

## Lafayette (IN) Police Department 2023 Officer Wellness Summary

The City of Lafayette, Indiana, is a community located in Tippecanoe County and has an estimated population of 74,545 residents. Lafayette is also home to Purdue University, a world-renowned institution of higher learning. Adjacent to Lafayette is the City of West Lafayette, also in Tippecanoe County. West Lafayette has a population of approximately 47,000 people not including the recorded record enrollments of 50k students and growing. The police department, established in 1825, has grown from a handful of men on horseback to 152 Sworn Officers and nearly 50 civilian employees.

The Lafayette Police Department has maintained a Police Chaplain Program since the mid 1990's. One of the main benefits of the program is the support it can provide to officers and their families in times of crisis or trauma. One of their chaplains, Dr. Will Miller, is a psychologist and professor at Purdue University and a well-known comedian and national radio personality. This unique combination of expertise offers a rare opportunity for him to educate families about the challenges their loved ones will encounter as they embark on their law enforcement careers. As part of his presentation, each family member is given a copy of Dr. Kevin Gilmartin's book, "Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement," which addresses the science of Hypervigilance and the potential difficulties that officers may face throughout their careers. Dr. Miller explains the science in a powerful, humorous, way that always impacts the new officers and their loved ones.

On day one, the department commences with this presentation to establish the expectations for the families and help them comprehend the stress and traumas that police officers could encounter during their service. Additionally, the chaplains provide spiritual guidance and resources to officers seeking to find meaning and purpose in their work or struggling with ethical or moral dilemmas.

As part of their emotional wellness and employee assistance programs, the City of Lafayette and the *Lafayette Police Department contract with Dr. Kelly Dardeen and her clinic, Suncrest Psychological Services*. Dr. Dardeen specializes in working with first responders. Police psychologists can help officers develop coping mechanisms and strategies to manage stress and trauma. They can counsel and support officers who have experienced traumatic events or are struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues. This can help prevent burnout and improve officer well-being, improving job performance and reducing the risk of misconduct.

Access to Dr. Dardeen and her clinic offers officers a safe and confidential space to discuss their concerns. The department believes a police psychologist can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues in law enforcement and promote a culture of Wellness within the department. Overall, the presence of a police psychologist can lead to a healthier and more effective police force.

*Dr. Dardeen is also made available for Critical Incident Debriefs*, particularly those cases that involve significant emotional trauma, such as an officer-involved shooting or a child death investigation.

*All members of the L.P.D. have access to our E.A.P. program*. Supervisors receive training from Human Resources on how to access these benefits. The process of referring employees to the program is essential to understand. Dr. Dardeen attends annual training to provide officers with updates on her services and to build relationships with officers to make them more comfortable and eliminate potential barriers to entry.

In 1996, the chief was on a diet regimen that recommended 60% of calories consumed come from carbohydrates, 25% from fat, and 15% from protein. Not long after embarking on this nutrition program, he began losing sleep because he was always hungry. Then he read a book entitled "The Zone Diet" by Dr. Barry Sears. In this book, he discovered the impact of nutrition on overall health and performance. He believed that proper nutrition would create a path, along with proper fitness and wellness programs, they would eventually design and then offer to their officers.

The chief also learned the differences between fitness and health, but they are two mutually dependent states. He realized that health is only part of the overall picture for aging gracefully; it would help if you were fit too, as you need

muscles for movement to keep your bones strong and protect you from falls, burn body fat, and avoid being overweight.

The chief also learned that over 60% of police officers are insulin resistant, meaning they have abnormally high blood glucose levels. He learned through Dr. Gilmartin's book that through Hypervigilance, Dr. Gilmartin analogizes this stress process occurring in police officers in the same way that bears pack on weight in preparation for hibernation.

The chief also learned many in our profession are unaware of the hidden dangers in policing, not from suspects' actions but from our lifestyle choices and the stressors that impact our physiology. Their goal as a command staff at the Lafayette Police Department has been to provide education and resources to raise awareness in their personnel on these hidden and overt dangers. Then, through investment in programs, equipment, technology, and training, remove potential barriers to engagement and incentivize participation in wellness programs.

In 2008 the Lafayette Police Department created a policy requiring all officers to get an *annual physical examination done by their physician*. The department and city insurance program covers the cost of yearly wellness exams, so there is no cost to the employee. This policy aims to ensure officers have at least one check-in with their physician yearly to ensure no underlying health issues may jeopardize their well-being.

*In 2013 the Lafayette Police Department began requiring all officers to participate in bi-annual physical fitness assessments.* There are no punitive outcomes from this assessment, but participation is mandatory. This gives officers a biannual physical fitness self-assessment. These assessments are conducted on duty during all-day training sessions.

In 2017 LPD opened up CrossFit Blue Heart in our police training center. CrossFit Blue Heart is a non-profit CrossFit affiliate. In conjunction with opening this affiliate, the Lafayette Police Department contracted with CrossFit, Inc to conduct a private CrossFit Level 1 seminar for 20 police officers from L.P.D. This seminar certified these officers as level 1 coaches. The intention was not to create any CrossFit standard or expectation that officers must utilize the CrossFit methodology, rather it was done to ensure the department could place peer coaches across all shifts and divisions of the Police Department to assist in physical fitness training.

The department's gym is fully outfitted and functional. It is open only to police officers and their families, provided their family is on the city insurance plan. All employees are permitted one-hour per shift to work out on duty. Workouts can also be done immediately before or after shifts since it is difficult for patrol officers to dedicate on-shift working hours due to response activity.

In 2020 the Lafayette Police Department contracted with O2X. O2X provides customized wellness programs for public safety departments, the military, and federal agencies that optimize every aspect of their most valuable resource: people. Their services include consulting, in-person training and education, On-Site Specialists, Readiness Assessments, and cutting-edge online tools.

The professional staff from O2X spent two days at L.P.D. during their all day Training sessions and conducted a comprehensive officer training session. This service included a *smartphone application that gave every employee access to O2X professional staff 24/7*. The application provided coaching on nutrition, exercise programming and routines, meditation, yoga, and other holistic wellness programming.

**\*\* This summary is only a brief overview of many of the agency's programs. In the actual submission you will see that the agency has other programs and incentives to benefit its members. Please review their entire submission and its associated documents to gain a complete understanding of their program.**