

Police Training in Baltimore During the Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for police training in the United States city of Baltimore. The city's police department operates its own police academy, training both new recruits and incumbent officers. The police academy was able to quickly shift to remote learning for recruits enrolled in entry-level training. All recruit classes graduated nearly on time, but the prolonged period they spent in remote learning interfered with the trainees' ability to subsequently apply what they had learned in practical scenarios. For incumbent officers, continuing education was interrupted for four months, reducing the amount of in-service training that could be accomplished during 2020. This article recounts the police department's experience with training during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in March 2020.

Keywords: Training, COVID-19, Pandemic, Baltimore, USA

Background

Policing in the United States is decentralized and fragmented. There are roughly 18,000 separate law enforcement agencies¹ in the country, including about 12,500 municipal police departments and 3,000 county sheriff agencies, with the rest accounted for by special jurisdiction agencies (such as campus police or park police), state-level agencies, and federal (national) agencies (Reaves, 2011).² To be clear, these agencies are

separate and independent, not part of any nationwide ministry or national police service. A police chief in a city or town is hired by, and reports to, elected and/or administrative officials in that city or town, and no one else. Sheriffs, since they are almost all elected, answer to the voters in their county.

The U.S. has about 750,000 sworn police personnel³ – police officers,⁴ deputy sheriffs, etc. Quick math tells

- 1 The terms "police department" and "law enforcement agency" are used interchangeably in this article. This is common in U.S. terminology, especially as sheriff departments balk at being referred to as police departments. Each of the 18,000 agencies has police authority, although the breadth of their duties and the specific features of their jurisdictions vary.
- 2 Although this census is dated, there isn't any reason to suspect that the numbers of agencies has changed very much.

- 3 In the U.S., the term 'sworn' refers to personnel who have police authority, as distinguished from non-sworn or civilian staff such as analysts, dispatchers, crime lab technicians, etc.
- 4 In the U.S., the position title "police officer" refers to first-level sworn staff, i.e., police of the lowest rank. In other words, "officer" does not indicate an elevated rank as it might in some other countries. In virtually all U.S. law enforcement agencies, new sworn members attend a police academy and enter service at the lowest rank.

us, then, that the average sized American law enforcement agency has 42 sworn staff. In fact, the distribution of agencies by size is severely skewed toward the low end. The U.S. has a few relatively large agencies (less than 100 have 1,000 or more officers),⁵ and a vast number of small ones. Half of the country's law enforcement agencies have 10 sworn members or fewer.

As one might expect, very small agencies are not capable of staffing and operating their own police academies. While many larger departments do run their own academies, there are also regional and state-level police academies that serve the needs of smaller agencies. According to the most recent census of U.S. police academies, 264 out of 681 academies were operated by individual law enforcement agencies, while 417 academies served multiple agencies and were operated at the regional or state level (Buehler, 2021).⁶

Each of the 50 states in the U.S. has some type of police training commission or other regulatory body that establishes and oversees minimum training standards in its state.⁷ There are no national police training standards – none. Proposals for national standards do arise from time to time and have garnered substantial support over the past year, since the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and subsequent protests around the country.

Baltimore, Maryland

Baltimore is a city on the east coast of the United States, one hour north of Washington, DC and three hours south of New York City. In the early 1800s it was the 3rd largest U.S. city and in the 1960s its population almost reached 1 million. However, in the wake of de-industrialization and the growth of suburbs, most recent estimates report Baltimore's population is below 600,000 for the first time in more than a century (Knezevich, 2020).

5 Of course, what passes for a large agency in the U.S. pales in comparison to many national police or big-city police in the rest of the world. The single largest U.S. law enforcement agency is Customs and Border Protection (part of the national-level Department of Homeland Security) with about 44,000 sworn personnel. The next largest is the New York City Police Department with 35,000 police officers. After those two, agency sizes drop off quite sharply.

6 There are also a small number of federal-level training academies that train members of federal (national) law enforcement agencies.

7 For links to training commissions in each state, see <https://www.iadlest.org/post-portal>.

Baltimore remains a vibrant port city with a robust tourism industry, fine dining, diverse neighbourhoods, affordable housing, and high-quality sports entertainment, museums, and parks. It is home to the world-renowned Johns Hopkins Hospital and sports apparel juggernaut Under Armour. However, its population also suffers from high rates of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, homelessness, and substance use disorders. Perhaps most notoriously, the city is horrendously violent. Since 1990, Baltimore has recorded less than 200 murders in only one year. In 2020, the city lost 335 lives to murder, yielding a per capita murder rate of 55 per 100,000, second highest among U.S. cities and reportedly 16th in the world (Security, Justice and Peace, 2021). In the quest to reduce the city's rate of violent crime, the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) is the most visible government agency.

The Baltimore Police Department

The BPD, founded in 1857, is one of the oldest police departments in the U.S. Today it is also one of the largest police departments per capita, with roughly 2,500 sworn personnel, or 40 police officers per 10,000 residents (Maciag, 2014). Its recent history has been marked by community mistrust, division, and even resentment. In the mid-2000's, Baltimore police made more than 100,000 arrests per year – equivalent to roughly one-sixth of the city's population (Fenton and Prudente, 2020). Arrests for minor offenses such as loitering, drinking alcohol in public, urinating in public, trespassing, and disorderly conduct were commonplace. In fact, a Justice Policy Institute report published in 2005 found "more than half of Baltimore's African-American men in their 20s [were] either incarcerated or under criminal justice system supervision" (Davis, 2005). Mass arrest and incarceration were in full effect.

In the four years before widespread unrest rocked Baltimore in 2015 with burning, looting, and armed combat between police and citizens, the city paid out \$11.5 million in civil judgments to more than 100 people who died or suffered broken bones or head trauma at the hands of BPD officers (Beyer, 2018). Perhaps even more damning, though, was the rampant corruption. Even before 15 officers connected to BPD's Gun Trace Task Force were indicted on a litany of federal charges related to years of theft, robbery, drug dealing, planting evidence, and falsifying charging documents, Baltimore police officers were convicted of a pay-to-play car towing scheme, drug dealing on a police station

parking lot, tipping off criminals to police activity, and committing robberies while on duty.

The tipping point in the fractious relationship between BPD and the city's majority African-American population was the death of Freddie Gray, a healthy, 26-year-old Black man from the Westside of Baltimore who suffered a fractured neck and pinched spinal cord while in the custody of Baltimore police officers (U.S. District Court, 2017). After his death, the Department of Justice launched an exhaustive civil rights investigation into BPD's practices surrounding the use of force, stops, searches, and arrests. Pursuant to this investigation, the parties entered into a consent decree in 2017 to remedy "systemic deficiencies in BPD's policies, training, supervision, and accountability structures that fail to equip officers with the tools they need to police effectively and within the bounds of the federal law" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). This legal action requires BPD to comply with over 400 reforms and to demonstrate the ability to sustain those reforms beyond the life of the consent decree (U.S. District Court, 2017). A primary focus of the consent decree is training Baltimore police officers according to national best practices, constitutional policing, and departmental policy and procedure as developed through a collaborative process with the Department of Justice, Baltimore City Consent Decree Monitoring Team, and community stakeholders.

Police Training in Baltimore

The Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission (MPCTC) establishes minimum training standards for all police officers and police academies in the state. For recruit training, MPCTC mandates 240 Terminal Objectives that the curriculum must cover, with testing of each trainee on each objective. A minimum academy length of 750 hours is also mandated. Once through the academy and into their careers, incumbent officers must complete a minimum of 18 hours of approved continuing training (often called in-service training) each year, over and above time spent requalifying with firearms and other weapons. As part of continuing training, the state also specifies certain topics that must be included each year, or in some cases at least every two or three years.

The Baltimore Police Department's recruit academy substantially exceeds the state's minimum requirements. Our curriculum is 1,200 hours in length and includes extensive instruction on topics not specifically

mandated by the state, such as community policing, problem solving, procedural justice, fair and impartial policing, cultural diversity, and de-escalation. The curriculum also emphasizes the police department's own policies and procedures, which are more restrictive than prevailing law in relation to use of force, stops, searches, and arrests.

In-service training in the police department also far exceeds state minimum standards. In recent years, all officers have received at least 56 hours of annual in-person training, usually delivered in the form of three 2-day courses and a 1-day course. In addition, all officers complete a variety of short e-learning courses each year, amounting to an additional 1-2 days of in-service training. Some officers complete specialized or elective training on top of what is required for every officer.

The delivery of training within the Baltimore Police Department has undergone significant enhancements over the last several years. The number of instructors has increased and the process of selecting instructors has been strengthened. Professional curriculum developers and law instructors have been added. Facilities were dramatically upgraded when the Education & Training Section moved from a dilapidated former middle school to the campus of the University of Baltimore in May 2020.

A substantial philosophical/pedagogical shift has also taken place. Starting in 2018, it was recognized that training delivery at both the recruit and in-service levels was too instructor-centred and too dependent on lecture. A concerted effort has since been undertaken to make lessons and lesson delivery more learner-centred, more engaging, and more consistent with principles of adult learning. Instructors are now referred to as facilitators and lesson plans are not approved unless they incorporate student engagement activities. Facilitators are routinely observed and given feedback about ways to engage trainees more effectively. Though this transition is still underway, "death by PowerPoint" has largely been eliminated.

One other change is directly attributable to the Consent Decree that the City of Baltimore entered into in 2017. The Consent Decree specifies training courses that must be developed and delivered, in most cases to all sworn staff, though in some cases to personnel in specialized assignments, such as sex offense detec-

tives or internal affairs investigators. When developing courses, training staff collaborate actively with members of the Consent Decree Monitoring Team and representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice. Those parties ultimately have to approve each course before it is delivered. In addition, most courses are posted for public comment, and any comments received must be given fair consideration. Then, up to three pilot tests of new courses may be required before the course is officially certified for delivery to members of the department. It is an arduous and time-consuming process, but it has resulted in better quality lesson plans and courses.

Feedback from members of the police department about the new approaches to training has been very positive. On surveys at the end of the first 2-day in-service course developed and taught under the new model, delivered to over 2,000 sworn members in 2019, 97% of officers rated the course superior to previous training they had received from the department. Following subsequent courses, 80-90% have consistently given positive ratings to training content and to their level of engagement during the course. Similar high proportions report being confident that they will be able to apply the training in the field.

Adapting to the Pandemic

The first cases of the COVID-19 virus were confirmed in the State of Maryland on March 5, 2020, and the governor declared a state of emergency. Starting on March 10, public schools and universities began announcing temporary closures; throughout the month additional restrictions on public gatherings and non-essential businesses were imposed. On March 12, state government employees were instructed to telework if possible. On March 14, the first coronavirus case in Baltimore was confirmed; eligible city government employees began teleworking on March 18. Also on March 18, the first COVID-19 death in Maryland was reported. By the end of March, pandemic cases in the state neared 2,000, with 13 deaths. Fifteen months later, the state had recorded over 460,000 cases and over 9,500 deaths.⁸

Early in March 2020, the police academy adopted several safety measures, including frequent cleaning of

surfaces (desks, tables, gym mats), social distancing whenever possible, wearing of masks, and screening of staff and trainees when they arrived each morning (temperature checks and questioning about any symptoms they might be experiencing). At that time, there were four classes of recruits matriculating in the police academy, as noted in Table 1, plus four sections of a 2-day in-service course for all sworn personnel were being held each week. Per day, there were about 175 recruits and officers attending training.

When Baltimore's government employees were authorized to telework on March 18, and with COVID-19 cases increasing dramatically around the U.S., the police department decided that in-person training was likely to become unsafe. The decision was made to suspend all in-service training, for safety reasons and to maximize the availability of sworn officers for operational duties. The question was then how to proceed with recruit training.

Training academy staff who were technology-savvy recommended that recruit training shift to remote learning. A quick scan of available platforms suggested that Zoom was flexible, user-friendly, affordable, and, if used properly, equally as secure as other alternatives. The police department's Information Technology Section quickly secured a sufficient number of Zoom user licenses.

A significant hurdle that had to be overcome was that the state's police training commission (MPCTC) had never approved any form of e-learning or remote learning for recruit training. Existing rules required that instruction covering the mandated 240 entry-level Terminal Objectives had to be in-person. Also, testing on those objectives had to be in-person. An emergency request to waive these rules was submitted on March 19, and it was rejected. Within a day, however, wiser heads prevailed. MPCTC agreed that remote learning could be approved if a satisfactory protocol was in place to verify (1) that each recruit was actually in attendance for each lesson, and (2) that each recruit completed each test without any help from study materials, the internet, or another person. Attendance and testing integrity had to be guaranteed and would be subject to audit.

Within a day a formal protocol was developed, submitted to MPCTC, and approved. Recruits would receive their training at home, via Zoom. If they lacked

⁸ Dates and data retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_in_Maryland and <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>.

Table 1. Academy Recruit Classes in Session as of March 2020.⁹

Class	Start Date	End Date	# of Recruits
2019-04	2 August, 2019	10 April, 2020	27
2019-05	21 October, 2019	12 June, 2020	20
2020-01	13 January, 2020	25 August, 2020	27
2020-02	9 March, 2020	9 October, 2020	30

a personal computer of their own, they were assigned a departmental laptop. During the training day, they were required to be visible on Zoom at all times, except when on breaks. During testing, while they took their exams on a personal or laptop computer, their departmental smartphones were positioned over their shoulder to detect any form of cheating.

Three of the recruit classes were set up for remote Zoom learning on Monday and Tuesday, March 23-24. This included assigning laptop computers as needed, instruction on how to use Zoom, and explanation of required protocols. Some remote training for the recruits began on March 24, and all three of these recruit classes were full-time on Zoom as of March 25.

The exception to this remote learning strategy was Class 2019-04. This class of recruits had only three weeks remaining until graduation, and little of their remaining course work seemed suitable for remote learning. One outside instructor (not a member of the police department) “Zoomed in” one day while team-teaching with a facilitator who was present in the classroom. Otherwise, this recruit class completed their last 15 days of the academy in-person, with in-person instruction, graduating as scheduled.

The other three recruit classes – 2019-05, 2020-01, and 2020-02 – were, of course, at different stages in the entry-level curriculum when remote learning began. Given the uncertain pandemic situation, how long each

class would remain on Zoom was unknown. The approach taken was to “front-load” lessons that seemed amenable to remote learning, while delaying, as long as possible, those lessons that required in-person instruction. The latter included defensive tactics, driving, vehicle stops, and training with firearms and other weapons.

All three recruit classes had their training exclusively on Zoom for the remaining few days in March. Table 2 reports the extent of remote training for each class over the following four months (Class 2019-05 graduated in mid-June). Several factors account for the scheduling patterns that were adopted. Initially, an effort was made to move all instruction to Zoom. However, by the end of April, nearly all the remaining courses needed by Class 2019-05 required in-person instruction, and Class 2020-01 was scheduled for firearms training, driving training, and tactical-medical training. Postponing those courses would have upset the schedule for the next class in line, Class 2020-02, and would have had a domino effect on the year’s following classes, since these skills courses use specialized facilities¹⁰ and specialized instructors. Moreover, those same instructors provided ongoing training to in-service personnel, some of which is mandatory every year. The potential for a logjam before the end of 2020 was recognized, so a decision was made to proceed with the skills training for 2020-01 in May.

⁹ Recruit classes that started in 2019 operated on a 34-38 week schedule. Beginning in 2020 (unrelated to the pandemic), the schedule was trimmed to 30 weeks.

¹⁰ The driving facility is operated by the state and used by many academies and agencies. As a result, weeks are reserved far in advance. Had our academy not used our weeks when they had been reserved, we ran the risk of not being able to reschedule the required training in a timely manner, creating delays in graduation and further deviating from a standardized training calendar.

Table 2. Extent of Remote Training for Recruits

Month	Percent of Training Hours Delivered Remotely		
	Class 2019-05	Class 2020-01	Class 2020-02
April 2020	86%	95%	100%
May 2020	14%	4%	90%
June 2020	0%	21%	28%
July 2020	n/a	27%*	0%

* Due to a two-week COVID-19 quarantine of the entire class.

By the beginning of June 2020, the intention was to return more recruit training to in-person instruction, creating a better balance between in-person and remote training. Academy staff had become more adept at enforcing COVID safety measures and everyone, including trainees, had become more accustomed to masks and social distancing. At that point, three additional factors, two virus-related and one not, influenced scheduling. One was that the academy's non-sworn law instructors continued to telework. As a result, even when recruits were physically at the police academy, they continued to receive most of their law courses via remote learning, with the instructors "Zooming in." This practice continued into 2021.

Another factor that periodically affected scheduling was positive COVID tests among trainees, staff, or their close friends and family members. The most common occurrence was for a trainee to report that someone close to them had COVID symptoms or a positive test. This would automatically result in the trainee being sent home (quarantined) for a period of time, and if the trainee had recently been in close contact with other trainees, they often had to be quarantined as well, until further COVID testing could be completed. As a result, it was not unusual to have one or a few trainees taking lessons at home via Zoom, while the rest of their class was in-person at the academy. Occasionally, an entire class had to be quarantined for a week or two, in which case all instruction shifted to Zoom until they could return to in-person training.

A third factor affected scheduling in early June – protests following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Most of the academy instructors are sworn officers, and they were assigned to protest duties nearly every night for about two weeks. Baltimore's protests were overwhelmingly peaceful, but evidence from other cities showed that the police department had to be prepared each night. For the first week, re-

mote Zoom instruction was provided by a skeleton crew of civilian academy staff, mainly law instructors. During the second week some sworn instructors were able to assist, often working overtime.

The police department started three more recruit classes in 2020. Class 2020-03 spent much of its first six weeks on Zoom, but starting with Class 2020-04 a more concerted effort was made to balance remote and in-person instruction right from the start of the academy. In the second half of 2020, the revised scheduling pattern for the first ten weeks was to have 2-3 days each week on Zoom, and 2-3 days in person at the academy. Then, during the remaining twenty weeks of the curriculum, almost all instruction was in-person. Now that the pandemic has largely subsided in the U.S. (as of mid-2021), and vaccines are widely available, recruit training is once again entirely in-person, barring exigent circumstances such as a widespread quarantine or severe weather.

When in-person recruit training partially resumed at the end of April 2020, and then became more and more frequent over the following months and into 2021, social distancing presented a significant complication. Class 2020-02 started with 35 recruits, finishing with 30. That number exceeded what could safely be taught in a single classroom. Consequently, for much of their training, recruits had to be split into two groups, using two classrooms. While occasionally a single instructor would be present in one room and simultaneously Zooming into the other room, the more common solution was for the instructor to teach the course twice. This solved the problem of social distancing, but strained the academy's resources by doubling each instructor's workload. This has continued to be the case, since subsequent class sizes have been even larger.

As previously mentioned, continuing education (in-service training) was suspended in March 2020. The

2-day course for all sworn personnel that had been in progress at that time was resumed in July, with social distancing and other safety measures in place. Because of smaller class sizes, it took the remainder of 2020 and a few weeks into 2021 to deliver the course to all 2,200+ sworn staff who were required to complete it.

Two other 2-day in-service courses had been planned for 2020. Due to lost time, it was necessary to postpone one course into 2021. This was disappointing, since all three planned in-service courses fulfilled requirements of the Consent Decree Monitoring Plan. A further challenge arose with the third in-service course on responding to calls for behavioral health crises and sexual assault. The class on behavioral health, largely taught by clinicians and other experts from outside the police department, had to be taught via Zoom because the instructors or the organizations they represented were not willing to teach the class in-person. Further complicating the situation, however, a curriculum had already been obtained for that day's lessons from a national organization, but they refused to allow it to be taught remotely. As a result, a new curriculum for Day 1 of the 2-day course had to be developed from scratch.

Despite these challenges, the officers favorably reviewed the 2-day in-service course, and the academy demonstrated to the Monitoring Team and Department of Justice that remote training could be effective. In addition, this was the first time the police department had authorized officers to sit at home, while on duty, to complete required training. While many officers had some initial challenges with the Zoom technology, in the end they were all able to complete the training and pass the test. On surveys conducted at the end of the course, 76% of officers said they preferred being trained remotely, while only 10% said they preferred training in-person.

Observations and Lessons

A familiar phrase holds that “necessity is the mother of invention.” We did not really invent anything, but the pandemic did force us to make some changes we probably would not have made otherwise. Here are some lessons we think we learned.

1. Perhaps most importantly, we found that “in-person” is not the only way police training can be accomplished. Up to one-third of our 30-week

entry-level curriculum was delivered remotely, resulting in recruits successfully passing their testing on the courses they took via Zoom. A 2-day in-service course was also delivered remotely, and successfully, to 2,200+ sworn officers.

2. By the same token, there is a limit on the extent to which in-person police training can be replaced. One obvious limiting factor is hands-on skills training. While it might be possible to incorporate some forms of simulation training via remote delivery, it seems inevitable that almost all training on self-defence, arrest and control, weapons, emergency driving, and various tactical situations (vehicle stops, person stops, evidence collection, crowd control, room clearing, active shooter, etc.) will have to be delivered in-person.
3. Another limiting factor is the need to integrate classroom learning with practical application. During the first few months of the pandemic, recruits were almost exclusively at home receiving remote instruction. To accomplish this, classroom instruction was “front loaded” while everything else was delayed. Then, when recruits returned to some in-person training after 4-8 weeks of mostly remote instruction, they had significant difficulty performing correctly in practical scenarios. To some extent they had forgotten what they had learned about the law, department policy, interviewing, etc., and in other cases they just couldn't apply their knowledge and make good decisions when confronted with complex situations involving victims, suspects, disputes, suspicious situations, or crime scenes.
4. A third limiting factor is that having recruits “at a distance” for an extended period made supervision and socialization more difficult. Recruits in our academy are police department employees, on the payroll, and as such are held to standards of conduct. The 30 weeks of the academy are also a time during which recruits are socialized to the best traditions of the police profession and the specific mission and values of the Baltimore Police Department. Accomplishing these objectives via Zoom was more challenging than doing it in-person.
5. Our response to these limitations of remote learning, once it became permissible to reinstitute in-person training, was to revise scheduling so that recruits had at least some training at the police academy every week. As pandemic-related restrictions were further relaxed, we slowly shifted recruit training back to in-person, with particular emphasis on timely integration of classroom learning with

practical application, starting at the very beginning of the 30-week curriculum. As expected, this has resulted in recruits performing much better in practical scenarios.

6. The recruits complained about having so much of their training on Zoom. This might seem to contradict the experience with in-service training, where the vast majority of current officers gave remote training positive reviews. The explanation, we think, is that it was a novelty for current officers, both as a way to receive training and as an opportunity to be paid to stay home. For recruits, the novelty wore off after weeks and weeks of remote training. Also, recruits were beginning a brand-new experience when they entered the police academy. Eight hours a day at home on Zoom was not the experience they expected or wanted.
7. We did learn that remote training created some challenges for both trainees and instructors. Inevitably, technical difficulties popped up from time to time – WiFi interruptions, videos that wouldn't stream well over Zoom, logon troubles, etc. Often it was necessary to have one academy instructor "running the Zoom" while another instructor facilitated the lesson. Instructors well-versed in engaging recruits inside the classroom didn't automatically become adept at engaging them on Zoom. Similarly, some recruits did not participate as well or learn as much in the remote environment as they would have in-person. Academy specialists in adult learning and curriculum design did provide both recruits and facilitators with professional development and coaching, helping them become more comfortable with remote learning, but all involved were happier when they could convene in-person at the academy.
8. Finally, earlier we mentioned the high level of collaboration involved in developing courses under

the Consent Decree. During the pandemic, another lesson we learned was that we could maintain and even expand collaboration despite not being able to have face-to-face meetings with the Monitoring Team, Department of Justice representatives, and community stakeholders. As in many other spheres of government and commerce, Zoom meetings became the norm, and ultimately more people were able to participate and contribute than had been the case pre-pandemic.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 interrupted in-service police training in Baltimore and forced the police academy to make a number of adjustments to recruit training. Banished to Zoom, the learning process for recruits was upended and the link between knowledge acquisition (knowing) and application (doing) was significantly stretched if not broken. In the end, remedial work brought the recruit training to a successful conclusion, and a substantial amount of in-service training was accomplished as well. But the pandemic, including social distancing requirements, put considerable strain on training academy staff and resources that would be difficult to sustain over a long period.

We think that the reforms and enhancements that had been underway since 2018 contributed to the academy's ability to adapt quickly and perform effectively under pressure when the pandemic arrived in March 2020. The federal consent decree in place in Baltimore puts a lot of burdens on the police department, but it has also been an engine for positive change in policies, systems, and resources. That infrastructure, though still being developed, helped us keep our footing when we suddenly had to start delivering training in a completely different way.

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