

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 25, 2020, a Black Minneapolis resident, George Floyd, was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin. The officer knelt on Mr. Floyd's neck for over nine minutes, while two other Minneapolis police officers helped pin him down for a portion of that time. Another police officer prevented several bystanders from intervening as they watched Mr. Floyd die.

Vigils and peaceful protesting began immediately after the murder, at the scene (38th Street and Chicago Avenue) and in other locations, and continued through June 7, 2020. Civil unrest, including violence and destructive behavior, started within 24 hours at the scene and in other parts of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, in the state of Minnesota, around the U.S., and internationally. Looting and arson were widespread, and local police and emergency responders could not respond to many calls for help—either because they couldn't safely access the area or were too overwhelmed. Minnesota State Law Enforcement Agencies, including the Minnesota State Patrol, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division, and other agencies, along with the Minnesota National Guard were called upon by the governor to provide services outside of their specific jurisdiction and training. Although these state-level entities were better equipped to respond to this particular crisis than local jurisdictions due to their training, equipment, and number of officers, they did not have experience responding to a large-scale civil disturbance and extended period of civil unrest such as what occurred in Minneapolis after Mr. Floyd's murder.

External review commissioned

In February 2021, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) contracted with Wilder Research to conduct an external review of the state's response to civil unrest¹ that occurred May 26-June 7, 2020, following the murder of George Floyd. DPS requested that the review:

- Objectively evaluate what the state did well and did not do well.
- Identify actions and options that may have produced different, or possibly better, outcomes.
- Provide recommendations to the Commissioner of Public Safety to assist state and local governmental units, including cities and counties, in responding effectively to potential periods of regional or statewide civil unrest in the future.

¹ In this report, we define civil unrest as a prolonged period of civil disturbance. We define civil disturbance as a gathering that constitutes a breach of the peace or any assembly of persons where there is a threat of collective violence, destruction of property, or other unlawful acts.