

The Innovative Ways York Regional Police Uses CommunityConnect

260,000+

messages sent since March 2020

1600+

sworn officers

1.2

million residents

Achieving Service Excellence

York Regional Police strives to find innovative ways for policing and engaging with their community through better service delivery and efficiencies. The agency continues to be a leader in leveraging technology to modernize and automate their service delivery. They selected Versaterm's CommunityConnect platform to enhance the efficiency and quality of the agency's communication with the public and foster community trust. Being able to send out customized messages and surveys with the ability to turn these capabilities on and off were definitive features for going with this technology. York Regional Police, who is also a Versaterm client, is the first Canadian police service to implement CommunityConnect, which included a pilot project in 2020.

About York Regional Police

The agency serves the Regional Municipality of York in the Canadian province of Ontario near Toronto. York Regional Police has more than 1,600 sworn officers and 600 civilians providing services across nine cities and towns with more than 1.2 million residents and 55,000+ businesses.

Improving Public Communication

The preliminary program focused on four call and crime types with three customized messages for acknowledgement of a call, delay in officer arrival, and a mini survey. After the success of the pilot project, the agency implemented CommunityConnect platform's Patrol, Investigation, and Insights features. Since March 2020, York Regional Police has sent:

- 260,000+ overall messages
- 100,000+ acknowledgement messages
- 36,000 crime victim messages
- 15,000 investigation-related messages

York Regional Police can now communicate with community members more quickly and efficiently by sending out automated alerts and updates almost instantly via mobile devices. CommunityConnect helps the agency provide timely crime prevention tips to callers or victims without the need for traditional paper formats. Easy access to case status information online provides crime victims peace of mind during the investigation process.

Innovative Pilot Programs

The agency is also customizing their platform for two pilot programs to support their community members in novel ways.

- **Non-Injury Crash Reporting:** When a non-injury vehicle incident occurs, participants receive an automated message containing information on how to file online



or in person. They are then sent a survey after the interaction asking about their experience with the agency.

The survey questions have been customized to accommodate whether the person filed a report online or at a station. The program was implemented for 90 days in March. During the month, 50 survey results have been collected and have been mostly positive.

- **Adult Pre-Charge Diversion:** This year-long project offers first-time offenders as well as those who have committed non-violent, low-level crimes, such as fraud and thefts, the opportunity to divert into a recovery program before they are prosecuted. York Regional Police has partnered with a local non-profit organization offering evidence-based programs that support the health, well-being and safety of their community to support the diversion program.

- Both the victim and those who are arrested receive automated customized messages about the program via text and email
- A survey is not part of the pilot study
- The pilot study was launched in March 2023

With innovation and technology as a key priority and cornerstone for the agency, York Regional Police is finding new ways to handle their challenges by using current solutions such as Versaterm's CommunityConnect and adapting it to suit their needs. The benefit of this forward-thinking approach helps them to continue to serve their community better.