

TAKOMA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - GENERAL ORDERS



TITLE: COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM		NUMBER: 503
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 6, 2012		REVIEW DATE: March 06, 2022
New X Amends Rescinds		General Order 503, dated September 27, 2005
AUTHORITY: Chief Ronald A. Ricucci		TOTAL PAGES: 3

01 Purpose: To define policy and procedures pertinent to community relations and community policing. Without “grass roots” community support, successful enforcement of many laws may be difficult, if not impossible. Community involvement can be an effective means of eliciting public support, can serve to identify problems in the making, and may foster cooperative efforts in resolving community issues. Input from the community can also help ensure that departmental policies accurately reflect the needs of the community.

02 Policy: It is continuing departmental policy to have binding ties with the community and to keep the lines of communication open to the needs of the community.

03 Procedures: The Community Outreach Program (COP), with one officer assigned full-time (as staffing allows, may be filled temporarily) thereto, is the focal point of the department’s community involvement function. The COP intent is to establish links with the community whereby the department can learn of issues and respond to them before they become problems.

A. The COP provides a medium for the following, at a minimum:

1. establishing liaison with existing community organizations or establishing community groups where they are needed;
2. assisting in the development of community involvement policies for the department;
3. publicizing departmental objectives, community problems, and successes;
4. conveying information transmitted from citizens’ organizations to the department;
5. improving department practices bearing on police community interaction;
6. developing problem oriented or community policing strategies, if any.

B. Authority and Responsibility: The COP officer is responsible for coordinating community relations initiatives. However, the burden of achieving the department’s community relations objectives is shared by all personnel. Mass media exposure to the successes of effective community relations and community policing will be handled by the Public Information Officer (PIO). Administrative Services and Criminal Investigations personnel are expected to promote good

relations in their interactions with the public. The performance evaluations of Patrol Officers take into consideration their efforts to support community policing. Established community policing practices coordinated by the COP officer include, but are not limited to:

- 1.** conducting services and programs offered by the department to the community (e.g., security surveys, Citizens' Police Academy, etc.);
- 2.** forming partnerships with community groups and acting as a liaison between the department and each group;
- 3.** providing current crime prevention, safety, and security information to community members;
- 4.** acting in a problem-solving capacity in dealing with ongoing quality of life issues that are brought to the attention of the COP;
- 5.** exchanging current community involvement techniques with agencies/departments throughout the state and metropolitan area.

C. Program Reporting:

- 1.** Department personnel who attend meetings or otherwise learn of community/neighborhood problems and/or quality of life concerns will, at a minimum, inform the COP officer of such problems and concerns via memorandum or email.
- 2.** Department personnel who participate in community-oriented policing projects will ensure the progress of the projects is documented and made available to the COP officer upon request.
- 3.** At least quarterly, the COP officer will prepare and submit to the Chief of Police a report that includes, at a minimum, the following elements:
 - a.** a description of current concerns voiced by the community;
 - b.** a description of potential problems that have a bearing on law enforcement activities within the community;
 - c.** a statement of recommended actions that address previously identified concerns and problems;
 - d.** a statement of progress made toward addressing previously identified concerns and problems.
- 4.** Annually, the COP officer will identify to the PIO all community relations tasks and responsibilities accomplished for the year to be included in the Chief's Annual report.

D. Program Evaluation: Ideally, the Community Outreach Program should be evaluated continuously. Inasmuch as the community is not a static entity, and the demands placed on the police department will vary, the programs designed to meet community needs should be evaluated as frequently as possible to ensure that they are current and relevant. At least annually, the Chief of Police or designee will evaluate the department's Community Outreach Program to ensure that it does still, in fact, speak effectively to community concerns.

04 Triennial Citizen Survey:

A. The COP officer will ensure that a documented survey of citizen attitudes and opinions is conducted at least once every three years with respect to:

1. Overall performance of the department;
2. Overall competence of departmental employees;
3. Citizens' perception of officers' attitudes and behavior;
4. Community concern over safety and security within the department's service area;
5. Citizens' recommendations and suggestions for improvements.

B. The survey may be conducted by mail, in person, electronically, or by telephone directly by department personnel or by others with departmental guidance. It may be combined with specific questions about the quality of policing and victimization issues.

C. The results of the survey will be compiled, with a written summary provided to the Chief of Police.