



2024-25 Youth Programs Impact Report

Analysis by Lindsey Horvat

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Helping to create safer, stronger, and more vibrant communities in Denver and beyond.

An important part of the Denver Police Museum's mission is to ignite curiosity, inspire learning, and pave the way for bright futures for our Denver youth. The Museum's programs offer an exciting gateway into the worlds of criminal justice, law enforcement, and forensic science. Through engaging, hands-on experiences, we blend the thrill of discovery with programs that provide essential opportunities for career exploration, trust-building, and safety education.

At the heart of our Youth Programs is our commitment to:

- **Exploration:** Sparking curiosity and creating pathways for career exploration in criminal justice, law enforcement, and forensic science.
- **Connection:** Building trust and fostering positive relationships between youth and law enforcement.
- **Education:** Equipping youth with the best skills, knowledge, and experiences to stay safe and avoid criminal behavior.

In 2024-25, the Denver Police Museum served 460 students across 18 programs, including ten core programs that focus on career exploration and eight high school field trips that highlight the dangers of Fentanyl. In addition, the Museum hosted four Traffic Safety programs for approximately 100 high school students. In the Traffic Safety program, students learn about what to do if they are involved in an accident, participate in mock traffic stops with the DPD traffic officers, and experience impairment with DUI goggles.

Evaluations were captured for the Museum's ten core programs and four Traffic Safety programs. Surveys from 206 students were reviewed to provide the following outcomes related to the students' opinions pre-program and post-program. In all, 277 post-program responses were received, but not all were included in this review due to the inability to pair a pre- and post-program response (an overall 74.4% response rate).

Importantly, perceptions of law enforcement had a net positive increase across all questions asked. The only question to not increase or slightly decrease over the course of the day was "I would consider a career in science, technology, engineering, or math" (average decrease of 2.3%).

Overall, the programs showed positive gains in all five questions asked. Students' responses post-program indicated that they:

1. Strongly agree that being a law enforcement officer is an important job (27.3% increase)
2. Strongly agree that they would call the police if they needed help (13.9% increase)
3. Strongly believe that the police keep the community safe (18.9% increase)
4. Strongly agree that they would be interested in a career in law enforcement (28.9% increase)
5. Somewhat or strongly agree that they would be interested in a career in public service or criminal justice (17.1% increase)

On average, students were neutral when considering a career in law enforcement or criminal justice, yet there was still an increase post-program showing an increased positive opinion as a career choice. Strongly disagree responses decreased by 3 responses and strongly agree increased by 11 responses. There were several students who asked in the follow up to be either contacted on next steps to becoming a law enforcement officer or joining the Explorer or Cadet program.

Students, on average, entered the classroom with a favorable opinion of law enforcement (95.5% strongly or somewhat strongly believes law enforcement to be an important job), but the interactions throughout the day moved these opinions towards the "strongly agree" opinion on law enforcement (27.3% increase in strongly agree responses). 75.4% of the students (131 of 179 respondents) greatly enjoyed interacting with law enforcement during the program.

"The Denver Public Schools Spark Career Exploration Program has greatly valued its partnership with the Denver Police Museum. Through this collaboration, the Museum has hosted numerous engaging events, impacting over a thousand students. These events have not only introduced our students to a wide range of career opportunities within the public safety sector but have also sparked a deeper interest and enthusiasm for these fields. The response from our middle school students has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing excitement about the potential paths in law enforcement and public safety. We are very grateful for the Denver Police Museum volunteers and all of the DPD employees that have made a positive impact on our students."

— Sondra Osif, Program Manager, Early Career Exploration, Denver Public Schools, Office of Career and College Success

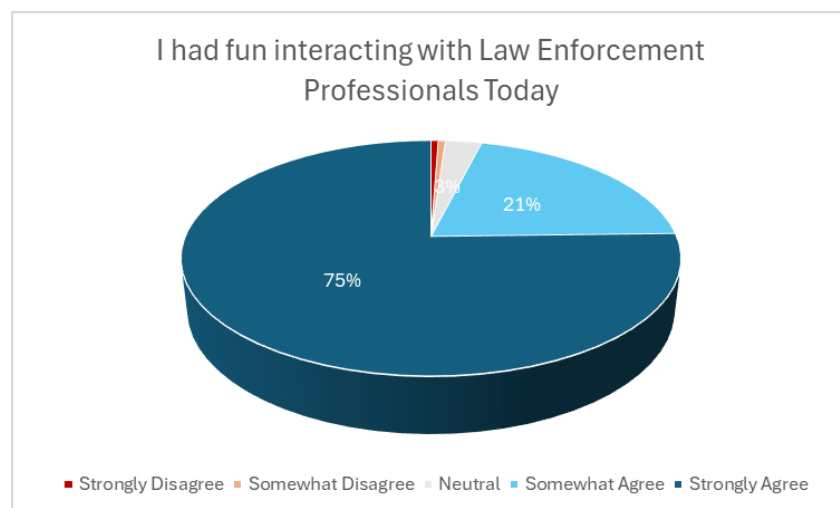
Overwhelmingly, the attendees appreciated the cars, K-9 unit, and interacting with the various professionals throughout the day. Below are selections of comments from the students on what they liked most from the day. Some comments have been translated from Spanish, as the Museum offered its first Forensic Science program in Spanish this year.

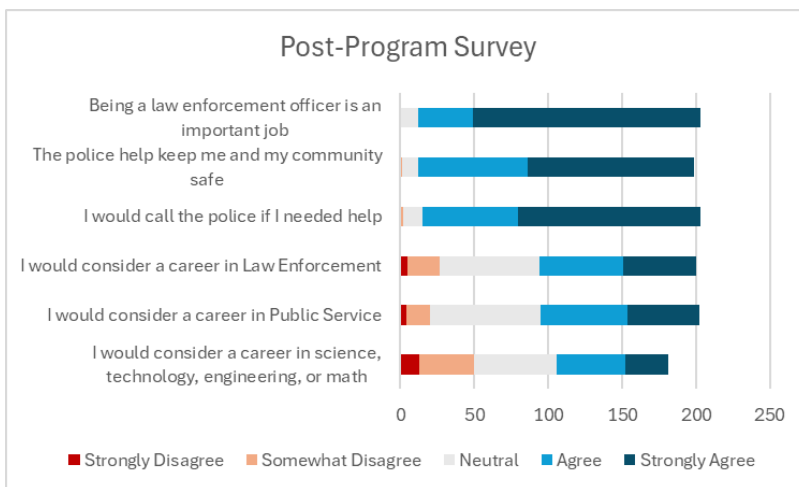
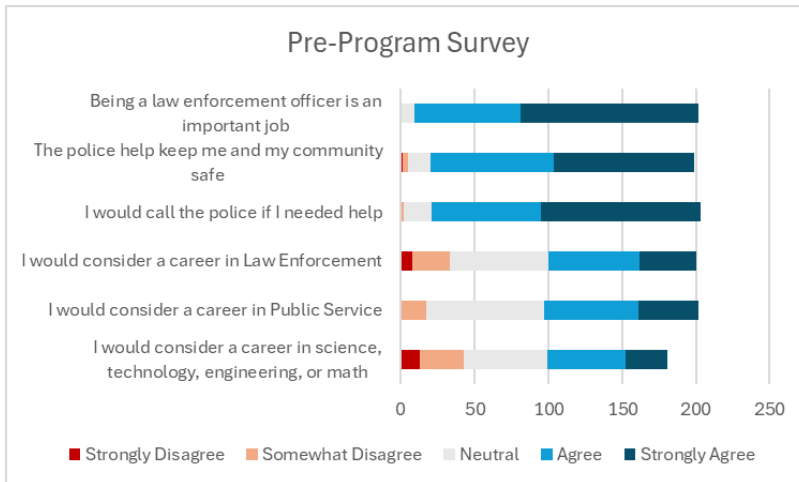
- (I liked that) we pretended to be professionals.
- That we got to solve a crime scene.

- That we got to talk to professionals.
- What I liked most is that there are many fields I can decide from.
- Going in the car, the truck, and the room where the people are (dispatch center).
- Learning how 911 calls work for each part like paramedics, firefighters & police. Also the walkie-talkie thing, too (aka the radio).
- Seeing how everything works.
- That I was able to talk to somebody who could answer all my questions and make me feel more sure about my future.
- I liked that each presenter explained thoroughly about what they do and how they got there.
- Hearing about the day-to-day scenarios faced by police and criminal justice professionals. Especially enjoyed listening to the detective and DA representative.
- I enjoyed getting to know the process of each division and how they all connect to each other
- The amount of careers involved in criminal justice and criminology. They revolve around laws and people.
- Being able to experience what it was like to be pulled over when you were in the cars
- I liked doing the traffic stops and seeing the cars in the garage
- Simulating a traffic stop and trying the drunk goggles
- Seeing how police respond to situations on bikes
- Hearing personal stories and experiences

I just wanted to extend a big thank you to you, the volunteers, and the officers for piecing together such a great experience for our students last Thursday! My students had such a great time, many of them calling it the "best field trip of the year."

— Lucas Mascarenas, Career Navigator Career and College Success, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College





Change	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neutral		Somewhat Agree		Strongly Agree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
I think being a law enforcement officer is an important job.	0	N/A	0	N/A	3	33.3%	-35	-48.6%	33	27.3%
I would call the police if I needed help.	-1	-100.0%	-3	-75.0%	-4	-26.7%	-10	-11.9%	18	18.9%
I believe the police help keep me and my community safe.	0	N/A	0	N/A	-6	-31.6%	-9	-12.2%	15	13.9%
I would consider a career in law enforcement.	-3	-37.5%	-3	-12.0%	0	N/A	-5	-8.1%	11	28.9%
I would consider a career in criminal justice.	4	N/A	-1	-5.9%	-5	-6.3%	-5	-7.8%	7	17.1%

Average of Responses	Pre-Program Average	Post-Program Average	# Change	% Change
I think being a law enforcement officer is an important job.	4.55	4.70	0.15	3.2%
I would call the police if I needed help.	4.35	4.50	0.16	3.6%
I believe the police help keep me and my community safe.	4.42	4.52	0.10	2.3%
I would consider a career in law enforcement.	3.49	3.62	0.13	3.7%
I would consider a career in criminal justice.	3.64	3.65	0.01	0.3%

Key:

- 1 is Strongly Disagree
- 2 is Somewhat Disagree
- 3 is Neutral
- 4 is Somewhat Agree
- 5 is Strongly Agree

Note: Surveys that could not be paired were not included in the report. Instances where a pre-survey was not completed were only captured for comments and responses did not contribute to the overall calculations. Law and Order received the least responses included in this survey (only 7 of the 19 responses received were eligible). Traffic Safety received the most responses (62 of 72 responses were eligible).