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COMPSTAT:

ITS ORIGINS, EVOLUTION, AND FUTURE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Bureau of Justice Assistance
Police Executive Research Forum



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ITS ORIGINS, EVOLUTION, AND FUTURE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

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BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice



POLICE EXECUTIVE
RESEARCH FORUM

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We appreciate the police chiefs, scholars, and other professionals who attended our Executive Session titled “Compstat: Today and Tomorrow” in Baltimore in March 2011 (see Appendix A for a full list of attendees). Many of those in attendance provided a detailed look into their agencies’ successes and challenges with Compstat or a similar performance management system. Dr. Robert D. Behn shared his work at the Harvard Kennedy

School of Government. Dr. James Willis, George Mason University, and Dr. Brenda Bond, Suffolk University, provided us with insight into what the research tells us about Compstat. For a perspective on the origins of Compstat in the New York City Police Department (NYPD), we appreciate the contributions of former Commissioner William Bratton, former Chief of Department Louis Anemone, former Chief of Department and First Deputy Commissioner John Timoney, current Deputy Commissioner Mike Farrell, Dr. George Kelling of Rutgers University, and Dr. Dennis Smith of New York University.

During the course of the project, a number of police agencies across the country opened their doors to us. We are especially grateful to be able to share their experiences and best practices in this publication. Our visits generally included attending a Compstat meeting, followed by interviews with the chief executive, members of the command staff, crime analysts, and others integral to the success of the organization’s performance management systems. We would like to thank the police chiefs and all those who contributed to our visits at their agency: Colonel James Teare, Anne Arundel County Police Department (MD); Chief Theron Bowman, Arlington Police Department (TX); Commissioner Frederick Bealefeld, Baltimore Police Department (MD); Chief James Johnson, Baltimore County Police Department (MD); Superintendent Garry McCarthy, Chicago Police Department (IL); Chief Michael Chitwood, Daytona Beach Police Department (FL); Chief Kim Dine, Frederick Police Department (MD); Colonel Rick Rappoport, Fairfax County Police Department (VA); Chief Charlie Beck, Los Angeles Police Department (CA); Colonel Terrence Sheridan, Maryland State Police; Chief Ed Flynn, Milwaukee

¹ The titles listed throughout this document reflect officials’ positions at the time of the 2011 Executive Session.

Police Department (WI); Chief Thomas Manger, Montgomery County Police Department (MD); Chief Jane Castor, Tampa Police Department (FL); and Commissioner Charles Gardner and Commissioner Edmund Hartnett, Yonkers Police Department (NY).

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FOREWORD

*By Denise E. O'Donnell, Director, Bureau of Justice Assistance
and*

Chuck Wexler, Executive Director, Police Executive Research Forum



Begun 20 years ago, Compstat has now become the norm in most major police departments. And in a profession that has seen programs come and go, Compstat has withstood changes in administrations. Today Compstat is a part of the institutional DNA of policing. Why is that? It's because Compstat gives police chiefs a daily report on how their departments are performing. We have advanced from a time when police departments worked with crime data that was six or twelve months old to an age of real-time crime data. Crime trends are quickly identified and actions taken to prevent further crime and violence.

PERF and BJA came together to look at how Compstat has evolved over these years. Law enforcement agencies have taken Compstat in different directions and to new levels of performance since it was first developed by the New York City Police Department in the early 1990s.

It should come as no surprise that Compstat was invented in a local police department. All of the big new ideas in modern American policing originated at the local level. Community policing, problem-oriented policing, hot spots policing, the Broken Windows theory, predictive analytics—all these innovations reflect the homegrown genius of U.S. law enforcement agencies.

And no policing innovation developed by a local agency has been more transformative than Compstat. Compstat changed how police view crime problems. Instead of merely responding to crimes after they are committed, police fundamentally expanded their mission to include preventing crimes from happening in the first place.

Compstat helps to achieve that mission. Essentially, a Compstat program requires police to gather timely, accurate information about crime patterns, and then respond quickly to break up those patterns.

Compstat holds many advantages for a law enforcement chief executive who is trying to build an effective agency that enjoys the respect of the community. Compstat fosters accountability by holding commanders and other individuals responsible for knowing the details about the crime in their districts and for devising plans to reduce crime levels. Compstat encourages information sharing within a police department as well as between police and other agencies that can help eliminate conditions that contribute to crime. Information about Compstat also can be shared with the public in different ways.

Compstat established the pivotal role of crime analysis in policing. In fact, this key principle of Compstat—gathering and analyzing data to produce solutions—is so universal, it has been adopted by other government agencies that have no connection to policing.

BJA and PERF are pleased to have had this opportunity to produce this report, which describes how Compstat came about, how it has evolved, and where it stands to go in the future. BJA and PERF have a longstanding relationship and a shared interest in promoting innovations and promising practices in policing, and Compstat is one of the best of those ideas.

INTRODUCTION

This publication presents the findings of an effort to assess the status of Compstat in local and state law enforcement agencies. The project was initiated with the goal of studying the initial development and evolution of Compstat, identifying current best practices, and analyzing the future of Compstat. The project consisted of three primary components—a survey of PERF member agencies, an executive session, and site visits and interviews with representatives of law enforcement agencies using Compstat.²

The survey effort began in early 2011 and resulted in responses from 166 agencies. The executive session, held in Baltimore, was attended by 65 participants including chief law enforcement executives, Compstat commanders, scholars, and representatives from several federal agencies.³

After the executive session, PERF undertook fieldwork to explore the issues identified in the survey and the executive session. PERF staff members conducted interviews with individuals who have played key roles in implementing Compstat. The interviews included discussions about the challenges of implementing or revamping a Compstat program, successes experienced as a result of an agency's program, and the experiences of the executive level staff, meeting participants, crime analysts, and civilian managers. Finally, PERF conducted site visits and interviews with chief executives and representatives of 20 law enforcement or other government agencies.⁴ In the

majority of the agencies, PERF representatives also attended a Compstat meeting or smaller division meeting that was conducted as part of the agency's overall Compstat strategy.

The first section of this report explains what Compstat is and how it developed. The second section examines many of the key issues associated with effective Compstat programs and provides illustrations of how police leaders overcame challenges associated with implementing Compstat. While some the principles may be appear to be simple, their ramifications can have a significant impact on agency's ability to run a meaningful Compstat program. The third section shares the views of several current and former police leaders and academics about the future of Compstat.

The Future of Compstat

"Compstat is the most important administrative policing development of the past 100 years. Compstat appropriately focuses on crime, but I think the danger is that Compstat doesn't always balance that focus with the other values that policing is supposed to pursue.... I want Compstat to measure and discuss things like complaints against officers, and whether police are reducing fear of crime in the community. The Compstat systems of the future must reflect all of the values the police should be pursuing."

—*Dr. George Kelling, Rutgers University*

² Throughout the publication, we use the term "Compstat," although we recognize that not all agencies use this name for their performance management system.

³ See Appendix A for a full list of executive session participants,

⁴ Ada County Sheriff's Office (ID); Anne Arundel County Police Department (MD); Arlington Police Department (TX); Baltimore City Police Department (MD); Baltimore County Police Department (MD); Chicago Police Department (IL); Clearwater Police Department (FL); Dallas Police Department (TX); Daytona Beach

Police Department (FL); Fairfax County Police Department (VA); Frederick Police Department (MD); Lenexa Police Department (KS); Los Angeles Police Department (CA); Maryland Governor's Office StateStat; Milwaukee Police Department (WI); Montgomery County Police Department (MD); New York City Police Department (NY); Tampa Police Department (FL); Washington State Patrol; Yonkers Police Department (NY).

WHAT IS COMPSTAT AND HOW DID IT DEVELOP?

What Is Compstat?

Compstat is a performance management system that is used to reduce crime and achieve other police department goals. Compstat emphasizes information-sharing, responsibility and accountability, and improving effectiveness. It includes four generally recognized core components:

- (1) **Timely and accurate information or intelligence;**
- (2) **Rapid deployment of resources;**
- (3) **Effective tactics; and**
- (4) **Relentless follow-up.**

The Benefits of Compstat

“No matter what you do, some amount of crime will always be there. Compstat is a performance management tool based on the goal of continuous improvement. There’s nothing mysterious about it. At its heart, Compstat is a relatively simple idea. The mission of the agency should drive Compstat, and chiefs should ask, “How can Compstat help achieve the mission?” It helps agencies to be innovative, test different approaches, and achieve milestones.”

—**Deputy Commissioner Mike Farrell**
New York City Police Department

Source: PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

The most widely recognized element of Compstat is its regularly occurring meetings where department executives and officers discuss and analyze crime problems and the strategies used to address those problems. Oftentimes, department leaders will select commanders from a specific geographic area to attend each Compstat meeting.

However, an effective Compstat program is more than just a meeting; it is a performance management system. Relying upon “strategic problem solving,” Compstat has been described as a model that empowers police agencies to place a strategic focus on identifying problems and their solutions.⁵ Compstat provides agencies with a new way of managing police resources and tactics and has been called “perhaps the single most important organizational innovation in policing during the latter half of the 20th Century.”⁶

Compstat Is a Method to Obtain Solutions

“Compstat is an ideology and methodology. When the numbers aren’t good, commanders have to know:

- What is the problem?
- What is the plan?
- What are the results to date?

Compstat is not a solution. It’s a method to obtain solutions.”

—**Garry McCarthy, Superintendent,
Chicago Police Department**
and Former NYPD Deputy Commissioner who ran
Compstat meetings in New York for seven years

5 David Weisburd, Stephen Mastrofski, James J. Willis and Rosann Greenspan, 2001, “Changing everything so that everything can remain the same: Compstat and American policing,” in David Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga, ed., *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 284–301.

6 George L. Kelling and W. H. Sousa, 2001, *Do Police Matter? An Analysis of the Impact of New York City’s Police Reforms*, Civic Report No. 22, New York, NY, Manhattan Institute.

Compstat Emerges at NYPD

Why Compstat Was Needed— From a NY Times Editorial, December 1990

“New York City is staggering. The streets already resemble a New Calcutta, bristling with beggars and sad schizophrenics tuned in to inner voices. Crime, the fear of it as much as the fact, adds overtones of a New Beirut. Many New Yorkers now think twice about where they can safely walk; in a civilized place, that should be as automatic as breathing. And now the tide of wealth and taxes that helped the city make these streets bearable has ebbed... Safe streets are fundamental; going out on them is the simplest expression of the social contract; a city that cannot maintain its side of that contract will choke.”

Source: “To Restore New York City; First, Reclaim the Streets.” *New York Times*, 12/30/1990.

In the early 1990s, crime was a central concern for New York City residents, and the issue of crime played a prominent role in the city’s 1993 mayoral election.^{7 8} Lou Anemone, NYPD’s Chief of Department (the top uniformed officer) in 1994, said that during the early 1990s “there was very bad violent crime and pervasive fear of crime in the community, and this likely contributed to Mayor David Dinkins’ loss to Rudy Giuliani in 1993.”⁹ After his victory at the polls, Mayor Rudy Giuliani, along with his pick for Police Commissioner, Bill Bratton, laid out their vision for New York City—they would make the city safe, reduce fear of crime, and improve the overall quality of life.

According to former Commissioner Bratton, there were several barriers that stood in the way of

achieving a safer New York City. The NYPD collected crime statistics mainly for the purpose of reporting the data to the FBI, so the statistics were unavailable for timely crime analysis.

More broadly, the department had no systemic focus on preventing crime. Lou Anemone explained that “The dispatchers at headquarters, who were the lowest-ranking people in the department, controlled field operations, so we were just running around answering 911 calls. There was no free time for officers to focus on crime prevention.”¹⁰ This type of situation wasn’t unique to New York City. Police officers in many cities focused on responding to crimes that had already been committed, and their effectiveness was judged in terms of response times, arrest statistics, and clearance rates. In many jurisdictions, the police were simply not held accountable for preventing crime.¹¹

As they reoriented the NYPD to focus on crime prevention, Bratton and his command staff created and implemented a new data-driven performance measurement system they eventually called “Compstat.”¹² Bill Bratton described the earliest version of Compstat as a system to track crime statistics and have police respond to those statistics.

The new focus on crime prevention and implementation of Compstat represented a major shift for the Department. Former NYPD Chief of Department and First Deputy Commissioner John Timoney said, “The focus of the NYPD for the previous 20 years had been reducing police corruption. No one had ever asked, ‘How can we reduce crime?’ There really was a belief that the police couldn’t do anything about crime, that because we couldn’t fix the ‘root causes,’ we couldn’t

7 “How to Police New York.” *New York Times*. Published 10/20/1993. Accessed 12/4/2012 at: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/20/opinion/how-to-police-new-york.html?src=pm>>

8 “To Restore New York City; First, Reclaim the Streets.” *New York Times*. Published 12/30/1990. Accessed 12/4/2012: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/23/weekinreview/crime-lab-mystery-of-new-york-the-suddenly-safer-city.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>>

9 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

10 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

11 William J. Bratton and Sean W. Malinowski, 2008, “Police Performance Management in Practice: Taking COMPSTAT to the Next Level,” *Policing*, Volume 2, Number 3, 259–265.

12 E.g. Bratton and Malinowski, Maple, Silverman, Straub and O’Connell, Kelling and Sousa, Henry.

have an impact. But the community wanted the focus on crime, and we changed that.”¹³

Lou Anemone added that “Morale was low. We had been taught for a long time that there was nothing we could do about crime.”¹⁴ At the time, many crime researchers also argued that “crime is an inexorable symptom of deeper social trends, like the breakdown of the family or community” and individual crimes were viewed as “random events driven by passion or desperation that police cannot control.”¹⁵

Bill Bratton rejected the position that police couldn’t impact crime, and declared that he would knock down the standard criminological theories about what caused crime waves, “like ducks in a row.”¹⁶

The four core components of Compstat were developed by NYPD Deputy Commissioner Jack Maple, whom *New York Magazine* called “perhaps the most creative cop in history.”¹⁷ Maple said he first jotted the core components of Compstat down on a napkin while brainstorming at his favorite restaurant.¹⁸ With the principles of Compstat in place, the NYPD began exploring methods to gather and share timely intelligence.

To start mapping crime, the department received money from the New York City Police Foundation for the purchase of mapping materials. However, because of the huge volume of crime,

leaders quickly decided that a computerized mapping program was required. Jack Maple purchased a computer from Radio Shack, and the name “Compstat” was born. Jack Maple said that Compstat was a “word invented as a [prototype] name for the...computer in which we compiled and stored the first sets of crime numbers. The name was short for ‘computer statistics’ or ‘comparative statistics’—nobody can be sure which.”¹⁹

NYPD’s initial approach mapped crime statistics along with other indicators of problems, such as the locations of crime victims and gun arrests.²⁰ According to a 1996 article appearing in an internal NYPD publication:

For the first time in its history, the NYPD is using crime statistics and regular meetings of key enforcement personnel to direct its enforcement efforts. In the past, crime statistics often lagged events by months, and so did the sense of whether crime control initiatives had succeeded or failed. Now there is a daily turnaround in the “Compstat” numbers, as crime statistics are called, and NYPD commanders watch weekly crime trends with the same hawk-like attention private corporations pay to profits and loss. Crime statistics have become the department’s bottom line, the best indicator of how police are doing precinct by precinct and nationwide.²¹

John Timoney described Compstat as starting “organically” within the NYPD. “It was not a system that was dropped into the agency, as Compstat so frequently is in agencies today. It developed through trial and error, and through the vision of Commissioner Bill Bratton, Jack Maple, and other

13 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

14 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

15 Krauss, Clifford. “Crime Lab; Mystery of New York, the Suddenly Safer City. *New York Times*. Published 7/23/1995. Accessed 12/4/2012: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/23/weekinreview/crime-lab-mystery-of-new-york-the-suddenly-safer-city.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>>

16 Krauss, Clifford. “Crime Lab; Mystery of New York, the Suddenly Safer City. *New York Times*. Published 7/23/1995. Accessed 12/4/2012: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/23/weekinreview/crime-lab-mystery-of-new-york-the-suddenly-safer-city.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>>

17 Horowitz, Craig. “Remembering Jack Maple.” Accessed 04/15/2013. <<http://nymag.com/nymetro/news/crimelaw/features/5087/>>

18 Jack Maple and Chris Mitchell, 2000, *The Crime Fighter: How You Can Make Your Community Crime-Free*, New York, NY, Broadway Books.

19 Jack Maple and Chris Mitchell, 2000, *The Crime Fighter: How You Can Make Your Community Crime-Free*, New York, NY: Broadway Books.

20 Dennis C. Smith, and William J. Bratton, 2001, “Performance Management in New York City: Compstat and the Revolution in Police Management,” in Dall W. Forsythe, ed., *Quicker Better Cheaper? Managing Performance in American Government*, Albany, NY: Rockefeller Institute Press, 453–482.

21 Ibid, citing 1996 internal NYPD article “Managing for Results: Building a Police Organization that Dramatically Reduces Crime, Disorder, and Fear.”

leaders in the agency.” Deputy Commissioner Mike Farrell agreed, saying “There was no predetermined model when the NYPD began Compstat. It was a systematic way in which the NYPD responded to crime...Compstat evolved and grew within the NYPD.”²²

As the department honed in on solving crime problems, Compstat became “less of a numbers discussion and more of a tactical and strategic discussion,” according to Lou Anemone.²³ Moreover, leaders realized that Compstat shouldn’t only analyze the performance of precinct commanders, so they began including detectives and representatives from narcotics and other specialized units.

John Timoney said that the decision to bring the detectives into the Compstat process was critical:

The detectives were previously pretty independent from the rest of the department. There hadn’t been much accountability or pressure on them, and they were pretty ineffectual—a huge untapped resource. It was like Compstat got the detectives to go from working at 5 or 10 miles per hour to 60 miles per hour.

Patrol was different. They had already been working at 50 miles per hour, but Compstat helped them get to 60 miles per hour and with more focused directions.²⁴

As the number of people who attended Compstat meetings grew, the department made use of larger meeting spaces and adopted more sophisticated computer systems.

At the NYPD, the Compstat meeting was part of a comprehensive performance management process. Compstat was not simply a meeting and a technology, but rather a larger system of management, and significant changes the NYPD’s organizational structure and culture contributed

to Compstat’s early success in New York City.²⁵ Increased use of statistics and crime indicators was complemented by a shift to an organizational model that was more decentralized and that promoted community policing and problem-solving.²⁶

But the focus was not on simply having more cops on the street and in high-crime areas.²⁷ Compstat decentralized problem-solving within the NYPD and placed accountability with the precinct commanders, who often relied on partnerships between the police and the community to achieve crime reductions.²⁸ Many police leaders, including Lou Anemone, welcomed the decentralization of problem-solving:

There was new trust placed in precinct commanders. Compstat was a way for headquarters to support the precinct commanders to achieve the NYPD’s goals. Compstat was like a shot of adrenaline to the heart of the NYPD, and even the most skeptical cops started to see that they could make a difference.²⁹

The legacy of Compstat in the NYPD can be seen in the significant changes that were made in three areas of the organization:³⁰

- (1) **Information-sharing**—Compstat helped to facilitate the flow of information between divisions and from the top-down. This enabled leaders to have a more holistic view of the entire organization.
- (2) **Decision-Making**—Moving away from a hierarchical bureaucracy allowed for “taking the

25 Vincent E. Henry, 2006, “Compstat Management in the NYPD: Reducing Crime and Improving Quality of Life in New York City,” *Resource Material Series* No. 68, 100–116.

26 Dennis C. Smith, and William J. Bratton, 2001, “Performance Management in New York City: Compstat and the Revolution in Police Management,” 453–482.

27 Ibid. See also: Jack Maple and Chris Mitchell, 2000, *The Crime Fighter: How You Can Make Your Community Crime-Free*, New York, NY: Broadway Books.

28 Ibid.

29 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

30 Dennis C. Smith, and William J. Bratton, 2001, “Performance Management in New York City: Compstat and the Revolution in Police Management,” 453–482.

22 Unless otherwise noted, quoted statements appearing in this report are from PERF’s Compstat executive session

23 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

24 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

handcuffs off cops.” Commanders were provided with greater authority.

(3) **Organizational Culture**—The agency became more creative, flexible, and better equipped to manage risk.

New York City experienced significant crime drops around the time Compstat was put in place. Crime declines began under Commissioner Ray Kelly, and when Commissioner Bratton took charge of the NYPD, he made it widely known that he had set a target of cutting crime by an additional 10 percent in his first year.³¹ With Compstat in place, he met and surpassed that goal, with a drop of 12 percent.³² The next year, significant declines continued, and crime dropped in every one of New York City’s 76 police precincts.³³ From 1993 to 1998, homicides dropped 67 percent, burglary was down 53 percent, and robberies were down 54 percent.³⁴ By 1995 the crime reductions were so pronounced that the New York Times called them a “marvel of American law enforcement” and “simply breathtaking.”³⁵

In 2002, Ray Kelly returned to the NYPD for a second, separate tenure as Police Commissioner, and he has continued to improve Compstat in the NYPD. The city’s crime rates have continued to plummet. According to the most recent UCR trend figures, New York City’s violent crime rate in 2010 was below 600 per 100,000 population, *less than one-third* the rates of the late 1980s and early

1990s. In 2012 the city had a reported 417 homicides—the lowest number since reliable records were established in 1963, and an 81-percent reduction compared to the 2,245 homicides in New York in 1990.

Compstat Is Adopted By Other Law Enforcement Agencies

Following its success in New York, police agencies large and small throughout the country began using Compstat, hoping to replicate the NYPD’s success. In a number of cases, former NYPD officials brought Compstat to other agencies when they were hired as police chief. For example, Bill Bratton implemented Compstat in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), John Timoney brought Compstat to Philadelphia and updated it in Miami, Gary McCarthy expanded Compstat significantly in Chicago, and Edmund Hartnett brought it to Yonkers, New York.

While the NYPD’s four principles of Compstat—accurate and timely intelligence, effective tactics, rapid deployment, and relentless follow-up—may be expanded upon or tweaked by agencies as they implement their own Compstat program, PERF’s research suggests that nearly all agencies embrace the principles. During a Compstat meeting at the Baltimore Police Department, for example, the four principles were displayed at the front of the room, and were frequently repeated by Commissioner Frederick Bealefeld and his command staff. To focus the discussion, command staff pointed out examples of how commanders’ actions were or were not conforming to the principles of Compstat.

Compstat Is Adopted By Non-Law Enforcement Agencies

Performance management strategies similar to Compstat have been successfully implemented in police agencies throughout the world, and they have also been adopted by other areas of

31 “How to Police New York.” New York Times. Published 10/20/1993. Accessed 12/4/2012 at: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/20/opinion/how-to-police-new-york.html?src=pm>>

32 Dennis C. Smith, and William J. Bratton, 2001, “Performance Management in New York City: Compstat and the Revolution in Police Management,” 453–482.

33 Ibid.

34 Paul E. O’Connell and Frank Straub, 2007, *Performance Based Management for Police Organizations*, Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

35 Krauss, Clifford. “Crime Lab; Mystery of New York, the Suddenly Safer City. New York Times. Published 7/23/1995. Accessed 12/4/2012: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/23/weekinreview/crime-lab-mystery-of-new-york-the-suddenly-safer-city.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>>

government. Harvard Professor Robert Behn has used the term “PerformanceStat” to describe programs that collect and use data to detect problems in an organization and suggest policies and practices that may solve the problems. The PerformanceStat strategy is used to compare organization sub-units, set goals, and motivate individuals within the organization to achieve those goals. Like Compstat, PerformanceStat includes regular meetings in which participants:

- use data to analyze units’ past performance;
- follow up on prior decisions and commitments to improve performance;
- establish the next performance objectives; and
- examine the effectiveness of overall performance strategies.³⁶

PerformanceStat may be used as a city-wide strategy, as a state-wide program, or for a single agency. An example is the Maryland StateStat program, which is operated by the Governor’s Office and is used to examine performance of state agencies and increase coordination between them. StateStat was based on the Baltimore CityStat program, which was developed by former Mayor Martin O’Malley to measure the performance of city agencies. CityStat was based on the Baltimore Police Department’s Compstat program.

36 Robert D. Behn, February 2008, “The Seven Big Errors of PerformanceStat,” Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government Policy Briefs.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT COMPSTAT TODAY?

The Case for Compstat

PERF Survey Results

We asked:

“Why is Compstat used by your agency?”

The top five responses were:

- To **identify emerging problems**
- To coordinate the **effective deployment of resources**
- To **increase accountability** of commanders/managers
- To **identify community problems** and develop police strategies
- To foster **information-sharing** within the agency

Law enforcement leaders may see several benefits from a Compstat program. For example, Compstat can help focus attention and resources on crime and the causes of crime. In turn, this focus can lead to better deployment plans. Compstat can also be a helpful tool to demonstrate that police resources are monitored and used effectively. Furthermore, many agencies report that Compstat has improved information-sharing within their organization.

Compstat can be used to measure aspects of an agency’s performance other than crime reduction. Some agencies use Compstat to assess overtime, budgets, use of force, citizen complaints, and other measures of police work for which the public and government leaders hold police agencies accountable.

Compstat and the accountability that comes with it can help chiefs drive organizational change. **Noted professor and criminologist George Kelling, co-author of a seminal article establishing the “broken windows” theory of crime**

reduction, argues that Compstat has such a successful track record that “Departments don’t have to justify doing Compstat. They have to justify not doing Compstat. The gains Compstat has made in policing are obvious.”³⁷

PERF Survey Results

We asked:

“What has Compstat helped improve within your agency?” The top five responses were:

- Internal information-sharing
- Accountability among managers
- Ability to analyze crime and workload data
- Agency problem-solving
- Clarity of organizational mission

Compstat Must Be A Clear, Purposeful Strategy

Any police leader thinking about improving or initiating a Compstat program should begin by asking two questions:

- Why are we doing Compstat?
- What do we want to accomplish?

The answers to these questions should be used to create one agency-wide Compstat strategy. The strategy, purpose, and goals of an agency’s Compstat program must be clearly articulated and understood not just by the chief and command staff, but by all personnel within the agency. To ensure that employees understand this information, it should be continuously communicated to all ranks of the department. Once employees understand the purpose and goals of Compstat, it can become a valuable tool for moving an agency in unison towards shared goals.

37 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

Compstat Is More Than a Meeting

It is important for law enforcement leaders to recognize that Compstat systems are much more than a meeting. Many leaders interviewed for this project say that agencies that understand Compstat's use as a dynamic performance management system are much more likely to succeed. The meeting itself will be more valuable if it is understood as a component of an organization-wide effort to improve performance and organizational learning.

Professor Eli Silverman, of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, found that agencies looking to establish their own Compstat program often attend another agency's Compstat meeting and walk out with the mistaken belief that the meeting, with its statistics and "flashy" computer maps, represented the entire Compstat process. "This superficial approach is emblematic of the quick managerial fix approach, thus contributing to the misunderstanding and misapplication of Compstat," Silverman said.³⁸

PERF Survey Results

Percentage of agencies that hold their Compstat meetings:

More than once per week	4%
Weekly	39%
Bi-Weekly	12%
Monthly	30%
Quarterly	4%

In an interview for this project, Frederick Police Chief Kim Dine explained, "Our Compstat meeting is a culmination of a process—Compstat is just one part of an agency's overall approach to reducing crime."

38 Eli B. Silverman, 2006, "Advocate Compstat's Innovation," in David Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga, ed., *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 267–283.

Yonkers Police Commissioner Edmund Hartnett stressed, "It's a process, not a meeting. Compstat is about how you do business every day."

John Timoney said, "Compstat is never about doing one thing. It's about doing a whole series of things and taking a comprehensive approach to solving problems."

Baltimore County Police Major Evan Cohen said, "Compstat serves to keep the commanders accountable for being aware of crime in their precincts. We want people to be able to do their jobs, rather than spend all of their time preparing for meetings. We believe we could hold our Compstat meeting any day, any hour because all of our commanders are on top of crime in their districts."

Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy said, "Compstat is not just a meeting that happens every week or every other week; it's a process, and the process takes place every single day."

Compstat Is Flexible and Can Accelerate Organizational Change

While Compstat was developed to meet the needs of the NYPD in 1994, the experiences of other agencies since then demonstrate that Compstat can be adapted for use in any law enforcement agency. There is no one-size-fits-all model of Compstat. According to Bill Bratton, "An inherent strength of Compstat and performance management systems is that they can be modified to direct and control significantly different environments. Compstat may be affected by cultural and organizational differences, budget constraints, and agency bureaucracies."³⁹ Bratton said that the Compstat system he used at LAPD reflected that agency's culture and was "more laid back and personable [than at NYPD], but the four principles still applied."⁴⁰ He compared the differences in

39 William J. Bratton and Sean W. Malinowski, 2008, "Police Performance Management in Practice: Taking COMPSTAT to the Next Level," *Policing*, Volume 2, Number 3, 259–265.

40 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

Compstat systems at different departments with the different manners in which people drive the same model of car. “It’s the same car, but people operate it differently,” he said.

Compstat Should Be Different at Each Agency

“Unfortunately, early on I think a lot of departments looked at Compstat in NYPD, went back to their cities, and said, “I know how to do this. You just bring somebody up and start yelling at them.” But that style isn’t necessarily going to work in every agency. So you really need to develop a Compstat process for your own agency. When I moved to Philadelphia, our Compstat meetings were much less aggressive and they had more humor.”

—**John Timoney**

*Former First Deputy Commissioner, NYPD
Former Police Commissioner, Philadelphia
Former Police Chief, Miami*

Source: PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

Leaders also should remember that even within a given agency, no two Compstat meetings are the same, nor should they be. But it is essential that Compstat meetings be consistent with an agency’s mission, organizational strategies, and culture. Some agencies rely on multiple Compstat meetings, with each meeting serving a different purpose. As an example, patrol districts may hold weekly Compstat meetings focused solely on crime in each district, while an agency-wide meeting may occur once a month and focus more on organizational crime-fighting strategies.

Agencies may differ in the goals they set for their Compstat program. The Daytona Beach (Florida) and Baltimore Police Departments both said that the purpose of their Compstat meetings is to “catch bad guys” and keep them off the street. But in Clearwater, Florida, Chief Anthony Holloway has made it clear that Compstat will not be used solely for lowering crime rates. His Compstat program has three distinct purposes:

(1) determining a plan of attack for combating crime; (2) establishing personnel accountability; and (3) reviewing budget matters.

Regardless of the number or type of meetings, the most productive Compstat systems are those where organizational learning occurs and the participants collaboratively engage each other to analyze problems and develop potential solutions.

Focus on the Mission

“The mission of the agency should drive Compstat. Compstat will help an agency achieve clarity of purpose and mission. By having a system with regularly scheduled meetings and agreed-upon measures, Compstat will be a catalyst for ideas and action. But without a focus on the core mission, you are winging it. There are too many issues to distract administrators.”

—**Deputy Commissioner Mike Farrell**

New York City Police Department

Source: PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

Just as Compstat can be modified to fit the needs of different agencies, it can continue to evolve after being implemented. In fact, a number of chiefs recommend that agencies continually monitor their Compstat program and modify it if it is no longer meeting the agency’s needs. It may take agencies some time to identify the most appropriate type of Compstat program for them. Constantly examining and adjusting Compstat is a natural and productive part of implementing it.

Several leaders talked about getting a feeling that their Compstat meetings need to be changed from time to time. In the Arlington, Texas Police Department, Chief Theron Bowman said, “We have built and re-built Compstat many times and we are looking to modify it again. We modify the format when we feel it is getting stale.”⁴¹

41 PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

The Baltimore County Police Department has begun to regularly tweak its Compstat strategy in order to keep it fresh, while continuing to reinforce the core Compstat principles. For example, when agency leaders recently sensed that the meetings needed an update, they polled commanders as to what should be changed. Given the opportunity to reduce the frequency of the meeting, operational commanders overwhelmingly declined, but they did suggest updating the format. The agency changed the format to allow every district and unit to provide a brief update during the weekly meeting. This allowed for more opportunity to look at the county-wide picture and exchange relevant information across all divisions.

Baltimore City Police Department Rethinks Compstat

When Commissioner Frederick Bealefeld and his staff sensed that their Compstat process was losing its focus, they took a brief hiatus from holding regularly scheduled meetings. During that time, commanders were asked for suggestions about how to improve the process. Leaders realized there was a serious problem, because the number one response was that the agency should do away with Compstat altogether. According to Bealefeld, “We weren’t challenging district commanders to think for themselves. All of the decision-making was in headquarters, and we needed to push it back down.”

NYPD Deputy Commissioner Farrell observed that within the NYPD, Compstat has evolved and grown, saying “The ‘NYPD model’ of Compstat has changed as the agency has changed.”

LAPD is now using a system called “Compstat Plus,” which incorporates three sub-strategies:

(1) use of detailed diagnostic exercises to identify and assist underperforming areas;

- (2) dialogue among stakeholders to assess the results of the diagnostic exercises so that there will be agreement about what the problems are; and
- (3) affected commands are required to create a plan of action involving key stakeholders.

According to its creators, Compstat Plus differs from regular Compstat in that it emphasizes very detailed analysis about why police units are underperforming. Once an underperforming command is identified, a team of top LAPD experts completes an in-person inspection. The purpose of the inspection is to uncover performance inhibitors, with a focus on helping reduce Part I crimes. Each expert focuses on examining performance related to his or her area of expertise, and the review includes candid discussions with a representative sample of the command. The inspection team in one pilot area included experts on patrol and detective operations, crime analysis, community policing, and management. Once each expert on the inspection team has completed his or her analysis, the team comes together to collaboratively form a comprehensive crime fighting blueprint in cooperation with the underperforming command’s staff. LAPD officers said it’s important for the staff of the underperforming command to be full partners in developing the new crime fighting plan, because officers may be more committed to a plan they helped develop and agree with, as opposed to a plan that was imposed on them.⁴²

Compstat is a flexible strategy, so it can be a key tool for chiefs looking to implement organizational change. A current chief can retool the Compstat process in order to effect necessary changes, or a new chief can use Compstat to communicate changes in the agency’s vision, mission and values.

>> *continued on page 14*

⁴² George Gascon, 2005, “CompStat Plus: In-Depth Auditing, Mentorship, Close Collaboration,” *The Police Chief*, vol. 72, no. 5.

Organizational Change in Three Agencies: Chicago; Clearwater, FL; and Camden, NJ

Chicago Police Department

After he was named Superintendent of Police in 2011, Garry McCarthy used Compstat as a way to bring his message and strategy to the Chicago Police Department. "I'm doing a lot of coaching, actually," he said. "I can't see managing a large organization without Compstat. It allows you to implement crime strategies and evaluate commanders. How could you maintain organizational change without a performance management vehicle like Compstat?"⁴³

Chief Robert Tracy, who runs Chicago's Compstat program and spent the first part of his career at NYPD, said he saw "a metamorphosis" take place within NYPD due to Compstat. "We went from reactive to proactive, and now in Chicago we are trying to replicate the success of New York City while also modifying Compstat to respond to Chicago's unique challenges," he said.⁴⁴

Chicago police leaders decided that for Compstat to be successful in Chicago, they had to modify the organizational structure of the department. Chief Tracy said, "In the past, we had a lot of city-wide units. District commanders were dependent on those city-wide units to help them fight crime, but they couldn't control the city-wide units. It wouldn't be fair to hold district commanders accountable for crime under that type of model." To ensure district commanders could control the resources they needed to reduce crime, leaders moved many officers from city-wide units into patrol districts. With the department's new structure, Chief Tracy said district commanders have "the authority, resources, and

accountability" necessary for success. In addition to giving district commanders more resources, Chief Tracy said it is important to create a culture where district commanders know "they don't need to ask permission to take action. They need to work within the constraints of department policies, but within those boundaries they should take the initiative to solve problems."

Another challenge for the department was making sure that the appropriate intelligence was available for the Compstat process in a timely manner. "Our reports were taking too long, so we couldn't identify crime patterns fast enough," said Chief Tracy.

The Compstat process has helped the department identify several problems. For instance, Chief Tracy said, "We found that the times when the most crime took place were also the times when we had the least police coverage. This is an obvious problem. The cops have to be working when the bad guys are working, so that was a quick fix. Compstat is helping us become a whole new department. It ensures commanders have a plan to reduce crime, and they are accountable to their peers and the department's executives. It makes our talent shine and exposes those who might need more coaching or don't have their heart in it anymore." Finally, Chief Tracy emphasized that "it is not a sin for a district commander to experience a crime increase in their area. The sin is if they do not know about the crime increase, or do not have a plan to address it."⁴⁵

43 PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

44 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

45 Interview with PERF staff, Spring 2013

Clearwater, FL Police Department

Clearwater Chief Tony Holloway previously spent two years as chief in Somerville, Massachusetts. During that time, he participated in “Somersat,” a performance management tool used by the mayor of that town. When Holloway became chief in Clearwater in 2010, he brought performance management with him.

Within a few months, the department had created an internal computer program for use in Compstat and the chief started to hold weekly meetings. Initially there was reluctance within the organization to embrace Compstat, but once commanders took ownership for their areas and saw how Compstat could put a spotlight on their successes, they appreciated it, Holloway said.

While commanders had bought in to Compstat, patrol officers complained that they weren’t being informed about the meetings. The chief recognized this as a problem and provided patrol officers with access to the maps and statistics used in the Compstat meetings, as well as briefings by their supervisors. Officers now have immediate access to this information in their patrol vehicles and desktop computers. Officers can also access information about warrants, trends, and activity by other officers in their area. The chief feels access to this information has led officers to build an increased sense of ownership for their patrol areas.

Camden, NJ Police Department

In 2010 Camden Police Chief Scott Thomson was forced to nearly halve his department due to budget cuts. Rather than allow such drastic reductions to derail the agency’s Compstat process, Chief Thomson embraced the process and currently holds daily performance management meetings he calls “The Huddle.” The Huddle meetings are attended by county, state and federal partners such as the FBI, DEA, ATF, U.S. Marshals, State Police, and the county prosecutor. According to Chief Thomson, “I can’t run

that meeting in a traditional Compstat fashion, because if I become too demanding on my partners, I risk pushing them away. We use the meeting to ensure that our strategies, tactics and targets are consistent with the dynamic environment of the streets. We need Compstat, because after losing half the police department, everything we do has to be done with a force-multiplier type mentality—breaking down traditional organizational partitions and bringing partners to the table.”

The Camden Police Department focuses intensely on time management, recognizing that there are a finite number of officers on the street and so they must perform as efficiently as possible to address the problems that matter to the community. The agency uses an Automated Vehicle Location system to aid in performance measurement, and officers are held accountable for the use of their time and for the quality of their service.

The Camden Police Department is currently in the midst of being replaced by a newly formed branch of the Camden County police force. Despite the tumultuous transition, Chief Thomson said that “all things considered, the wheels haven’t fallen off the wagon, and we are relying on the Compstat model to help us through these challenging times. The things that get performed are the things that get measured. If we did not have Compstat in place and were not doing it on a daily basis, the results would have been disastrous by now.”

Rutgers University Prof. George Kelling said that a major challenge for big-city police chiefs is figuring out how to push their vision to all levels of a vast and decentralized organization.

Chiefs simultaneously attempt to empower leaders at the lower levels of the organization while exerting control over the organization. To do this effectively, Dr. Kelling suggests that chiefs need interactive control mechanisms such as Compstat.

Compstat can also be a useful mechanism for new chiefs to quickly learn about their department. Moreover, Compstat is a helpful tool for chiefs to identify their most effective commanders. Lou Anemone recounted that during Compstat meetings at NYPD, “Rather than guessing who the really sharp people were, I got to see the talent in the department firsthand, twice a week, and people loved getting exposure for their good ideas and actions. I knew who the effective leaders were.”⁴⁶

When using Compstat to spur change, the chief’s role is critical. Several of the chiefs interviewed for this project emphasized that while the chief does not necessarily have to lead the Compstat meeting, he needs to be present and involved in the process. “The chief has to be the face of Compstat,” said Commissioner Edmund Hartnett.⁴⁷ According to Baltimore Commissioner Frederick Bealefeld, “You need to put your stamp on it. You need to find a way to reinforce the legitimacy of the message to the officers.”⁴⁸

While Compstat can be effective in many forms, chiefs may wish to consider the work of David Weisburd and his colleagues, who have published several studies examining Compstat.⁴⁹

Compstat Increases Accountability

Compstat provides leaders with a mechanism for holding commanders and other employees responsible for responding to the crime and quality-of-life problems within their area of responsibility. Many agencies organize accountability by geographic area. Accountability begins with the police chief, who is held accountable for crime in a city or county, then filters down through commanders, supervisors and patrol officers.

To strengthen the accountability process, chiefs should make sure the department’s leadership team understands its responsibilities and has a clear view of crime. Executives should establish and clearly communicate priorities for all commanders. In this way, Compstat can be helpful for commanders in doing their jobs.

If implemented properly, Compstat will create a shared sense of purpose for a department’s strategies, tactics, activities and outcomes. One agency described how its managers designed their own “report card” of indicators and activities for which they are held accountable, and they now use Compstat meetings to measure their progress against the report card.

Several agencies use performance metrics to assess individual officers on a routine basis during Compstat meetings. In the Louisville Police Department, officer activity is mapped and compared to crime maps. “It’s because we find that our officers are busy doing what they want to do, and they’re not always focused on what our issues really are,” said Colonel Yvette Gentry. “Sometimes they take the quick route; they want to go stop the 70-year-old woman and write a ticket because it gives them the stat. But we’ve got 25 to 30-year-olds out doing street robberies. So mapping officer activity has really helped us.”⁵⁰

46 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

47 PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

48 PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

49 David Weisburd, Rosann Greenspan, Stephen Mastrofski, and James J. Willis, April 2008, “Compstat and Organizational Change: A National Assessment,” Report provided by NCJRS, Washington DC.

50 PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

Measuring Performance: Milwaukee Police Department Compares Officers' Performance to District-Wide and Agency-Wide Data

The Milwaukee Police Department Compstat meetings include reviews of department-wide, district, and shift performance. However, the department also compares individual officer activity (including arrests, incident reports, and traffic and subject stops) with district-wide and agency-wide activity. This information is available during the Compstat meetings and on the agency's intranet, where all officers can view it.

The comparisons have caused some push-back from officers, who believe the comparisons rely too heavily on numbers. According to Chief Ed Flynn, "We use discussions of officer activity at Compstat to drive organizational change throughout the agency. I want officers to know that the chief is seeing their name, whether they're doing well or need to improve their performance."

Follow-Up Is Critical

Several chiefs emphasized that accountability and follow-up go hand in hand. "If you don't do relentless follow-up, the first three tenets of Compstat (the analysis, deployment, and tactics) fall apart," said Commissioner Hartnett.⁵¹ It is important to make sure that attendees leave the meeting with a clear understanding of what is expected of them and how they will be held accountable. Like other elements of Compstat, follow-up outside of the meeting can take many forms. Some agencies use formal procedures, such as written reports, to track and ensure follow-up, while other organizations prefer informal discussions.

Follow-up helps agencies to identify successful strategies by closely examining the impact of various approaches. Successful strategies can then be used in other areas, and ineffective strategies can be improved or abandoned.

51 PERF Compstat Executive Session, March 2011

A Venue for Fast Learning

"The beauty of Compstat is you have a room full of people listening intently to a commander explain the tactics and strategies he has used to address a crime problem and whether they have been successful. The commanders in the room benefit from hearing about other people's approaches to crime problems that may help them address their problems. The adaptation and learning in Compstat happen incredibly quickly."

—*Lou Anemone*

Chief of Department (Ret.), NYPD

Source: Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

Compstat Empowers Officers, But Chiefs Should Anticipate Initial Resistance

A number of the agencies that participated in PERF's study indicated that Compstat has "taken the handcuffs off" their commanders and officers. Even with the increased accountability and expectations placed on them, personnel feel empowered. The agencies reported that after Compstat was put in place, employees performed at a higher level, distinguished themselves as effective crime fighters, and took ownership for their assigned area of responsibility.

In the Fairfax County Police Department, supervisors empower officers by asking them to identify problems they want to work on, help develop and execute action plans, and work to solve the issue. The action plans are used as a "weekly yardstick" to hold officers accountable for the problems that contribute to crime.

Sometimes, Compstat can provoke resistance. New Orleans Police Superintendent Ronal Serpas was at the helm of the Washington State Patrol during the implementation of its Compstat system. He said, "As the light of accountability shines farther and farther into an agency, there will be resistance. Certain employees will be entrenched in the status quo, continually resisting change,

shunning accountability, and working in opposition to agency leadership.”⁵² Serpas urges leaders to “focus their energies on the overwhelming majority of employees who want to contribute to the success of the organization. One of the most effective strategies for combating the negative influence [of problem employees] is continuous internal and external messaging of the agency’s vision, direction, challenges, and successes.”⁵³

In Daytona Beach there was initial resistance to Compstat when Chief Michael Chitwood imported his version of the program, based on his experiences in the Philadelphia Police Department. According to Chief Chitwood and his command staff, Compstat was a hard sell because of the accountability associated with it, and the “old guard” was resistant to change. Command staff and the patrol captains had to constantly “sell” Compstat—to the officers, to partner agencies, to city leaders, and to the community.

According to Dr. George Kelling, when Compstat was put in place at the NYPD, a large cadre of precinct commanders retired or were forced out because they didn’t want the pressure and accountability that Compstat entailed. Lou Anemone elaborated:

Initially there was tremendous resistance to Compstat throughout the NYPD. Some people just didn’t believe in Compstat. Others did not welcome anything, including real work. It took a long time to replace all of the people who weren’t in policing for the right reasons.

But the vast majority of staff still had the spark burning, they wanted to serve, and this was an opportunity like never before to show us what they could do. If you were the best at your job, you would be recognized and rewarded. Our job was to help them succeed, give them what they needed, remove needlessly obstructive regulations, turn them loose, and trust them to do the job.

When you take this approach, word travels quickly throughout a department. When you raise the bar, you’ll be surprised how people can rise to the occasion.⁵⁴

Compstat Meetings Should Be Direct But Respectful

Part of the initial reluctance toward Compstat resulted from a belief that Compstat meetings are meant to drill down on minutiae and embarrass commanders in a “gotcha moment.”

However, leaders say the most effective Compstat meetings don’t embarrass employees or focus on trivial details. In fact, many chiefs spoke about the need to establish an atmosphere that is conducive to collaboration and the open exchange of ideas. They said that orchestrating “gotcha moments” is counterproductive to the goals of Compstat. Effective meeting leaders balance criticism with praise for deserving employees. Meeting leaders should ask tough questions, but they should do so in a professional, respectful manner. Bill Bratton said that tough questions “are not intended to be a ‘gotcha’; they are designed to ensure police understand the problems in their areas. If someone’s strategy is working, then great, let’s share it. If it’s not, let’s see how we can improve it with the knowledge of other professionals in the room.”⁵⁵

Asking tough questions can be difficult for chiefs and other leaders, however. “It’s hard to be the questioner,” Bratton said. “When you’re questioning your peers and friends, it’s difficult to question them in a way that may generate conflict or reveal poor performance.” John Timoney emphasized that leaders running Compstat must be “quick on their feet and unafraid of confronting a bad job.”

According to Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, it is possible to use the

52 Ronal W. Serpas, 2004, “Beyond CompStat: Accountability-Driven Leadership,” *The Police Chief*, vol. 71, no. 1.

53 Ibid.

54 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

55 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

“NYPD-style” of Compstat to improve accountability without demeaning people. To promote a productive atmosphere, he provides coaching to his supervisors before, during, and after Compstat meetings. He publicly recognizes what commanders did well in their presentations and what they could improve upon. The Baltimore Police Department has a policy of admonishing in private. Commissioner Frederick Bealefeld said that “In the hands of some, Compstat is a valuable tool. But Compstat in the hands of a tyrant is a bludgeon.”

At the same time, chiefs should not let sensitivities prevent them from pushing for improvement. In the view of NYPD Deputy Commissioner Mike Farrell, “You need to ask if the Compstat meeting is worthwhile or if it is just a show. If everyone is being too polite, then it may be a waste of time. Meetings need to be direct and real. Tone and how the meeting is conducted are extremely important to ensure legitimacy of the process.”

Recognition of successes can become an important part of Compstat meetings. In some agencies, Compstat meetings begin with an award for officers who made particularly good arrests or performed extraordinarily well. At a Compstat meeting in Daytona Beach, the police chief also recognized guests and certain community members present, and provided an award to a young Police Explorer. According to Commissioner Hartnett in Yonkers, “We always start with an award or recognition. We want to make it a positive experience.”

Information-Sharing Supports Compstat Success

It is critical that operational information must flow freely between Compstat participants. However, information is often held closely by individual officers and investigators, and this is one reason why many who participate in Compstat for the first

time find it uncomfortable—Compstat requires them to share information for the good of the agency.

During a recent Compstat meeting observed by PERF, a patrol commander reviewed information about a group of individuals suspected in a number of local crimes. However, the patrol commander had no information regarding outstanding warrants on any of the individuals. The investigative commander and warrant supervisors were present and were able to quickly obtain the information and provide it to the police chief. The chief stepped back from the discussion and used it as a teaching example. He stressed that the patrol officers need to have warrant information, too, and urged attendees to share information and stop “protecting their turf.” He stressed the importance of teamwork, information-sharing, and letting go of the notion that units need to protect their information and their perceived territory.

In response to concerns from his officers at NYPD about losing sensitive information because of information-sharing at Compstat, Bill Bratton said, “If we can’t trust a room full of 200 cops, then we can give up on fighting crime.”

Compstat as a Means of Sharing Institutional Knowledge

“We are a small department. In the old days, we all drank out of the same coffee pot, so we knew what was going on in the city with crime, based on those daily contacts we had with each other.

That’s all different now; people have retired and now the vast majority of our officers have less than three years of experience. So they don’t have the 20 or 25 years of institutional knowledge about where crime happens and who’s doing it, and what are the vulnerable areas.

We see Compstat as an opportunity to make our officers more efficient and knowledgeable about our local crime patterns.”

—*Chief Ellen Hanson*
Lenexa, KS Police Department

For many agencies, Compstat meetings are also an opportunity to collaborate and share information with people outside the department. Examples of external stakeholders invited to the Compstat meetings that PERF observed included representatives from:

- Prosecutors' offices
- State police
- Corrections
- Regional intelligence or fusion centers
- Neighboring police departments
- Sheriffs' offices
- Mayors' offices
- City council members or their staff members
- Probation
- Parole
- Domestic violence service providers
- Neighborhood crime prevention groups
- Members of the public
- News media
- Federal law enforcement agencies
- Campus police departments

The outside stakeholders most often invited to meetings were representatives from probation, parole, the prosecutor's office, and neighboring police departments. When prosecutors attended meetings, they generally had a limited role, but their presence was described by the hosting agencies as helpful for maintaining communication between the police and prosecutors. In Frederick, Maryland, the prosecutor who screens the Frederick Police Department's criminal court cases attends the meeting in order to learn about the police department's priorities and developments in specific cases. During the Yonkers Police Department Compstat meeting, prosecutors provide specific case information and discuss trends and problems with prosecutions.

In several agencies visited, representatives from neighboring police departments, sheriffs' offices, or university campus police departments were present for the Compstat meeting. In some agencies, this was to facilitate information-sharing with

regard to crime trends, especially in border areas. In other agencies, guests participated to learn about Compstat in order to implement Compstat in their own agency. In several cases, officials hope that once the neighboring agencies have Compstat, each agency will routinely send representatives to the other agencies' meetings.

Allowing members of the public and the news media to attend Compstat meetings can have significant benefits. Bill Bratton said that in cities where he has worked, Compstat has helped "show the community what the crime situation in their neighborhood looks like." Compstat meetings can also demonstrate to the media and public that the police are on top of crime problems. "It's about the public seeing you do something about the signs of crime that they are concerned with," Bratton said. John Timoney appreciated the media's presence at Compstat meetings in Philadelphia, saying, "The media was honorable about not revealing sensitive law enforcement information they heard at Compstat. Their attendance resulted in a lot of stories about good police work, and the public's knowledge of the police department improved."

Establishing the right tone can play a role in promoting information-sharing. In Yonkers, New York, Commissioner Edmund Hartnett and his command staff make a concerted effort to create a light mood at their Compstat meetings so that everyone feels comfortable enough to participate and share ideas. They said they don't want any "shrinking violets" at their meetings. According to Commissioner Hartnett, when he was a commander in the NYPD, he often felt that the leaders at the Compstat meeting had better information and better systems than the commanders. "The commanders felt like the deck was stacked against them," he said. He stressed that it is important to ensure that everyone has the same access to information.

Many chiefs and Compstat meeting leaders agreed, emphasizing the importance of getting the information for the meeting into the hands of those who will participate ahead of time. Failing

to disseminate information before the Compstat meeting—whether intentional or not—misses an opportunity to set a good example about the need to freely share information across an agency.

In Baltimore County, Compstat meeting participants informally share information and keep one another informed about crimes and investigations at the times in-between Compstat meetings. They say this practice has a direct impact on the agency's Compstat meetings, where colleagues feel comfortable sharing any new information. In Milwaukee, information-sharing occurs through a more formal process that includes a daily conference call to discuss crime. A similar system is in place in Anne Arundel County, where commanders discuss crime with their major and the chief on a daily basis.

Today, chiefs are finding that their newer officers are technically savvy and commonly request more information about crime. While it is important not to overwhelm patrol officers with too much unprocessed raw data, it is critical that they have the tools they need to understand and implement an agency's Compstat strategy. Several agencies noted that new records management systems can provide increased intelligence and crime information to officers via laptop computers in the field. In the Milwaukee and Anne Arundel County Police Departments, web-based content management platforms provide information to officers through alerts, individual queries, and intelligence bulletins.

In the Tampa Police Department, officers and detectives share responsibility and accountability for a zone within their district. All officers work collaboratively to contribute to offense and arrest reports, and they also maintain blogs of informal information and intelligence to be shared among all agency personnel.

In nearby Clearwater, Florida, officers have real-time access to crime data, intelligence, and activity reports, making it easy for them to review activity in their patrol area.

Fresno Police Solve Problems By Pushing Information Throughout the Department

"We use our automated report-writing system to compile the previous night's crimes every morning at 5:00 a.m. into a report we call 'Crime View.' So when our commanders log in at 7:00 a.m., they can see everything that's happened over the last 24 hours. It's also mapped. And the data, the maps, and the report are made available to everybody in our organization from the chief to the cadets. We've had a couple of car theft rings busted by some very eager police cadets who want to make their bones.

"I think it's important to continue to push access to information down the chain. We have a whole generation of computer-savvy young cops who love nothing more than to dig around and see what they can find. So if we give them access to our data within the agency, access to probation and parole databases, they will solve their own problems if we give them the tools to do it.

"We come from a model 20 years ago in which the crime analysts had all the information. They made the maps and plotted the information and told us what we needed to know. I'd rather have a couple of 23-year-old cops come to work and say, 'What are we going to get into today?' and pull up a crime map, start looking and seeing who's on probation or parole in the area, and then go out and look for the people committing these crimes."

—Lt. Burke Farrah
Fresno Police Department

Compstat Wins Support of Officers, Community Members In Daytona Beach, Florida

Under the direction of Chief Mike Chitwood, the Daytona Beach Police Department (DBPD) has become an organization that thrives on information. The DBPD Compstat strategy, started in 2006, has become a critical tool for the agency to keep its employees and the community informed and working toward a shared goal of crime reduction.

The command staff uses Compstat to break down silos and encourages employees to share as much information as possible. Information-sharing through Compstat has helped the department to stay organized and well-informed of investigations and crime trends.

Chief Chitwood and his staff acknowledge that after grabbing the low-hanging fruit—the easily prevented and easily solved crimes—it becomes more challenging to achieve and maintain crime reductions. Compstat can create a sense of urgency to keep officers motivated about reducing crime.

According to department leaders, crime analysts are essential to the organization's Compstat success. They are adept at recognizing and analyzing crime trends and patterns. Crime maps produced by analysts are distributed to everyone in the agency three times per week. By examining three-day and seven-day crime trends, the investigations division has found that it is able to solve crimes much more quickly.

The DBPD has two types of Compstat meetings—internal and public. Internal meetings are held on a weekly basis. At these meetings, command staff and supervisors review crime trends, investigations, and other information. The public Compstat meetings, held several times per month, are attended by local government officials, representatives from other law enforcement agencies, probation and parole

representatives, members of community crime watch groups, and other interested citizens. The mood is collaborative and friendly, with breakfast and an award presentation at the beginning of the meeting.

Even at the public meetings, a high level of detail is provided about recent crimes. Community members contribute to the discussion with comments, suggestions, and questions for Chief Chitwood and his staff.

Chief Chitwood says Compstat has been an excellent tool for establishing connections between the police and the community. "Not inviting the public to attend and participate in meetings is cheating your agency," he said.

The initial impact of Chief Chitwood's Compstat program was examined with a survey of officers and supervisors. Generally, reaction to the program was positive, with supervisors noting improvements in accountability and communication. The survey responses noted some concern among supervisors and senior officers that meetings required too much preparation time and that too much information was being provided to the public.⁵⁶ In recent PERF interviews with the command staff and commanding officers, however, there was little evidence that this sentiment still existed. Comments from the staff were candid and indicated that while there had initially been reluctance, the current format for Compstat was widely praised as promoting community involvement, officer innovation, and crime reduction.

⁵⁶ Charles H. Fordham III, May 2009, "The Compstat Concept in Addressing Crime," Florida Department of Law Enforcement May 2009, SLP-13.

Compstat Depends on Effective Crime Analysis

The success of any Compstat program depends on effective crime analysis. Crime analysis provides the information and findings that guide the meetings. Chicago Superintendent Garry McCarthy thinks of Compstat as a method of “figuring out where crime is happening, making the connections, and coming up with ways to interrupt crime patterns.”

Agencies can invest in their Compstat programs by employing professional crime analysts, valuing them, and challenging them to use their skills to produce actionable intelligence. Analysts should provide insight on crime patterns and trends; they should not simply report raw crime numbers. Police leaders should examine whether the department suffers from common problems that hinder effective analysis, including outdated or incompatible information analysis systems, poor record-keeping, a lack of financial resources to purchase needed equipment and software, or insufficient education and training.

Leaders must also be aware that the Compstat process can be time-consuming for analysts, who often are tasked with preparing reports and making sure all participants have necessary crime information prior to the meeting. One crime analyst explained that, “We can sometimes get too bogged down in handling administrative tasks, rather than using our skills to perform more in-depth analysis of crime trends and suspects.”

In the Frederick, MD Police Department, the agency’s crime analyst serves as the information hub for the agency, regularly issuing intelligence bulletins to patrol and investigations personnel, and maintaining a log of past bulletins for officers to review.

The Fairfax County, VA, Police Department is implementing a new crime analysis capability that allows patrol commanders and supervisors to observe current crime numbers and patterns at their

desks, and to analyze the numbers and produce custom reports for crime in their districts.

The Compstat system at the Montgomery County, MD, Police Department emphasizes that personnel need to continuously problem-solve and think about crimes in an analytical way. To help with this problem-solving process, each district is assigned a crime analyst who works closely with patrol and investigative supervisors. Intelligence systems are set up so that district captains receive the same information as the police chief.

In the Arlington, TX, Police Department, the role of crime analysts has changed dramatically as the agency has gone through a number of different versions of its Compstat meeting. Initially, the crime analysis unit worked closely with commanders to help them interpret crime numbers. Over time, commanders became much more comfortable with the information. Once the agency developed a web-based, intranet capability, commanders became capable of analyzing information on their own and could create crime reports to meet their needs.

Compstat Measures Should Be Simple, Functional, and Clear

One of the principal challenges of establishing a Compstat system is deciding which performance indicators should be measured. Should metrics focus on “outcomes,” such as crime reduction and improved quality of life? Or should they focus on police activity, such as arrests and traffic stops? PERF’s research suggests that current Compstat programs most commonly focus on metrics related to crime reduction and quality of life improvement.

According to NYPD Deputy Commissioner Michael Farrell, “You need simple, functional, clear measures that resonate with the workforce from the chief down to the police officer. Compstat should be about continuous improvement, no matter what hand you’ve been dealt. Units should

be measured against themselves. Cross-unit comparisons should be avoided—they are a distraction and invite excuses.”

Chicago Superintendent Garry McCarthy also warned about too much analysis done in the aggregate or across units. “Aggregate data is okay, but it is much better to do an internal comparison within a particular district. Often it doesn’t make sense to compare districts. In Chicago there are 21

patrol districts, but 11 of the districts are responsible for 80 percent of the violence.”

Los Angeles Assistant Chief Rick Jacobs expressed similar sentiments. “It is difficult to compare stations to each other on crime, simply because they deal with different populations and crimes. What we sometimes do, however, is compare productivity ratios.”

Ensuring the Accuracy of Crime Statistics

At PERF’s Compstat executive session, NYPD Deputy Commissioner Mike Farrell described the NYPD’s extensive system for ensuring the accuracy of crime statistics:

There’s no perfect indicator in any social realm, whether it’s education, health, the economy, or policing. For example, we know from the BJS crime surveys that reporting rates vary according to the type of crime, and reporting rates have varied over time. Yet we rely on indicators, so even though we know there are shortcomings, the challenge is to try to ensure the reliability of the statistics we are using.

In New York, particularly after the onset of CompStat, when it became clear that we were relying pretty heavily on crime statistics in a way that we hadn’t before, we developed an internal capacity to audit and examine the crime reports in two separate units that are independent of the operational units. We have a Data Integrity Unit that looks at what is entered into the computers and checks for accuracy in the classification of crimes. And we also have a Quality Assurance Division, which does much more robust auditing.

This auditing is expensive. We have about 40 people engaged full-time in our auditing process.

Each of the operating commands—there are 76 precincts and with the Housing and Transit Police units, it’s 97 units in total—is audited twice a year. The audits are not announced, and they are done on a random basis, but all of the units are covered in a six-month period, and our commanders are well aware that they’re going to be audited twice a year.

The Quality Assurance Division goes into a command, taking samples in 18 crime categories where there would be a likelihood of a misclassification. They get a sample of about 300 crimes, and examine all of the documents attendant to the crimes, from the draft report hand-written by the police officer to everything that has been entered into the computer. In a good percentage of the cases, they call the complainant and determine whether what we have in the records is the way it happened—what happened, what was stolen, and so on. In addition, any time there’s an allegation of impropriety, those allegations are thoroughly investigated.

Harvard Professor Mark Moore and Rutgers Professor Anthony Braga suggest that police departments should measure seven dimensions of police performance:

- Rates of criminal victimization
- Success in holding offenders accountable
- Fear of crime in the community
- The level of safety and civility in public spaces
- Lack of bias in the use of force
- Fairness in the use of public funds
- Quality of police service/customer satisfaction⁵⁷

Does Compstat Inhibit Decentralization of Decision-Making?

A number of scholars have expressed concerns that Compstat, as it is currently being used in many agencies, may not be compatible with community policing and other policing innovations. Some say that Compstat hinders decentralized decision-making because of its reliance on a strong command and control model. Thus, they argue that Compstat may inhibit problem-solving at lower levels, and contend that in American police agencies, Compstat “has been focused more on reinforcing and legitimizing the traditional bureaucratic military model of police organization than on innovation in the practices of policing.”⁵⁸

However, a large majority of PERF’s survey respondents believe Compstat is compatible with community policing. Dr. George Kelling said that Compstat “is about empowering officers at the lower levels of the organization while still leading from the top. It is absolutely consistent with community policing.”⁵⁹ Commissioner Edmund Hartnett of Yonkers said that Compstat and community policing “work together to put the cops

where the problems are. The police department listens to the community and responds accordingly. Compstat is about customer service, and the cop on the beat is a big part of that.”

As originally implemented in the NYPD, Compstat placed operational authority as well as accountability for community-oriented problem-solving with precinct commanders, rather than patrol officers.⁶⁰ Commissioner Bratton explained his reasoning:

I gave away many of my powers not to the cop on the beat—as my predecessors wanted—but rather to the precinct commander. I did not want to give more power to the cops on the beat. They were, on the average, only 22 years of age. Most of them never held a job before becoming New York City police officers, and had only high school or GED qualification. These kids, after six months of training, were not prepared to solve the problems of New York City. Sorry, but it just was not going to work that way.

However, my precinct commanders typically had an average of 15 years of service, and they were some of the best and the brightest on the police force. All of them were college educated; all were very sophisticated; and they were at the appropriate level in the organization to which power should be decentralized.

My form of community policing, therefore, put less emphasis on the cop on the beat and much more emphasis on the precinct commanders, the same precinct commanders who met with community councils and with neighborhood groups.⁶¹

57 Mark H. Moore and Anthony Braga. “The ‘Bottom Line of Policing: What Citizens Should Value (and Measure!) in Police Performance.” *Police Executive Research Forum*. 2003.

58 David Weisburd, Stephen Mastrofski, James J. Willis and Rosann Greenspan, 2001, “Changing everything so that everything can remain the same: Compstat and American policing,” 284–301.

59 Interview with PERF staff, Fall 2012

60 Dennis C. Smith, and William J. Bratton, 2001, “Performance Management in New York City: Compstat and the Revolution in Police Management,” in Dall W. Forsythe, ed., *Quicker Better Cheaper? Managing Performance in American Government*, Albany, NY: Rockefeller Institute Press, 453–482. See also: Vincent E. Henry, 2006, “Compstat Management in the NYPD: Reducing Crime and Improving Quality of Life in New York City,” *Resource Material Series* No. 68, 100–116.

61 William J. Bratton, October 15, 1996, “Cutting crime and restoring order: What America can learn from New York’s finest,” Heritage Foundation Lectures and Educational Programs, Lecture No. 573.

As Compstat was implemented throughout New York City, community policing continued to play a role as precinct commanders relied on their partnerships with the community to achieve crime reductions.⁶² In an interview with PERF, Bratton also pointed out that Compstat can help focus police attention on community concerns, such as quality-of-life issues, that might otherwise escape the focus of law enforcement officers, who may naturally gravitate toward more serious crimes. Commissioner Bratton realized the need to focus on quality-of-life concerns after attending community meetings, where he found that citizens “weren’t interested in the crime statistics. They wanted to talk about what they saw happening in their neighborhood.”

One recent research study compared and contrasted Compstat and community policing. The authors argue that in most departments, “Compstat and community policing can be viewed as co-existing rather than mutually reinforcing” and the strategies operate “in parallel but independently.”⁶³

There are several differences in emphasis between Compstat and community policing that may contribute to the strategies becoming independent or “stove-piped.” For example, the study authors found that both Compstat and community policing value flexibility and promote a decentralized decision-making process. However, Compstat tends to push accountability down primarily to middle managers, while community policing places greater emphasis on the role of lower-level officers. And in contrast to community policing, Compstat focuses more on internal accountability and data-driven problem-solving. Community policing places a high value on partnerships with outside persons and entities, while Compstat looks

to select the most effective method to solve a problem—even if that method may not involve community policing.

Chief Anthony Holloway in Clearwater believes that Compstat should ask, “Does the community feel safe?” Clearwater Police link Compstat with community policing through a “Park, Walk, and Talk” program. In areas with high crime rates, officers are expected to get out of their patrol vehicles and walk around, speaking with the community members. Officers then input any information they obtain into the computer system, which is visible to the crime analysis unit and other officers. The result has been an increase in “ownership” of beats, an increase in canvassing, and improved information-sharing throughout the department.

Compstat Can Be Applied To Resource Management As well as to Crime-Reduction

As Compstat has developed, many agencies have expanded its scope to include management issues. Bill Bratton argues that management accountability is just as important as accountability for crime prevention. During his time at LAPD, Compstat tracked management variables such as overtime, sick days, and complaints against officers.

A number of the agencies that participated in this project say Compstat has helped district commanders formulate a plan to effectively acquire, deploy and manage resources, including patrol officers and specialized units that can have an immediate and significant impact on targeted areas. Project participants provided a number of examples of how Compstat has assisted with management and deployment decisions:

Chicago Police Department

Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy is using Compstat to emphasize the importance of effective deployment of officers. McCarthy uses Compstat to assess the needs of his commanders

62 Dennis C. Smith, and William J. Bratton, 2001, “Performance Management in New York City: Compstat and the Revolution in Police Management,” 453–482.

63 James J. Willis, Stephen D. Mastrofski, and Tammy Rinehart Kochel, February 2010. *Maximizing the Benefits of Reform: Integrating Compstat and Community Policing in America*, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

and to ensure that they have a strategy to place resources where they are needed. Within his first few months in Chicago, McCarthy moved 750 police officers out of administrative posts, city-wide groups, and other specialized units and into district assignments.

Clearwater Police Department

Chief Holloway credits Compstat with giving his commanders a venue to discuss the resources they need, and also to focus on issues that cross district lines. Deployment and resource management are coordinated in tandem with neighboring district commanders.

Montgomery County, MD Police Department

Compstat helps the Montgomery County Police Department identify crime trends and deploy resources in a more efficient and timely manner. District commanders use input from crime analysts, lieutenants, and specialized Protect Response Team (PRT) units to focus on habitual offenders and specific geographic locations. When a problem area is identified, patrol officers maintain a visible police presence, the PRT focuses on the area, and detectives focus on known offenders.

Anne Arundel County, MD Police Department

Compstat, combined with a focus on problems and trends, has been used by the Anne Arundel County Police Department to lower crime rates. As a result, calls for service have decreased at the same time that the county population has grown. Officers now have time to engage in proactive police work that is guided by the agency's overall strategy and focused by crime analysis.

Daytona Beach Police Department

One effect of Compstat and the successful crime reduction strategies used by the Daytona Beach Police Department is that crime has been displaced to neighboring jurisdictions. When neighboring police agencies don't have Compstat, they may not have the same sense of urgency

about crime reduction, making it more difficult to achieve regional change and crime reduction. Chief Chitwood and his staff believe public safety would be improved if agencies used Compstat as a method of working together to create regional resource deployment strategies.

Frederick, MD Police Department

The Frederick Police Department uses a specialized "Directed Patrol Unit" (DPU) to investigate suspect-based pattern crimes. The City of Frederick generally does not have a high rate of homicides or sex crimes, so the DPU focuses on analyzing and preventing 4 pattern crimes: robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft from motor vehicles. The DPU routinely meets with patrol, detectives from the Criminal Investigations Division, and crime analysts to identify crime patterns and suspects, prepare bulletins, and distribute actionable intelligence to patrol officers. "We keep the unit focused on the things they can affect," Chief Kim Dine said. "This took a significant amount of discipline to change this approach, because in the past, this unit, like many others in major cities and smaller agencies, was used more as a hot spot unit to put out fires. We were constantly moving them around from one thing to the next, which ultimately reduced our effectiveness at combating crime. Implementing a strong community policing strategy, we tasked and empowered our patrol officers to address those day-to-day beat issues so that the DPU could focus on crime we can impact, and that has been effective."

THE FUTURE OF COMPSTAT

The Compstat process is likely to continue evolving with policing innovations and technological advances. Advances in information systems and computer technology will have an impact on the ability of police agencies to quickly and accurately identify crime problems and deploy resources. Managing the enormous quantities of available information will probably require that agencies place a higher priority on investing in crime analysis, including hiring professional crime analysts, providing them with training to stay abreast of the latest developments, and fully utilizing their skills to perform sophisticated analyses. Developing crime analysis dashboard systems, so that commanders can have more immediate access to crime numbers, may help relieve crime analysts of the administrative tasks associated with preparing reports.

Shrinking public sector budgets require more efficient policing, and Compstat can help to ensure that police resources are monitored and used effectively. Government administrators, elected officials, and citizens may place greater emphasis on the external scrutiny of police practices, and Compstat can help agencies establish priorities and demonstrate their effectiveness in achieving goals.

A number of agencies, especially larger ones where patrol officers and investigators may not get an opportunity to attend Compstat meetings, are examining how they can push accountability down to first-line supervisors and officers. The leaders in these organizations believe that Compstat will be a critical part of their effort to achieve greater responsibility and accountability.

Police leaders continue to explore how the Compstat process and meetings can move to a more strategic or long-term orientation, with less emphasis on day-to-day tactical issues. Their

vision is that Compstat can be more future-oriented, and that lessons from past successes can be applied to the challenges of the future.

Participants at PERF's Compstat Executive Session and executives interviewed during the course of this project were asked about their agencies' future plans for Compstat. Following is a summary of their views:

**COMMISSIONER CHARLES RAMSEY,
PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT:**
*Technology Is Helping Officers
To Access Real-Time Information*

I think one of the important themes of Compstat is the impact that technology has had on our ability to respond and deploy our resources effectively. When I was a district commander in Chicago in the late 1980s, I used to start my day by manually going through all the case reports. I had a pin map in my office that I would use to show what was happening.

Once a month, I would get a huge computer printout from Data Systems concerning crime in the 11th District. The only problem was that I'd be getting information from February in July, and there wasn't a damned thing I could do with that information because it was so old! We didn't have current information at all. When I left the department in 1998, things hadn't really changed all that much. Today Chicago is light years beyond where it was when I was there.

When I went to Washington, DC, we were looking at getting a Compstat-like process there, but the information systems in DC were worse than they were in Chicago. It wasn't until 2002 that we got the ability to map our crime in real-time and have sessions about our strategies and what

we were doing about crime. Until we got that, we were always a day late and a dollar short.

Technology systems are crucial to really opening the doors, not only to Compstat, but to everything we're going to be doing in the future—intelligence-led policing, “smart policing,” evidence-based policing—you name it, it's going to be data-driven.

Having current data gives you that sense of urgency that you need to get your officers interested in fighting crime. When it's July and I'm looking at a report about burglaries in February, where's the urgency? But when you see a report on a shooting that just happened, and you know it's gang-related and you're going to have retaliation, the question becomes “Who is likely to retaliate? Who are the shooters in the rival gang?” And then you've got something that gives you the sense of urgency. The information is staring you right in the face, and you can do something with it. You can put out the word, “If you see these guys on the street, you'd better stop them, because odds are they're going back to do another shooting.”

**ASSISTANT CHIEF WILL JOHNSON,
ARLINGTON, TX POLICE DEPARTMENT:**
*In the Future We Will Have Faster,
More Automated Dissemination of Intelligence*

We've been doing Compstat since 1996. I think as a profession we have done a very good job measuring UCR crime and individual commanders' response to crime. But I think where we still have room for improvement is the development of non-traditional performance metrics—for example, to measure community engagement and problem-solving. How do you tell your story of crime prevention to your budget decision-makers? It's difficult to talk about and quantify a crime that never happened, but we're responsible for all of it—UCR crime, quality of life, community engagement. So all of that needs to come into our Compstat model for accountability. As commanders we should be just as accountable for community

engagement as we are for crime reduction. It all fits together.

The other key to Compstat is that *disseminating* tactical intelligence is essential. We are data-rich in Arlington, but it takes time and energy to sit down in front of a terminal and run the crime reports. We need technology to push the tactical intelligence out to us automatically, so a sector commander gets a message on his Blackberry saying, “You just had three robberies within six blocks of each other,” and can direct resources accordingly, in near real-time.

DR. GEORGE KELLING, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY:
*Compstat Must Reflect All of the Values
That Police Should Be Pursuing,
Not Just Crime Reduction*

Compstat is the most important administrative policing development of the past 100 years. Compstat appropriately focuses on crime, but I think the danger is that Compstat doesn't always balance that focus with the other values that policing is supposed to pursue, including justice and minimizing use of force. I want Compstat to measure and discuss things like complaints against officers and whether police are reducing fear of crime in the community. If you only focus on crime, you can develop a distorted view of whether the Department is succeeding. The Compstat systems of the future must reflect *all* of the values the police should be pursuing.

There has been discussion about the tone of Compstat. Some people were disturbed by how aggressive Compstat was when it started at NYPD. But you have to remember that over 2,000 people were dying from violent crime each year in New York City, and the NYPD was significantly underperforming. So at first, it had to be brutal. As Compstat has developed, it makes sense for it to become more collegial and collaborative. However, if commanders make bad decisions or allow their subordinates to perform poorly, they should not be protected from humiliation. Police deal with

life-and-death issues, so poor performance cannot be tolerated.

In the future, I think Compstat will continue to spread and be used by more departments. Departments don't have to justify doing Compstat. They have to justify it if they aren't doing Compstat. The gains Compstat has made in policing are obvious.

We used to talk about how long it takes to change a police department. But Compstat can do it rapidly. Compstat provides a structure for new chiefs to learn about their department.

In the future, the accountability of Compstat will roll down to the lower levels of organizations. Precinct commanders can have mini-Compstat meetings with their sergeants, and sergeants can do the same with their officers. Compstat is a generic interactive control mechanism, and it can be used at all levels of organizations. The meetings become a ritual to confirm the good work that is being done throughout a department.

LOU ANEMONE,
FORMER CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT, NYPD:
Compstat Releases the Power of Middle Managers

The future of Compstat is expanding it. We expanded it to the idea of traffic accidents and created "TrafficStat." Today, departments might find it useful to apply Compstat to counterterrorism operations. Once a problem is identified, the four principles of Compstat can be applied. What it does is release the power of an organization's middle managers. They are closest to the action, closest to the problems, and closest to the community, and it's in their self-interest to serve the community and do it well. Commanders understand that accountability means rewards for doing well and punishment for cheating or doing poorly.

Many departments who say they are doing Compstat are not really doing it. In some places Compstat is just a numbers game; it's not about strategies and tactics. The focus is only on whether

crime is up or down. **But Compstat is supposed to be a problem-solving process.**

Advances in computer technology will impact Compstat. We now have better, faster computers. They can dive deeper into crime issues. Real time crime centers are also a big help. Crime analysis can be very labor-intensive, and it takes a lot of work for the department's top leadership to run an intelligent Compstat meeting. But today data mining, software, and other technology can help reduce the workload.

BILL BRATTON, FORMER NYPD COMMISSIONER AND LAPD CHIEF:

The Next Advances in Compstat Will Involve Predictive Policing and Social Media

Compstat will continue to evolve because it goes to the fundamentals of policing. It is an effective instrument to control behavior. Compstat can be compared with medical diagnostic techniques. First, we had X-rays, then the CAT scan and the MRI. We have continually developed better ways to analyze medical patients. For law enforcement, the patient is the city, town, or precinct. Our task is to determine what is making our patient ill. Compstat is not an amazing invention; it mirrors what is done in other professions. Doctors diagnose a problem, prescribe a solution, and then follow up to make sure the problem doesn't return. We can continually develop better ways to do the same thing in law enforcement.

I would also argue that Compstat is relevant to the intelligence era we entered after 9/11. What can we do with terrorism? Compstat. And what is predictive policing if not Compstat?

I think taking Compstat to the next level will involve predictive policing and social media. Predictive policing is about taking information and applying algorithms to predict where crime will occur. I talk about how we used to use pin maps and basic computers. Now we're dealing with real time crime centers, algorithms, and partnering with universities.

And what else are cops doing now? They are examining Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and other social media sites to anticipate problems. Predictive policing and social media policing are using the Compstat principles. That's why Compstat isn't going away. People can use something else, but Compstat worked for me in the two largest police departments in the country. Details of it can be changed around and improved, but it's hard to argue with the basic concept. That's the strength of it. It's all still about how we look at crime, use crime information to prevent new crimes, and make our profession more effective.

**DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MIKE FARRELL,
NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT:**

*Compstat Will Spread
To Lower Levels of the Organization*

Compstat will continue to be a good vehicle for focusing on management issues and to examine particular problems. In the future, Compstat may be more flexible and open. More junior people will be involved in the process. More investigative information could be included, as will overtime, civilian complaints, and other administrative information.

CONCLUSION

Since Compstat was invented by the New York Police Department in 1994, it has evolved as it has been adopted by agencies of every size across the country. Given Compstat's success, it can be expected to remain a critical part of policing in the future.

PERF researchers observed a wide variety of Compstat programs in action. In one department, a Compstat meeting was held in an auditorium with more than 100 people and multiple video screens, banks of computers, and podiums. In another department, we saw a meeting of seven people in a small room with one laptop projecting maps onto a cinderblock wall. In both of these Compstat meetings, as well as the other 13 we observed, those in attendance were engaged in serious and thoughtful discussions about how to reduce crime. Compstat provided a system to collect and analyze the latest crime numbers, and to convene employees in a format that encouraged the open exchange of ideas.

Police chiefs can promote the success of Compstat by remembering the principles of Compstat and the advice of their peers. Compstat should be based on a clear, purposeful strategy routinely communicated to all employees. Compstat should assess performance by using simple, functional, and clear measurements. Compstat should be thought of as more than a meeting—it is a performance management system. Chiefs should adapt Compstat to fit their agency, and use it as a tool to learn and achieve organizational change. Departments can implement their community policing and Compstat programs in a manner that is mutually reinforcing. The simultaneous empowerment and accountability that come with Compstat can unlock the potential of employees. The most effective Compstat systems encourage

information-sharing, and leverage effective crime analysis.

Agencies will continue to find innovative ways to apply the four Compstat principles: timely and accurate information or intelligence, rapid deployment of resources, effective tactics, and relentless follow-up. Departments are examining how they can use Compstat to track important measures in addition to crime rates, such as use of force, public opinion about the police, complaints against officers, and metrics to assess the effectiveness of community policing efforts. Compstat might also become more decentralized.

Departments may find that social media changes the way Compstat is conducted. Social media offers police agencies new opportunities to communicate with the public via platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Police departments may wish to demonstrate Compstat to the community through social media. Some departments conduct public Compstat meetings as well as separate, private Compstat meetings where police officials can speak more candidly. The public meetings are a natural opportunity for police to share information as well as obtain information and opinions from the public, and social media can facilitate this process.

Regardless of how it develops in the future, it is clear that Compstat has become an integral part of policing in the United States by helping agencies become more productive, agile, and effective.

Jack Maple, who passed away in 2001, would likely be pleased but not entirely satisfied with the progress that law enforcement agencies have achieved using Compstat. Before he died, he wrote about the characteristics and tools every cop would have in a perfect world. He believed that officers should have the same information

that department executives use at Compstat, and they should be able to identify crime patterns, trends, and the chronic conditions that contribute to crime. But most of all, he said police officers and citizens alike should be “relentless in their demand for neighborhoods and communities free of crime...We finally have a game plan that we know will keep the crooks on their heels...To go further—to bring crime rates down to 1960 levels and beyond—citizens everywhere must learn precisely what they should now expect from the police and other law enforcement agencies—and

then demand nothing less.” Even after witnessing New York City’s precipitous crime declines during the 1990s, Jack Maple dreamed of reducing crime rates to 1900 levels—a time when New York City had “no neon, no automobiles, no buildings more than a few stories tall, and no passerby who would have the first clue how to answer if asked directions to Times Square.”⁶⁴ Perhaps this type of tenacity and passion for reducing crime is what will help today’s law enforcement leaders improve the application of Compstat and move towards achieving Jack Maple’s vision.

64 Jack Maple and Chris Mitchell, 2000, *The Crime Fighter: How You Can Make Your Community Crime-Free*, New York, NY, Broadway Books. Pages 242–243

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Appendix A: PERF Compstat Executive Session Participants

Baltimore, MD • March 8, 2011

Chief Rick Armstrong

Kansas City (Kansas) Police Department

Deputy Chief Anthony Barksdale

Baltimore Police Department

Captain Martin Bartness

Baltimore Police Department

Commissioner Frederick Bealefeld

Baltimore Police Department

Dr. Robert Behn

Harvard University

Assistant Chief Chief John Bennett

Tampa Police Department

Dr. Brenda Bond

Suffolk University

Deputy Chief Mike Brown

Salt Lake City Police Department

Director Jim Burch

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Social Science Analyst Brett Chapman

National Institute of Justice

Commander Steve Caluris

Chicago Police Department

Chief Michael Chitwood

Daytona Beach Police Department

Inspector Matthew Clark

Minneapolis Police Department

Major Evan Cohen

Baltimore County Police Department

Lieutenant Mark Comte

Colorado Springs Police Department

Chief Ken Corney

Ventura Police Department

Captain Charles Dunn

Houston Police Department

Senior Policy Advisor Steve Edwards

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Lieutenant Burke Farrah

Fresno Police Department

Deputy Commissioner Mike Farrell

New York City Police Department

Lieutenant Colonel Antoinette Filla

St. Louis Police Department

Superintendent Paul Fitzgerald

Boston Police Department

Colonel Yvette Gentry

Louisville Metro Police Department

Assistant Chief Vincent Golbeck

Dallas Police Department

Captain Terrence Gordon

Milwaukee Police Department

Chief Ellen Hanson

Lenexa (Kansas) Police Department

Associate Deputy Director T.J. Harrington

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Commissioner Edmund Hartnett

Yonkers Police Department

Director Kerry Hayes

Baltimore Police Department

Chief Anthony Holloway

Clearwater Police Department

Captain Kevin Hughart

Prince William County (Virginia)
Police Department

Assistant Chief Wayne Jerman
Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Department

Assistant Chief Will Johnson
Arlington (Texas) Police Department

Deputy Superintendent Debra Kirby
Chicago Police Department

Deputy Chief Joseph Lombardo
Las Vegas Metro Police Department

Dr. Cynthia Lum
George Mason University

Chief Chris Magnus
Richmond (California) Police Department

Captain Sean Malinowski
Los Angeles Police Department

Superintendent Garry McCarthy
Chicago Police Department

Assistant Chief Blake McClelland
Phoenix Police Department

Senior Policy Advisor Michael Medaris
Bureau of Justice Assistance

Chief Ron Miller
Topeka Police Department

Chief Chris Moore
San Jose Police Department

Deputy Director Tim Murphy
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Deputy Chief Daniel Murray
Arlington County (Virginia) Police Department

Lieutenant Colonel William Pallozzi
Maryland State Police

Senior Policy Analyst Albert Pearsall
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Lieutenant Clark Pennington
Frederick (Maryland) Police Department

Chief Kenton Rainey
Bay Area Rapid Transit Police Department

Executive Assistant Chief David Ramirez
San Diego Police Department

Commissioner Charles Ramsey
Philadelphia Police Department

Lieutenant Colonel Ed Roessler
Fairfax County (Virginia) Police Department

Deputy Commissioner Richard Ross
Philadelphia Police Department

Chief Ray Schultz
Albuquerque Police Department

Director Steve Sharkey
Baltimore Police Department

Colonel John Skinner
Baltimore Police Department

Deputy Chief Peter Sloy
Toronto Police Service

Dr. Dennis Smith
New York University

Director Frank Straub
Indianapolis Department of Public Safety

Colonel James Teare
Anne Arundel County Police Department

Lieutenant Kelly Testerman
Maryland State Police

Chief J. Scott Thomson
Camden (New Jersey) Police Department

Senior Vice President John Timoney
Andrews International, Inc.

Lieutenant Daniel Wagner
Cambridge (Massachusetts) Police Department

Deputy Director Sandra Webb
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Dr. James Willis
George Mason University

Major Thomas Wilson
Anne Arundel County (Maryland)
Police Department

Chief Jon Zumalt
North Charleston (South Carolina)
Police Department

Appendix B: PERF Survey and Survey Results

To gather information about the state of Compstat, how agencies organize and use it, and how it has helped police agencies across the country, PERF conducted a survey of 326 of its member law enforcement agencies. A total of 166 agencies throughout the United States responded, representing cities, counties, states and a few smaller municipalities. Data was collected between January 28, 2011 and February 28, 2011.

Agency Information

1. What is the actual number of sworn officers in your agency?

Mean = **985** sworn officers

2. What is the actual number of civilian employees in your agency?

Mean = **367** civilian employees

3. What is the population of your jurisdiction?

Mean = population of **502,830**

COMPSTAT Purpose

4. Does your agency currently use Compstat?

Yes, we use Compstat.	79 %
No, but we plan to start using Compstat (within the next six months).	6 %
No, we have never used Compstat.	12 %
No, we do not use Compstat, although we once did.	3 %

5. When did your agency first start using Compstat?

1994 – 1999	13%
2000 – 2005	35%
2006 – 2010	52%

6. What are the primary reasons that your agency uses Compstat? (Please select top 5)

To identify emerging problems and assign resources accordingly	95%
To coordinate the effective deployment of resources	82%
To increase accountability of commanders/managers	73%
To identify community problems and develop police strategies	73%
To foster information sharing within the agency	59%
To focus the mission of the agency	45%
To increase accountability of executive staff	16%
To demonstrate agency performance to the public	12%

COMPSTAT Specifics

7. How often does your agency hold Compstat meetings?

More than once a week	4%
Once a week	39%
Every other week	12%
Monthly	30%
Quarterly	4%

8. On average, how long do your Compstat meetings last?

Less than 1 hour	18%
1 to 2 hours	63%
2 to 3 hours	14%
More than 3 hours	1%
Other	5%

9. Who in your agency has the responsibility for running Compstat meetings?

One person is responsible	54%
Several people are responsible	40%
Rotating group is responsible	3%
No one group or individual	2%

10. Does your agency have a unit that performs crime and statistical analysis in preparation for the Compstat meetings?

Crime Analysis Unit	67%
Dedicated Compstat Analysis Unit	17%
We don't have a unit that conducts analysis for Compstat	8%
Another unit within the organization	8%
A unit outside the agency	1%

11. Does your Compstat program focus on the performance of only operational units, or does it also address the performance of other units in the agency? Please mark all that apply.

- a. 70% focus only on operational units
- b. 95% include patrol
- c. 86% include investigations
- d. 62% include traffic
- e. 53% include task forces

- f. 25% include operational support units
- g. 24% include technical units
- h. 18% include administrative units
- i. 15% include some other unit

12. Who is required to attend your agency's Compstat meetings? Please mark all that apply.

<i>Sworn</i>		<i>Civilian</i>	
Executives	96%	Executives	30%
Mid-Managers	93%	Mid-Managers	28%
Line Supervisors	40%	Line Supervisors	6%
Crime Analysts	47%	Crime Analysts	50%

13. Realizing that your agency may use a variety of means for presenting and discussing information in Compstat meetings, which of the following best describes the format that your agency most often uses in Compstat meetings? Please only mark one response.

Commanders make formal presentations	5%
Leader questions unit commanders	6%
Leader moderates collaborative discussion	9%
Analysis presents crime data/trends and meeting participants discuss strategies	12%
Commanders make formal presentations and answer questions from leader	18%
Use a combination of tactics	44%

14. Realizing that your agency may use a variety of means for monitoring progress on decisions/plans made at Compstat meetings, which of the following best describes the format that your agency most often uses with

your Compstat program? Please only mark one response.

Verbal progress reports at subsequent Compstat meeting	53%
Written progress reports to leadership	5%
Compstat statistical unit monitors progress and advises leadership	3%
Compstat leadership follows-up if performance doesn't improve	2%
Commanders submit written progress reports to the Compstat statistical unit	2%
Use a combination of tactics	28%

15. What does your agency do to ensure that officers understand the reasoning behind the decisions made in Compstat meetings? Please mark all that apply.

Commanders brief officers after meetings	70%
Officers are encouraged to attend Compstat meetings	33%
Written minutes of the meeting are distributed	24%
Other methods are used	27%

16. At your Compstat meetings, do you ever invite or include the following? Please mark all that apply.

60%	invite other police agencies
50%	invite other criminal justice partners
43%	invite prosecutors
40%	invite probation/parole
38%	invite city/county council members
27%	invite community members
24%	invite media representatives
22%	invite code enforcement
21%	invite other local government agencies
9%	invite non-government organizations

Achieving COMPSTAT Outcomes

17. To what extent has Compstat helped your agency achieve the following outcomes? Rate each using a scale of 1 – 10.

98%	have achieved greater internal information sharing
95%	have achieved more accountability among managers
93%	have enhanced ability to analyze crime and workload data
93%	have enhanced agency problem-solving
90%	have achieved a clear organizational mission
90%	have achieved innovative approaches to crime and disorder
86%	have achieved a decrease in property crime
87%	have achieved a decentralized decision-making
80%	have achieved a decrease in violent crime
73%	have achieved greater citizen satisfaction with police services
68%	have achieved decentralized geographic commands
59%	have achieved greater employee satisfaction

For the following answers, the number given represents an average score on a scale of 1 to 10:

8.7	– Greater internal information sharing
8.3	– More accountability among managers
8.2	– Enhanced ability to analyze crime and workload data
8.0	– Enhanced agency problem-solving
7.9	– Clear organizational mission
7.7	– Innovative approaches to crime and disorder

- 7.4 – Decrease in property crime
- 7.3 – Decentralized decision-making
- 7.2 – Decrease in violent crime
- 6.7 – Greater citizen satisfaction with police services
- 6.4 – Decentralized geographic commands
- 5.9 – Greater employee satisfaction

18. To what extent has Compstat in your agency been as effective as you envisioned it would be? Rank on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being completely exceed expectations.

Average 7.6 on a scale of 1 to 10

COMPSTAT'S Strengths and Weaknesses

19. Listed below are some potential weaknesses suggested about Compstat. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these weaknesses based on your experiences with Compstat. Rate each using a scale 1 to 10 (1=Strongly disagree, 10=Strongly Agree).

% Disagreeing with Common Criticisms

- 95% of agencies disagree that Compstat is incompatible with community policing
- 91% of agencies disagree that Compstat can be demeaning to participants
- 91% of agencies disagree that Compstat puts too much emphasis on a command and control policing model
- 89% of agencies disagree that Compstat consumes too many organizational resources
- 83% of agencies disagree that Compstat may cause commanders to misrepresent the success of crime reduction efforts
- 82% of agencies disagree that preparing and attending meetings is too much work for commanders

- 79% of agencies disagree that Compstat is over-reliant on statistics for measures of success
- 73% of agencies disagree that Compstat puts too much emphasis on short-term results and not enough on long-term solutions
- 65% of agencies disagree that employees believe Compstat is a paper exercise
- 64% of agencies disagree that Compstat discussions and decisions do not get accurately communicated to officers

For the following answers, the number given represents an average score on a scale of 1 to 10 (1=Strongly disagree, 10=Strongly Agree):

- 2.0 – Incompatible with community policing
- 2.6 – Can be demeaning to participants
- 2.9 – Consumes too many organizational resources
- 3.0 – Too much emphasis on a command and control policing model
- 3.2 – May cause commanders to misrepresent the success of crime reduction efforts
- 3.3 – Preparing and attending meetings is too much work for commanders
- 3.7 – Over-reliance on statistics for measures of success
- 4.2 – Too much emphasis on short-term results and not enough on long-term solutions
- 4.5 – Employees believe it is a paper exercise
- 4.7 – Discussions and decisions do not get accurately communicated to officers

COMPSTAT with External Stakeholders

20. Does your agency routinely work with other police agencies on a multi-agency or regional Compstat format?

79% answered “No”

21% answered “Yes”

21. Is your agency’s Compstat program part of a larger city or county performance measurement system that includes other agencies of local government?

88% answered “No”

12% answered “Yes”

Additional Input

22. Please describe any other innovative or promising aspects of your agency’s Compstat program that you think would benefit other police agencies.

Some of the answers we received are listed here:

- Getting information to front-line officers
- Emphasize problem solving
- Collaborative, teamwork approach
- Open to the community
- Involve other criminal justice partners
- Involve other local government partners
- Tie Compstat to real time crime center
- Expand Compstat to focus on achievements and accomplishments
- Use Compstat to manage all agency resources
- Have patrol officers identify crime problems for inclusion in Compstat

23. Based on your experience with Compstat, please describe what you think the future holds for Compstat and its ability to contribute to the performance of police agencies during the next 10 years.

Some of the answers we received are listed here:

- Incorporate predictive analysis into Compstat
- Moving more information, more quickly, to all agency personnel
- Compstat can justify funding and staffing necessities in an era of budget cuts
- Use Compstat to prevent crimes, rather than react to past crimes
- A multi-disciplinary forum involving agencies like schools, probation/parole and code enforcement
- Long term problem-solving rather than a focus on short term statistics
- Compstat can encourage innovative thinking by all agency personnel
- Move the analytical capabilities of Compstat to patrol officers
- Regional approaches to crime fighting
- Compstat will enhance accountability and performance

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