



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

Director Clara Decerbo
Providence Emergency Management Agency
591 Charles Street
Providence, RI 02904

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Dear Director Decerbo,

On December 13, 2025 and the days that followed, our community experienced the horrible tragedy of the mass shooting at Brown University. As the City of Providence begins to implement our own after actions in response to this incident, I am writing to formally direct the Providence Emergency Management (PEMA) and the City Solicitor's Office to engage in a third-party review of the City's response. I have copied Colonel Oscar Perez, Chief Derek Silva, Director of Telecommunications David Radcliffe, Chief Operating Officer Courtney Hawkins, Chief of Staff Emily Crowell and Housing and Human Services Director Emily Freedman on this communication as their leadership and collaboration has and will continue to be critical to coordinate a thorough review and response to the incidents that occurred during the active shooter situation and throughout the investigation.

Preliminary internal reviews have informed the facts of the events and initial early actions for departments that will be implemented concurrently with any third-party review. Based on information reviewed internally and confirmed by documentation, the City has established a unified and verified understanding of the key facts related to the initial response which you will find attached as **Exhibit A**. This includes a timeline of events, response times from initial notification to first units on scene, identification of City personnel and partner agencies engaged during the first phase of the response and the cadence of initial internal and public communications.

This unified factual baseline reflects the City's best understanding of what occurred in the initial response and will serve as the foundation for the coordination, analysis and follow-up work outlined. This timeline is intended to ensure shared understanding across departments, support

informed decision-making and provide clarity as the City moves from immediate response to review, improvement and recovery efforts both internally and with partner organizations.

After preliminary review, several next steps were identified to better understand areas of improvement or opportunity within the Public Safety departments in the city. The City shall:

- Hire an external consultant to work with the City and all involved parties to review response and use any lessons learned to work with other major institutions to improve coordination and communication in response to major threats or emergencies.
- Review all existing public safety related MOUs between the City of Providence and local institutions including but not limited to access by the Providence Police's Real Time Crime Center for real-time responses on campuses throughout Providence.
- Review the process for statewide mutual aid requests and responses, particularly across police departments.
- Review current training schedule and determine and document where additional training could be helpful in preparation for City staff's response to potential future events.
- Create an integrated interagency communications and coordination framework to enable rapid mutual aid, unified command and efficient resource deployment during critical emergency incidents in the city.

Notification

- Review internal and external notification to partners, public and the press.
- Look into strategies for enhanced notifications, layered communication strategies and standardization of communication language.
- Explore other tools and best practices for enhanced notifications and communication tools outside of existing assets.

Mental Health Response

- Work with local unions, including FOP Lodge 3, IAFF Local 799 and Local 1033 to ensure that all appropriate after-action resources were implemented and sufficient for staff.
- Ensure ongoing support, such as trainings, for the community to monitor ongoing stressors, needs and safety concerns and by facilitating timely referrals to appropriate services and supports.
- Participate in the establishment and oversight of a Resiliency Center to deliver coordinated mid- to long-term recovery and behavioral health supports to those impacted by the incident.

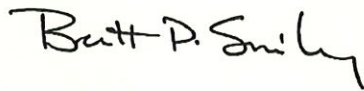
City Assets

- Collaborate with Public Property to complete a security review of all City assets to determine if additional safety measures should be implemented.

I appreciate your leadership and the continued collaboration of all departments and partners engaged in this work. The actions outlined above are intended to ensure that we approach this review with rigor, transparency and a clear focus on learning and improvement, while we continue to support the community impacted by this tragic event.

Please proceed with coordinating these efforts and provide my office with regular updates on progress, findings and any recommendations. This work is critical to strengthening our preparedness, reinforcing public trust and ensuring that the City continues to respond swiftly, immediately and compassionately in moments of crisis and throughout our response and recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett P. Smiley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brett P. Smiley

Mayor

Cc:

Jeffrey Dana, City Solicitor

Colonel Oscar Perez, Providence Police

Chief Derek Silva, Providence Fire

David Radcliffe, Director of Telecommunications

Courtney Hawkins, Chief Operating Officer

Emily Crowell, Chief of Staff

Emily Freedman, Housing and Human Services Director

Exhibit A: Shared Timeline of Events from City Departments and Agencies

- **4:05 PM (16:05):** Providence Telecommunications Department Police Control Center and Fire Alarm Bureau of Control (BOC) receive the first calls reporting shots fired and a single person shot. Calls reference four different locations: Barus & Holley Engineering Building, Manning Walk, 137 Waterman and Thayer Street.
- **4:07 PM (16:07):** Police Control Center and Fire Alarm BOC dispatch police units and fire apparatus (approximately 1 minute 22 seconds after first call).
- **4:10 PM (16:10):** First arriving police and fire units arrive on scene with shooting victims present.
- **4:11 PM (16:11):** Police dispatch airs potential description of the shooter. Providence Fire Department determines multiple people have been shot.
- **4:13 PM (16:13):** Providence Police Department units are on scene, within 3 minutes and 20 seconds, aligning with response goals.
Providence Fire Department arrives on scene in under 4 minutes.
- **4:15 PM (16:15):** Incident is formally declared an active shooter situation by Providence Police.
- **4:18 PM (16:18):** Incident is identified as a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) and hospitals were notified.
- **4:22 PM (16:22):** Fire Alarm BOC initiates a citywide formal Rescue Task Force activation.
- **4:22 PM (16:22):** Initial Brown University shelter-in-place notification via text, call and email.
- **4:23 PM-4:28PM (16:23-16:28):** Unified Command requested and established on-scene.
- **4:23 PM (16:23):** All patients are transported to Rhode Island Hospital (11 total victims).
- **4:30 PM (16:30):** Fire Alarm BOC declares Mass Casualty event to Metro Control and initiates a formal Mass Casualty response.
- **4:32–5:04 PM (16:32-17:04):** Primary initial active shooter search by Providence Police and supporting agencies, lasting approximately 32 minutes from entry to the top of the building.
- **4:45 PM-4:53PM (16:45-16:53):** Mobile Command requested and established on-scene.
- **4:46 PM (16:46):** Statewide mutual aid begins responding citywide including support from: North Providence, Lincoln, West Warwick, Barrington, Central Falls, Coventry, North Kingstown, Warwick, Cranston, Westerly, Woonsocket, Attleboro, Cumberland,

Scituate, Warren, Johnston, Tiverton, East Greenwich, Charlestown, Smithfield, Burrillville, Bristol, Little Compton and Seekonk.

- **4:47 PM (16:47)** A shelter-in-place order is issued.
- **4:48 PM (16:48)**: Initial City statement issued to media.
- **4:49PM (16:49)**: Social media is issued notifying public to avoid area. Social media continued with updates following initial posts.
- **5:05 PM (17:05)** Tactical Dispatch Team deployed by Telecommunications.
- **5:10 PM (17:10)**: Initial PVD311 text issued notifying public to avoid area.
- **5:37 (17:37)**: PEMA requests activation of RIPTA buses by RIEMA for transport of students to Reunification Center.
- **5:43 PM (17:43)**: Brook Street Station (223 Brook Street) established as central media coordination location.
- **5:00–9:30 PM approx. (17:00-21:30)** Secondary, systematic search of the building conducted from top to bottom by Providence Police and supporting agencies, lasting approximately 4 hours 26 minutes.
- **6:00 PM (18:00)**: Walkthrough of Nelson Fitness Center commences for Family Reunification Center operations with a call out to trained volunteers.
- **6:15 PM (18:15)**: Family reunification registration system established and roles assigned, staffed by Providence Emergency Management Agency, American Red Cross, Rhode Island Department of Health, the Rhode Island Medical Reserve Corps, Family Services RI and volunteers.
- **6:17PM (18:17)**: Media advisory issued to local and national press advising the first press conference.
- **6:35PM (18:35)**: First press conference held at the Brook Street Station.
- **7:30 PM-8:30 PM (19:30-20:30)**: Moved student operations fully to the Olney-Margolies Athletic Center (OMAC) facility and Nelson Center reserved for parents only given the estimated number of students in transport (500)
- **8:21 PM (20:21)**: Buildings on footprint being cleared by Providence Police Department, Brown University Police Department, Rhode Island State Police, Tactical Dispatch Team.
- **8:45 PM (20:45)**: Students, staff, and community members sheltering in place at Nelson Center evacuated and sent to designated areas.
- **9:11PM (21:11)**: Media advisory issued to local and national press advising second press conference.
- **9:30 PM (21:30)**: Students interviews begin at OMAC.
- **9:35PM (21:35)**: Second press conference held at Brook Street Station.
- **10:46PM (22:46)**: City releases video of suspect to local and national press and shortly after posts across social media.

- **11:06PM (23:06):** Media advisory issued to local and national press advising third press conference.
- **11:15PM (23:15):** Third press conference held at Brook Street Station.
- **12:45 AM (00:45):** Brown informs students that “graduate students with off campus housing may leave.” Police on scene notified they may have students returning to campus footprint.
- **12:50 AM (00:50):** Estimated 40% of students at OMAC leave facility.
- **2:24 AM (02:45):** Tactical Dispatch Team clears the scene.
- **3:30 AM (03:30):** Last family leaves Nelson Fitness Center and location is closed.
- **4:15 AM (04:15):** 215 students remain at OMAC center as students are shuttle bussed back to dorms.
- **5:00 AM (05:00):** 6 students remain at OMAC due to their dorm being inaccessible due to the crime scene perimeter. Hotel room reservations and transportation was coordinated for these students.
- **6:00 AM (06:00):** Family Reunification Center closed.
- **6:01AM (6:01):** Media advisory issued to local and national press advising fourth press conference to occur at 7AM.

Additional time-based statements:

- All critical patients were transported within 13 minutes after arriving to the scene.
- From the first 911 call, it took approximately 80 seconds to dispatch and less than 3 minutes 20 seconds to arrive on scene.
- It took less than 5 minutes from first dispatch for first patient contact at 4:10PM (16:10).