In 2000, Winnipeg had the fourth highest level of police strength of Canadian cities, at 176 officers per 100,000 population, a reduction of six from 1999’s proportion. Only Thunder Bay, Regina and Toronto had more police per capita.

Winnipeg’s crime rate was ninth among 13 major metropolitan areas, but the City’s police department ranked sixth in the percentage of crimes that were actually solved, 30%. Thunder Bay’s success rate, 50%, was much higher than Winnipeg’s. Even though Regina and Saskatoon, cities that are demographically almost identical to Winnipeg, had much higher crime rates, their police forces solved a lot more crimes, 37% and 39% respectively.

Per capita police costs in Winnipeg are only slightly higher than the Canadian average even though staffing is among the highest in Canada. These facts suggest two conclusions. First, the Winnipeg Police Service continues to carry a heavy administrative burden. Second, the force has problems with the effective allocation of resources, including Canada’s most rigid two-officer police car policy (for more information please see the Frontier Centre Backgrounder at http://www.fcpp.org/publications/backgrounders/one_vs_two.html). Fewer resources are therefore available for front-line crime fighting, with clearance rates for property crimes of only 18% and violent crimes of 70%, for a weighted average of 30%. These clearance rates improved over 1999, from rates of 16% and 61% respectively.

In 2000, the Winnipeg Police Service was able to resolve a slightly higher percentage of criminal code infractions with slightly fewer personnel, moving its performance indicators in the right direction, albeit from a poor relative position. Jurisdictions vary widely, but many others in Canada still have higher success rates with resources that are equal to, or fewer than those in Winnipeg, and many others improved their performance in one year more than Winnipeg.

SOURCE: All the above data is contained in Police Resources in Canada, 2001, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-225-XIE.