



Source: Courtesy of Jennifer A. Herbert

CAREERS AND RESEARCH

Jennifer A. Herbert, MA, Crime Intelligence Analyst, Crime Analysis and Strategic Evaluation Unit

Jennifer Herbert graduated with a double major in political science and justice studies from James Madison University in 2007. She had aspirations of becoming a police officer and eventually a detective. She was hired as a police officer after graduation, but she realized while at the police academy that she wanted to pursue the crime analysis career path in law enforcement. She became a crime analyst at Chesterfield County Police Department in Virginia. While working full time as an analyst,

Jennifer pursued an MA degree in intelligence at the American Military University. She then accepted a promotion to crime intelligence analyst at Henrico County Police Division. After working as a crime analyst for six years, Jennifer cannot imagine doing anything else.

Every day is different working as a crime intelligence analyst. Some days, Jennifer analyzes phone records and maps the location of and time of crime incidents. Other days, she maps the latest residential burglary trend and predicts where the next burglary will occur. She also completes research projects that examine quality-of-life issues for the community, including estimating crimes per 1,000 residents by neighborhood. Jennifer's role as a crime analyst is equally important in preventing crime and in apprehension of offenders by patrol officers. She thinks the most rewarding part of her job is helping people who have been victimized by apprehending offenders and improving the quality of life for county residents. Jennifer has some good advice for students interested in careers involving analysis:

If crime analysis interests you, ask your local police department if you can do an internship (paid or unpaid) to gain experience. Be sure to network with other crime analysts and let them know you are interested in pursuing a career in crime analysis. Courses in all forms of data analysis and GIS (geographic information systems) are almost essential to a career in crime analysis. Even if you did not take GIS classes during your undergraduate studies, many community colleges offer introductory and advanced classes in GIS. Other qualifications that will help you stand out as an applicant include competency in basic statistics and proficiency in data analysis programs, including Microsoft Excel, Access, and SPSS.