



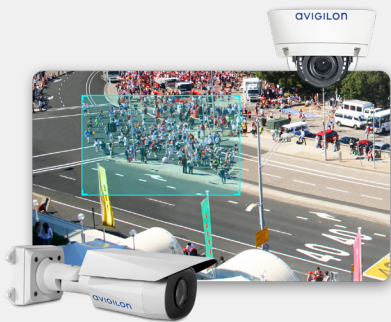
AUGUST 2019 | SUCCESS STORY

Community Safety Starts with Best-in-Class Security

New Bedford Housing Authority (NBHA)

Industry: Community Safety

Location: New Bedford, Massachusetts



Avigilon Solutions Implemented

Avigilon Control Center (ACC) Software

Allows for quick and easy review of live or recorded video with a simplified screen layout, intuitive controls and self-learning video analytics.

Unusual Motion Detection Technology

Continuously learns what typical activity in a scene looks like, and then detects and flags unusual motion, revealing events that may have otherwise been missed.

Avigilon Appearance Search™ Technology

Allows you to locate persons of interest quickly and easily using certain physical descriptions such as gender and clothing color.

H4A Camera Line

Provides high image detail in a range of settings such as offices, hallways and building entrances. Featuring remote zoom and focus, embedded self-learning video analytics and an impact-resistant design, it's a comprehensive solution to enhance security in any installation.

HD Network Video Recorders (NVRs)

Contains high-performance recording technology, pre-installed with ACC™ software, and 3-year warranty and support.

The New Bedford Housing Authority (NBHA), founded in 1938, is committed to providing safe, high quality, affordable housing to individuals and families that live on limited incomes. There are nearly 1,750 federal public housing units and 748 state-aided units located across 19 properties in the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Altogether, this provides over 6,000 people with affordable housing options. On top of that, nearly 1,800 federally-funded rental vouchers are made available to help assist with rent payments for another 3,300 men, women and children. Yet in spite of these crucial services, the NBHA runs a lean, efficient operation, with a staff of one hundred dedicated team members. The NBHA's mission is to provide affordable housing while also promoting self-sufficiency, fostering leadership and cultivating sustainable, healthy communities.

To fulfill this mandate, the NBHA's first priority is to provide residents with a safe, secure space, and the organization has always made it their mission to present clean, well-maintained environments across all properties. However, petty crimes and misdemeanors proved to be a persistent problem, and its analog security systems were ill-equipped to prevent them. To the NBHA, not only was the maintenance of the old cameras prohibitively expensive, but because the cameras lacked responsive capabilities, their blind spots were large and they often failed to record incidents. When events were captured, viewers had difficulty identifying traits such as physical characteristics, clothing and license plate numbers due to the low-resolution of the video, making it not very useful as evidence.

Taking Neighborhood Watch up a Notch

The NBHA knew that it needed to take its security installation to the next level across all its properties, which meant finding a solution that was scalable: it had to function across all the locations that the NBHA was overseeing while maintaining a central hub from which it could manage information and activity. Avigilon solutions proved to be an ideal fit.



Avigilon Control Center (ACC) video management software served as a core nexus for the whole system, while a network of H4 cameras collected video from all of the NBHA's sites. The housing authority collaborated with Galaxy Integrated Technologies, Inc., CSY Technologies and ECI Systems to get the new installation in place and online.

A total of 173 new cameras were added across the properties, providing a variety of vital features. Self-learning video analytics helped the NBHA's security operators to proactively hone in on potentially critical events, instead of focusing on unchanging scenery. Through ACC software, Unusual Motion Detection (UMD) technology took this a step further: not only did it allow the system to recognize the movement of individuals and vehicles throughout the video, but also assisted in identifying normal versus abnormal activities, flagging objects or people that seemed out of place to help expedite response. Security operators could also leverage Avigilon Appearance Search technology to recognize people and vehicles of interest across the NBHA's sites for a more complete picture of what they were doing and where they had been.

“The greatest savings that I have experienced is time. The amount of time spent reviewing video for incidents using our previous cameras and VMS system has been cut down tremendously using Avigilon,” said Steven Beauregard, executive director of the NBHA. **“The thumbnail, pixel, appearance and classified object search have been a great benefit in making everything more time-efficient.”**

Not only did the new installation help ensure safer communities, but it was also extremely cost-effective. The NBHA's old system had been very expensive, as video feeds had to be transmitted wirelessly across the city to a single storage solution which experienced regular outages since the wireless radios could not accommodate the higher bandwidth of the cameras. With Avigilon HD NVRs serving as localized storage solutions, the wireless infrastructure built by Avigilon is designed to withstand ISP outages with minimal interruption in collecting video.

Taking the Onus off the Community

For a variety of reasons, victims and witnesses of crimes are often reluctant to come forward. The NBHA, however, noticed after deploying its Avigilon solution that the security system took the onus off residents by providing round-the-clock monitoring.

By serving as the eyes of the neighborhood, there's less pressure for individuals to involve themselves in situations that could compromise their sense of safety, and the community knows that help is accessible, even after the property offices are closed for the night. It was especially important for the NBHA to install cameras in places where petty crime has taken place in the past, such as roadways and parking lots; with intelligent video analytics and video security cameras that record misdemeanors, the security system has proven to be an effective deterrent. Community members are so pleased with the system, in fact, that the NBHA has reported its residents have been vocally supportive of the expansion of its network of cameras to cover even more areas and are appreciative when they see new installations.



Supporting Positive Outcomes

Another benefit of the Avigilon solution is that it has enabled law enforcement to better serve the NBHA's communities. The housing authority has always had a close working relationship with the local police force, and now that both parties utilize Avigilon systems, their platforms are cross-functional. Investigators can easily access the cameras to view video feeds in real-time or export footage for evidence.

The process of collecting evidence has also been expedited. In the past, compiling clips for court proceedings was a tedious, analog process; but now editing, formatting, duplicating and sharing high-definition video has become a more seamless experience.

“The clear detail of the video and easy export features allow us to collaborate more effectively with law enforcement, which helps protect our community.” — Mr. Beauregard

Furthermore, the clarity of the images assists police and prosecutors with identifying criminals beyond a reasonable doubt so that restitution can be paid or charges can be brought.

Building Trust with Residents

Another issue that the NBHA struggled with in the past was trying to identify unauthorized visitors or tenants within its public housing communities. There were frequent reports of unknown persons on the properties, but these weren't always vandals or mischief-makers; oftentimes, they were family members or additional tenants that residents had chosen not to report to the housing authority. Having clear video evidence enables the NBHA's team to have meaningful conversations with the community around the rules and codes of conduct so that the appropriate steps can be taken to ensure that everyone is safe and accounted for.

Helping Realize the NBHA's Mission

The NBHA's vision is to ensure sustainable and self-sufficient communities, even in the face of uncertainty, and its mission is to nurture safe neighborhoods with quality housing and to encourage economic development. With its comprehensive Avigilon security solution, the housing authority is taking proactive measures to prevent crime and making sure that this mission and vision stay a reality for all residents. ■

Next Steps

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