

2025 Accomplishments

- Relocated to a new state-of-the-art Public Safety Services headquarters to serve the county with adequate space to house emergency vehicles, public safety equipment, classroom training facilities, and a Mutual Aid Command Center.
- Increased safety for detainees in the jail by implementing real-time Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) activity logging for health and welfare checks.
- Added a second K-9 team for narcotics detection in the jail.
- Updated weather and civil defense processes and systems for faster and more accurate notification to the public in the event of an emergency.
- Greatly reduced response times to alarm calls by transitioning to a digital alarm notification service between home alarms and emergency communication centers with an integration to alarm companies.
- Built lasting partnerships through community outreach by attending over 1,000 community events, including opioid awareness and drug takeback days, life jacket giveaways, D.A.R.E. classroom instruction, and bike safety classes.
- Partnered with numerous military veteran organizations, local colleges and universities, and developed Pathways to Policing opportunities to help reach our recruitment goals which resulted in a record high 173 new employees hired throughout the agency.
- Provided analytical and investigative case support through our Criminal Intelligence Division to multiple metro agencies related to the rise in carjackings, including auto theft analysts to identify real-time trends and deploy resources and aid in the quick identification of suspects, many involving repeat juvenile offenders.
- Partnered with the University of Minnesota to develop and deliver an in-service training for detention staff focused on the science of addiction and evidence-based treatment. This collaboration strengthened staff understanding, supported safer jail operations, and reinforced our commitment to integrating public health expertise into detention practice.
- Conducted comprehensive security assessments and residential vulnerability evaluations for judiciary and other local officials through our highly trained Threat Assessment Group.

Our mission

Providing quality professional services while building meaningful relationships that are sustainable within our communities, and with our partners, to ensure justice and safety for all.

Our values

Service, Accountability, Culture, Responsiveness, Ethics, Dedication

Our mandate

Keep and preserve the peace of the county.

Sheriff Dawanna S. Witt



2026



Hennepin County Sheriff's Office
Strategic Plan



Hennepin County Sheriff's Office

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Letter from the Sheriff

Over the past year, I have remained dedicated to reducing violent crime by working with our public safety partners, focused on the opioid crisis by continuing our on-going efforts to educate all residents about the dangers of lethal illicit drugs and continued to strengthen communities by building strong, meaningful and lasting relationships with all of our residents.

Dawanna S. Witt
Hennepin County Sheriff

Four-year focus priorities

- Building safer communities through reduction of violent crime.
- Opioid overdose prevention and awareness with a focus on fentanyl.
- Recruitment and retention of all our exceptional employees who are dedicated to public safety.
- Reform through innovative programming for those in our custody.
- Community engagement and education to strengthen relationships with all whom we serve.
- Criminal justice reform by emphasizing rehabilitation in addition to accountability.



Our 2026 goals

1. Continue to work with our public safety partners to reduce violent crime through proactive and data-informed efforts, an essential approach that supports the identification and apprehension of the most prolific and violent offenders in our communities.
2. Advocate at the county, state and federal levels for necessary funding for the Sheriff's Forensic Science Laboratory, an internationally accredited facility that provides thorough, accurate, and unbiased forensic services to support public safety in Hennepin County and the region.
3. Expand upon the current array of effective jail programming that support successful reentry — including educational opportunities, vocational training, substance use and addiction treatment, life-skills development, and medical and behavioral health services — to ensure that jail time is not wasted time.
4. Continue to demonstrate transparency through clear, direct and effective communication with the public by utilizing leading technology and accessible online and social-media platforms.
5. Continue our Focus on Fentanyl initiative and opioid awareness campaign to educate all residents about the dangers of lethal illicit drugs trafficked throughout the county and remain a committed partner with the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Investigative Support Center to combat the devastating impact of these illegal narcotics.
6. Collaborate with Hennepin County administration to implement recent staffing study recommendations that support adequate staffing levels for the safe management of our jail, continue recruiting highly qualified new employees, and offer competitive wages and career opportunities to retain our exceptional staff.
7. Utilize best practices in public safety technologies across all divisions — including body worn and squad cameras, records management systems, jail body scanners, and intelligence gathering tools that support investigations — while ensuring staff receive continuous training on emerging technologies, including systems designed to counter criminal activity involving cryptocurrency.
8. Actively pursue state and federal grant opportunities to mitigate rising budget pressures, including applying for the Medicaid Section 1115 Waiver to broaden coverage for our jail population, improved continuity of care, and reduce the tax burden on county residents.
9. Integrate innovative and immersive training technology such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven scenario-based tools for employee training.
10. Seek external perspectives, feedback and expertise from community members through ongoing collaboration with our Community Engagement Team and through regular meetings of the Sheriff's Community Advisory Board, Youth Community Advisory Board, the SHIELD Program, and the Hennepin County Sheriff Foundation.
11. Implement medically monitored wristbands designed to provide staff in the jail with continuous visibility into early signs of medical distress for detainees in our custody.

