



INSTITUTE FOR
REFORMING GOVERNMENT

IMMIGRATION CRISIS IN WISCONSIN

IRG INVESTIGATES HOW AMERICA'S BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM
HAS PLACED CRUSHING BURDENS ON A SMALL WISCONSIN CITY



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Executive Summary

It happened fast and with little explanation or resources. In 2022, the City of Whitewater began to observe an increase in migrants from Central America. Whitewater Police Chief Daniel Meyer saw an increase in various law enforcement activity relating to issues not normally associated with local residents. He noted in an email to a Walworth County official that “[w]ithin the last month or so, our department has had contact with an increasing number of Nicaraguan migrants who have recently moved to our area. I don’t have much of an estimate of how many people have moved into the city at this point, but a number of the adults have found jobs at larger businesses in our area... We recently have had a number of criminal investigations involving some of these individuals and we’ve also had children from some of these families within the school district who have been reported truant.”

All told from 2022 - 2023, the City estimates at least 1,000 migrants from Central America quietly established themselves in the sleepy college town of 15,000. The City has struggled to deal with the increasing strain on law enforcement resources, housing overcapacity, and the challenges associated with educating children with no formal background in schooling and often lacking basic English skills. These increasing burdens culminated in the Police Chief authoring a letter to the White House in December 2023, highlighting the challenges and begging for additional federal funding. The letter resulted in additional communications from Wisconsin’s Congressional delegation and the Wisconsin Legislature, as well as a deluge of state and national media requests.

While many media outlets moved on to the next story, the City of Whitewater has continued to struggle to meet the demands from the “newcomers.” In order to determine the full extent of the challenges, on March 14, 2024, IRG’s Center for Investigative Oversight (“CIO”) submitted a series of public records requests to the Police Chief, who fully complied with the request and provided over 400 responsive records. IRG’s review of the records uncovered numerous revelations.

“Because of a completely broken federal immigration system, local units of government like the City of Whitewater are now being forced to manage a crisis that impacts almost every facet of government operations. Congress, the White House, and even the states must lead by securing the border, ensuring a clear process exists for removing violent migrants, and to the extent migrants have settled in a municipality, providing necessary resources for managing the impact on existing government resources.” - Jacob Curtis, General Counsel and Director of CIO



Key Takeaways

- » While numerous public officials have attempted to highlight the challenges, the nation's broken immigration system continues to place an unmanageable burden on local units of government. Nationally touted funding programs are either unavailable or insufficient.
- » Unlike "sanctuary cities," it does not appear the City of Whitewater sought the immigrants. Instead, the City's "theory" explaining the sudden influx revolves around a complex web of ample student housing following Covid, a need for farm and manufacturing labor, and the congregation of sponsor families in and around the City that were then identified by migrants at the border.
- » Despite the presence of notorious MS-13 gang members from Nicaragua and investigations that have led to the seizure of significant cartel funds, confusion remains as to the processing and potential deportation of violent criminals. Emails reflected uncertainty regarding the process for contacting ICE as migrants await immigration hearings in Chicago.
- » In light of language barriers and a complete unfamiliarity with basic Wisconsin law, the City and Police Department were forced to expend considerable time and resources in providing basic public education on legal standards, including educating the migrant population on driving standards, public conduct, and avoidance of various familial and sexual crimes.
- » At various points, City leadership sought assistance from the state, including the Governor's office. While meetings took place, there was an emphasis on keeping the meetings low profile to "avoid the press."
- » Due to the rapid increase in population, the housing market in the City has been unable to accommodate the influx of migrants. City officials were made aware of deplorable living conditions, including children sleeping in sheds during sub-zero temperatures, children left at home unattended while parents worked, and small apartment units housing 8-10 individuals. The paring of non family members has resulted in allegations of sexual assault and other acts against victims, including the discovery of a deceased child discarded in a ditch.
- » As a result of increased costs to the City's Police Department and School District, both taxing entities are considering referendums.
- » The increasing student population of "newcomers" has caused significant strain on the School District. In addition to language barriers associated with students that do not speak English and other barriers related to students that have no familiarity with U.S. education standards, school resource officers have spent considerable time locating students that either are uninterested in attending and are not being encouraged by working parents to do so or don't have transportation options.
- » Local businesses have been looked to for assistance in addressing some of the challenges faced by the City. Because of the need for labor from local farms and manufacturers, the City has encouraged employers to facilitate transportation to avoid unlicensed drivers traveling to and from their places of employment.

- » The City has looked to local nonprofit organizations for assistance. While the City as a whole has appeared to take a nonpartisan approach to the challenge, certain nonprofit organizations may have partisan motivations. Planned Parenthood and organizations promoting increased immigration levels have been in communication with the City.
- » Because of the focus on the unique law enforcement challenges associated with the migrant population, such as violations for driving without a license, the Police Department has identified a significant decrease in proactive policing. The issuance of violations for speeding and driving while intoxicated have decreased.
- » In light of questions related to the legal status of migrants, questions have been raised regarding how individuals should be identified. In particular, the City appears unsure how migrants can obtain identification cards. Some members of the community have suggested paths for migrants to obtain driver's licenses. It remains unclear how that is being accomplished under Wisconsin law.

Introduction and Timeline

Even before the City of Whitewater Chief of Police Daniel Meyer's much publicized letter to the White House highlighting an influx of immigrants from Central America, the City's Police Chief wrote the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. Among other observations, he explained the basis for the "dire need for additional resources,"

Communicating with an immigrant population that generally speaks only Spanish has been a challenge we've worked to overcome by the use of costly translation software. We have found approximately three times the number of unlicensed drivers on our roadways compared to previous years. This occupies much of their time and takes away from our ability to serve in other aspects. Our officers have also seen first-hand the terrible living conditions that many migrants are living in. We've seen a family living in a 10'x10' shed in -10-degree temperatures. We've seen many over-occupied apartments that create non-familial living situations, which unfortunately has led to a number of situations involving juvenile victims of sexual assault. We've also encountered a significant trust barrier between the immigrant population and law enforcement. In many cases this has led to individuals providing false documents and misleading our staff, which further increases our time involved in investigating cases. Finally, our law enforcement staff have responded to a number of serious crimes linked to immigrants in some manner including the death of an infant child, multiple sexual assaults, and a kidnapping.¹

On December 28, 2023 the Police Chief formally wrote to the White House, informing it of significant challenges the City faces related to ongoing "demographic change."² More precisely, that demographic change related to a "rapid increase in the population of migrants arriving from Nicaragua and Venezuela." This has resulted in "major challenges." The Police Chief's letter explained that the "demographic changes" identified by the police department

¹ See Attachment A.

² See Attachment B.

has “utilized a great deal of our law enforcement resources and made it increasingly difficult to police proactively.” Moreover, “[c]ommunication, transportation, housing, and documentation/identification concerns are some of the top obstacles that we have been addressing.”

On January 4, 2024, Representative Karen Hurd and Senator Cory Tomczyk introduced LRB-5037 and LRB-5523. In particular, LRB-5037 would require municipalities within a 100 mile radius of the proposed site of a refugee resettlement to designate an individual to serve as a representative when consulting with the federal government or a private nonprofit voluntary agency regarding certain refugee resettlement and assistance issues.³ In essence, the proposal would ensure that any contact to or from the federal government or any private/non-profit working with the federal government by an elected official, appointed official, or employee of local government related to resettlement issues would be publicly communicated to a broad array of local officials and citizens.⁴ The proposals were supported by the Wisconsin Towns Association, the Wisconsin Counties Association, U.S. Senator Ron Johnson, and Congressman Tom Tiffany. The office of Representative Ellen Schutt, who represents parts of the City of Whitewater, reached out to City leadership to determine whether the bills would help alleviate some of the challenges the City was facing related to the influx of migrants. In response, the City expressed concern, arguing the proposed legislation “inadvertently imposed unfunded mandates and increased administrative burdens” and lacked a “clear funding mechanism.”⁵

On January 5, 2024, the Wisconsin State Legislature also sent a letter to the White House, attempting to bring attention to the immigration-related challenges facing the City.⁶ Among other concerns, the legislators specifically made reference to an increase in serious crimes involving some of the migrants as well as a decrease in proactive policing:

This small city has recently been subjected to an increase in serious crimes involving some of those immigrants including numerous sexual assaults and sexual assaults of juveniles, a kidnapping, and the tragic death of an infant child. The City of Whitewater Police Department with its current staffing levels has needed to reduce its proactive policing services benefitting the entire community in order to focus significant resources to address the immigration-related circumstances.

The strain on law enforcement and other local municipal services is evident. Due to the elevated levels of crime, the police department has reported a significant decline in policing activities. For example, they cite a nearly 50% reduction in self-initiated traffic stops over the last two years. Between 2010 and 2021 the Whitewater Police Department conducted an average of 2,437 traffic stops - in 2023 that number fell to just 1,246. Again, this highlights the desperate need for additional law enforcement support.

³ It was pointed out the US Immigration and Nationality Act (“INA”), as amended by the Refugee Act of 1980, authorizes the United States to admit refugees. 8 USC 1522 requires the federal government to consult with state and local governments before refugee placement; however, the code does not spell out with whom the federal government should consult with.

⁴ The specific procedure under the bill would require any local official or employee that contacts or is contacted by the federal government or a private nonprofit working with the federal government on a resettlement to report the contact to the chief elected official, creating a “placement report.” The chief elected official would then be required to notify each local governmental unit within a 100-mile radius. Governing bodies that received such a notice would then be required to meet and include on a meeting agenda an informational item that the notification has been received and allow for public comment. In addition, the governing body would be required to designate a representative for the local governmental unit for purposes of consulting with the federal government or private nonprofit.

⁵ 1/10/24 email from City Manager John Weidl to Office of Representative Ellen Schutt Legislative Assistant Connor Hartje.

⁶ See Attachment C.

On January 8, 2024, Wisconsin Congressman Bryan Steil responded to the Police Chief's letter to the White House, noting the "addition of roughly 1,000 migrants in your community has strained your officers and their resources, making your department unable to serve your residents properly."⁷ Congressman Steil emphasized, among other initiatives, his support for additional funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas ("HIDTA") program. Finally, he explained the importance of the Administration maintaining its Title 42 authority, which grants the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") the "ability to immediately expel migrants that would otherwise be detained or released into our communities in the U.S." This is key in light of the Mexican Gulf Cartel's alleged activities in Whitewater, which includes operations in the City such as "drug and sex trafficking and selling fraudulent ID documents."⁸

On January 17, 2024, Senator Tammy Baldwin followed suit and sent a letter to the White House.⁹ She noted "I write to express my concern and request immediate assistance for cities and towns across the State of Wisconsin as migration increases demands on existing state and local government resources." Citing the Police Chief's letter, she emphasized "Whitewater estimates that between 800-1,000 migrants have arrived since 2022, a population increase of approximately 7 percent."

On February 22, 2024, the Police Chief received a letter from FEMA in response to the December 2023 letter to Secretary Mayorkas.¹⁰ After explaining that the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 appropriated \$800 million to support sheltering and other critical services for noncitizen migrants, it went on to note "entities in Wisconsin were not awarded SSP funding in FY 2023, but FEMA and CBP continue to evaluate future funding models should Congress appropriate funding to SSP in FY 2024." The Police Chief then reached out to Wisconsin Emergency Management at the Department of Military Affairs, noting "I'm reaching out to inquire whether there are any state grant opportunities that our City may qualify for related to an influx of immigrants from Central America."¹¹

In March 2024 the Police Chief prepared and presented a power point presentation that attempted to explain many of the questions that were generated from his letter to the White House.¹² Among other key information and data provided by the Police Chief, the presentation explained the "first signs of change" in January 2022, the impact on the Whitewater Police Department ("WPD") of interpretation costs, the impact on traffic enforcement, overoccupancy impacts, and possibly most critically, the importance of unobligated time for officers. The presentation highlighted while certain calls for service related to the increase of migrants, such as truancy, have increased, others often related to "proactive enforcement," such as speeding, OWI citations, and officer-initiated traffic stops (see below) have actually decreased because of the diversion of resources and WPD officer time to issues related to the increase in the migrant population.

On March 14, 2024, IRG's Center for Investigative Oversight ("CIO") submitted a series of public records requests to the Police Chief, who fully complied with the request and provided

⁷ See Attachment D.

⁸ During a November 10, 2023 public meeting, the Police Chief noted an ongoing investigation, wherein "We have documented that almost a quarter million dollars in a four-month period was funneled back to the cartel itself from Walworth county, from Whitewater." In a separate communication, the Police Chief commented "I do strongly believe there is a direct link to cartels outside the US in terms of the source of the drugs in our area." See 1/22/24 email from Police Chief to Wisconsin Public Radio Reporter Evan Casey.

⁹ See Attachment E.

¹⁰ See Attachment F.

¹¹ 3/4/24 email from Police Chief to Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs Caitlin Snyder-Worth.

¹² See Attachment G.

over 400 records, all of which establish the impact to the small Wisconsin city by the influx of migrants.¹³ Overall, the records suggest a significant strain on local resources for the City of roughly 15,000 as a result of the arrival of over 1,000 migrants, primarily from the Central American countries of Nicaragua and Venezuela.¹⁴

In response to the crisis, among other initiatives, the Police Chief and City Administration (i) encouraged the City's police force to complete a six-week online Spanish course (at one point even seeking proposals from various online language services), providing the officers with holiday leave in the hopes that at least 25% of the force would have the course completed by the end of 2023; (ii) organized a "New Community Member Expo," which was attended by 100 residents; (iii) published an information sheet in both English and Spanish describing common "do's and don'ts" under U.S. law (with an emphasis on traffic, domestic abuse/relations, and child welfare laws); (iv) engaged with an immigration attorney to educate officers and the community on the asylum process and to create an English/Spanish guide; and (v) worked with local nonprofit organizations to provide immigrant residents with medical care, clothing and housing. Other direct expenditures include the need to create an immigration liaison position within the Department.

Other initiatives suggested by community members were unique, including one suggestion from a School Board member for community policing to create a campaign for reaching immigrant children based on Dragon Ball, explaining he is a "hero Goku [who] has a very Superman-like storyline, and the series is big in Latin America. Some immigrant activists have even mentioned that Superman is literally an illegal alien."¹⁵

Overall, many of the communications, particularly those from the Police Chief, make clear the City has attempted to balance maintaining an objective posture on a highly charged public policy debate while recognizing the clear impact the influx of immigrants is having on the City's ability to protect its residents, ensure a quality public education, and maintain fiscal solvency.¹⁶ In one example, the Police Chief reached out to the County's Democratic Party and explained the following:

I'm reaching out to let you know that I would be interested in presenting information on how demographic change is impacting law enforcement here in Whitewater. I've provided this information a few different times now, to the Walworth County Republican group, at a roundtable with elected officials, and to a very politically diverse group on the UW-Whitewater campus.

My position is apolitical. I understand that immigration and demographic change can be very polarizing topics, but my goal in presenting this information is simple – I want to ensure the public knows what we are seeing here locally in a way that unifies our community rather than serving to further divide it. The underlying message in my presentation is that we have a critical strain on our resources and we are struggling to continue providing proactive law enforcement service at a level our community is accustomed to.¹⁷

¹³ All public records received in response to IRG's March 14, 2024 Public Records Request are available upon request.

¹⁴ Some have suggested the estimate of the number of immigrants has been exaggerated. In one communication, a resident argued "[a]pparently the number that was used by Senator Johnson was used incorrectly based on school district numbers. The actual numbers are quite different and will not reflect 800 to 1000 newcomers to town based on the school district numbers which is my understanding how Chief Meyer determined that number." 1/4/24 email from Marjorie Stoneman to Police Chief and City Administration. The Police Chief stands by the estimate. In response to the above complaint, the Police Chief explained his rationale - "I stand by the listed estimate of 800-1,000 people, and I believe it is a conservative estimate. At one point we believe we had 200-300 individuals from Central America in one apartment complex alone. Also, in our experience in the police department, most of the individuals we are encountering are 20-40 year-old males who would not be counted in any WWUSD numbers." Id.

¹⁵ 2/21/24 email from Whitewater School Board Member Miguel Aranda to Police Chief.

Other records illustrated specific challenges the City is facing as it attempts to manage the influx of migrants and are summarized below.

Why Whitewater

The first, and most critical question answered by a review of the records relates to the simple question of why the City of Whitewater has experienced such a rapid increase in illegal immigrants. While much media attention has been focused nationwide on large numbers of migrants being “bussed” into municipalities en masse, the City slowly began to observe an increase in its migrant population throughout 2021 and 2022. The Police Chief has offered the following explanation, which is supported by other records reviewed:

[O]ur belief is that COVID-19 had an adverse impact on the university population living in Whitewater. That led to ample housing availability during that time. Around that time a few families came here from Central America. Those families then became sponsor families for individuals who were crossing the US/Mexico border. Once the sponsor family was identified in Whitewater, those individuals were flown to a nearby major city and bussed to the location of the sponsor family. That process happened many times and caused the population of immigrants to grow relatively quickly.¹⁸

In a another communication, the Police Chief similarly explained his “theory”:

One of the most helpful [pieces of] info[rmation] I can provide is our theory on why this is happening here in Whitewater. When Covid-19 hit, the university here either canceled classes completely or went to an online format. This caused many students who previously lived in off-campus housing here in the City to move out of the area. That housing availability coupled with ample farm and manufacturing labor opportunities in our immediate area made this a very attractive location. I know from speaking with people that have come here from Central America that upon crossing the border, Customs asks if there is a “sponsor family” that could take the individuals in. If they can confirm a sponsor family, the individual is either flown or bussed from the border to a hub city and ultimately transported to the sponsor family. This happened here many times over and a larger pool of sponsor families created a fairly quick increase in the population here.¹⁹

The Police Chief separately noted “[t]he situation here in Whitewater has been a gradual increase in population since early 2022, rather than busloads of people is being (sic) dropped off.”²⁰ The email came in response to a Watertown Department of Public Health inquiry regarding plans and procedures “for migrant displacement in the event that a bus was dropped off in our City.”²¹

¹⁶ It is equally important to note the impact from the arrival of immigrants is not limited to the City and School District. Numerous emails illustrated the impact to counties. For example, the Jefferson County Health Department noted multiple pregnant women and children had come to their office for WIC services/benefits but explained it is “difficult to get information from them to get them in the program, [because] we usually require: Proof of ID, Proof of Residency, Proof of Income of household.” 2/25/22 email from Jefferson County Health Department WIC Director Supervisor Jennifer Gaal to Police Chief. Another communication suggests the Walworth County Sheriff has communicated with Senator Ron Johnson’s office regarding “a contract with either the U.S. Marshal Service or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to house at their jail immigrants that were being detained for possible deportation by ICE.” 10/10/23 email from Pam Travis, Wisconsin Research Specialist for Office of Senator Ron Johnson to Walworth County Sheriff Dave Gerber.

¹⁷ 11/16/23 email from Police Chief to walworthcodems@gmail.com.

¹⁸ 1/4/24 email from Police Chief to CBS 58 News Reporter A.J. Bayatpour.

Lack of Clarity Regarding Felon Detainees

In one particularly telling communication, members of the Police Department attempted to understand the involvement of ICE, which prompted troubling questions from the Police Chief. On December 6, 2023, a WPD Detective emailed the Police Chief, noting “ICE agents told me that we can inform them of our felony arrests when the person is confined. I know we are not agents working on behalf of ICE but this email can be used to notify ICE and DHS of our felony arrests. They then decide if a detainer needs to be placed on the person. It gives ICE and DHS a head start with paperwork when they need to place a detainer on someone. They said they are notified by the jail but the person may be released before they can get to proper paperwork completed.”²² The Detective suggested the following communication be sent to WPD staff - “If you arrest someone who is not a legal citizen for a felony offense and they are being confined, ICE and HSI are requesting we email Icecapmil@ice.dhs.gov. They need you to inform them of the name, DOB, crime, and jail they are being held at. This is only for people who are being confined for felony offenses.”²³

This email prompted a follow-up communication from the Police Chief to ICE. The Police Chief began by thanking the agency’s “recent assistance in our City removing an individual who had been identified as **a wanted MS-13 gang member** from Nicaragua.” (emphasis added)²⁴ The Police Chief asked “[w]hat type of internal tracking mechanism do you have for individuals who cross the border and are identified?”²⁵ He further explained “[t]he reason I ask this is I know of a number of individuals here in Whitewater that crossed the border and have upcoming court dates in Chicago related to their immigration status. There are also individuals that I know to be formally seeking asylum. I’d prefer not to be contacting ICE for arrests involving those individuals unless you are all clearly aware of what their status is. On that note, we often times don’t necessarily know an individual’s immigration status unless we are notified that they have an ICE detainer etc...to my knowledge we don’t have access to any type of database other than contacting ICE.”²⁶

Lack of Understanding of Basic Wisconsin Law and Legal Status

Based on numerous and documented interactions with WPD, the City published a presentation detailing very basic Wisconsin laws that residents must adhere to. Among other highlighted laws, the presentation noted (i) No one can intentionally cause bodily harm to another person or child, which includes any form of injury, including bruising, scratching; (ii) Persons age of 16 years or younger cannot consent to sexual contact of any kind; (iii) Domestic abuse incidents are illegal, these incidents can involve any co-habitants; and (iv) Do not drive without a valid driver’s license.

¹⁹ 1/22/24 email from Police Chief to public records requester Jacob Graber.

²⁰ 1/22/24 email from Police Chief to Watertown Department of Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Victoria Parker.

²¹ Id.

²² 12/7/23 email from WPD Detective Anthony Heilberger to Police Chief.

²⁴ 12/7/23 email from Police Chief to ICE’s Aurora Banda.

²⁵ Id.

Included in the information made available to recent arrivals was an immigration guide published by a local law firm. Among other information, the guide includes an explanation as to “How Refugees Get to the U.S.”

A lack of clarity regarding the legal status of the migrants was also detailed in numerous communications. Initially, City leadership believed “Temporary Protected Status (TPS) may be the US Citizenship and Immigration Services program that the Nicaraguan immigrants are working through.”²⁷ It was noted with TPS, applicants are eligible to work with Employment Authorization Documents (EAD).²⁸ Officials with the School District attempted to provide clarification, explaining the following:

It is my understanding that Nicaragua is one of the countries currently designated as eligible for TPS. However, none of the families I know have applied for TPS or are aware that is even an option. Often, applying for Temporary Protected Status involves having to hire an attorney. There aren’t any pro-bono immigration attorneys in the area that I know of. And there aren’t many bilingual immigration attorneys either.

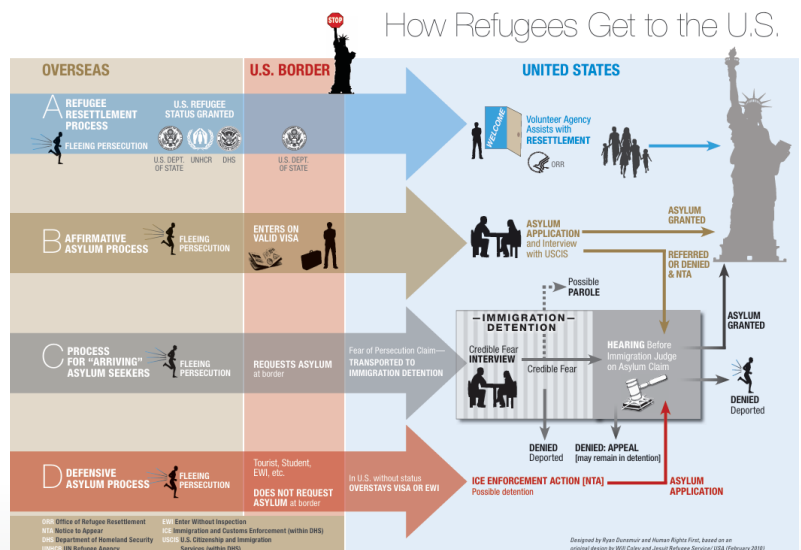
Our families are mostly asylum seekers. They present themselves to border officials, they are processed and given a court date to officially plead their case. Their court date is almost always a year away and usually in a nearby city like Milwaukee or Chicago. Until then, they are released without any Employment Authorization Documents. So, the answer to the question is no. Unfortunately, they aren’t working through the TPS program or have applied for it.²⁹

Overall, the Police Chief at various points emphasized the lack of jurisdiction the WPD has with respect to immigration status issues. He made clear “[l]ocal law enforcement don’t have any authority to enforce immigration issues. We also don’t have access to any type of database that provides information related to legal status.”³⁰ He has separately explained “[t]he reality is that we don’t categorize people by legal status or immigration status when we have contact with them or arrest them.”³¹

HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT LAWS AND RULES

1. Do not drive without a valid driver's license. - Wisconsin State Statute 343.05
2. Vehicles need to be registered in the state in which they are stored, i.e., vehicles in Wisconsin need Wisconsin registration. - Wisconsin State Statute 343.04
3. Motor vehicle liability insurance is needed on every vehicle that is operated. - Wisconsin State Statute 344.62
4. Do not drive while under the influence of alcohol or other impairing drugs. - Wisconsin State Statute 346.63
5. School attendance is mandatory for those children under age of 18. - City of Whitewater Ordinance 7.61.010
6. Those under the age of 18 must comply with the curfew ordinance. No one under the age of 18 should be on the street without the supervision of a parent or legal guardian from Sunday to Thursday 11pm-4am or Saturday and Sunday from 12AM-4AM. If any minor is found in the street without supervision, the minor and the guardian can be fined. - City of Whitewater Ordinance 7.62.010
7. It is illegal to provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. - Wisconsin State Statute 125.07
8. Do not consume alcohol in unauthorized public places. - City of Whitewater Ordinance 7.36.020(15)
9. No person in such a state of intoxication as to disturb others or unable to care for one's self, shall be in any public place. - City of Whitewater Ordinance 7.36.010
10. Residential noise disturbances can be considered violations at any time of the day. - City of Whitewater Ordinance 19.58.040
11. No person shall fail or refuse to comply with any lawful order, signal or direction of an officer. - City of Whitewater Ordinance 7.03.010
12. No person shall litter on private or public property. Fine amount for littering is \$124.00 - City of Whitewater Ordinance 7.23.010
13. It is against the law to lie to a police officer. - City of Whitewater Ordinance 7.02.010 and Wisconsin State Statute 946.41
14. No one can intentionally cause bodily harm to another person or child, which includes any form of injury, including bruising, scratching, etc. - Wisconsin State Statute 940.19 and Wisconsin State Statute 948.03 (child)
15. Persons age of 16 years or younger cannot consent to sexual contact of any kind. - Wisconsin State Statute 948.02
16. Domestic abuse incidents are illegal, these incidents can involve any co-habitants. - Wisconsin State Statute 968.075

City of Whitewater Ordinances - <https://library.municode.com/wi/whitewater/wisconsin/state/statutes>



²⁶ Id.
²⁷ 9/26/22 email from City Manager John Weidl to Police Chief.
²⁸ Id.

Meetings with Governor Evers

On February 14, 2024, the Chief of Staff in the City Manager's Office informed City leadership, including the Police Chief, that he had communicated with the Governor's staff. He advised "[t]omorrow we will be meeting the Governor and his team at the Library. His team is looking to talk about the migrant letter and any other topics that we deem necessary. I will let you know if anything changes."³² He also emphasized "[a]s a reminder, this is a private meeting and the Governor's team has asked to keep this low profile. **The goal of keeping this low profile is to avoid the press.**" (emphasis added).³³

Following the meeting with Governor Evers and his staff, the Police Chief sought additional information related to the number of immigrant liaison positions in the state in the hopes of formulating "what an immigration liaison position would need to look like in order to potentially have funding support from our local legislators."³⁴ Based on the information received from the Bureau of Refugee Programs, the Police Chief emailed leaders from the cities of Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, Sheboygan and Appleton, "looking to see if your department has access to an immigrant liaison position or something similar."³⁵

Deplorable Living Conditions and Allegations of Assault

Numerous examples existed of deplorable living conditions at various multi-family properties. In one example highlighted by WPD officers, a family with children was living in a shed in January with no heat or running water. The Police Chief explained the challenges as follows:

We've got a number of apartment buildings-Fox Meadows apartments (291 N. Fraternity Ln.) is probably the most acute problem-that have issues with overoccupancy and just poor living conditions. Unfortunately as a city we have not had a lot of success in enforcing overoccupancy because it's difficult to prove based on our ordinance. My hope is as these people continue working here and get more stable, they will begin to find housing in more healthy conditions. I think affordable housing is a priority here.³⁶



²⁹ 9/26/22 email from Sandra Ramirez to Police Chief (and other School District staff).

³⁰ 1/5/24 email from Police Chief to Turning Point USA report Kalen D'almeida.

³¹ 1/5/24 email from Police Chief to Michael Smith.

³² 2/14/24 email from City Manager's Office Chief of Staff Taylor Zeinert to City leadership, including the Police Chief and City Manager John Weidl.

³³ Id.

³⁴ 2/19/24 email from Police Chief to Wisconsin Bureau of Refugee Programs Director Bojana Zorić Martinez.

³⁵ 3/5/24 email from Police Chief to respective city leaders.

In a communication from the School District relating to transportation concerns, staff noted students “had been living in conditions that were unsafe and difficult, sharing a house with 8+ adults for a while.”³⁷ One officer noted in an email the conditions in the common areas:

There is a large amount of trash scattered around the property. Empty beer cans, broken glass, rubbish, etc. are all over the parking lot and inside the building. I spoke with the manager on site and he told me that people are openly urinating and defecating on the floors of the hallways. The carpet and walls are severely stained. Some of the stairs inside feel broken, like the carpet is holding them together.

Smoke detectors and alarms have been ripped off the wall, leaving dangling wires. The manager of the property stated the residents pull them down.³⁸

Beyond overoccupancy, the Police Chief at various points explained serious problems that he began to notice in early 2022. In one response to a reporter’s interview request in January 2024, the Police Chief explained in early 2022 he observed “[t]hree incidents within a week: family living in 10’x10’ shed, two unoccupied children in fire, 14-year old forced to work 30 hours per week by father.”³⁹ He further explained “we did end up having multiple situations involving young females who were assaulted in those non-familial living situations.”⁴⁰



Official police reports and emailed observations from WPD officers supported the Police Chief’s summaries. One police report shed light on the situation involving unattended children who were rescued from a fire.⁴¹ When police entered the apartment unit they observed food burning on a stovetop. When they proceeded to search the apartment, they discovered two children.

³⁶ 7/26/22 email from Police Chief to Walworth County Department of Health & Human Services Deputy Director Trista Piccola.

³⁷ 2/28/22 email from Washington Elementary School Hispanic Parent Liaison Sandra Ramirez to Principal Adam Bretl.

³⁸ 8/10/22 email from WPD Lieutenant Nicholas Borchardt to Police Chief and MSM Chris Bennett.

³⁹ 1/5/24 email from Police Chief to reporter Kim McDarison.

⁴⁰ Id.

According to one officer, the children were living in an unheated room and sleeping on the floor:

I observed the apartment's living room was bare with no furniture. I observed three bedrooms located inside the apartment had personal items which made it appear someone was residing there. I observed a bedroom, located in the south end of the apartment, that had a mattress and clothes. I observed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] bedroom, located in the southwest corner of the apartment, had a deflated air mattress, blankets, clothes located in garbage bags, and a space heater. I observed [REDACTED] was using a garbage bag filled with clothes as a pillow while [REDACTED] used a pillow. It appeared there was no heat being produced from a furnace. I observed the thermostat had been removed from the wall and wires were hanging out of a hole.

A CAD report detailed the incident relating to a young couple living in a garden shed with their child in sub-zero temperatures:⁴²

Call Summary

Lot #187 has Nicaraguan immigrants and Twin Oaks mgt was alerted that a couple with a baby were living in garden shed on property. It was confirmed that parents and [REDACTED] yr old were sleeping in shed, which was heated with space heater and fixed up with drywall, electrical, and food preparation area. Family was told they need to stay inside trailer with other relatives and that Twin Oaks mgt would be starting eviction process because property owner is not allowed to rent out trailer and they would need to find new residence in less than 28 days. Family was not in need of immediate resources and was provided with information about apartment rental by [REDACTED]

Thursday, January 27, 2022

Ultimately, the Police Chief explained that while it was important to highlight the overoccupancy problem, the long-term solutions remained unclear. In one example, he noted "from a 10,000 foot view, we don't have great options for locations to send people to if they are displaced other than the typical shelter list. But we need to make sure we are doing what we can to enforce the issue for their safety and to show the full scope of the problem to the decision makers in the city, to help prompt some long-term solutions."⁴³ When those residing in overcrowded apartments have moved, it was often unclear to City personnel where they were moving to.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, law enforcement concerns were not limited to overoccupancy. Numerous allegations of sexual assault were revealed in police reports and communications from WPD officers. In another example, police discovered the body of a baby discarded in a ditch near a trailer park.

In October 2020 police investigated multiple allegations of the same individual inappropriately touching victims, some of whom may have been minors.⁴⁵

Summary

[REDACTED] report received from [REDACTED]. The report indicated [REDACTED] had stated an acquaintance of [REDACTED] had recently touched [REDACTED]. This case was transferred to the detective bureau for further investigation.

Summary

[REDACTED] disclosed to [REDACTED] that the same man that assaulted [REDACTED] also assaulted [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] then told school [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] said [REDACTED] was acting differently today, but did not disclose anything to [REDACTED].

⁴¹ 1/26/22 City of Whitewater Police Incident Report - Neglect of a Child (Includes Nonsupport).

⁴² 1/27/22 City of Whitewater CAD Activity Detail Report.

⁴³ 8/19/22 email from Police Chief to WPD Sworn Personnel.

⁴⁴ 3/21/22 email from MSM Chris Bennett to Police Chief.

⁴⁵ 10/6/20 and 10/27/20 City of Whitewater CAD Activity Detail Reports.

In November 2021, WPD investigated allegations of a sexual assault by a student against another student on a school bus.⁴⁶

Summary

Student sexually assaulted by another student on the bus during the past week.

In 2022, reports suggested at least two assaults of minors took place, including one involving individuals living in the same residence.⁴⁷

Summary

brought to the Police Department to report that was being provided with vape pens from a year old male name Wilmer Rodriguez of also reported that also kissed and was intimately touched by Wilmer at on January 07, 2022. Follow up to continue. -S. Valadez

Summary

and came to the PD to report sex assault of a student. Student told and a male subject that lives with grabbed chest. Follow up continuing.

Two additional allegations were made in 2023, including one where the accused had suggested running away with a minor.⁴⁸

Summary

has concerns over her , in a relationship with a year old male, known to them as Yesser Rodriguez. found nude photographs sent to and from to Yesser in a phone was using. There were also messages about running away together. Follow up investigation to be completed. - Martin

Summary

responded to the PD with and . reported that she attempted to obtain a restraining order today against , Cutberto Arizmendi Escamilla, but the restraining order was not granted. advised that she told the restraining order was not granted and then told needed to tell her something advised that disclosed to her that on two occasions, one in June and one in August, went to bed with clothes on and woke up with clothes off. advised believes that was sexually assaulted by Cutberto. did not recall ever waking up to Cutberto sexually assaulting . I spoke with Cutberto and he seemed surprised by what was being alleged and he denied sexually assaulting . Even though there is no evidence of being sexually assaulted, I still contacted and notified of this call. -S. Valadez

According to summaries provided by WPD, there are currently ten open sexual offense cases involving migrants in the City.⁴⁹ Some allegations went beyond assault. In October 2023, WPD responded to a situation involving the alleged kidnapping of a minor.⁵⁰ When the police arrived, there was concern the accused had escaped to the back of the residence where he kept his firearms, prompting a significant police response.

⁴⁶ 11/2/21 City of Whitewater CAD Activity Detail Report.

⁴⁷ 1/12/22 and 3/3/22 City of Whitewater CAD Activity Detail Reports.

⁴⁸ 10/10/23 and 10/19/23 City of Whitewater CAD Activity Detail Reports.

⁴⁹ See cases 23-002480, 23-002948, 23-008920, 23-010364, 23-010551, 23-013187, 24-000065, 24-001331, 24-001865, and 24-002665.

⁵⁰ 10/16/23 City of Whitewater Police Incident Report - Agg Asslt-Nonfamily-Gun.

SUMMARY

On Sunday, October 15th, 2023, at approximately 11:00pm, I, Officer Wipperman, and Officer Aldrich, were dispatched to Whitewater Petroleum, located at 804 W Walworth Ave, City of Whitewater, Walworth County, WI for a report of a missing person that had been tracked by ██████████ to 363 S Janesville St. Leonela B. Herrera Peralta wanted to report ██████████ ██████████ had not been heard from in three days and a male named Yefferson Guzman Rodriguez had been holding her at 363 S Janesville St against her will. Herrera Peralta showed messages indicating that ██████████ had called for help and to send police. As officers were attempting to conduct a welfare check on the residence, ██████████ came running out of the house and started frantically pointing towards the back of the residence. Google Translate was used to communicate. ██████████ stated that Guzman Rodriguez had ran outside toward a garage in the

back of the residence where he keeps his firearms. More units were called to the scene. Officers set perimeter around the house. ██████████ stated that she had been held against her will for three days and that during this, she had been thrown up against a wall, choked, and struck by Guzman Rodriguez. Guzman Rodriguez had also threatened to kill her while aiming a firearm at her head. Guzman Rodriguez was later located and taken into custody near the intersection of Prince St/Highland St. Guzman Rodriguez was mirandized at the Whitewater Police Department. He refused to answer questions. Guzman Rodriguez was ultimately confined at the Walworth County Jail on Charges of: Kidnapping, 1st degree Reckless Endangerment of Safety, False Imprisonment, Substantial Battery, Strangulation, Disorderly Conduct, and Resist/Obstruct an Officer.

In the worst example of all, in March 2023 a baby was found by a group of teenagers near a trailer park, discarded along the roadside in a box.⁵¹ When the officers opened the box, they found the deceased baby wrapped in a garbage bag.

NARRATIVE

On Saturday, March 4, 2023, at 11:11am, I, Officer Bradley and Officer Swartz, responded to Twin Oaks Trailer Park, 755 N. Tratt St., lot #225 reference a rescue call for a newborn baby that was found deceased. I arrived shortly after Officer Kolb, who was waved down by a group of teenage ██████████ I followed behind the group of teenagers and Officer Kolb to the far east side of the mobile home park. Upon arrival, I observed a cardboard box approximately 5 yards off the roadway, a black garbage bag just off of the road way, and a light red cloth beside the black garbage bag. Officer Kolb informed me there was newborn baby inside the red cloth and life saving measures were not necessary at this time.

⁵¹ 3/5/23 City of Whitewater Police Incident Report - DOA-Sudden Death.

Looking to Referendums

In light of the increased costs to both the City and the School District, several local officials have called for referendums. On January 12, 2024, Whitewater Unified School District Board Member Miguel Aranda emailed the City Manager and Police Chief, lamenting:

On the diplomatic side, it has been difficult for me to persuade local School Board Members and some Council members to consider the tool we have to use referendums. The word “referendum” becomes a trigger word for many people as it usually raises property taxes, and with a State reluctant to distribute the State surplus to many agencies - it becomes frustrating lobbying our local State legislators. I have offered several creative solutions to our local legislators to no avail. The State legislators that do agree unfortunately don’t have enough influence to sway the thoughts of their peers.

I am here, ready to promote and support any referendum that helps our community improve services. When I ran for school board, a volunteer position, I ran on growth to avoid layoffs and consolidation which can have a downward spiral on a community. Growth comes with pain, and hopefully we can ease some of that community pain together.⁵²

The Police Chief has also commented as recently as January 2024 that the City would consider commissioning a firm to assist the City in preparing for a public safety referendum, likely in the Spring of 2025. In December 2023 the Police Chief wrote to the Office of the City Manager, thanking the City for additional funding and explaining part of the funding would go towards a law enforcement staffing study with an outside firm for the purpose of “guid[ing] our future steps, including the possibility of a referendum for law enforcement services.”⁵³ He further explained “[w]e are also financially prepared to go through the referendum process if the recommended staffing measures exceed the governing body’s ability to implement solutions.”⁵⁴

Impact on School District

Numerous communications made reference to the impact on the District as a result of children that have accompanied the migrants. The Superintendent emphasized the difference between “multilingual learners” and “newcomers.”

Newcomers

Multilingual learners who are new to attending school in the United States. Typically we use this term for students who have been in the U.S. fewer than two years. These students are rapidly acquiring social and academic language. They are also learning how American schools operate.

Multilingual Learners

Students who are exposed to or utilize a language other than English for greater than 50% of the time at home.

⁵² 1/12/24 email from Whitewater School Board Member Miguel Aranda to Police Chief and City Manager John Weidl.

⁵³ 12/1/23 letter from Police Chief and City Manager to “Stakeholders of the City of Whitewater.”

⁵⁴ Id.

She explained as of January 2024 the district had “a total of 415 Multilingual students (MLs),” which included “9 languages amongst our MLs- English, Mandarin, Albanian, Tagalog, Spanish, Hindi, French, Gujarati, and American Sign Language.”⁵⁵ She stated such a designation does not relate to immigration status, noting “[i]t is illegal for us to ask that.”⁵⁶ Based on this distinction, she summarized three years worth of data, detailing the overall ML learners and the disaggregated number of “newcomers”:⁵⁷

School Year	Number of ML Learners	Newcomers
21-22	340	83
22-23	401	84
23-24	415	14

Early on in the process, the district had a less clear picture of the “newcomers.” In response to an email from the Police Chief, the Superintendent noted on August 29, 2022:

[W]e have 33 newcomer students that have transferred into the district and registered so far. Of those 33, 28 are from Nicaragua. I will not have a total of “returning” newcomer families from last year until September. We are really struggling to get them to register online.⁵⁸

In addition to the above numerical challenges, practical challenges were also noted throughout various records, including challenges enrolling “newcomers” and associated questions over guardianship, or lack thereof. According to one school resource officer (“SRO”):

It is the 1st week of school and I have already dealt with tracking down a 13 year old that has apparently been here since December of last year. She has not been enrolled in school. She said she mostly “watched Youtube and played video games” for the past 9 months. While at the residence, we also found a 5 year old that has not been enrolled in school. We tried to get the mom to enroll her, but the mom works 12 hour days and would not be able to get the child to/from school. Very frustrating. We know there are many more families like this in the area. Many of the children are not even here with a biological parent, nor is there official “guardianship”. That makes it difficult to enroll them, give them services or enforce parental responsibilities.⁵⁹

In addition, the SRO explained the challenges once a “newcomer” is actually enrolled, explaining many of the students come from backgrounds where no formal education norms existed. In particular, she noted “[o]nce enrolled, the students do not attend regularly. There are no attendance laws in Nicaragua, so they do not feel school is important. I spend a lot of time going to homes to track down kids. During the winter months, the most frequent excuse for the kids not being at school is because it is ‘too cold.’ It is very time consuming for me

⁵⁵ 1/4/24 email from Whitewater Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Caroline Pate-Hefty to Police Chief and City Manager John Weidl.

⁵⁶ Id.

⁵⁷ Id.

⁵⁸ 8/29/22 email from Whitewater Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Caroline Pate-Hefty to Police Chief.

⁵⁹ 9/8/22 email from Whitewater Unified School District SRO Michele Martin to Police Chief.

to do all the ‘welfare checks’ for the kids not at school.”⁶⁰ She did state that once attending school, she did not have many “issues” with the students and believes “[t]hey are respectful and seem to want to learn.”⁶¹

Role of Local Businesses

Numerous communications referenced the role local businesses may be playing in the influx of migrants. While the City and District have struggled to manage the increase of migrants, much of the draw to the City could be attributable to the understandable workforce strains experienced by local employers, many of whom were referenced in communications as attempting to provide employment to the migrants.⁶² Among other specific needs, the Police Chief explained the need for ride-sharing programs that could be sponsored by local employers.

But even here there was concern expressed regarding the relationship between the migrant community and local employers. A member of City staff explained the dynamic:

When it comes to workforce needs, there may indeed be an opportunity to connect our new arrivals with work opportunities. I personally have a concern that, due to the chaotic life experiences of some prior to arriving here, their expectations for an honest wage or employment rights are probably very low. Thus, I am concerned some may be taken advantage of. It would be good to just make sure they have access to jobs where they can get a leg up and provide desperately needed labor for employers.⁶³

Assistance from Local Non-Profits

While many of the local nonprofit organizations mentioned in communications as attempting to provide assistance to the City are organizations focused on immigrant needs or faith based, others may have political motivations. Several communications referenced abortion-provider Planned Parenthood. In one email from the Police Chief, he indicated he “met with Monica Los from Planned Parenthood this morning” and explained she “is trying to get time at the major employers of individuals recently migrating to the area to provide resources.” In another email, the Police Chief expressed interest in joining the Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force, a group that describes itself as “over 150 law enforcement leaders committed to serving and protecting all members of their communities and advocating for immigration reform.”⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Id.

⁶¹ Id.

⁶² 11/10/22 email from Police Chief to Terilyn Robles.

⁶³ 2/22/22 email from City Manager Cameron Clapper to City staff.

⁶⁴ 2/13/24 email from Police Chief to City Manager John Weidl (forwarding email from Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force Field & Constituencies Coordinator Andrea Corro).

While the Police Chief appeared to maintain a non-partisan approach,⁶⁵ at least one member of the School Board expressed a clear bias against conservative involvement in the situation. In discussing coordinating with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel regarding coverage of the immigrant situation, School Board Member Miguel Aranda commented that “I do politely ask that this story initiative be kept under the radar until publication, as one of my worries and concerns is that a certain political party is known to weaponize the topic of immigration as a political tactic. The goal is to have a real conversation, to hopefully have real progress on policy.”⁶⁶ In discussing the cancelation of a festival, the School Board Member also commented that:

One of the reasons that the Fall Festival was canceled (sic) by the school district was due to some very heavy anti-immigrant language from some of members of the planning committee. One of my worries, which I’m sad to say, is the possibility of a school shooting. Following the most recent school shootings, there has been a pattern of the phrase “the Replacement Theory.” If the Festival was something led by the Police Department, I feel that could help alleviate some of that tension.⁶⁷

The League of Women Voters Whitewater Area also has been involved in addressing the situation, at one point reaching out to City management to ask if there would be interest in participating in the League’s public forum “designed to enhance our community’s understanding of the needs of our Nicaraguan neighbors and how everyday citizens can lend their support.”⁶⁸

Finally, the relationship with UW-Whitewater at various points was highlighted, particularly as it relates to the provision of linguistics services. However, in one exchange, the Police Chief communicated with the Chancellor, noting “while our first couple meetings have been a bit contentious, I do respect you and the position you hold.”⁶⁹ Chancellor King responded that “[t]he university’s core value speaks to our commitment to inclusivity. We are also committed to advancing our town-grown relationship in partnering in identifying positive avenues to welcome and embrace all members of our communities. I appreciate you reaching out.”⁷⁰

⁶⁵ While City Administration in most situations maintained a non-partisan posture, at least one communication suggested that sources from non-mainstream media outlets would not be viewed as reliable. For example, in an exchange relating to an upcoming Greater Whitewater Committee (“GWC”) meeting, the City Manager rejected the use of an article from Breitbart.com, arguing “I must express that the City of Whitewater is committed to engaging in discussions based on factual, unbiased information. The article from Breitbart, while informative, originates from a source that is often perceived as having a particular political bias. For a matter as significant as this, it is crucial that our discussions and decisions are grounded in balanced and diverse perspectives. Simply, Breitbart doesn’t meet the journalistic standards of credibility and unbiased reporting that is required by this city administration to be used as fact.” 1/4/24 email from City Manager John Weidl to Crystal Singer and Jeffery Knight. The article referenced by the City Manager related to the impact of the immigrant population on the City of Whitewater and can be found here: www.breitbart.com/economy/2024/01/03/biden-floods-small-wisconsin-town-with-1000-migrants

⁶⁶ 1/3/24 email from Whitewater School Board Member Miguel Aranda to Police Chief.

⁶⁷ 8/31/22 email from Whitewater School Board Member Miguel Aranda to Police Chief.

⁶⁸ 3/31/23 email from LWV Whitewater Area Co-President Ellen Penwell to City Manager John Weidl.

⁶⁹ 1/8/24 email from Police Chief to UW-Whitewater Chancellor Corey King.

⁷⁰ Id.

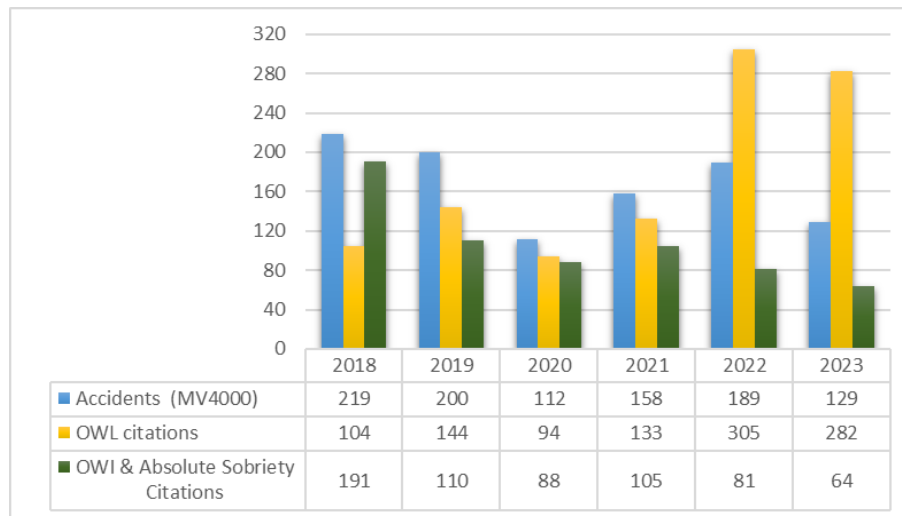
Unlicensed Drivers

In July 2022 the Police Chief explained the driver-related challenges facing the City. He noted “[a]s far as the unlicensed driving goes, our officers have those contacts just about daily, and sometimes multiple times a day. We’ve seen a lot of odd traffic crashes that seem to relate to a lack of driving knowledge or training. Just Sunday we had an individual with a BAC of .29 driving on sidewalks almost hitting a pedestrian.”⁷¹

Beginning in 2022, the City experienced a significant increase in the number of operating without a license (“OWL”) citations over previous years. Prior to 2021, the highest annual number of OWL citations was 144 in 2019. In 2022, the City issued 305 OWL citations and another 282 in 2023. At the same time, because resources and officer time has been diverted to dealing with the issues related to the increase in illegal immigrant residents, the City experienced a decrease in the number of operating while intoxicated (“OWI”) and absolute sobriety citations. Chief Meyer has attributed this to the officer’s ongoing inability to engage in preventative policing.

The data available for 2024 suggests a consistent trend in traffic related violations, including 40 OWL citations issued in the first quarter of 2024 and 24 operating without motor vehicle liability insurance citations.

Type of Activity/Complaint	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Accidents (MV4000)	219	200	112	158	189	129
OWL citations	104	144	94	133	305	282
OWI & Absolute Sobriety Citations	191	110	88	105	81	64



To address the increased number of drivers operating without a license, the Police Chief explored ways to provide contact information for Brown Cab, specifically for the purpose of “look[ing] for ways to reduce the number of unlicensed drivers in the city.”⁷²

⁷¹ 7/26/22 email from Police Chief to Deputy Director, Walworth County Department of Health & Human Services, Trista Piccola.

⁷² 9/7/22 email from Police Chief to Walworth County Housing Authority’s Araceli Wence.

Questions over Identification Cards

Specifically with respect to identification cards (or lack thereof), some have questioned whether international drivers permits could serve up to three years for immigrant adults as valid driving permits.⁷³ In response to this question, the Police Chief responded by explaining:

As I understand it, a valid international driver's license would be good up to a year for a "tourist," however, I believe individuals who are actually planning to move to the U.S. may not fit under the definition of tourist.

Another thing to consider is that we have seen a number of fake international driver's licenses, which are not actually issued by a government entity. I'll keep you in the loop if I'm able to get any additional clarification.⁷⁴

Later in 2022, WPD officers first observed the use of voter ID cards for proof of identity and then a refusal to voluntarily identify or the use of fraudulent documents.⁷⁵ One officer explained the progression as follows:

Our officers have been coming across a significant number of OWL violations, especially with the influx of Nicaraguans to the community. Officers advise that earlier in the year, when they were stopping cars, the drivers were identifying themselves with some form of identification, usually a Nicaraguan voter ID card. The officers advised that the current trend is that they have stopped carrying these Nicaraguan voter ID cards with them to prevent themselves from being properly identified and only identifying themselves verbally to the officers. The officers feel the drivers are now just making up names/DOB's and they have no way of verifying their identity. Some officers are starting to search the vehicle's incident to arrest for proof of identification, sometimes leading to them finding documents in different names, fraudulently obtained/made social security cards/ID's, etc. and sometimes leading to larger incidents such as felony Identity theft charges.⁷⁶

Another officer explained:

Perhaps our Nicaraguan residents are confused when asked to see their "identificaccion" (sic) because they have never referred to their electoral cards as an identificaccion. (sic) In the future if you are wanting to identify a Nicaraguan resident ask them to see their "cedula."⁷⁷

⁷³ 11/7/22 email from Terilyn Robles, Whitewest Unified School District Multilingual Services Coordinator, to Police Chief.

⁷⁴ Id.

⁷⁵ Numerous Call Detail Reports were provided establishing the use of fraudulent identification cards and the use of fraudulent social security numbers. For example, in a Report dated 6/15/22, the WPD officer reported "Ever Francisco Sevilla was placed under arrest for OWI 1st and transported to the PD. Francisco Sevilla was finger printed and photographed. I located a fraudulent social security card and USA resident card." In another report dated 7/26/22, WPD discovered the fraudulent use of a social security number and actually reached out the individual associated with the number - " Fake Social Security card located on a male during another incident (22-006350). Made contact with [REDACTED], who the social security number on the fake card belongs to. [REDACTED] stated she would like the person that was in possession of the card charged and did not give permission to use her social security number." According to summaries provided by WPD, there are currently ten open fraud cases involving migrants in the City. See 22-004916, 22-008008, 22-009105, 22-009146, 23-004633, 23-006232, 23-006657, 23-007256, 23-001967, and 24-000792.

⁷⁶ 12/28/22 email from WPD Administrative Captain Adam Vander Steeg to Attorneys Wallace and Jonathan McDonnell.

⁷⁷ 12/20/22 email from Saul Valadez to WPD Sworn Personnel.



Despite the above lack of clarity, at least one record suggests certain migrants have been able to obtain temporary driver's licenses from the Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles ("DMV"). In a 2023 report to staff, the Police Chief explained that:

I met with Sandra Ramirez and four immigrants from Nicaragua who have been able to successfully obtain temporary Wisconsin driver's licenses. We discussed the process they went through to obtain the licenses. This included providing paperwork for their upcoming court date which they received at the border, showing their Nicaraguan passport, as well as passing a written exam and driving test. I will be speaking with the DMV to attempt to obtain additional guidance on this process, and will be brainstorming ways to make sure people are aware of the process.⁷⁸

At roughly the same time the Police Chief delivered his report, a member of the School District informed the Police Chief of her work in assisting migrants to obtain driver's licenses without a social security number. She explained:

I feel like there is still much that isn't known about the process of obtaining a driver's license in WI. Some information isn't online and isn't easy to find unless you know someone who knows someone in the DMV. **I have been able to help two undocumented adults (not school parents) obtain their WI driver's license without a social security number.** It is possible to do so if they fulfill certain immigration requirements and if they have a passport. I believe this information isn't known. It needs to be known and I am happy to tell you more about it if you would like to meet. (emphasis added)⁷⁹

She went on to explain the process for coordinating with the Consulate of Nicaragua, noting "I am also helping many Nicaraguans obtain their Nicaraguan passports through the Consulate of Nicaragua in New York, as that would be the only form of real ID they could potentially have until all other immigration paperwork gets filed or goes through. As those passports arrive, many more Nicaraguans are reaching out to me for that purpose."⁸⁰ The Police Chief responded by expressing interest in meeting with the individuals who obtained the licenses using the above process.⁸¹

⁷⁸ 11/22/23 email from Police Chief to City Manager John Weidl.

⁷⁹ 11/14/23 email from Sandra Ramirez to Police Chief.

⁸⁰ Id.

⁸¹ Id.

In a follow-up communication, the Police Chief was informed of a connection between the Janesville and Madison DMVs:

I have talked to staff at the DMV in Madison East and they were able to communicate with the Janesville DMV about servicing eligible immigrants who have passed the road test. Last week, I was able to go to the Janesville DMV and in fact, the process was successful although staff were a bit confused still. I have started to advise people to stay in Janesville after passing the road test rather than taking all the paperwork to Madison, which is what we had been doing. Since we met, at least 5 more people have acquired their permits or licenses and many more are in the process.⁸²

It was again emphasized that maintaining a positive relationship with the Consulate of Nicaragua was critical for purposes of migrants obtaining passports, which in turn are necessary for purposes of obtaining a driver's license.⁸³

Conclusion

While numerous public officials have attempted to highlight the challenges, the nation's broken immigration system continues to place an unmanageable burden on local units of government. Overall, many of the communications, particularly those from the Police Chief, make clear the City has attempted to balance maintaining an objective posture on a highly charged public policy debate while recognizing the clear impact the influx of immigrants is having on the City's ability to protect its residents, ensure a quality public education for the City's school children, and maintain fiscal solvency.

Unless and until the federal government repairs the nation's utterly broken immigration infrastructure, local units of government like those in Whitewater, Wisconsin will be left to respond to the federal government's continued failures.

⁸² Id.

⁸³ Id.

December 20, 2023

Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, DC 20558-0525

Secretary Mayorkas,

I am writing to inform you of significant challenges the City of Whitewater faces related to ongoing demographic change, and I am asking for your assistance in obtaining resources to address the situation.

Whitewater is a small City of approximately 15,000 people. Since early 2022, the City has seen a rapid increase in the population of immigrants arriving from Nicaragua and Venezuela. We estimate that there are roughly 800-1,000 individuals who have arrived here in that short time. Each individual has a different reason for coming here; some are fleeing from a corrupt government, others are simply looking for a better opportunity to prosper. Regardless of the individual situations, these people need resources like anyone else, and their arrival has put great strain on our existing resources.

We know that these individuals have come here with a variety of legal statuses; some are seeking asylum, some await a federal court date, and others are here undocumented. As a municipal government, our focus is not on legal status, but rather ensuring we are providing the resources expected of a municipality to all residents of the City. Unfortunately, we are increasingly finding it difficult to do that.

Our police department has identified major challenges associated with the demographic change which have utilized a great deal of our law enforcement resources and made it increasingly difficult to police proactively. Communication, transportation, housing, and documentation/identification concerns are some of the top obstacles that we have been addressing.

Communicating with an immigrant population that generally speaks only Spanish has been a challenge we've worked to overcome by the use of costly translation software. We have found approximately three times the number of unlicensed drivers on our roadways compared to previous years. This occupies much of their time and takes away from our ability to serve in other aspects. Our officers have also seen first-hand the terrible living conditions that many migrants are living in. We've seen a family living in a 10'x10' shed in -10-degree temperatures. We've seen many over-occupied apartments that create non-familial living situations, which unfortunately has led to a number of situations involving juvenile victims of sexual assault. We've also encountered a significant trust barrier between the immigrant population and law enforcement. In many cases this has led to individuals providing false documents and misleading our staff, which further increases our time involved in investigating cases. Finally, our law enforcement staff have responded to a number of

ATTACHMENT A

serious crimes linked to immigrants in some manner including the death of an infant child, multiple sexual assaults, and a kidnapping.

None of this information is shared as a means of denigrating or vilifying this group of people. We know that challenges will come with the addition of any significant number of people to a City. In fact, we see great value in the increasing diversity that this group brings to our community. We simply need to ensure that we can continue to properly serve this group, and the entirety of the City of Whitewater.

With that said, we are in dire need of additional resources. We need additional staffing, specifically in the police department, but also in the form of an immigrant liaison position. These positions are critical to ensure we are addressing the immediate needs of this new population. In terms of law enforcement, our traffic enforcement numbers give insight into just how much we are struggling to continue to provide proactive service to our community. Our department averaged 2,437 self-initiated traffic stops annually from 2010-2021. In 2022, that number was reduced to 1,719, and in 2023, we are on pace for 1,246. That is an incredible statistic that shows how our staff is struggling to address the workload.

We also need resources to be able to fund programs aimed at improving the quality of life of our immigrants. Funding an immigrant liaison position would give us the ability to focus resources and deliver what our immigrant population needs. A number of non-profit organizations have taken great strides in providing this group with basic essentials like clothing and medical care. However, with additional funding, the City could begin to incentivize new initiatives such as ride-share programs, affordable housing opportunities, and language courses.

To close, I'd like to reiterate our need for assistance. The impact of demographic change that we are seeing in Whitewater is acute. It is unique in Walworth County and even in the State of Wisconsin. If direct funding is not feasible, then I ask that you to consider creating a grant opportunity that the City would be eligible to apply for. This is a critical humanitarian issue, and our City needs government assistance in order to continue to serve our entire community properly.

Thank you for your consideration,

Daniel A. Meyer
Chief of Police
City of Whitewater Police Department

John S. Weidl
City Manager
City of Whitewater

City of Whitewater Common Council



WHITEWATER POLICE DEPARTMENT

312 W. Whitewater Street • P.O. Box 117 • Whitewater, WI 53190
Telephone (262) 473-0555 • Fax (262) 473-0559

December 28, 2023

The White House
Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

President Biden,

I am writing to inform you of significant challenges the City of Whitewater faces related to ongoing demographic change, and I am asking for your assistance in obtaining resources to address the situation.

Whitewater is a small City of approximately 15,000 people. Since early 2022, the City has seen a rapid increase in the population of immigrants arriving from Nicaragua and Venezuela. We estimate that there are roughly 800-1,000 individuals who have arrived here in that short time. Each individual has a different reason for coming here; some are fleeing from a corrupt government, others are simply looking for a better opportunity to prosper. Regardless of the individual situations, these people need resources like anyone else, and their arrival has put great strain on our existing resources.

We know that these individuals have come here with a variety of legal statuses; some are seeking asylum, some await a federal court date, and others are here undocumented. As a municipal government, our focus is not on legal status, but rather ensuring we are providing the resources expected of a municipality to all residents of the City. Unfortunately, we are increasingly finding it difficult to do that.

Our police department has identified major challenges associated with the demographic change which have utilized a great deal of our law enforcement resources and made it increasingly difficult to police proactively. Communication, transportation, housing, and documentation/identification concerns are some of the top obstacles that we have been addressing.

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ATTACHMENT B

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Thank you for your consideration,

Daniel A. Meyer
Chief of Police
City of Whitewater Police Department

John S. Weidl
City Manager
City of Whitewater

City of Whitewater Common Council



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

January 5, 2024

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to bring attention to the escalating immigration-related challenges facing the City of Whitewater, Wisconsin, and to emphasize the need for additional federal resources to provide relief to strained public services in our community. We believe that taking a more decisive approach to secure our nation's southern border will not only alleviate challenges in Whitewater, but also contribute to a secure environment for citizens nationwide.

The City of Whitewater, located in Walworth County, has a population of approximately 15,000 people. According to the City of Whitewater Police Department, 800-1,000 immigrants have relocated to the city since early 2022. These individuals have various legal statuses including those seeking asylum, illegal aliens awaiting a federal court date and refugees. Local municipal services have been struggling to deal with communication, transportation, housing and identification concerns for these immigrants.

This small city has recently been subjected to an increase in serious crimes involving some of those immigrants including numerous sexual assaults and sexual assaults of juveniles, a kidnapping, and the tragic death of an infant child. The City of Whitewater Police Department with its current staffing levels has needed to reduce its proactive policing services benefitting the entire community in order to focus significant resources to address the immigration-related circumstances.

The strain on law enforcement and other local municipal services is evident. Due to the elevated levels of crime, the police department has reported a significant decline in policing activities. For example, they cite a nearly 50% reduction in self-initiated traffic stops over the last two years. Between 2010 and 2021 the Whitewater Police Department conducted an average of 2,437 traffic stops - in 2023 that number fell to just 1,246. Again, this highlights the desperate need for additional law enforcement support.

The situation in Whitewater is an urgent matter that requires immediate action. Therefore, we urge you to provide increased federal support and resources for the City of Whitewater.

We urge you to take these necessary steps to ensure the community of Whitewater is safe for everyone.

Respectfully,

Ellen Schutt
State Representative
31st Assembly District

Tyler August
State Representative
32nd Assembly District

Scott Johnson
State Representative
33rd Assembly District

Steve Nass
State Senator
11th Senate District

ATTACHMENT C

BRYAN STEIL

1ST DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION, CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1526 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-3031

JANESVILLE DISTRICT OFFICE
20 S. MAIN STREET
SUITE 10
JANESVILLE, WI 53545
PHONE: (608) 752-4050

January 8, 2024

Police Chief Meyer
Whitewater Police Department
312 West Whitewater Street
Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190

Chief Meyer,

I recently read your letter to President Joe Biden requesting assistance due to the large influx of new migrants to the City of Whitewater. As you are aware from our work on this issue, you and the people of Whitewater have my strong support for your efforts, and I can assure you that I will continue to work on resolving these challenges. I have visited our southern border multiple times, most recently this January, and saw firsthand how dire the situation has become. I am working to force the Biden administration to change course to secure the border and stop the flow of illegal migrants into the U.S. and places like Whitewater.

It is evident through the multiple meetings we have had on this topic that your motivation is supporting your officers and serving the people of Whitewater. Illegal immigration is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a collaborative response, and I appreciate your continued work with my office.

Our country has a broken legal and illegal immigration system. Our first order of business needs to be restoring sanity in our border policies and fixing the humanitarian crisis at the southern border. Communities like Whitewater will continue to struggle to properly serve their residents and maintain public safety until our border is secure.

As you noted in your letter to President Biden, Whitewater is a city of approximately 15,000 people that has been forced to deal with an influx of 800-1,000 migrants arriving primarily from Nicaragua and Venezuela in the last two years. The addition of roughly 1,000 migrants in your community has strained your officers and their resources, making your department unable to serve your residents properly. Big cities like Chicago and New York often receive national attention when undocumented immigrants arrive in their cities; however, smaller communities like Whitewater are often overlooked even when their burdens greatly increase.

To secure our border, protect our local communities, and restore sanity to our immigration system, I am working to enact the Secure the Border Act (H.R. 2), which passed the House with my support on May 11, 2023, by a vote of 219-213 and now awaits consideration in the Senate. This legislation would take immediate action to end catch-and-release, re-institute the Remain in Mexico agreement, expand the use of expedited removal, cease exploitation of parole authority, and would resume border wall construction. H.R. 2 would also end family separations, address

the human trafficking crisis, and increase criminal penalties for illegal entry and visa overstays. Lastly, the bill would make aliens who are convicted of certain crimes ineligible for asylum, including child abuse, domestic violence, and gang-related crimes.

I have also taken multiple actions to address our border crisis by supporting additional funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program, which provides assistance to law enforcement agencies to target drug traffickers. I have also written to President Biden urging him to maintain Title 42 authority, which gives the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) the ability to immediately expel migrants that would otherwise be detained or released into our communities in the U.S. This has led to the infiltration of Mexico's Gulf Cartel in Whitewater. The cartel is running illegal operations in the city such as drug and sex trafficking and selling fraudulent ID documents.

The safety of families and children in Whitewater is my priority. The illegal activity in our community caused by the border crisis is why I'm working to force the Biden administration to change course and implement policies that will secure the border.

As always, please continue reaching out to me and my office for any assistance we can provide, and thank you for your service to the City of Whitewater.

Sincerely,



BRYAN STEIL
Member of Congress

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

January 17, 2024

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

I write to express my concern and request immediate assistance for cities and towns across the State of Wisconsin as migration increases demands on existing state and local government resources.

I support the ongoing bipartisan negotiations on legislation that will help fix our broken immigration system, secure our border, and provide the resources the Administration has requested for critical border enforcement activities, communities receiving migrants, and to stem the flow of fentanyl across the border. The United States and the Western hemisphere are experiencing an unprecedented period of migration, straining our infrastructure and our national, state, and local governments' ability to respond. The impact of this migration is not contained to communities at our Southwestern border. Addressing this crisis requires leadership, and as part of your Administration's response, I urge you to ensure that adequate resources and support are available to towns and cities across Wisconsin to keep our communities healthy and safe for all.

I want to ensure your attention to a request you recently received from the City of Whitewater, Wisconsin.¹ Whitewater estimates that between 800-1,000 migrants have arrived since 2022, a population increase of approximately 7 percent.² The city reports that it lacks the resources to provide the types of communication, transportation, housing, and public safety services that are necessary to best serve its community. I am working to connect the city to existing resources that may offset these costs. However, it is clear that more must be done to provide the resources necessary to respond to this period of unprecedented migration and its effects at our Southwest border and across the United States.

That is why am fighting to secure the key investments that will help cities and recently arrived migrants as they integrate in local communities included in the Administration's national

¹ Letter from Chief Meyer, et. al., at: <https://www.wpr.org/documents/letter-president-biden-pdf>.

² S. Lehr, Whitewater Police Chief Preparing Letter Asking for Federal Help in Response to Migration, at: <https://www.wpr.org/whitewater-police-chief-letter-asking-federal-help-immigration>; Council approves letter to President Joe Biden describing immigration-related challenges facing local law enforcement, at: <https://whitewaterwise.com/council-approves-letter-to-president-joe-biden-describing-immigration-related-challenges-facing-local-law-enforcement/>.

security supplemental appropriations request. These investments would include an additional \$1.4 billion in Shelter and Services Program (SSP) grants to local governments to provide food, shelter, and other services to recently arrived migrants; 30 new USCIS officers to speed issuance of work authorization for eligible noncitizens; 375 additional immigration judge teams to adjudicate and process immigration cases; and an additional 1,600 asylum officers and other staff to hear migrant claims and facilitate timely dispositions.

Wisconsin communities must be eligible to apply for this funding. Following appropriation of additional SSP funding, I urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency to broaden the eligibility for this funding beyond those cities and nonprofits that previously received it to ensure that Wisconsin communities, like Whitewater, can benefit from these resources. I additionally urge the Administration to work across agencies to provide technical assistance to communities – small and large – as they work to meet the needs of migrants. This technical assistance is particularly necessary for smaller communities who may lack the resources and capacity of larger municipalities, or who are implementing support services for migrant populations for the first time.

Wisconsin is home to nearly 300,000 immigrant residents, originating from countries across the globe. Wisconsin communities need appropriate resources to provide services to help all Wisconsinites stay safe and thrive. Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

CC: Deanne Criswell, FEMA Administrator



February 22, 2024

The Honorable Daniel A. Meyer
Whitewater Police Department
312 W. Whitewater St
P.O. Box 117
Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190

Dear Chief Meyer:

Thank you for your December 28, 2023 letter to Secretary Mayorkas. As the Assistant Administrator for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate, I am responding on behalf of the Secretary.

I am grateful for the work done by nonprofit organizations, local municipalities, and other entities providing care and support to noncitizen migrants arriving in Whitewater, Wisconsin. Furthermore, I am most appreciative for the work of the Whitewater Police Department in the area. I understand the variety of challenges entities like yours are facing, working to provide care to noncitizen migrants while still ensuring resources are available to continue providing services to the greater community.

On December 29, 2022, in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, Congress appropriated \$800 million to support sheltering and other critical services for noncitizen migrants. \$363.8 million of this appropriation funded and established the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) and required obligating the funds before the end of the fiscal year (FY). With time being so limited, FEMA and the U.S. Custom and Border Protection (CBP) stood up SSP and relied on an allocation model to award funding in FY 2023 to entities that previously received an Emergency Food and Shelter Program – Humanitarian award. FEMA and CBP weighed data, such as the intended destinations of noncitizen migrants after release from CBP custody, locations experiencing high volumes of noncitizen migrant releases, and emerging operational needs to identify additional eligible SSP applicants. I understand entities in Wisconsin were not awarded SSP funding in FY 2023, but FEMA and CBP continue to evaluate future funding models should Congress appropriate funding to SSP in FY 2024.

I also encourage the Whitewater Police Department, non-profit organizations, and local municipalities in Whitewater and the State of Wisconsin to apply for other FEMA grant programs where they may be eligible applicants. These other programs include the Homeland Security Grant Program and Nonprofit Security Grant Program. Additional information on eligibility, allowable activities, and how to apply can be found at [About Preparedness Grants | FEMA.gov](#). As the State Administrative Agency, the Wisconsin Emergency Management –

ATTACHMENT F



Department of Military Affairs can also provide additional, state-specific, insight on these programs. Their contact information can be found at [State Administrative Agency \(SAA\) Contacts | FEMA.gov](#).

I sincerely appreciate your partnership in this effort. If you have any additional questions, comments, or concerns, please have a member of your staff contact FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs Division at 202-646-3444 or FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P.S. Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela S. Williams
Assistant Administrator
Grant Programs Directorate

cc: Robert A. Farmer, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator, Grant Programs Directorate
Stacey N. Street, Director, Office of Grants Administration
Thomas C. Sivak, FEMA Regional Administrator, FEMA Region V


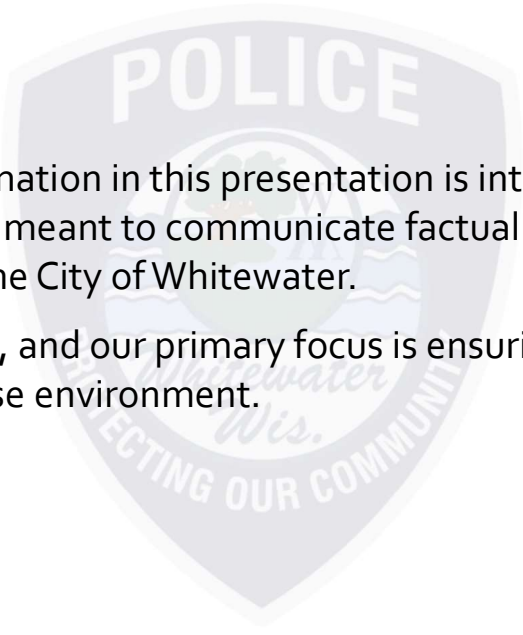


Demographic Change in the City of Whitewater

Dan Meyer
Chief of Police, Whitewater PD
March, 2024



ATTACHMENT G

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- 
- None of the information in this presentation is intended to vilify any group of individuals; it is meant to communicate factual information about trends we are seeing in the City of Whitewater.
 - We value diversity, and our primary focus is ensuring public safety within our increasingly diverse environment.

Background Information

Why Whitewater?

- COVID-19
 - UWW classes canceled or entirely online
 - Created a large amount of vacant off-campus housing
- Whitewater Economy
 - Plentiful agricultural / farm labor
 - Factory work

How is this Happening?

- Individuals cross the US/Mexico border
- Many want to be identified by US Customs
- If they can identify a "sponsor family" they are transported to a hub city (Chicago/Milwaukee) and provided transportation from there to Whitewater
- Those individuals can then sponsor others
- This has created a pyramid effect
 - Many people have arrived in a short time
 - A large number of people from a relatively small geographic region of Nicaragua

First signs of change

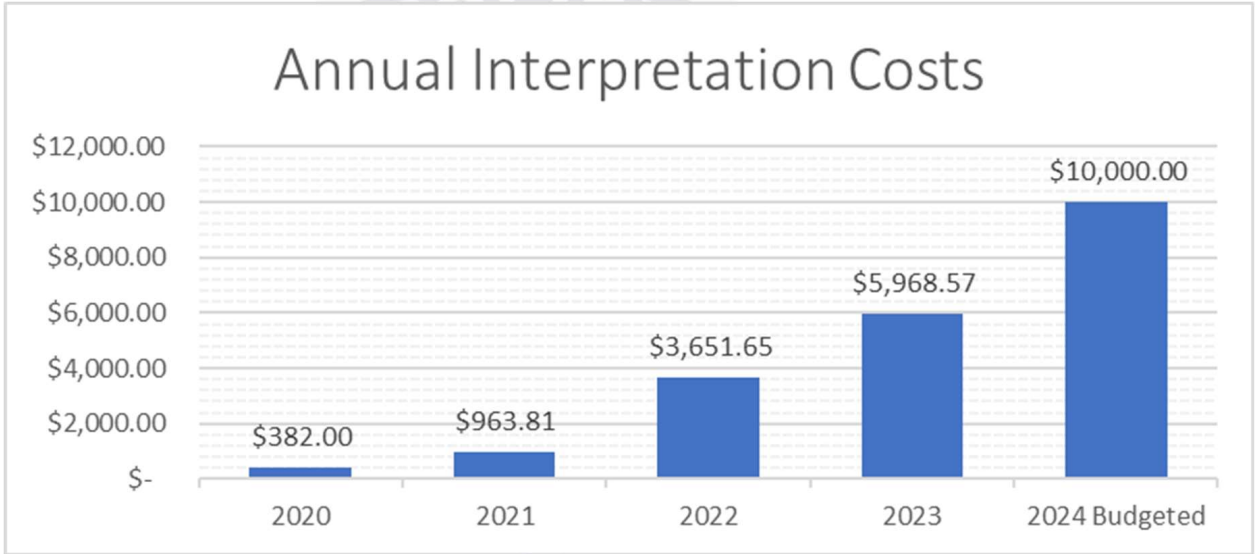


- January 26, 2022: Apartment fire with two unattended children found sleeping on the floor
- January 27, 2022: Family with 2-year old child found living in a 10' x 10' shed in -10 temps
- January 31, 2022: 14 year-old being forced to work 30 hours/week by her father instead of attending school

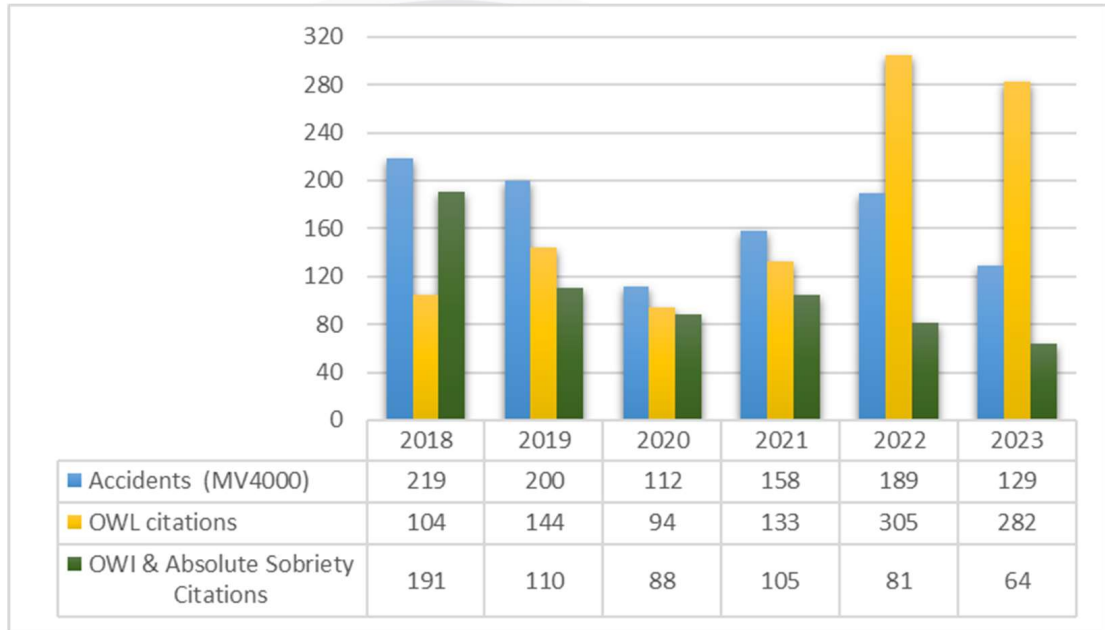
PD Initial Response

- Determine scope of the issue
 - School District enrollment data used to estimate influx of new community members
 - Spring 2022: Estimated 400-500 migrants from Nicaragua had settled in Whitewater
 - Identify major obstacles for law enforcement:
 - **Communication:** Spanish with Central American dialect spoken almost exclusively
 - **Housing:** Overoccupancy and non-familial living situations
 - **Transportation:** Increased traffic crashes/violations with unlicensed drivers
 - **Documentation:** Difficulties obtaining true identities of individuals
- Gather support/resources
 - Held multiple meetings with government entities and stakeholders
 - Created a Helpful Tips document for residents in English and Spanish
 - Began using Propio app for interpretation needs
 - Outreach events to educate on laws and available resources

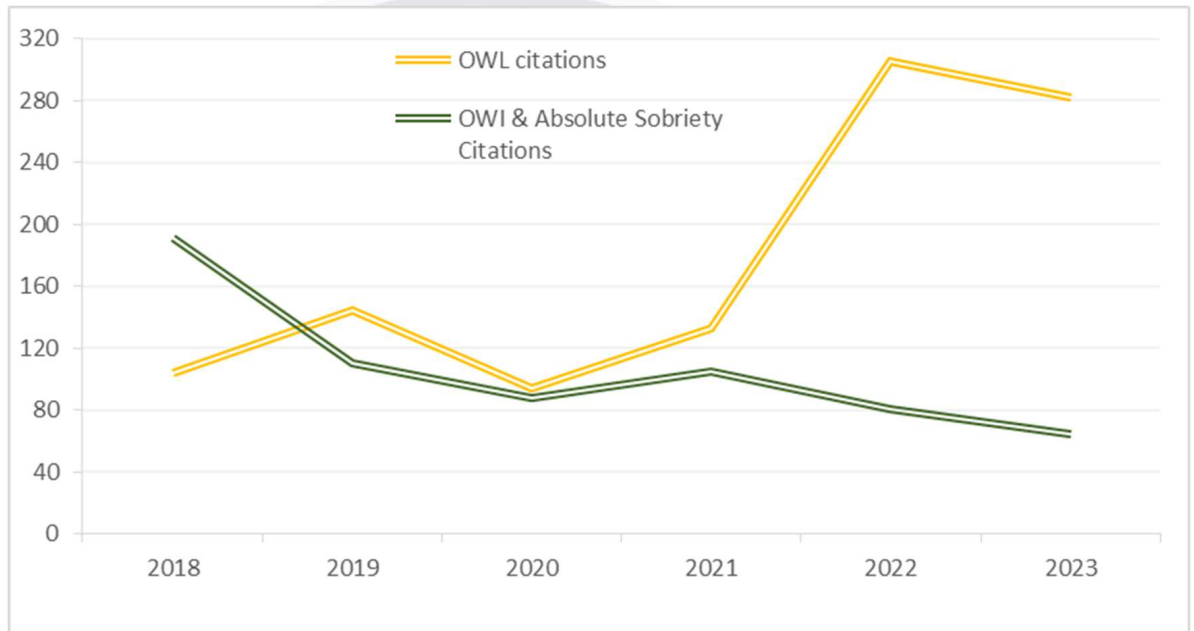
Impact on PD Interpretation Costs



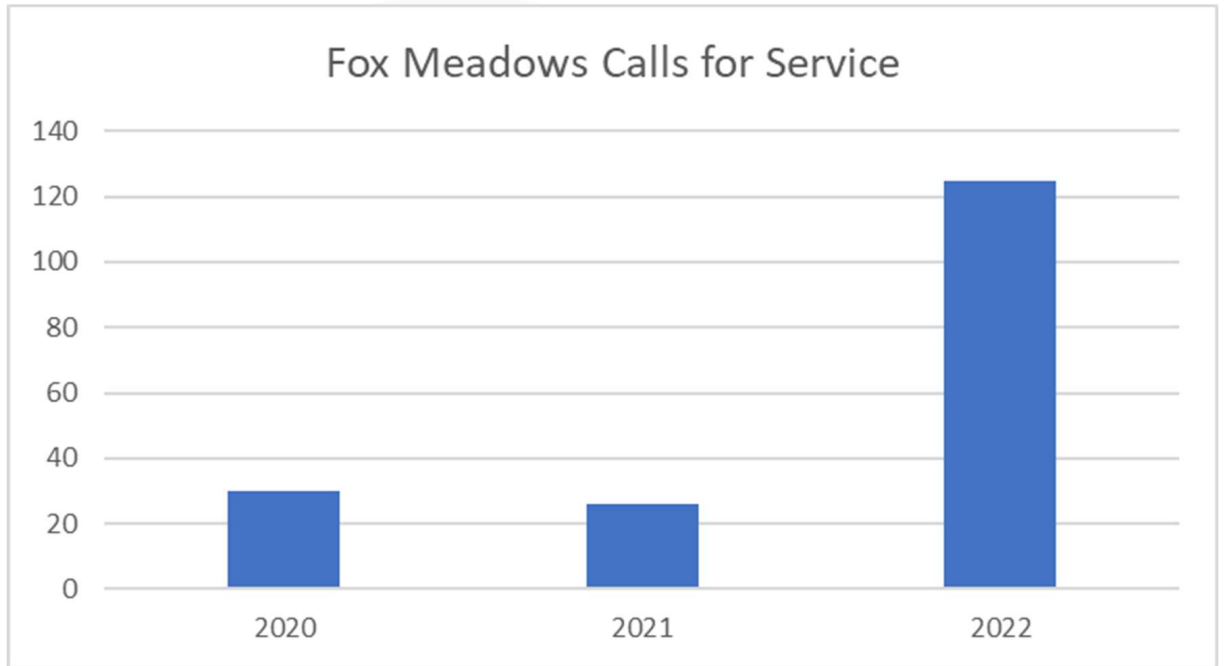
Impact on Traffic Enforcement



Impact on Traffic Enforcement



Overoccupancy Impacts: Fall 2022



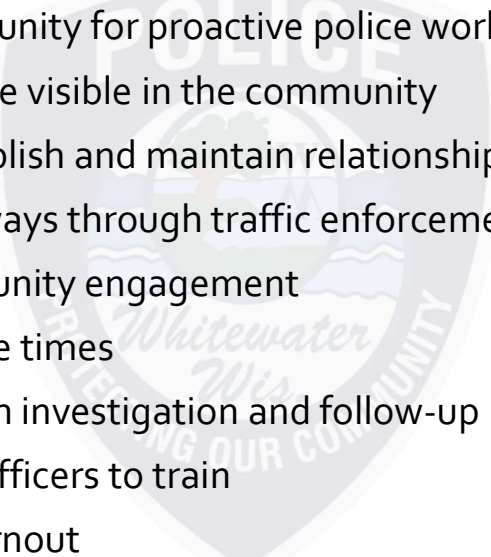


Moving into 2023

- Individuals continue arriving from Central America
- We estimate somewhere between 800-1,000 individuals from Central America have settled in Whitewater
- Venezuela now a common country of origin (in 2022 mostly Nicaragua)
- March, 2023: Deceased infant (“Baby Oak”) located in a cardboard box in Twin Oaks mobile park. Massive effort involved to identify and criminally charge the mother. Case pending.
- Immigration Attorney Marc Christopher commissioned to create an Immigration Guide in English and Spanish – publicly available on City website.
- Increasing number of domestic calls
- Overall, less and less proactive work due to reduced unobligated time for officers
- Led to a review of how our law enforcement efforts are being impacted



The Importance of Unobligated Time for Officers

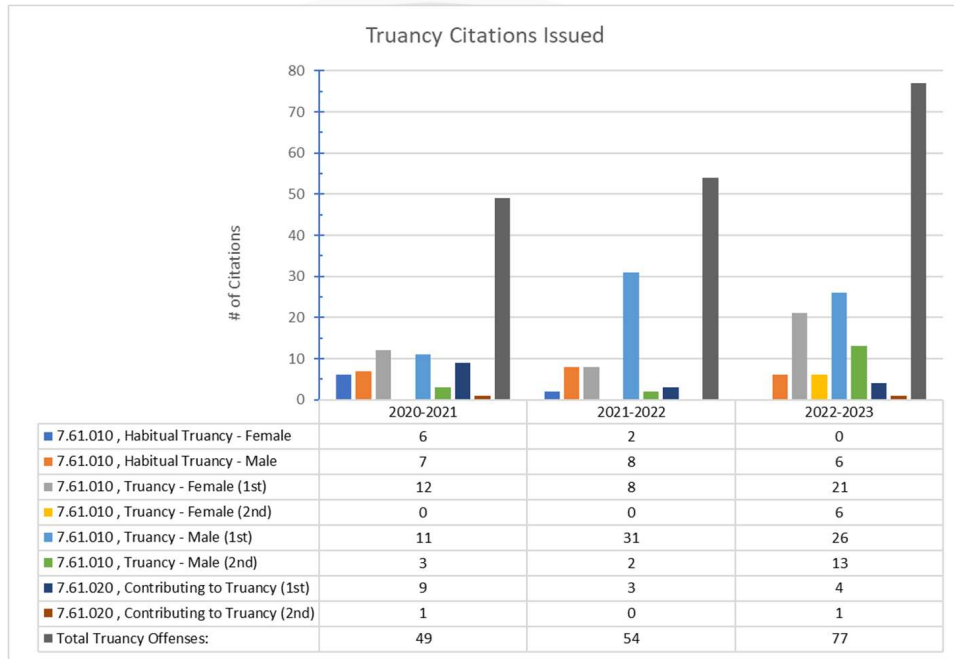
- Provides an opportunity for proactive police work
 - Allows officers to be visible in the community
 - Helps officers establish and maintain relationships
 - Ensures safe roadways through traffic enforcement
 - Encourages community engagement
 - Decreases response times
 - Allows for thorough investigation and follow-up
 - Provides time for officers to train
 - Reduces officer burnout
- 



Data Selection

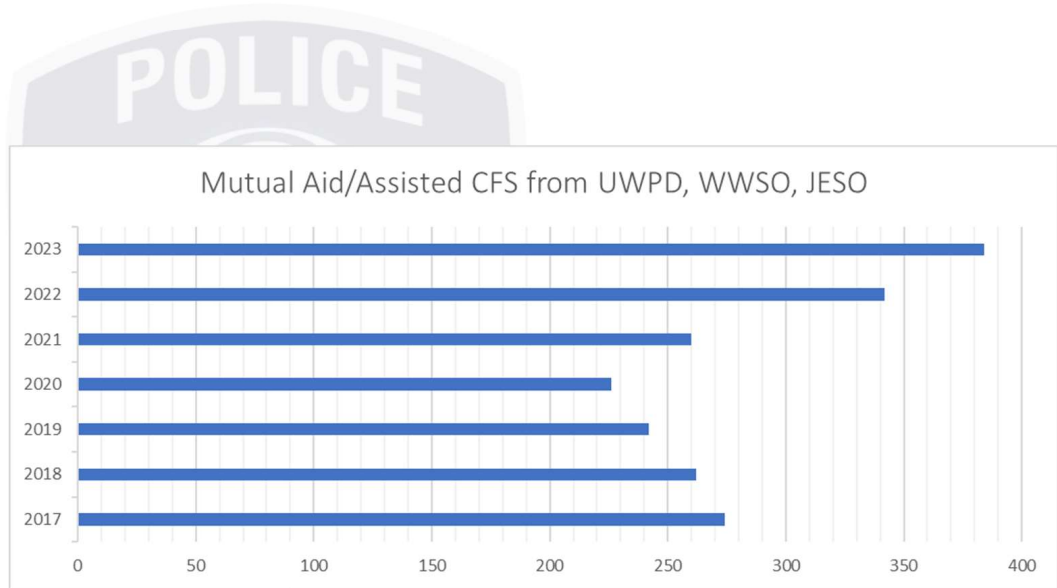
- This is not a reiteration of our Crime Statistics or Annual Report – that information is comprehensive and publicly available on the City website: <https://www.whitewater-wi.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=39>
- Goal is to transparently provide critical, albeit less publicized data on the following data to analyze activity of our officers:
 - **Mutual Aid Requests** – How often our officers are insufficiently staffed to properly respond to an incident, necessitating a request for officers from an outside agency.
 - **WWUSD Calls for Service**
 - **Proactive Enforcement Measures** – Enforcement categories that give insight into how much unobligated time officers have to enforce our laws and ordinances.
 - Officer-Initiated Traffic Stops
 - OAWI (DUI) Incidents
 - Speeding Citations

WWUSD Call for Service Data: Truancy



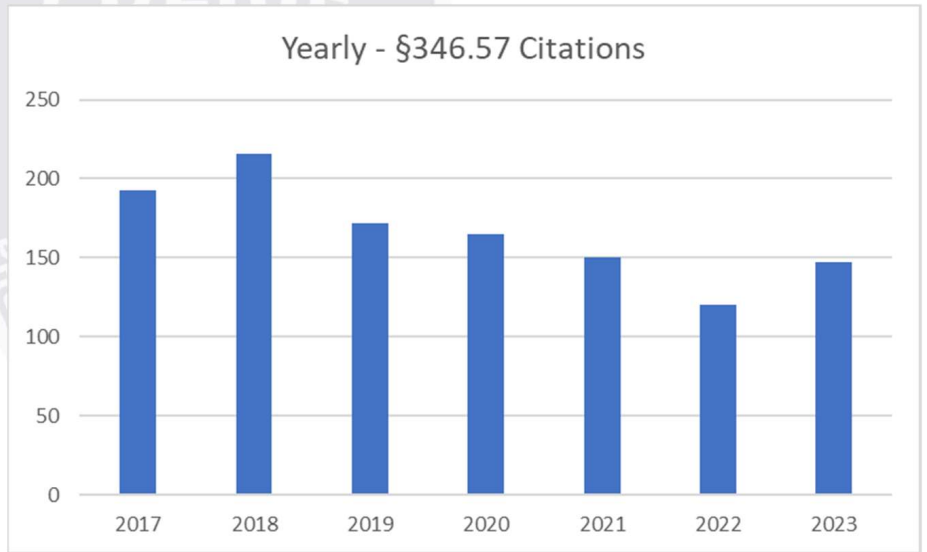
Mutual Aid Requests

- Annual average (2017-2021): **252.8**
- 2022: **342**
- 2023: **384**

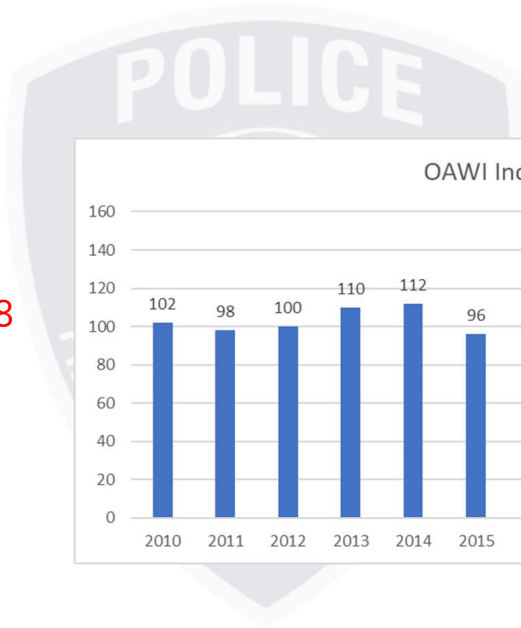


Speeding Citations

- Annual average (2017-2021): **179.2**
- 2022: **120**
- 2023: **147**



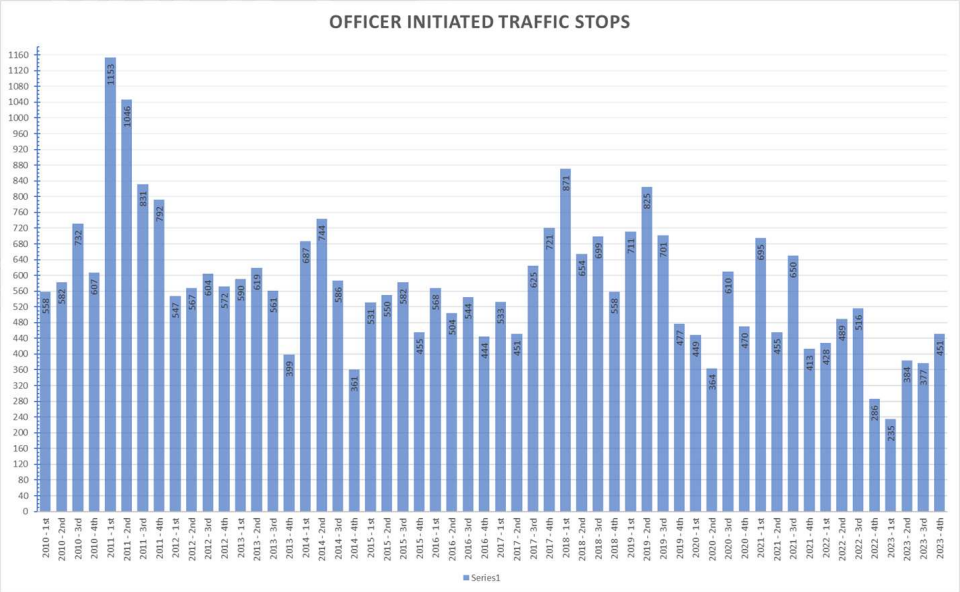
OAWI (DUI) Incidents



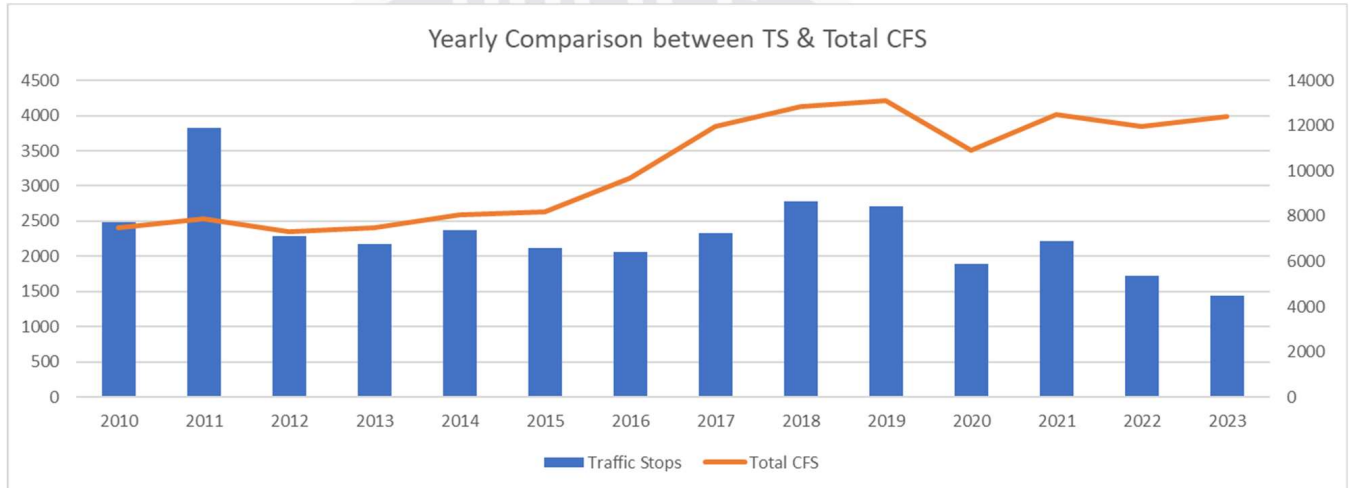
- Annual average (2010-2021) : **101.8**
- 2022: **72**
- 2023: **62**

Officer-Initiated Traffic Stops

- Annual average (2010-2021): **2,437**
- 2022: **1,719**
- 2023: **1,447**



Officer-Initiated Traffic Stops vs. Total CFS





Numerous Factors Contribute to this Decline in Proactive Enforcement

- Demographic change brings significant challenges:
 - Incidents take longer to investigate due to required translation
 - 61.2 hours of Propio interpretation service used by PD staff in first 9 months
 - Increased time fingerprinting and photographing individuals without proper identification
 - Challenges in the schools carry over to law enforcement
- High priority incidents have resulted in significant long-term investigations
- The Department has maintained community engagement efforts which take time
 - Kiwanis Cops 'N Kids Book Reading
 - Shop with a Cop
 - Active Threat Training Presentations

Solutions

- **Leverage Technology**

- Propio
- Drone
- ALPR (Automated License Plate Reader) Cameras

- **Increase Staffing**

- Officers / Detective
- City Immigrant Liaison position





INSTITUTE FOR REFORMING GOVERNMENT

ReformingGovernment.org

PO Box 180291
Delafield, WI 53018

info@reforminggovernment.org

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 [@ReformingGovt](https://twitter.com/ReformingGovt)