

Milestones and Momentum: The State of the 30x30 Initiative

Advancing and Supporting Women in Law
Enforcement to Improve Public Safety

March 2025



30x30

The 30x30 Initiative (30x30) invites and inspires women to join law enforcement and improves working conditions for all officers. In this way, 30x30 is addressing many of the issues facing the profession today, including overcoming staffing shortages, expanding officer health and wellness support, and addressing community trust and confidence. Hundreds of law enforcement agencies across the country share our aims, recognizing that attracting a broad array of qualified professionals is essential for public safety, while modernizing policies and improving workplace experiences are key to retaining them.

This report highlights the tangible impacts of our work. It shows the progress of our partner agencies and the broader achievements of 30x30 at the state, national, and international level. From helping agencies to implement fairer policies and ensure the health and wellness needs of officers are met, to advancing state legislation that supports parents and caregivers, to informing international efforts to expand the role of women in peace and security roles, 30x30 is changing the status quo.

This report also clarifies misconceptions about these efforts. Resistance to change is to be expected, but the most common criticisms of our work fundamentally misunderstand and mischaracterize what we do (and, more importantly, what we do not do).

Throughout this report, we celebrate considerable progress while maintaining focus on the work that lies ahead. We are laying the groundwork for continued and expanded efforts to advance and support women in law enforcement and improve public safety for all communities.



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At-a-Glance: Summary of 30x30 Achievements

- Partnering with over **400 law enforcement agencies** in the U.S. and Canada to implement the *30x30 Pledge*, a series of no- and low-cost actions to improve the representation and experiences of qualified women in law enforcement. Partner agencies include federal, state, local, and campus departments, ranging in size from major metropolitan departments to small, rural agencies, some of whom have never had a sworn woman officer.
- Facilitating **policy improvements** across these agencies, including expanded recruitment efforts; more accurate, less subjective assessments; establishing mentorship and professional development programs; expanding women-specific health programs; procuring women-specific personal protective equipment like ballistic resistant vests; expanding communities of practice; and improving support for pregnant officers, parents, and caregivers.
- Achieving an average of **28% increase in the representation of women** in recruit classes of reporting agencies over two years, bringing the average percentage of women recruits from 19 to 24 percent.
- Contributing to **state legislation**, including laws on part-time options for peace officers in Washington State and statewide 30x30 adoption in Hawai'i, and developing state-level strategies for sustainable change.
- Collaborating on **research** to expand the evidence base about what works and matters to improve the representation and experiences of women in the profession.
- Learning from over 1,000 sworn women through our **national listening tour** and 30x30 **surveys**, and integrating their lived experience into our approach.
- Sharing **subject matter expertise** with national and international organizations, including providing input on improving law enforcement retention, promotional processes, and officer health and safety; participating in global collaborations to improve evidence-based practice; and supporting efforts to expand the role of women in peace and security to combat violent extremism.
- Contributing expertise to **dozens of major media publications** on the current state of women in law enforcement and the importance of women officers.

- Establishing **key implementation partnerships**, including with the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives, Women in Federal Law Enforcement, Police Executive Research Forum, National Policing Institute, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Law Enforcement Action Partnership, New Blue, International Association of Women Police, and the Global Society of Evidence-Based Policing.
- Delivering **keynote addresses and presenting** at over 65 domestic and international conferences.
- Founding **strategic partnerships** with and **raising funds** from private industry, philanthropy, and government, and helping to conceptualize and raise funds for complementary efforts (for example, a \$1 million technical assistance center at the National Policing Institute).
- Generating **policy briefs, research summaries, webinars, assessments,** and **tool kits** to help agencies improve workplace culture, expand health and wellness support, enhance data collection and analysis, and support the professional development of all qualified officers.

Perhaps most importantly, 30x30 has fostered a national and international community of women and men who strongly believe in the critical importance of advancing and supporting women in law enforcement.

We've come a long way, and we're just getting started.





To keep up with our progress and access resources, visit www.30x30initiative.org and follow us on LinkedIn (30x30initiative) and X (@30x30initiative).

I. The 30x30 Initiative

Introduction

Launched in 2021 at the Policing Project at NYU Law, the 30x30 Initiative (30x30)¹ is a coalition of police leaders, researchers, and professional organizations working together to support and advance the representation, experiences, and well-being of women in law enforcement across the United States and around the world.

We focus on women officers for two reasons:

- 1) Decades of **research shows that women officers are uniquely valuable** in improving public safety outcomes. For example, women officers use less force and less excessive force, get better outcomes for crime victims, are named in fewer complaints and lawsuits, and are perceived by communities as more trustworthy and compassionate.
- 2) Despite this, some approaches to recruitment, hiring, and organizational management **unnecessarily deter qualified women** from joining and staying in the profession. As a result, **women make up only 13% of sworn officers in the U.S., and 3% of police leaders** – numbers that have been stagnant for decades. In 2020, over **40% of agencies reported having no women** in sworn positions at all.²

The 30x30 Initiative is changing that.

Since its inception, 30x30 has collaborated with over 400 federal, state, campus, and local law enforcement agencies, as well as federal grantmakers, police professional organizations, researchers, state legislatures, international groups, and nonprofits. Together, we identify and address barriers to attracting and retaining qualified women in law enforcement. Our work builds on decades of pioneering efforts, including those led by the National Center for Women and Policing, which have laid the groundwork for a safer, fairer, and healthier workplace informed by applied research.

¹ www.30x30initiative.org

² For more details about the state of women in policing, see Appendix A

Built on women’s experience and empirical evidence

We ground our work in the firsthand experiences of women officers. Over our first two years, we conducted surveys, focus groups, and interviews with more than a thousand women officers across the country. We validated persistent workplace challenges for women, including complications returning to work after childbirth; minimal or nonexistent lactation support – including women having no choice but to pump breast milk in their police vehicles; ballistic vests and uniforms that don’t fit; experiences of disrespect, isolation, and exclusion; and widespread sexual harassment and discrimination.



“We partnered with 30x30 to support their national listening tour because we felt strongly that this type of transformation must be built on the lived experiences of women on the front line. We heard difficult stories about how the profession is not meeting the unique needs of women across the country, but most often – we heard incredible stories of hope, resilience, and a commitment to service.”

– **Ganeshia Martin**,
Vice President for Community Affairs at Mark43, and 30x30 strategic advisor.

At the same time, we heard inspiring stories about what women officers love about the profession, what called them to it, and what keeps them in it – stories celebrating a deep sense of purpose, unparalleled opportunities to make a real difference in their communities, a spirit of selfless service, and the camaraderie that comes from working toward a shared mission.

These insights have shaped 30x30’s focus areas, strategies, and actions. In addition, 30x30’s founders, alongside a steering committee of law enforcement leaders and researchers, spent years scouring the academic literature and engaging experts from previously male-dominated professions to understand how to sustainably

improve the representation and experiences of women in the workplace.³ This research together with insights from women in the field – is the foundation of the 30x30 Pledge.

How it Works: The 30x30 Pledge

Agency heads sign the 30x30 Pledge⁴– a series of no- and low-cost actions to help agencies address women officers' unique health and safety needs, modernize policies, expand data collection and analysis, and improve agency culture. Pledge commitments span the entire lifecycle of an officer's career, from recruitment and assessment through promotion, retention, and separation. These actions are guided by insights from police leaders, researchers, and industry experts, and are grounded in empirical evidence.



By signing the Pledge, agencies commit to implementing these actions to the best of their ability. We then ask agencies to report on their progress and demographic data every six-months. These reports help 30x30 identify promising and innovative practices

³ To learn more about the history of 30x30, please see Appendix B

⁴ <https://30x30initiative.org/the-30x30-pledge>

and understand where agencies need support. In turn, 30x30 provides technical assistance, policy guidance, research summaries, support for data collection and analysis, connections to industry experts, and access to a community of practice.

In just four years, we have made remarkable progress. Our agencies are working hard to ensure that qualified women officers can join the profession, thrive within it, and play their part in improving public safety. As a result, there are now more women officers serving in participating agencies and fewer barriers to them remaining on the job.



II. 30x30 Progress, Impact, and Growth

30x30 is working on critical issues in policing and public safety, including responding to unprecedented staffing shortages, growing public trust, enhancing the health and wellness of officers, and improving public safety outcomes. With measurable impact across hundreds of agencies and growing support from state legislators, policymakers, and international partners, the initiative is successfully driving change.

Broad commitment across the profession

In its first year alone, 30x30 experienced rapid word-of-mouth growth, partnering with over 100 law enforcement agencies. Today, 30x30 collaborates with more than 400 agencies of varying sizes — including federal, state, local, sheriffs', and campus departments. Our reach is expanding globally, with international agencies and organizations looking to replicate our model. This widespread adoption underscores the field's readiness to prioritize this work.



One of my career highlights was being the first chief in the country to sign on to the 30x30 Pledge. I strongly believe in the importance of advancing women in law enforcement for the strengths that they bring and in the power of the 30x30 team to help us make that happen. I truly believe that 30x30 will be one of the most consequential shifts in law enforcement in our generation.

- Chief Ken Clary, Bellevue (NE) Police Department

Women recruits on the rise

Remarkably, reporting agencies that have participated in 30x30 for at least two years have experienced an average **28%** increase in their number of women recruits, moving from 19 to 24 percent at the end of their two-year engagement. One agency lead said, "by implementing 30x30 strategies, we reduced bias in our assessments and hired more women in six months than we had in the prior seven years combined."

Improving experiences, addressing family needs, and advancing safety

By implementing the 30x30 Pledge, participating agencies have also made measurable progress in supporting women. For example, 95% of our partner agencies have affirmed zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment. Over 90% reported that women officers now have appropriately fitting ballistic vests and uniforms, with some exploring lead-free ammunition for pregnant officers. 83% of agencies now provide schedule flexibility for nursing mothers who have returned to work and 60% have ensured private, hygienic spaces for expressing breast milk. Partner agencies are also learning from women on the job; 34% conducted anonymous surveys and some also held focus groups and interviews. Additionally, 69% of participating agencies have made hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified women a stated strategic goal, integrating these efforts into mission statements and strategic plans.



The 30x30 Initiative has planted the seeds of powerful collaboration and impactful work within the law enforcement profession. As a proud participant since 2021, witnessing the nationwide outcomes of the various programs has been incredibly inspiring. The strategic implementation of these initiatives within each agency has enabled them to understand the needs from both their community's and officers' perspectives. By focusing on enhancing recruiting, retention, and workforce culture, the 30x30 Initiative has resulted in officers feeling supported, valued, and equipped to serve effectively. This, in turn, has strengthened public safety and community trust. I am more encouraged and motivated than ever to believe that achieving the goals of 30x30 are within reach.

-Gina V. Hawkins, President of the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives



As leaders in law enforcement, we have a responsibility to create an environment where all officers can thrive. The 30x30 Initiative is an important step toward fostering a workplace that values the contributions of all officers and makes sure their unique needs are understood and met.

- Chief Shon Barnes, Seattle Police Department

Advocating for and advancing federal and state legislation



Many of 30x30's objectives are best achieved through legislation or partnerships with state standards and training organizations. Thanks to an award from Arnold Ventures, 30x30 has begun working with state policymakers to inform legislation and appropriations and promote statewide approaches to supporting and advancing women in law enforcement. Notable legislative progress includes:

- **Hawai'i Bill 2231 (HB2231)**, enacted in July 2024, which establishes the goal of employing 30% female officers across law enforcement agencies in the state by 2030.
- **Washington Senate Bill 5424**, passed in June 2024, which allows law enforcement agencies to implement flexible work policies – including part-time options – for peace officers. This policy change will help alleviate challenges for parents and caregivers and enable part-time officers to remain

in the Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement System.

- **Providing Childcare for Police Officers Act (H.R.2722)**, introduced in the U.S. Congress, would establish a pilot program under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide funding to law enforcement agencies for creating childcare programs tailored to officers' nontraditional work hours.
- **Female Officers Ballistic Protection Act** and the **DHS Better Ballistic Body Armor Act** bills, introduced in Congress, would ensure properly fitting ballistic body armor for female law enforcement officers. These bipartisan bills address safety risks posed by ill-fitting gear and ensure women officers have the protective equipment they need.

Publishing resources to support implementation

We have developed an extensive online collection⁵ of research summaries, policy guides, survey and focus group assets, data frameworks, and promising practices. We also post (with author permission) scientific journal articles relevant to advancing and supporting women in law enforcement and national statistics on law enforcement agency demographics. In addition, our site includes recordings of conference presentations and a library of over two dozen 30x30 webinars featuring critical insights from industry leaders.

Keynote addresses and conference presentations

To promote our mission, 30x30 leadership delivers keynote addresses and participates in regional, national, and international conferences. These have included featured presentations at annual meetings of the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), INTERPOL IP Crime Division, the American Society of Criminology (ASC), TaserCon, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), the American Society of Evidence-Based Policing (ASEBP), National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE), and the Global Evidence-Based Policing Summit. These platforms allow our team to connect with industry leaders, practitioners,

⁵ <https://30x30initiative.org/what-works/>

policymakers, and researchers, fostering collaboration and building consensus for a more fair and effective profession. 30x30 also contributes to expert roundtables in government and private industry, with a particular focus on recruitment, hiring, promotion, retention, and meeting officer's health and wellness needs.





Celebrating the impact of women in the field

Highlighting the contributions of women in law enforcement helps inspire the next generation of women to see themselves in a profession historically dominated by men. We are honored to spread the word about the incredible courage, service, and resilience of our women in blue. Every month, we post a feature on a woman officer from a participating agency on our website.⁶ We also recently launched a “Profiles in Courage” series, where we celebrate the trailblazing contributions of women who have paved the way for future generations. Our first profile honors Margie Moore, Deputy Assistant Director (ret.) of ATF and a co-founder of Women in Federal Law Enforcement.⁷



You Can't Be What You Can't See

30x30 steering committee member Chief Sheryl Victorian is going above and beyond to ensure young women and girls know they are both welcome and needed in the profession. Chief Victorian is both the first Black and first woman Chief in Waco, TX. Earlier this year, she published “The Me I See,” a children’s book showing readers that they have what it takes to make a difference in their communities.



⁶ <https://30x30initiative.org/from-the-field/>

⁷ <https://bit.ly/417ka0K>

Media coverage: Driving discussions and raising awareness

30x30 has elevated discussions about women in law enforcement. Since our launch, hundreds of major national and local news outlets have covered 30x30 and our efforts to advance and support women in policing.⁸

How the 30x30 initiative aims to advance women in policing

Women currently represent only 12% of all LEOs in America. Will you take the 30x30 pledge and promise to change that statistic?

April 21, 2021 09:16 PM - Policing Matters Podcast



Want to reform the police? Hire more women

By Ashley Fantz and Casey Tolan, CNN

Updated 5:41 AM EDT, Tue June 23, 2020



The Hiring Practice That Could Dramatically Improve Policing

BY CARI SHANE

NOV 01, 2021 - 12:53 PM



Highlights include:

- A front-page *Washington Post* feature on the work of our first law enforcement partner, Chief Ken Clary of the Bellevue (NE) Police Department⁹
- An in-depth *Slate* feature on the founding of 30x30 and our near-term progress.¹⁰
- A *CNN* feature highlighting the success of our first year¹¹
- An op ed by *Washington Post* columnist Karen Tumulty celebrating the promise of 30x30 and encouraging its broad adoption¹²
- A *USA Today* feature highlighting 30x30 as a promising way to help law enforcement agencies represent the communities they serve¹³
- A segment on *Vox's Today Explained* covering women in law enforcement¹⁴

⁸ <https://badassinheels.com/season-3-badass-in-blue>

⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/interactive/2022/women-police-nebraska/>

¹⁰ <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/11/police-reform-keeps-failing-is-it-time-to-hire-more-female-cops.html>

¹¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/26/us/police-departments-increase-women-in-ranks>

¹² <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/26/us/police-departments-increase-women-in-ranks>

¹³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/09/21/hire-female-officers-fix-police/>

¹⁴ <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/can-women-fix-the-police/id1346207297?i=1000564721378>

Advancing Critical Research on What Works and Matters

We collaborate with research partners around the world who help ensure our work reflects the latest available evidence. These partnerships also allow us to help grow the research base. For example, 30x30 has partnered with the Research Triangle Institute to explore critical needs and promising practices related to retaining women officers.¹⁵ And the National Institute of Justice funded several researchers to analyze 30x30 data, including analyzing over 600 survey responses from women officers and hundreds of 30x30 agency progress reports. Results are forthcoming in 2025 and will inform our work going forward.



A call by 30x30 for rigorous, evidence-based research is motivating more scholarly work in this field. In partnership, the 30x30 Initiative along with academic collaborators, are positioned to drive new insights into the role and contribution of women in law enforcement.

- Dr Jacqueline M. Drew, Associate Professor, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice & Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University, Australia

Expanded technical assistance through increased partnerships

30x30's initial launch was made possible by seed funding from the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative. Today, 30x30 has expanded through funding and support from Arnold Ventures, several philanthropic gifts (including the Park City Community Foundation), Mark43, federal grants, and additional support from Microsoft. And in 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice formally partnered with 30x30 to advance women in law enforcement. Federal support includes funding for technical assistance, data collection, and evidence-based strategies to help agencies achieve 30x30 objectives. In 2023, the DOJ also awarded \$1 million to the National Policing Institute to establish a technical assistance center to support agencies in meeting the unique health and safety needs of women officers, improving recruitment strategies, and expanding data collection.

¹⁵https://30x30initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/30x30-Exit-Stay-Interview-Findings_RETAINS_Feb-2025.pdf

Developing international collaborations



As the success of 30x30 gains traction, a growing number of international and transnational law enforcement agencies and professional organizations are engaging 30x30 to drive progress in their regions and countries. For example, the Australian Federal Police engaged our co-founder to help inform a national strategy for advancing women in law enforcement. Over the past year, we have worked closely with Police Scotland to help promote sex equality and address misogyny. The Global Society of Evidence-Based Policing, which includes researchers and law enforcement leaders from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the UK, Netherlands, and the U.S., has collaborated with 30x30 as a strategic partner to help develop a global research strategy to support the advancement of women in law enforcement. And 30x30 leadership recently joined DOJ's International Criminal Investigative Training and Assistance Program (ICITAP) to help expand the role of women in security and counterterrorism positions in emerging and transitional democracies.





Research needs to influence police practice, and the 30 x 30 framework is underwritten by evidence on what we know works. We advocate for change when we are aware of the research that improves what we do, and how we do it. As a police leader in Canada, I wholeheartedly believe that the 30 x 30 framework is exactly the kind of change policing needs. We are proud to be among the first police services in Canada to join and are committed to exceeding the 30 x 30 call to action.

- Rich Johnston, Chief of Police, Barrie Police Service, Director of Research CANSEBP (Canadian Society of Evidence Based Policing)



The highlight of our 2024 What Works in Policing Conference was 30x30's Gender Diversity in Policing Symposium. The issues discussed are relevant to the legitimacy of policing and the safety of communities around the world. 30x30 is grounded in the scientific evidence about the unique value of women officers and what is most effective in ensuring they are equitably supported. Societies for Evidence Based Policing around the world collectively seek to lift up the trailblazing work of 30x30.

- David Cowan, Detective Superintendent, Victoria Police, President, Australia & New Zealand Society of Evidence Based Policing (ASEBP)



The collaboration between Police Scotland and 30 x 30 is a powerful example of how policing organisations can work together to promote gender equality and empower women within law enforcement to increase public safety. The goals of 30 x 30 align perfectly with Police Scotland's commitment to Sex Equality and Tackling Misogyny (SETM). The collaboration has not only helped enhance the representation of women but also fosters a more inclusive culture benefiting all officers, staff and the communities they serve.

- Sgt Claire Coleman, Police Scotland



Strengthening peer networks and cross-sector partnership

Impactful outgrowths of 30x30 include organic partnerships among regional and state-level partners. By improving communication and coordination across co-located departments, agencies can streamline investments, leverage each other's



work, and present a united front to advance women officers and improve workplace experiences for all employees. 30x30 Arizona¹⁶ is one such coalition of 30x30 agencies across the state that have come together to exchange ideas and support one another in their work

Private industry partnerships

We also partner with private industry to provide no cost resources to participating agencies, develop novel tools and training, and help inform their approach to meeting the needs of the field. For example, 30x30 partnered with experts at Slalom to develop an AI-powered tool to help agencies improve policies on pregnancy and lactation. 30x30 also partnered with both Simsi and SAS to offer no cost training and certification for officers from 30x30 agencies. And we collaborated with industry partners to conduct officer focus groups to address challenges related to ballistic vests and ensure manufacturers are meeting the needs of women in law enforcement.

¹⁶ <https://joinmesapd.com/az30x30/>

Recognition and awards



30x30 has received national and international recognition for its impact on policing and public safety, its contributions to advancing evidence-based practice, and its innovative approach to sustainable change. 30x30 was honored with the 2024 WIFLE President's Award for its contributions to advancing women in the field, recognized as a trailblazing initiative by the Global Society of Evidence-Based Policing in 2024, and named a 2022 ASTORS Award recipient by *Security Today*.



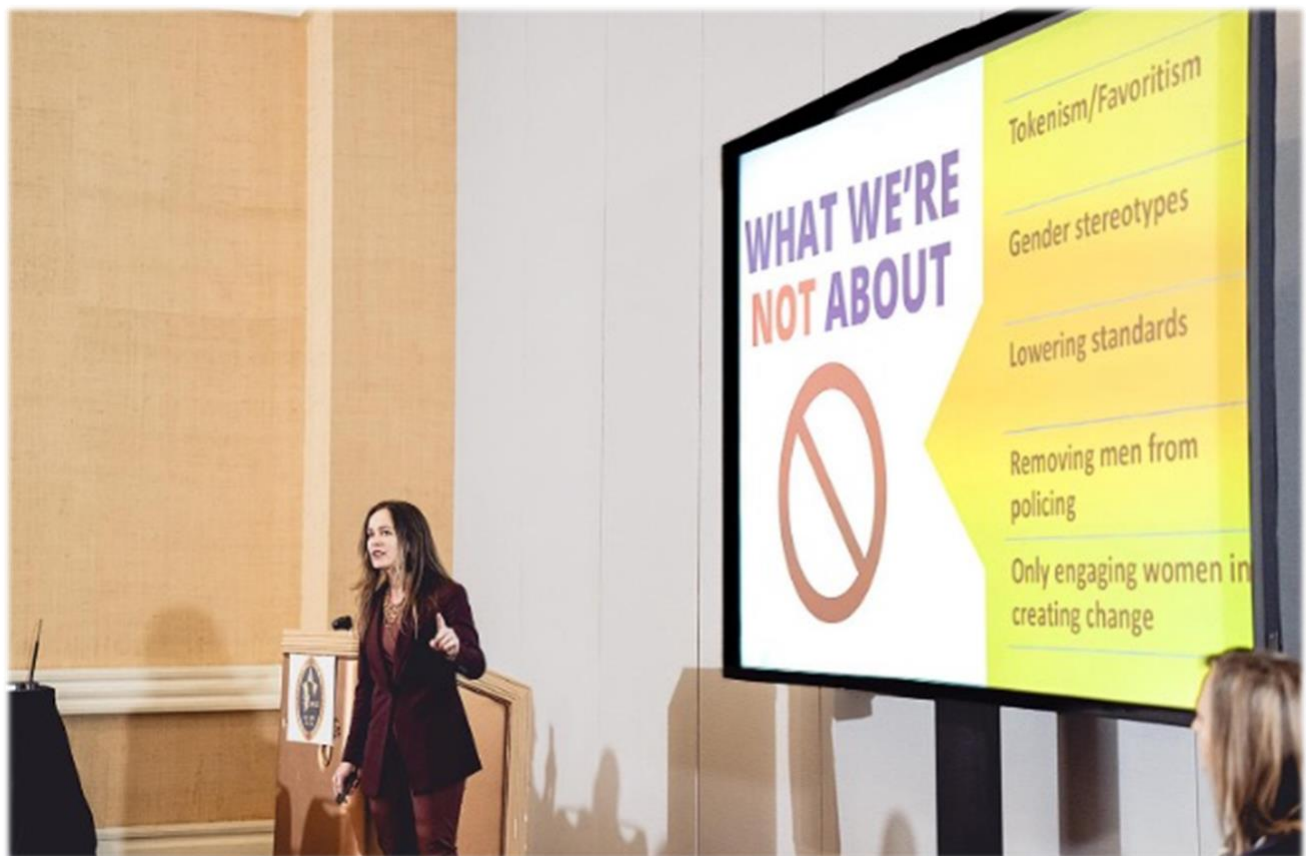
For more than 25 years, WIFLE has consistently addressed the topic of female underrepresentation by offering viable solutions and strategies to law enforcement's top executives, leaders, and decision-makers. Although we have made incremental progress, we must rededicate our efforts to pave the way for future generations of women in law enforcement. WIFLE is proud of our strong partnership with the 30x30 Initiative because, like us, their team of professionals recognize that achieving gender equity will change the face of policing for the better. Together, we will continue to honor the legacy of trailblazing women whose commitment to duty, honor, courage, and equity will remain a constant source of inspiration.

- Catrina M. Bonus, President, Women in Federal Law Enforcement Foundation, Inc., Deputy Chief (Retired) – U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division

III. Myth-Busting Misconceptions

What 30x30 is (and isn't)

We envision policing as a profession that is accessible to all qualified individuals and supports the success and well-being of everyone within it. To achieve this, agencies must expand recruitment efforts, ensure hiring assessments accurately measure what the job requires, and intentionally understand and meet the needs of their employees. Our goal is to create stronger, safer, and more effective law enforcement agencies that better reflect and meet the needs of the communities they serve. But some misunderstand our goal. The following clarifies what we do, and what we do not do.



Recruiting, hiring, and standards

Recruiting: 30x30 advocates for agencies to implement expansive, proactive recruitment strategies to reach the broadest pool of qualified candidates, including women. 30x30 also encourages agencies to give prospective recruits an accurate picture of what the job of policing entails and what skills and abilities are required to do it well.

Hiring and Promotions: Many agencies use outdated hiring and promotional assessments that have not been updated for decades and have not been validated for accuracy. These assessments do not necessarily measure the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the job, nor is their accuracy known. This may lead agencies to unintentionally screen strong candidates from the applicant pool.

We do not advocate for lower standards. And we do not promote the recruiting and hiring of women solely because of their gender. Such a position would be unfair and have dangerous implications for both public and officer safety. We believe standards and assessments should accurately reflect what the job requires. Research shows that women officers offer unique value to policing agencies, and 30x30 is confident that accurate assessments will naturally yield an increase in women passing them.

"We saw recruitment content from a small agency that had no aviation assets, yet the 15-second spot they aired on the local news included a man hanging out of a helicopter with a long-gun strapped to his chest. That may be what policing is in some jurisdictions for some people for some part of their careers, but it certainly didn't reflect policing at that agency."

- Mo McGough, 30x30 co-founder



We were using an artificially heavy 12 lb. trigger pull, which resulted in higher rates of disqualification for some recruits, more often women. The artificially heavy trigger pull did not serve a public safety purpose, so we changed it. Immediately after changing back to a factory standard trigger, we saw the passing rate for women on the pre-employment Job Standards Test skyrocket from 44% to 75%. The first academy class we hired after making that change was over thirty percent female - the highest percentage of females we had ever hired.

- Ken Corey, NYPD Chief of Department (ret.)

Meeting the needs of women officers

30x30 recognizes that policing is a historically male-dominated profession. Given that, it is not surprising that the status quo sometimes fails to meet women's unique needs and can, at times, be unintentionally unfair toward them. 30x30 helps agencies identify improvements to better meet women's needs, engage them in the workplace, and ensure agency cultures help women and other underrepresented groups thrive.

From ballistic resistant vests that fit to pregnancy and lactation support, flexible options for parents and caregivers, women-specific health programs, and improved prevention of and response to sexual harassment in the workplace: 30x30 is helping agencies operate as they would if women and other under-represented groups were at the table when the status quo was designed.

We do not endorse favoritism, tokenism, or preferential treatment for women or any other group. Instead, we advocate for the minimum level of support that any employee is due in the workplace and seek to ensure their basic needs are met.



When we formed a 30x30 Advisory Committee and I met with a group of women officers, I thought I would be hearing about high-level concerns, such as promotion and advancement. Instead, I heard about things like women returning from maternity leave having to jump through hoops to be issued new uniform pants. Quick fixes to simple problems such as these go a long way in improving morale and officers' working conditions.

Armando R. Aguilar, Assistant Chief of Police, Miami Police Department

30% of women in police recruit classes

Why 30%? Achieving a critical mass—often identified as at least 30% of a given organization—is essential for a group to positively influence that organization's culture. Reaching this threshold fosters work environments where varying perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes.

We do not advocate for quotas. And we do not encourage hiring women just because they are women. Quota-based policies can lead to hiring under-qualified candidates and negatively impact qualified members of under-represented groups.

This figure represents an outcome we hope for, not a rigid expectation for participating agencies. We believe that by updating policies and programs to meet the needs of women, using fair and accurate assessments, and improving agency culture, we will naturally see an increase in women's representation over time. We also make it clear to our partners that we understand all agencies have different starting points and operate with varied hiring cycles. Nevertheless, all agencies can and should make meaningful progress toward fostering an environment where *all* qualified officers can thrive.



Fortune 500 companies, major league franchises, and other corporations are constantly evolving to attract the best people to their team. Police departments should be no different. 30x30 has been a model for many departments pursuing this type of continuous improvement. It's not about a number. It's about investing in a positive workplace, supported by policies that match practice and create equity for all who support public safety. All of this makes our agency more attractive to the best and brightest – no matter who they are.

- Chief Tarrick McGuire, Alexandria Police Department

IV. On the Horizon: 2025 and Beyond

While women have made significant strides in law enforcement, progress has been gradual, and much work remains. At this pivotal moment, we are focused on cementing the accomplishments of the past four years and using our rapidly expanding reach to push for widespread, lasting change.

There is, even still, a vocal minority who resist efforts to address long-standing imbalances in working conditions. However, we are confident that the demand for change is stronger. Meeting the transformative potential of this moment will require steadfast and determined leadership at all levels and across multiple sectors, including law enforcement, municipal leadership, policymakers, and philanthropy.

30x30 is laser focused on sustaining these efforts, but we need additional resources. Further support is critical to winning over critics and expanding this vital work. We actively seek both funding and strategic partners to ensure our continued impact through 2030 and beyond.

Continued agency engagement

We will continue to support agencies by providing technical assistance, webinars, research summaries, and policy guidance. Many of our Class 1 agencies – the early adopters of the 30x30 Pledge – are entering their fourth year of engagement. These agencies continue to share their successes, challenges, and best practices. Lessons from Class 1 agencies are shaping our work with the next cohort, Class 2, which we officially launched in December 2024. As of January 2025, over 75 agencies from across the United States and Canada have joined Class 2. We welcome additional agencies and are expanding our efforts to engage agencies throughout the U.S. and beyond.

Expanded state-level engagement

Key aspects of our work must be implemented at the state level for maximum impact and sustainability. We plan to expand our efforts to identify and advance legislative priorities related to women in law enforcement – including specific appropriations for key resources like childcare. We also plan to engage state accrediting and standards organizations to establish basic minimum practices across law enforcement agencies.

Deep dive on critical issues

Early adopters have identified several key areas where agencies lack the expertise, resources, and capacity to improve practice. Accordingly, we plan to develop a comprehensive suite of technical assistance resources in close partnership with the National Policing Institute.

Topical areas include:

- Improving response to and prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination
- Improving support for pregnant officers, parents, and caregivers in the workplace
- Establishing and expanding support for employees navigating childcare responsibilities
- Developing and implementing fair and accurate hiring assessments
- Improving the fairness and accuracy of promotional assessments and expanding professional development opportunities
- Expanding support for data collection and analysis in recruitment, hiring, promotions, commendations, training opportunities, assignments, and officer performance
- Engaging youth and establishing pipelines for a broad group of recruits to enter the profession

Expanded community of practice

30x30 is not alone. The longer we operate, the more connected we become to complementary efforts across the country and around the world. While operational contexts differ by region, the underlying challenges confronting women in law enforcement are similar. Together, we stand to learn from each other, uplift our collective efforts, and present a united front against opposition to aspects of our work. To facilitate a coordinated approach, 30x30 hopes to establish a global network dedicated to advancing our shared mission.

Enhanced strategic communications

Though 30x30 has historically lacked funding for strategic communications, we are working to change that. We intend to raise public awareness of the importance of women in policing, encourage more agencies and states to engage in this work, disseminate promising practices broadly, complement agency recruitment efforts, and combat mischaracterizations about the role and value of women in policing.

Expanded reach

30x30 intentionally focuses on supporting sworn women in law enforcement. This was a strategic decision — the empirical support for the importance of women officers is strong and we believe that improved support for sworn women will naturally result in agency-wide transformations in policy, practice, and culture that benefit everyone.

However, there are opportunities to expand our scope, for example by engaging women in professional staff positions, as well as including women in other criminal justice and first responder professions, such as corrections, dispatch, the courts, EMS, and fire. It is important that we do not expand too far too fast and risk diluting our mission. But, if sufficiently funded, there is potential for 30x30 to support women across the criminal justice system and beyond.

Conclusion

The 30x30 Initiative has made significant strides in advancing and supporting women in law enforcement and transforming agencies in the process. This report highlights the measurable progress achieved by our partner agencies and the growing momentum behind this movement. Yet our mission is far from complete.

We call on police leaders, community advocates, policymakers, and funders to deepen their involvement with 30x30. Agencies should continue to implement policies that improve engagement and meet women's needs, ensure fairness, and foster cultures that attract and retain top talent. Policymakers can champion legislative reforms that address longstanding imbalances in working conditions. And philanthropic and private funders are well-positioned to accelerate progress through strategic investments.

This progress would not be possible without the support, advocacy, allyship, and friendship of hundreds of individuals and organizations. Thank you for everything you do to further our shared mission. It is an honor to work with and learn from you. Together, we can and will build a better, more effective law enforcement profession — one where all officers thrive, and all communities are safe.

This work requires intentionality, persistence, and courageous leadership. We are heartened and humbled by the commitment we've seen thus far and look forward to working together in the years to come.

Appendix A: Landscape of Women in Law Enforcement

A National Perspective

Across the country, law enforcement agencies are struggling to fill crucial vacancies and retain the officers, critically impacting agencies' ability to fulfill their public safety mission and serve their communities. Many refer to current conditions as a staffing crisis.¹⁷

In this context, interest in law enforcement careers among women has been increasing. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), **women comprised 16% of police academy recruits in 2006. By 2022, these numbers rose to 20% of recruits**, reflecting increasing interest and progress toward gender representation in the field.¹⁸

In 1997, only 40% of the approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the U.S. employed at least one full-time woman officer. By 2020, this number had increased to 60%.¹⁹

While there have been modest improvements in the representation of women in policing on a national level, the fact remains that **approximately 40% of law enforcement agencies in the U.S. currently employ no women officers.**

Women make up about 13% of sworn officers in the U.S and this representation varies by type of law enforcement agency. Campus law enforcement agencies lead with 18% women officers, followed by sheriffs' offices (14.4%), federal agencies (14%), and local police departments (13.6%). State agencies have the lowest representation of sworn women (7%).

The percent of sworn women declines as rank increases. **Women hold approximately 9% of intermediate supervisor roles and 10% of first-line supervisor positions** in law enforcement, a percentage that has remained relatively unchanged. **Approximately 4% of local police chiefs across the United States are women.**

¹⁷ PERF [WorkforceCrisis.pdf](#)

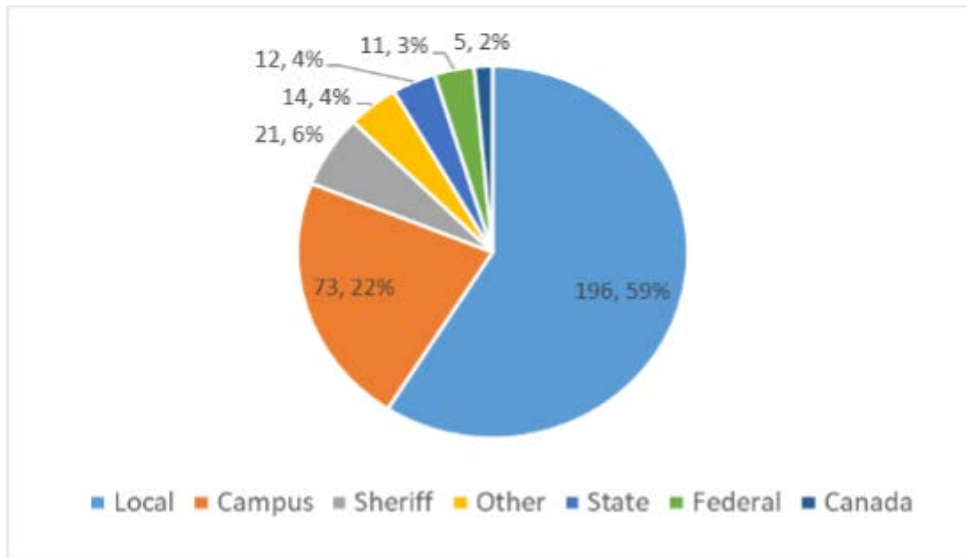
¹⁸ BJS Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2006, 2011-2013, 2018, and 2022. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/census-law-enforcement-training-academies-cleta#2-0>

¹⁹ BJS Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics, 1997, 2007, 2020. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/law-enforcement-management-and-administrative-statistics-lemas>

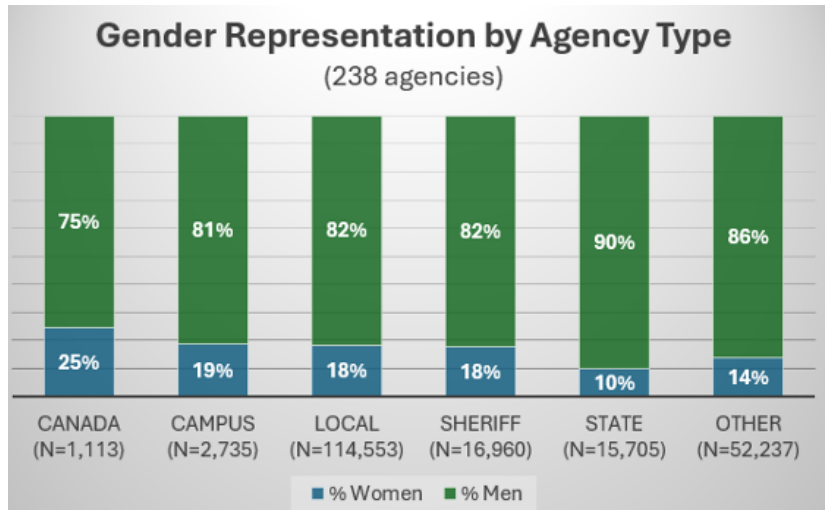
30x30 Agencies

The data below describes the representation of women in 30x30 agencies based on the demographic data they submit. The first cohort of 30x30 agencies, referred to as Class 1, joined the Initiative between March 2021 and June 2023. Class 1 includes 332 law enforcement agencies representing federal agencies, state, local, sheriffs, and campus jurisdictions. Forty-five states, plus Washington, D.C., and Canada are represented in 30x30's Class 1. Departments range in size from fewer than 25 officers to over 1,000 officers. This variation across geography, size, and type of agency demonstrates a widespread commitment to advancing and supporting women in policing.

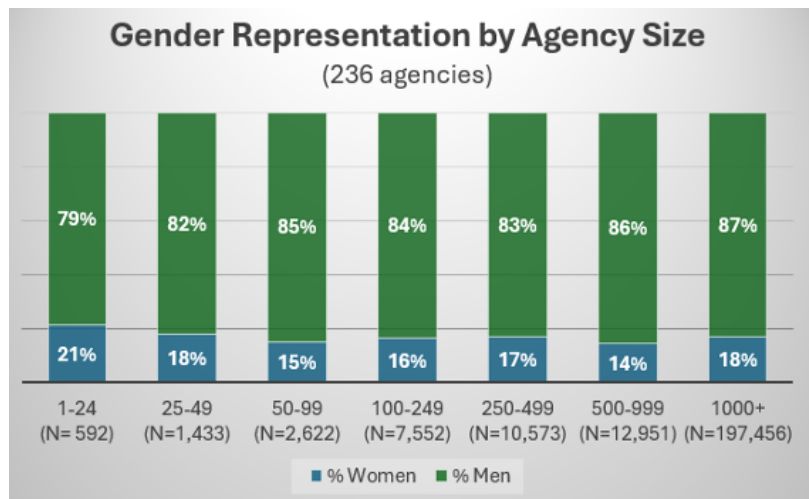
30x30 Class 1 Agencies by Type of Agency



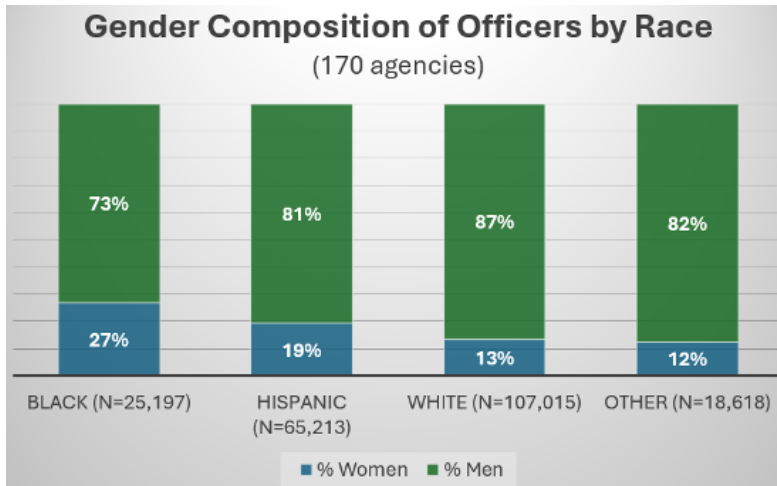
Proportion of women by agency type. The overall share of women officers for 30x30 agencies was 17%, somewhat higher than the national average of 13%. When disaggregated by agency type, the share of women varied somewhat. As shown in the chart below, Canadian agencies had the highest proportion of women in policing (25%), followed by campus police departments (19%). State agencies had the lowest proportion of women (10%).



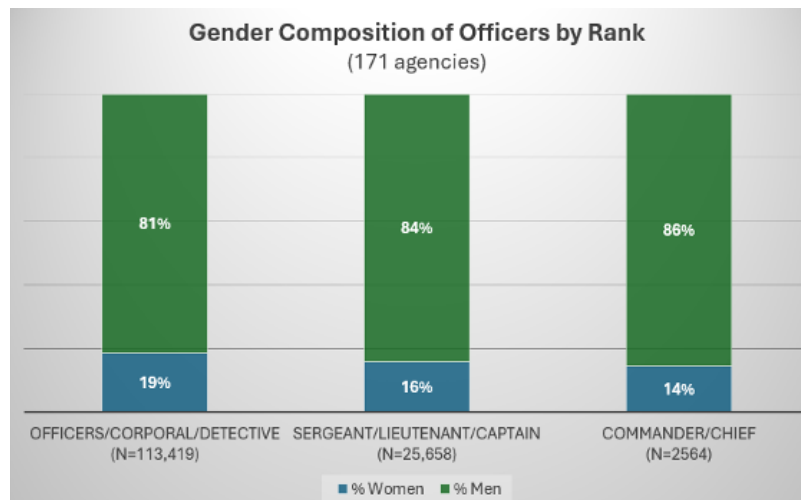
Proportion of women by agency size. There is little variation in the representation of women officers across agency sizes, from a low of 14% among agencies with 500–999 officers to a high of 21% among smaller agencies with 1–24 officers.



Proportion of women by race and ethnicity. Looking at the share of women officers by race and ethnicity, the highest representation of women was among Black officers (27%) and Hispanic officers (19%), followed by white officers (13%) and officers of other races (12%). BJS data similarly indicates the highest proportion of women in policing among Black officers (24%), and the lowest proportion of women in policing among officers of other races.³



Gender by rank. The proportion of women decreased as rank increased, though at a lower rate than national averages. Women represented 19% of officers and detectives, 16% of mid-level supervisors including sergeants, lieutenants, and captains, and 14% of commanders and chiefs.



Women recruits on the rise. 30x30 agency data showed a notable improvement in the representation of women in police recruit classes. **Agencies that participated in 30x30 for at least two years experienced a 28% increase in their number of women recruits,** increasing from 19% at the beginning of their engagement with the 30x30 Initiative to 24% at 24 months.

Appendix B: Who We Are & How We Got Here



Like so many field-driven innovations, the 30×30 Initiative got its start in large part due to the power of a single voice: Captain (ret.) Ivonne Roman of the Newark Police Department.

In 2017 Capt. Roman noticed that her department was losing disproportionate numbers of women applicants and this occurred after the state of New Jersey changed the timing of their physical fitness assessment for police officers to be earlier in the academy. She submitted Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for retention data on all police academies in the state of New Jersey and discovered a similar phenomenon occurring across the entire state.

She took action and created a non-profit called the Women’s Leadership Academy, which focused on preparing women in the state of New Jersey for the application and assessment process. A key component of this preparation involved physical fitness training. She met with women in public parks over several weekends to work on technique and optimal approaches to the physical fitness assessment; all the women Ivonne trained passed the assessment.

She also brought the insights she learned from her FOIA request to the National Institute of Justice at the US Department of Justice. She joined forces with attorney and senior policy advisor Maureen “Mo” McGough to host a national summit on women in policing in 2018. They brought together a range of perspectives including commissioners of major metropolitan departments to line officers with six months on the job, researchers, policymakers, and organizational partners to explore why so few women joined and remained in law enforcement and what could be done to improve their experiences and representation. This two-day convening highlighted common challenges, promising practices, opportunities for improvement and, most importantly—elevated the critical importance of advancing women in policing.

The report from that convening, *Women in Policing: Breaking Barriers and Blazing a Path*²⁰ laid the groundwork for 30x30. Over the next two years on the margins of their day jobs, Ivonne and Mo constituted a steering committee of law enforcement leaders and researchers; established strategic partnerships with key organizations including

²⁰ At the time of publication, this report has been removed from the USDOJ website.

the National Association of Women in Law Enforcement, the Police Executive Research Forum, and the National Policing Institute; worked with these partners to develop the 30x30 Pledge; and collectively recruited the first group of agencies to join the Initiative prior to the March 2021 launch.



During this time, Ivonne was also selected as a TED Fellow in recognition of her leadership in the field of policing, providing her with a global platform to amplify her efforts. Her TED Talk, *How Policewomen Make Communities Safer*²¹, has been viewed over two million times.

Ivonne and Mo remain deeply involved in 30x30's development and administration. In 2023, 30x30 also was extremely fortunate to bring on Dr. Tanya Meisenholder, former Deputy Commissioner for Equity and Inclusion at the NYPD, to oversee implementation and expansion. The work is supported by a team of contractors and consultants and an advisory board that contribute expertise, analyze data, guide strategic decisions, and support implementation.



Attendees of the 2018 National Institute of Justice Research Summit on Women in Policing.



Four years later, attendees of the National Summit on Women in Law Enforcement, launching a partnership between the USDOJ and the 30x30 Initiative.

²¹ https://www.ted.com/talks/ivonne_roman_how_policewomen_make_communities_safer

Thank you for everything you do to advance our shared mission.





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Gender Diversity in Policing Symposium | 4 September | 0830 - 1630

Dr Jacqueline Drew, Griffith University

Mo McGough, co-founder 30x30 Initiative

Janelle Tonkin, Assistant Commissioner NT







SCPD HAS TAKEN THE PLEDGE

30X30

30x30 is an initiative to advance the representation and experiences of women in policing agencies across the United States.



