



Connecting Law Enforcement

How the T-Mobile® for Government Connecting Heroes® Program makes policing faster, safer, and more cost effective



T-Mobile has made a commitment to invest \$7B over 10 years to make policing faster, safer, and more cost-effective through reliable access and connectivity



Our Partners

- McDonald County Sheriff's Office, Pineville, Missouri
- Natick Police Department, Natick, Massachusetts
- Orem Police Department, Orem, Utah
- Pinellas Park Police Department, Pinellas Park, Florida
- Wichita Police Department, Wichita, Kansas

The Challenge

- Lack of affordable and dependable mobile connectivity impacts law enforcement agencies, both large and small, across the country.

The Opportunities

- Help city and county law enforcement better serve their communities by providing devices and tailored solutions with free or significantly discounted wireless service.
- The mobile officer works faster and with greater precision and efficiency. Mobile connectivity allows for distributed workforces and provides the tools for a new generation of policing.
- Assign phones to a broader group of professionals.
- Invest connectivity savings in equipment, PPE, and training in leadership; crisis intervention; diversity, equity, and inclusion; mental health and empathy; to improve employee satisfaction and retention.
- Model a mutually beneficial private-public partnership for other first responder agencies across the United States.

Connecting Heroes empowers city, county, and state law enforcement and first responders to do their jobs faster, safer, and better

As a technology partner, T-Mobile for Government offers law enforcement agencies reliable wireless coverage, robust capacity, and the support officers need for modern policing. Connecting Heroes is our commitment to provide free service and 5G access to first responder agencies—from EMS to fire and police departments.

**“People who save lives shouldn’t have to choose
between life-saving equipment and wireless service.
And with Connecting Heroes, they won’t have to.”**

— Mike Sievert, CEO, T-Mobile





Accelerating law enforcement response with mobile services and applications

The past few years have been a challenging time in law enforcement. A pandemic, natural disasters, and civil unrest have tested sheriff's offices and police departments across America, in both cities and counties and in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Some departments have gone all-in on wireless connectivity and digital solutions, recognizing the value of being mobile and continuously connected to the network. From crime scenes to investigations and apprehensions, digital tools have made policing better, faster, and smarter—at least for those whose budgets will support it. For others, reliable wireless has been unavailable or unaffordable. Until now.

The Connecting Heroes program delivers free, unlimited talk, text, and smartphone data with high-priority access and preemption services to agencies enrolled in Wireless Priority Service (WPS) at no cost to first responders and law enforcement agencies.

The program, which launched May 2020, represents a 10-year, \$7.7 billion commitment by T-Mobile for Government to bring critical communication solutions to our communities.

These case studies feature examples of the impact Connecting Heroes is having across the country, from east to west. The sheriff's offices and police departments profiled are now working faster, with more precision and greater efficiency thanks to mobile devices and free unlimited smartphone data service on the nation's largest and fastest 5G network.¹

¹ For state & local fire, police, and EMS agencies' first responder lines; eligibility verified. Video typically streams on smartphone/tablet at DVD quality (480p). Coverage not available in some areas and may be impacted by emergencies; check your response area. Requires WPS enrollment; eligibility must be confirmed by USDHS. WPS functionality (including priority access and preemption) may not be available while roaming. Completion of calls not guaranteed. 5G: Capable device required; coverage not available in some areas. Some uses may require certain plan or feature; see T-Mobile.com. Fastest based on median, overall combined 5G speeds according to analysis by Ookla® of Speedtest Intelligence® data 5G download speeds for Q4 2021. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission.

01

McDonald County Sheriff's Office

McDonald County, Missouri Sheriff's Office

Making law enforcement more efficient in rural communities

The Sheriff's Office at McDonald County, Missouri—a rural area in the southwestern part of the state named after Sergeant Alexander McDonald, a soldier in the American Revolutionary War—upgraded its law enforcement capabilities through the Connecting Heroes Program and cost-free Wireless Priority Service (WPS) with priority access and preemption by T-Mobile.



01 McDonald



This enhancement allowed local law enforcement to better serve residents of the McDonald County area, known for poultry farms supported by employees from South America, Africa, Micronesia, and other cultures. Regional tourism also employs many others in McDonald County, which is home to the Elk River, a popular recreational destination that brings large summer crowds that swell the 23,000 population by another 10,000 people.

On a yearly average, a crime occurs every eight hours in the county.² The 17 deputies in the McDonald County Sheriff's Office are tasked with patrolling 540-square miles of rural, rugged terrain.

According to Lt. Michael Hall, the deputies and staff relied on their own personal phones to communicate with headquarters and the public. The estimated \$10,000 to provide smartphones and service yearly to sheriff's office personnel was not in the budget. So, the office depended upon on a variety of carriers, with unpredictable service a daily reality.

Then, in 2020, one of the deputies became a T-Mobile customer. "He was very happy with the service, and we noticed that T-Mobile had put up a bunch of new cell towers in the area," recalled Lt. Hall. "Around the same time, we found out about the Connecting Heroes program, applied, and were accepted. With free service or free smartphones, this program and the improved T-Mobile network seemed to be the answer to the department's communication challenges."

"Giving our first responders mobile data, texting, and voice service means we don't have to decide between phones and other equipment. T-Mobile's commitment through the Connecting Heroes program has been awesome in my book."

— Lt. Michael Hall, McDonald County Sheriff's Office

² ["The Safest and most Dangerous Areas in McDonald County, MO."](#) CrimeGrade.org, 2021.

01 McDonald

The office first tested the T-Mobile service by sending deputies to make calls, texts, and try out the hotspots included in T-Mobile phones in areas they had considered dead zones. The service worked and never lost a single connection.

Today, all 17 deputies and several staff are equipped with 4G/LTE and 5G-capable T-Mobile phones with hotspots that connect laptops in vehicles to records management systems, criminal databases, and other resources. Instead of having to drive back to the office to prepare search warrants, get approvals, or upload evidence, personnel can communicate from the field and be more productive. Calls from the dispatch center are sent to the phones through a mobile app. Now, instead of using their personal cell phones and making private phone numbers accessible to the public, deputies, detectives, and other personnel present a more professional image with a McDonald County Sheriff's Office caller ID, which results in a higher percentage of answered calls.

The McDonald County Sheriff's Office is also well-prepared for the next natural disaster or major emergency. The Connecting Heroes program, T-Mobile for Government, offers law enforcement and emergency responder agencies the ability to surpass competing lower-priority connectivity demands through the Wireless Priority Service (WPS) with priority access and preemption—at no cost.

WPS supports authorized national security and emergency preparedness leaders in emergency crisis situations when wireless networks are congested and the probability of completing a call is reduced. In such cases, first responder and law enforcement agencies with WPS get priority access to the network, and non-priority callers are preempted if required to let essential calls get through.



02 Natick Police Department

Natick, Massachusetts Police Department

Years of experimentation in disaster communications leads northeastern police department to T-Mobile for Government

On September 11, 2001, phone lines were tied up for emergency responders across the northeast. The event led to the beginning of a close collaboration between the Natick Police Department, 10 miles west of Boston, and the state of Massachusetts on testing a variety of mobile data communications networks and devices.



02 Natick



“We looked at how best to communicate in a disaster, knowing that phone lines would get tied up very quickly,” said Chief of Police James Hicks. “We worked on private networks and tested large mobile devices as big as bricks.”

That focus on field communications led the Natick Police Department to T-Mobile for Government, after years of working with multiple providers. “We tested both 4G and 5G connectivity and the cost through Connecting Heroes is unbeatable.” Chief Hicks estimates that the 10 smartphone lines with six hotspots from Connecting Heroes would cost another \$6,300 per year with another carrier.

“The Connecting Heroes program is a tremendous recognition by T-Mobile of the role of public safety. Cellular data and text are so important now in law enforcement, at every incident scene.”

— Chief of Police James Hicks, Natick Police Department

02 Natick

With crime rates in Natick relatively low, a major focus of the police department is on the Natick Mall, one of the largest shopping malls in the northeast, and where the majority of property and auto theft occurs.

“We use a lot of data so it’s refreshing not to worry about losing connections or paying exorbitant prices for bandwidth,” said Chief Hicks. “And the priority service and preemption are everything we need in a disaster to continue to operate.” The department tested the service successfully at the 2021 Boston Marathon since they were unable to do so when the event was canceled in 2020.

With the savings offered through the Connecting Heroes program, the Natick Police Department has been able to provide more personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID pandemic and training in leadership, crisis intervention, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“I’ve told other police departments about Connecting Heroes. They ask ‘what’s missing?’ I tell them they’re getting the same 5G service as the public and to compare the total cost. With T-Mobile for Government, I can now afford to assign phones to a broader group of supervisors and still keep our costs below those of the other major mobile providers.”

— Chief of Police James Hicks, Natick Police Department



03 Orem Police Department

Orem, Utah

Police Department

Superior network experience enables remote policing and faster investigations

Social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic changed policing in Orem, Utah. Police officers in the city of 96,700, located 45 miles south of Salt Lake City, suddenly relied a lot more on patrol cars as their offices. But connecting to the network from the field was a consistent problem.





“We were losing video footage that was critical to investigations. Some of our officers got so frustrated that they used their own cell phones and hotspots instead of driving around looking for Wi-Fi,” recalled Lt. Nick Thomas. “This was happening when we were trying to maintain a level of service while changing the way we do things, like avoiding a lot of face-to-face contact where possible.”

So, the city tested several T-Mobile smartphones with integrated hotspots and the range and quality of wireless service was just what they were looking for. “This program shows that T-Mobile is committed to the law enforcement community and understands how important the mobile piece is to what we do.”

By enrolling in Connecting Heroes, the Orem Police Department now has a no-cost, high-speed wireless service for 99 police officers and 15 civilian employees. Digital cameras have been replaced with smartphones. Hotspots in patrol cars keep laptops connected. Officers use dictation apps to speed up the writing of reports.

“It’s my mobile office,” said Lt. Thomas. “We’ve come to realize that you can’t investigate crime and give people the service they need when you’re searching for a Wi-Fi signal or having to come back to the office. We’ve sped up how we do policing and I think morale has improved as well.”

“When we tested the 5G service, I immediately got feedback from the officers that it was so much better. They specifically went to areas where they had been losing service and remained connected to T-Mobile.”

— Lt. Nick Thomas, Orem Police Department

With free unlimited service through the Connecting Heroes program, T-Mobile for Government has cut wireless costs for the Orem Police Department by one-third. Those funds have been reallocated for more equipment and training in defensive tactics and Critical Incident Response Team training for mental health issues.

“One big challenge we’re facing is maintaining our numbers on the force and keeping officers happy. Younger officers especially are used to working with digital tools and I’ve never heard any of them complain since Connecting Heroes started.”

— Lt. Nick Thomas, Orem Police Department

Lt. Thomas estimates that everyone from the police chief on down uses their phones nearly half the time on shifts, calling and texting the public and other department personnel, and uploading and tagging evidence photos and video.

The priority access and preemption that comes with Connecting Heroes at no cost is another big value add to the department. While Orem hasn’t yet seen a major incident that required the priority and preemption service, Lt. Thomas noted that “they’ve been saying for years that we’re due to have a major earthquake and we all understand that priority access and preemption will be vital if networks become overloaded.”



04

Pinellas Park Police Department

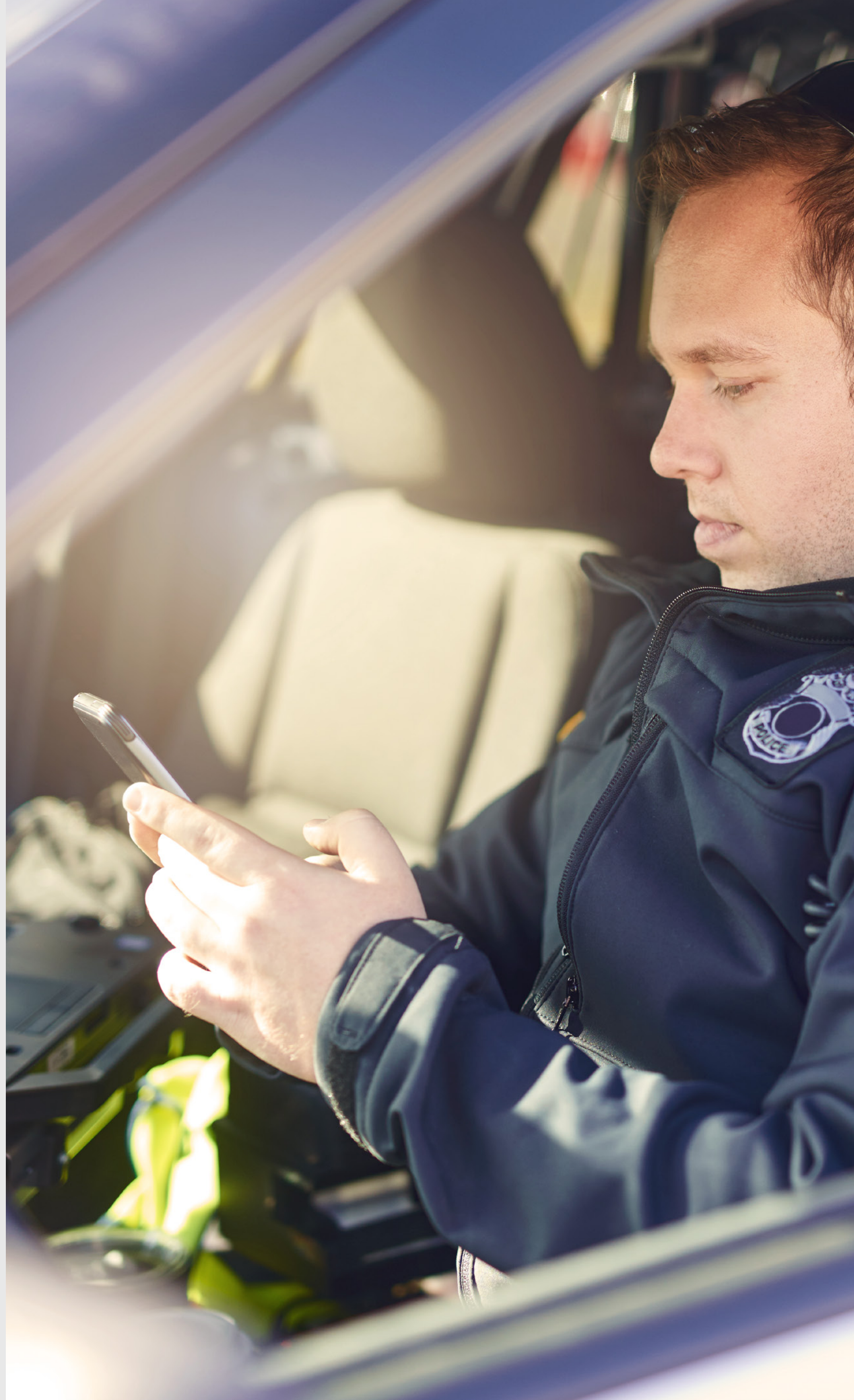
Pinellas Park, Florida Police Department

Policing becomes mobile and real time thanks to wireless access for officers and integration with body cameras

Pinellas Park, with a population of 53,093, is a city in central Florida that is known for popular equestrian events and a multi-day, multi-venue spring festival. A short drive from Tampa Bay, the city has a crime rate of 37 per one thousand residents.³ The chance of becoming a victim of either violent or property crime in Pinellas Park is one in 27, well above the national average.

³ [Pinellas Park, FL, Crime Rates](#), Neighborhood Scout, 2021.





“2020 was a very rough year,” admitted Captain Adam Geissenberger of the Pinellas Park Police Department. “With everything going on in the U.S., policing has become more challenging and morale has suffered. We saw high attrition. But we learned, we grew, we changed, and we adapted.”

Among the organization’s previous challenges, cell phone service was limited to a small number of personnel. The majority of officers relied on their personal phones, which was inconvenient and compromised their privacy and safety.

“After COVID, we realized there was a pressing need to rapidly reach officers without them relying on their own devices,” said Capt. Geissenberger. “Around the same time, we had to switch to body cameras, which presented other communications challenges.”

Meanwhile, the police department office found out that the City of Pinellas Park had chosen T-Mobile to provide 200 mobile lines for employees and integration with Geotab, the software-as-a-service fleet management solution.

“We saved \$55,000 a year with the Connecting Heroes program. That’s \$55,000 that I can now use to train my police officers in mental health awareness, critical incident response, and empathy training.”

— Captain Adam Geissenberger, Pinellas Park Police Department

The police department's IT administrator reached out to T-Mobile for Government and found out about the Connecting Heroes program. They liked what they heard about free, unlimited talk, text, and smartphone data; 5G; priority access and preemption in emergencies; and devices and integration with policing technologies like body cameras. Today, the department uses 127 Connecting Heroes lines on smartphones that provide priority access and preemption. The phones connect laptops in patrol cars to the T-Mobile network and connect to body cameras, allowing officers to view live feeds, monitor cameras from 40–50 feet away, and upload video.

“We’re a picky customer and I can’t say enough about the T-Mobile network and customer service. I don’t hear complaints anymore about calls being dropped or text messages not received. Connecting Heroes is a great testament to what the leadership of T-Mobile is choosing to prioritize.”

— Captain Adam Geissenberger, Pinellas Park Police Department



05

Wichita Police Department

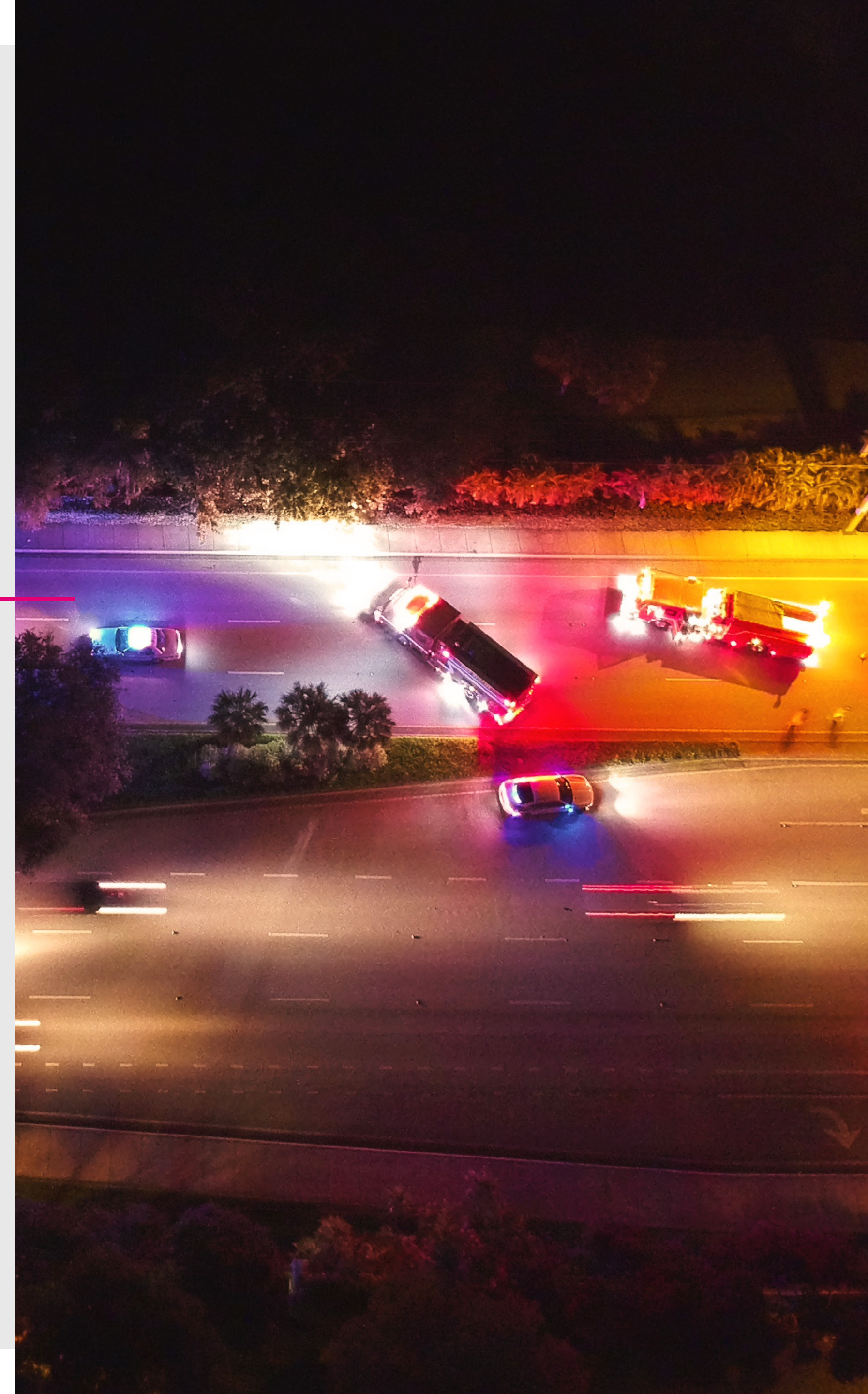
05 Wichita

Wichita, Kansas Police Department

Connecting Heroes program enables department upgrade from iPods to smartphones and wireless mobility solutions

Facing challenges of low morale and 10% attrition, the 500 officers in the City of Wichita Police Department are spread thin over a population of 361,000 and 139 square miles. Property crime and burglary declined significantly during the pandemic, while motor vehicle thefts and homicide rates were higher in Kansas's largest city.⁴

⁴ ["Wichita Sees Decrease in Violent Crimes from 2020 to 2021," KWCH 12, 2022.](#)





“Without much of a technology budget, we’ve had to improvise,” said Officer Timothy Baird. Before the force had smartphones, they used iPods connected to Bluetooth to upload, title, and categorize videos from their body cameras. iPods were also used as cameras for stills that could also be uploaded to the department network along with footage from hand-held video cameras. Voice recorders, license plate readers, and other policing apps were also available on the iPods, a phone-less handheld computer and a precursor to the iPhone.

The problem with this improvised solution was that every few hours, officers would have to drive back to a station and connect to Wi-Fi to communicate and upload their data. This greatly limited their mobility. Another downside of calls made to the public from police stations from landlines was that the caller ID displayed as a blocked number, contributing to fewer answered calls.

Through the Connecting Heroes program, the Wichita Police Department now has 650 iPhone SE2 smartphones and wireless service on a mix of no-cost and low-cost Connecting Heroes plans.

“Officers have replaced three devices—an iPod, digital video camera, and voice recorder—with one T-Mobile smartphone. Now Caller ID shows the phone number of the officer calling, instead of a blocked number, increasing our successful interactions with the public.”

— Officer Timothy Baird, Wichita Police Department

Speeding up response times is an ongoing challenge. In one incident, a citizen waited for four hours for a response. "It wasn't an emergency, but still, that was unacceptably slow," said Officer Baird. "That's our biggest struggle now, getting boots on the ground to incidents."

But now with smartphones and T-Mobile high-speed wireless in the hands of every officer in Wichita, a tremendous amount of evidence can be collected quickly from crime scenes, uploaded on site, and sent to crime analysts as the officer is on the way to another incident. Morale is higher

as evidence gathering is more efficient and faster. Officer interactions with citizens are safer and more effective with Caller ID identifying the police department in outgoing calls.

From iPods to iPhones and Wi-Fi to 5G wireless, the Wichita Police Department's mobile connectivity for all officers eliminates office boundaries and enables a digital communications workflow that makes policing more efficient, the community safer, and, hopefully, leads to lower rates of attrition among Wichita officers.

“Without Connecting Heroes, I don’t think we’d have cell phones for our officers now. It’s invaluable what officers can do with this service. It speeds our response time and provides digital solutions for better policing. T-Mobile not only supports first responders; Connecting Heroes also supports the safety of entire communities.”

— Officer Timothy Baird, Wichita Police Department



06

T-Mobile for Government

Find out more about our programs for emergency, disaster, and public safety communications agencies

In McDonald County, deputies no longer have to rely on their own personal phones for work. In the city of Natick, the value of priority service and preemption were demonstrated in a recent test during the Boston Marathon. In Orem, cellular dead zones have been eliminated for officers and police department employees. Officers in Pinellas Park connect their body cameras to live feeds or remotely upload video. Wichita officers replaced three devices—iPods, video cameras, and voice recorders—with smartphones. The benefits in cost savings, greater efficiency and safety, and higher morale continue.

The Connecting Heroes program offers a robust set of solutions to the law enforcement and first responder communities, including free unlimited talk, text, and smartphone data along with network prioritization on the devices they need in emergencies. Through the program, every qualifying public and non-profit state and local fire, law enforcement, EMS agency, and Public Safety Access Point (PSAP) also has access to discounted plans with free 5G smartphones, rugged 5G routers in vehicles, software that turns smartphones into integrated body cameras, other communications devices, and more.

To sign up for Connecting Heroes or check agency eligibility, visit T-Mobile.com/ConnectingHeroes or call our team of government experts at 1-877-386-4246.

T-Mobile Connecting Heroes plans for state & local fire, police, and EMS agencies' first responder lines; eligibility verified. Video typically streams on smartphone/tablet at DVD quality (480p). **Coverage** not available in some areas and may be impacted by emergencies; check your response area. Not intended for continuous bodycam livestreaming or upload. **5G:** Capable device required; coverage not available in some areas. While 5G access won't require a certain plan or feature, some uses/services might. **Network Management:** Service may be **slowed, suspended, terminated, or restricted** for misuse, abnormal use, interference with our network or ability to provide quality service to other users, or significant roaming. On-device usage is prioritized over tethering usage, which may result in higher speeds for data used on device. See Coverage details, Terms and Conditions, and Open Internet information for network management details (like video optimization) at T-Mobile.com. T-Mobile, the T logo, Magenta, and the magenta color are registered trademarks of Deutsche Telekom AG. © 2022 T-Mobile USA, Inc.

