MINNESOTA BUREAU OF CRIMINAL APPREHENSION

2021–2023 STRATEGIC PLAN
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INTRODUCTION

To continue to provide value to Minnesotans and the criminal justice community it serves, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension must evolve to meet changing budgets, skill sets and the changing needs of our customers. While this Strategic Plan is a living document which will change to meet changing capabilities, limitations and needs, it will serve as the framework which will guide the decisions made and actions taken by the organization and its employees. And it will enable Bureau staff to better prepare for the challenges ahead.

As a division of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension’s decisions and actions must align with the Department of Public Safety’s mission.

DPS Mission

The Department of Public Safety is committed to protecting citizens and communities through activities that promote and support prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, education and enforcement. These objectives are achieved through a focus on saving lives, providing efficient and effective services, maintaining public trust and developing strong partnerships.

BCA Mission

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension prevents, investigates and solves crimes in collaboration with our criminal justice partners.

BCA Vision

Delivering exceptional law enforcement services for a safer Minnesota.
BCA Values

Integrity • Integrity is the cornerstone of public trust. This organization strives to always do the right thing.

Excellence • We value excellence in our people and our work to continually provide the best service to our partners, the Minnesota criminal justice community, and the citizens of this state.

Ingenuity • Ingenuity drives progress. We strive to continually innovate in all of our programs to provide exceptional services, assistance and processes that protect the state of Minnesota.

Partnerships • It is the mission of this organization to work in collaboration with our criminal justice partners to promote public safety.
The Minnesota Legislature created the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension in 1927 as a division of the Office of the Attorney General to assist Minnesota peace officers in solving local crimes and apprehending criminals. Additional field offices and the Division of Statistics were added in 1935. Forensic Science Services became operational in 1947 and the Bemidji Regional Office and Forensic Science Services opened in 2001. Since its inception, the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension has adapted and grown to meet the changing needs of the criminal justice agencies it serves.

Today the BCA employs 508 people. This includes three main divisions: Forensic Science Services (162), Investigations (168), and Minnesota Justice Information Services (MNJIS) (151), plus a Training Unit (10) and an internal support unit, Business Shared Services (17). The BCA also utilizes contractors for specific project work in the MNJIS division. Staff members work out of the BCA’s St. Paul headquarters, Bemidji Regional Office and 11 field offices around the state.
Staff/Facility Locations

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension staff and offices are strategically located across Minnesota to provide timely service to local communities. Agents are positioned in regional offices in St. Paul and Bemidji and in 11 field offices. BCA forensic scientists are located in St. Paul and Bemidji, and lab personnel staff an evidence processing facility in St. Cloud. MNJIS staff members are located in St. Paul, Bemidji and Duluth.
Major Accomplishments from the 2017–2019 Strategic Plan

The BCA will use this strategic plan to guide agency activities during the life of the document and beyond. The BCA’s last strategic plan addressed goals for 2017–2019. Below are some of the accomplishments completed in 2017–2020 to meet goals identified in that plan.

- Completed many enhancements to BCA products to improve user experience and make data more easily accessible – e.g. automating Harassment Restraining Orders, adding flags for civil commitment and mental health data for firearms background checks and flags for firearms disqualifiers, adding geolocation and mapping data for DWIs and other drug-related events, adding more notifications to BCA Portal MyBCA, etc.
- Completed comprehensive IT Security audit of BCA network and systems and created a remediation plan and strategy to improve security best practices and FBI compliance.
- Implemented new state Criminal History System in March 2018 which provided more complete and accurate data on arrests, court dispositions, and custody status for individuals in Minnesota.
- Transitioned more than 99 percent of Minnesota law enforcement agencies to the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which provides more detailed crime statistical data, to meet FBI January 2021 mandate.
- Developed and deployed major components of a new Predatory Offender Registration system (POR) to provide more automated, accurate and timely predatory offender data.
- Revised course evaluation process for training attendees to glean better feedback, and conducted an external instructor training session to improve consistency and ensure high-quality training.
- Implemented a new online learning management system to track users’ online learning, expanded the number of online course offerings, and significantly expanded virtual training availability to meet training needs during the COVID-19 state of emergency.
- Revamped law enforcement leadership and management courses to streamline them into two tracks and ensure the most innovative, high-quality and effective training is offered.
- Created new Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAIC) position with direct supervision authority. Eight staff were promoted to ASAIC positions.
- Upgraded BCA investigations technology to improve video edit and enhance capabilities including body cam footage. Developed policy for and acquired two drones to be utilized in support of crime scene and other investigations.
- BCA used federal funding to establish and continues to lead a statewide anti-heroin task force to assist local and tribal law enforcement combating the heroin problem. Nearly 50 affiliate agencies have joined in this effort. BCA agents are assigned to the DEA Task Force, Safe Trails Task Force and assist local task forces around the state.
- Established and continues to lead the Minnesota Human Trafficking Investigators Task Force. This task force has led numerous proactive investigations across Minnesota. More than 40 affiliates agencies partner in these efforts.
- BCA Criminal Information Operations Section led effort to gain law enforcement use of ODMAP. The section’s Minnesota Fusion Center analyzes ODMAP data in real-time and provides overdose spike alerts to Minnesota law enforcement.
Established monthly agency-wide virtual staff meetings during which employees hear about agency priorities, issues affecting the agency and high-profile agency happenings; and senior administrators answer staff questions.

Established a new position at the BCA to improve agency communication with victims and families regarding BCA investigations and strengthen knowledge about the agency by Minnesota communities.

Leveraged the expertise and skills of existing BCA employees through promotions to leadership positions.

Transitioned the Laboratory Information Management System to a format that increased accessibility for laboratory users and provided more access to agencies regarding their cases. This transition was a critical step to allow for future improvement to evidence submission processes.

BCA forensic services available at the St. Cloud Police Department expanded to include on-site drug chemistry analysis for expediting testing of drug evidence for central Minnesota investigations.

Implemented new approaches to testing sexual assault kit evidence that assist in the identification of kit items with the highest potential for DNA testing success. This allows for a more expedited process for testing kits in the laboratory.

Rapid DNA testing technology was validated and implemented, allowing BCA scientists to test samples and release DNA results in a fraction of the time needed using traditional laboratory methods.

The Digital and Multimedia evidence testing section (established in 2016) achieved accreditation under the ASCLD/LAB International Program ISO/IEC 17025 in 2018. Additionally, the capacity of this section expanded to the Bemidji Regional Office in 2018 and was accredited in 2019.
DIVISION OVERVIEW

Investigations

The BCA provides investigative, analytical and crime scene responses, as well as long-term assistance with complex investigations in the areas of abductions/missing persons, cold cases, crime scene, death, financial crime organizations, human trafficking, narcotics, predatory offenders. The BCA also conducts conflict of interest and officer use of force investigations, digital evidence examinations and analysis, and technical support/special operations. These are essential services that many agencies cannot support locally.

As the past half-decade has seen a steady increase in murders compared with prior decades, the number of cases for which local law enforcement relies on the BCA to lead or assist with an investigation has also seen steady growth. This trend has resulted in a dramatic increase in BCA cases.
Forensic Science Services

The BCA Forensic Science Services (FSS) is the only full-service, accredited crime laboratory in Minnesota. It provides forensic science testing, crime scene response, breath alcohol instrument calibration, specialized training, and expert court testimony to all 87 counties of the state. Forensic science testing services are available for the following categories: DNA analysis, drug chemistry, latent prints, toxicology and alcohol, trace evidence, firearms and toolmarks, and digital multimedia evidence.

As BCA FSS testing capabilities expand, so do the number of requests by criminal justice partners for testing and expert witness services. Each case may represent a single piece of evidence or hundreds that require testing in one or more of the laboratory sections.

The BCA FSS added DNA evidence testing capabilities in 1991. Since then, this area of testing has experienced significant growth. In the past decade, DNA case submissions nearly tripled. In recent years, the demand for testing of suspected controlled substances and evidence pertaining to impaired driving has also increased. The evolution of illicit drugs has contributed to the complexity of the cases encountered by BCA drug chemists and toxicologists.

Increases in demand leads to an elevation in the time required to test and report cases. The BCA FSS continues to look for ways to increase capacity to meet the rising demands for service.
Minnesota Justice Information Services

This division collects, manages and delivers criminal justice information to law enforcement, prosecutors, corrections professionals, court staff and defense attorneys for better decision-making in the criminal justice system and is the conduit of this information for local, state and federal criminal justice agencies. The BCA maintains more than 30 criminal justice information applications and data management tools on a secure network. This data includes fingerprints, criminal history, warrants and wanted persons, stolen property, driver and vehicle data, predatory offender registrations, firearms permits to carry, charging, sentencing, and corrections and supervision data, etc. This division also audits criminal justice agencies that access BCA and FBI systems and data to ensure appropriate use of data once every three years.

This data is also available to the public for other purposes as authorized by law. Accurate and timely criminal justice information also plays a role in providing background checks for employment, housing, firearms permits and other purposes. BCA systems provide authorized agencies and organizations with the information they need to make those decisions.

The BCA collects crime statistics from all MN law enforcement agencies and makes that data available to analyze crime trends and to assist local agencies in planning and proactive policing.
BCA Training Section

The BCA Training section provides training to law enforcement agencies on a wide range of specialized topics. BCA special agents and other support staff, as well as experienced law enforcement practitioners from agencies across Minnesota, provide instruction on crime scene and investigative techniques, missing persons, death investigations, human trafficking, safety certifications, and leadership programs for supervisors, managers, and senior leaders. In addition, BCA Training organizes several annual conferences featuring nationally recognized speakers and subject-matter experts.

Note: Background check need impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.
Members of the criminal justice community receive this training at BCA facilities in St. Paul and Bemidji, and at criminal justice partner sites. Training is also offered via virtual and online formats to provide the largest outreach to Minnesota law enforcement agencies.

![Number of Classes and Students By Fiscal Year](image)

*Note: Class and student numbers in FY 2020 reflect business adjustments made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**Business Shared Services Section**

The Business Shared Services section provides services to all sections of the BCA including legal analysis, budget and fiscal services, contract and grant management, purchasing, communications support and data practices request processing.
The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension has an annual operating budget of $75,249,058 made up mostly of general fund appropriations but which also includes federal funding.

Funding within the BCA is broken down by section. Technology-driven MNJIS receives the largest portion of the funding to build and maintain data systems used by Minnesota criminal justice agencies and the public.
OVERARCHING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Provide comprehensive criminal justice information to authorized users for better decision making.

- Provide intuitive access to systems for relevant and meaningful data.
- Ensure data quality through continuous data, systems, and process analysis and improvement.
- Ensure the security and FBI compliance of BCA data and systems.
- Provide products and services to optimize reliability and customer value.

Design and deliver relevant, contemporary and valued professional development opportunities for Minnesota’s criminal justice professionals.

- Develop a plan on training delivery that incorporates in-person, hybrid, and distance learning models.
- Develop program for instructor development to enhance instructor skills and improve the quality of BCA training.
- Evaluate emerging criminal justice trends and ensure courses are offered in relevant areas. E.g., bias related training, ICAT, sexual assault, etc.
- Increase partnerships with external training entities and law enforcement associations including identification of subject matter experts to assist in building course offerings.

Deliver quality Forensic Science Services (FSS) by developing innovative processes and increased capacity.

- Expand and simplify stakeholder access to data, services, and general information regarding BCA FSS capabilities.
- Assess and implement new technology and evidence processing schemes.
- Respond to the needs of stakeholders as they evolve due to external factors such as any new legislation, court ruling, crime trend, national mandate, or quality assurance situation.

Identify and investigate violent criminals, organized criminal enterprises, use of force incidents, exploitation of children and technology facilitated crimes.

- Create and develop new Force Investigative Unit to include Sexual Assault investigations involving law enforcement officers and conflict of interest.
• Engaged partnerships with criminal justice stakeholders (federal, state, local and tribal) in the investigation that meet mutual goals (such as human trafficking, etc.).
• Leverage technology and investigative expertise.
• Continue to assess/evaluate section staffing levels to meet the investigative needs of our partners.
• Criminal information and operations section - Facilitate situational awareness of the homeland security threat picture for stakeholders and decision-makers.
• Increase the visibility of the Threat Liaison Officer (TLO) program by adding more classes each year and collecting more data.
• Facilitate situational awareness and training for places of worship in regard to threats.

Create a positive and inclusive workplace that values communication, wellness, and diversity.

• Expand and focus methods for recruiting skilled staff that are reflective of Minnesotans ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion.
• Support employee development in alignment with the mission and vision of the BCA to facilitate employee and organizational success.
• Retain employees to meet the business needs of the organization.
• Build on internal communication plans to improve awareness of BCA goals, activities, and strategic priorities.

Build trust through communication, engagement and partnerships with diverse stakeholders and communities across Minnesota.

• Understand and define who the BCA’s community is (LE, CJAs, non-CJAs, general public, etc.) and determine outreach and engagement strategies.
• Be intentional about communications, including prioritizing the BCA website, using other platforms to have a greater external communications presence, branding and impact of our communications.
• Engage different communities to understand their perspectives and perception of the BCA. Get their input on how to engage with different communities to more effectively build trust.
The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension provides round-the-clock service to Minnesota law enforcement agencies on investigations and in support of BCA technology resources. The BCA provides many services to the public during business hours at its St. Paul headquarters as well. More information on the BCA can be found at bca.dps.mn.gov. Additional information is available on the BCA’s social media platforms.

- [facebook.com/MNBCA](https://facebook.com/MNBCA)
- [twitter.com/MnDPS_BCA](https://twitter.com/MnDPS_BCA)
- [youtube.com/user/MNDPS](https://youtube.com/user/MNDPS)
- [instagram.com/Minnesota_DPS/](https://instagram.com/Minnesota_DPS/)