hiring and vetting standards for all police officer candidates.

Each applicant participates in two separate interview panels composed of representatives from the Springfield Police Department, the City's Human Resources Department, and diverse members of the community. Candidates undergo a comprehensive background investigation utilizing law enforcement databases, open-source information, personal references, and secondary references.

All background investigations are reviewed by the Civil Service Commission, which carefully evaluates each candidate before approval for hire. Candidates must then successfully complete extensive psychological and medical evaluations conducted by qualified professionals.

Upon hiring, new officers complete a minimum of 42 weeks of training, significantly exceeding the 16-week basic law enforcement academy requirement established by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board. Training includes cultural competency, procedural justice, crisis intervention, de-escalation techniques, constitutional policing, and other critical topics designed to prepare officers for service in today's communities.

Call to Action #7: Expand Law Enforcement Pipelines and Implement Data-Driven Hiring Practices

In 2016, the Springfield Police Department entered into a partnership with the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) to evaluate and improve recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices.

At that time, the department employed eight Black officers and had no Black representation in supervisory ranks. Since then, the department has implemented numerous initiatives, including targeted recruitment efforts, leadership development opportunities, participation in programs such as Minorities in Blue and Women in Law Enforcement, and ongoing investments in professional development.

As a result of these efforts, the department now employs 38 minority officers, representing more than 15 percent of the agency. Minority representation has also expanded throughout the supervisory ranks, including Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Commanders.

The Springfield Police Department recognizes the importance of continued accountability, monitoring, and community partnership to ensure representation, recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion practices.

diversity, equity, and inclusion remain central to its mission.

Call to Action #13: Establish a Coordinated Police Accountability and Transparency Framework Between the City of Springfield and Sangamon County

The Springfield Police Department and the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office currently share a variety of operational data through the Sangamon County Combined Dispatch Center. Much of this information pertains to active law enforcement operations and criminal investigations and is therefore considered law-enforcement sensitive.

Certain records, including personnel files, training records, internal affairs investigations, and related employment documents, are governed by applicable laws, policies, and collective bargaining agreements. As a result, these records can only be shared between agencies in certain situations dictated by state law.

The Springfield Police Department remains committed to transparency while ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements governing confidential records.

Call to Action #17: Require Comprehensive Equity and Accessibility Reviews and Departmental Inclusion Plans

The Springfield Police Department has worked diligently to recruit, retain, and promote a diverse workforce. As previously noted, the department currently employs 38 minority officers who serve at every level of the organization, from patrol operations through command staff.

The department fosters a culture of inclusion through mentorship, leadership development, continuing education, and professional training opportunities for employees of all backgrounds.

Additionally, the Springfield Police Department maintains an LGBTQ+ liaison who works directly with community members to identify concerns, strengthen relationships, and improve understanding between the department and the LGBTQ+ community.

In 2025, the City of Springfield received a perfect score on the Municipal Equality Index issued by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, reflecting the City's commitment to equity and inclusion.

Call to Action #21: Prioritize Additive Job Creation, End Corporate Incentives, and Expand Workforce Training for Marginalized Residents

The City of Springfield is committed to striving to fulfill the goals of CTA #21 of the Massey Commission, prioritizing additive job creation, ending corporate incentives, and expanding workforce training for marginalized residents. This work has already begun with the completion of the first cohort of the Springfield Minority Business Institute. This program, housed in the Office of Community Relations, provides a nine-week course to minority business owners and non-profit organizers focused on navigating processes that have historically proven difficult to understand. It incorporates lessons in Planning and Economic Development, Permitting, Zoning, Compliance when working with the City of Springfield. In addition, multiple community partners such as The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, The SBDC, Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance, UIS School of Business and Management, Innovate Springfield, The Springfield Urban League, and Visions 1908, provided in-depth lessons about what resources they provide and how those resources can be utilized to help grow and sustain success for each business. This program is provided at no cost to the participants to limit financial barriers that frequently decrease the likelihood of participation in similar programs. The inaugural cohort featured 15 graduates with a myriad of diverse businesses and a beautiful mix of cultural backgrounds, generations and nationalities. While we recognize this is only the first step in the long journey to increase equity in the professional landscape of our City, the impact of this step will continue to crescendo into a symphony of new sustainable minority owned businesses in Springfield, and inspire more programs that are accessible and beneficial to traditionally marginalized communities.

Call to Action #26: Conduct a Comprehensive Review of the Massey Commission Final Report and Workgroup Findings

The City of Springfield will continue to review the Massey Commission's final report and recommendations. However, many recommendations are countywide in scope and extend beyond the authority of the City of Springfield.

Sangamon County operates under its own elected governing body, including the County Board and County Board Chairman. Decisions regarding countywide policies, procedures, and implementation efforts ultimately fall under the jurisdiction of county government rather than the City of Springfield.

The Springfield Police Department remains committed to working collaboratively with community stakeholders, elected officials, and public safety partners to improve service delivery, strengthen public trust, and ensure the safety and well-being of all residents.