

Advancing Public Safety through Community Policing

The first 25 years of the COPS Office



COPS ★

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Advancing Public Safety through Community Policing

The first 25 years of the COPS Office



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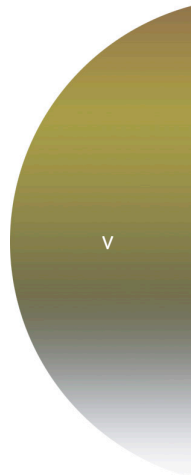
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About the COPS Office

THE VIOLENT CRIME CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1994 introduced an innovative, unique office to the country specifically to advance community policing and reduce crime in state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) communities. The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, better known as the COPS Office, became the first component of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) dedicated solely to serving the needs of SLTT law enforcement to reduce crime and maintain public safety. The initial and overarching goal of the office was simple: to put 100,000 more officers and deputies on the streets and in so doing reduce crime. In addition, the office promised to offer training, technical assistance, and other resources to help support law enforcement agencies across the country and engage the community to promote accountability and co-responsibility for public safety.

Within five years, the COPS Office fulfilled its initial pledge by awarding federal funds to support the hire of 100,000 new officers and deputies. To date, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to support the hiring of more than 134,000 law enforcement professionals. The nation has also experienced an overall reduction in violent crime rates since the COPS Office's inception, although since 2015, there have been disproportionate increases in violent crimes in many

local jurisdictions. Not only does the COPS Office directly fund the hiring of law enforcement professionals through direct hiring programs like the COPS Hiring Program (CHP) and the COPS Hiring Recovery Program (CHRP) but it also funds a number of other initiatives, including training, technical assistance, publications, and other resources to advance the practice of community policing and strengthen our nation's public safety posture.

Through the years, the COPS Office has become the go-to agency for law enforcement agencies across the country and continues to listen to the field and provide the resources that are needed to reduce crime and build trust between law enforcement and the communities served. It is the only component in the DOJ that has “policing” in its name, which reinforces its stature in the department as the primary component responsible for the law enforcement portfolio. Listening sessions, forums with subject matter experts, research, and the development of community policing practices and strategies that build trust and mutual respect between law enforcement and their communities continue to be the hallmark of the COPS Office. Community policing has never been more important than it is in 2020, as it supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together; it is those efforts that strengthen our nation’s ability to maintain safe and thriving communities. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, promote accountability of both law enforcement and the community, and allocate resources to meet the desired outcome of a safe community where residents can thrive and prosper without a persistent fear of crime.

Rather than solely responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing and interdicting crime and working with the community to establish public safety through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire officers and deputies to promote community engagement toward public safety and supports the development and dissemination of innovative and effective policing strategies to keep our communities safe. To complement the increases in numbers of police officers and deputies, the COPS Office provides training and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies, community members, and local government leaders to build community competency and engagement to improve public safety.

The COPS Office places a particular priority on listening to the challenges of our nation’s 18,000 law enforcement agencies to address their common needs through providing additional resources, training, technical assistance, and research to improve current practices. This is an important level of relationship building and coordination that allows the COPS Office to recognize national trends early and take steps to assist in addressing challenges to keep our communities safe. The COPS Office prioritizes resources and proactively addresses these challenges.



25 Years of Advancing Public Safety through Community Policing

WHILE WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED a tremendous amount, there is much work that remains; and the COPS Office is excited to continue to play a critical role for law enforcement in the years ahead. With the tremendous support of our law enforcement stakeholders, as well as our

Congressional support, the COPS Office continues to serve the needs of law enforcement across the country. This report highlights the 25 most significant initiatives the COPS Office has contributed to the field. Supporting law enforcement is our mission; we are proud of the ways we have done that and excited about what we will accomplish in the years ahead.

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1 Officer Safety and Wellness

Amplifying the importance of officer safety and wellness

THE OCCUPATIONAL FATALITY RATE for law enforcement is three to five times greater than the national average for the working population. Officers must be protected against incapacitating physical, mental, and emotional health problems, as well as against the hazards of their job. The COPS Office has built a library of resources to help agencies better serve the physical safety and mental wellness of their officers, and it is a library we continue to expand based on best practices, pilot projects, and field-tested approaches.

Most critically, we formed the National Officer Safety and Wellness Group (OSWG) in 2011 in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance to bring attention to the safety and wellness needs of law enforcement officers following a number of high-profile ambushes on police. Since then, the OSWG has raised awareness, increased knowledge, and encouraged law enforcement agencies to adopt practices that recognize that the most valuable resource a law enforcement agency has is the men and women who put their lives on the line each and every day in the name of protecting and serving their communities.

OSWG Success Stories

In a report summarizing its most recent meeting, the OSWG highlights several agencies that have adopted practices, enacted policies, and added resources for the benefit of officers' safety and both mental and physical wellness.

- The Metropolitan Nashville (Tennessee) Police Department's Behavioral Health Services Division has both a counseling and wellness unit through which free, confidential therapy and five types of wellness checks are available to all personnel and their families. As of March 2020 the unit had 100 peer supporters with another 25 to 30 scheduled for training, as well as chaplains and a licensed counselor—and funding from a COPS Office Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act grant further allows the department to provide training and assistance to other agencies in the surrounding 10 counties.
- One participant described a partnership between a police department and a supermarket chain that donates healthy, fresh, portion-controlled meals to officers on duty: The officers get a meal to go, and the agency gets healthy officers. This type of partnership helps overcome both the cost and convenience issues of eating healthy and of getting a meal on shift.
- A Texas law prescribing fitness standards for law enforcement sets specific goals the Texas Department of Public Safety must achieve with respect to its officers' physical condition but also gives the department flexibility to design programs to support its officers and the tools they need to meet the state standard. The statute applies only to state troopers and only in the state of Texas, but other states and local agencies could enact similar programs; the standards are reasonable and do help promote officer safety and wellness.

The OSWG meets twice a year, and the COPS Office publishes a summary of each meeting.

As the law enforcement field has grown in its understanding and appreciation of the critical importance of officer safety and wellness, so too has the depth and breadth of the discussions of the OSWG. Where early meetings talked about vehicular safety and gunfire deaths, the group's ability to elevate and amplify ideas has led to in-depth analysis of critical areas such as physical fitness and cardiac health, suicide, building both resilient agencies and officers, breaking down the stigma of mental health, and promoting positive coping strategies that can help officers manage their exposure to trauma on the job and mitigate the stress it can put on their personal relationships and finances.

As these semiannual conversations—each of which is summarized in a COPS Office publication—have evolved, the COPS Office has continued to emphasize the need to identify and understand the ways in which officers may

struggle to manage the stress of the job. This understanding is critically important to developing programs and services that focus on providing officers with the skills, tools, and positive coping strategies to enable them to build their own resilience and not merely survive but flourish. Nearly 10 years into this work, the OSWG has come incredibly far but recognizes that there is still much ground to cover to protect those who protect and serve. The COPS Office is committed to continuing to bring together law enforcement leaders and subject matter experts to have these critical conversations and improve all of our understanding.

The COPS Office also supports Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) Near Miss: a national, voluntary, nondisciplinary reporting system that allows law enforcement personnel to read about and anonymously share “close calls” or “near misses,” which provide lessons learned that can save the lives of other law enforcement officers.

Implementing the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act

Entrusted by Congress to provide support for law enforcement

THE LAW ENFORCEMENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACT OF 2017 (LEMHWA, Pub. L. 115–113) was signed into law in January 2018, recognizing that law enforcement agencies need and deserve support in their ongoing efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of their employees. Good mental and psychological health is just as essential as good physical health for law enforcement officers to be effective in keeping our country and our communities safe from crime and violence.

In 2019, the COPS Office published two reports, the *LEMHWA Report to Congress* and the *LEMHWA Eleven Case Studies*, as required by the law. The Report to Congress offered 22 recommendations to safeguard and improve officer mental health and wellness, and the case studies extensively address suicide prevention as part of a holistic wellness approach. To date, nearly 10,000 copies of the reports have been distributed, and their content heavily influenced the design of the new Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) grant program, also launched in FY 2019. The program awarded \$1.7 million to develop knowledge, increase awareness of effective

mental health and wellness strategies, increase the skills and abilities of law enforcement, and increase the number of law enforcement agencies and relevant stakeholders using peer mentoring programs. This funding included awards to 15 law enforcement agencies focusing on enhancing or expanding their peer support programs. The National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) also received funding to develop a national peer support training program to aid in standardization in knowledge, skills, and abilities across the country.

In FY 2020, Congress expanded funding to the LEMHWA grant program and the COPS Office awarded approximately \$4.3 million in grants directly to 40 state and local law enforcement agencies. The funding will increase their ability to provide peer support, access to behavioral health professionals, and suicide prevention training and programs to their officers. The program also encourages larger agencies to offer their services and experience to surrounding smaller jurisdictions that may lack the infrastructure to support a confidential peer support or crisis intervention program on their own.

In December 2020, the COPS Office launched a new community of practice that will leverage the experiences of these LEMHWA grantees to improve the understanding of how best

to serve the mental health needs of law enforcement. The goal of this initiative is to create a space for awardees to share experiences and gain insight into best practices on the design, development, and implementation of an officer safety and wellness program, including how to overcome challenges. As a community of practice, this working group will offer awardees dynamic access to an ongoing communications network of peers who can provide support in the implementation and sustainment of successful officer wellness programs. The COPS Office will also elevate and amplify the best practices and lessons learned within the community of practice to the broader law enforcement field.

The popularity of the LEMHWA program is demonstrated by the tremendous volume of applications submitted every year. As state and local budgets are affected by the expenses and lost revenue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability of agencies to provide these types of programs without federal assistance is at risk of being significantly impaired. Given that policing during a pandemic brings unique stressors in addition to the general risks of exposure to trauma and stressful working conditions, the need for programs that address officer mental well-being will no doubt increase. The COPS Office will be ready to continue to adapt to the mental health needs of the field through the LEMHWA program and the growing library of resources based on best practices and training the program is helping to establish.

Preparing First Responders for Active Shooter Situations



Scenario-based training for worst-case scenarios

SINCE THE TRAGEDY at Columbine High School in 1999, law enforcement and other first responders have worked to improve their tactical training to active shooter events. With more than 75 active shooter events between 2016 and 2018 alone, killing 306 (including 15 law enforcement officers) and wounding 850, a well-trained first responder workforce is critical to saving lives. Since 1999, law enforcement has made great strides in training, policy development, and accountability. However, the law enforcement community continuously

seeks to make improvements and bring about best practices to enhance the decision-making and application of appropriate judgments by law enforcement.

The COPS Office created the Preparing for Active Shooter Situations (PASS) Program in 2017 to provide multidisciplinary, scenario-based training as described under the POLICE Act of 2016. In just a few short years, PASS has provided more than 53,000 first responders nationwide a multipronged approach to training and auxiliary assistance, including the following:

- Courses designed to improve the tactical response to active shooter situations, including tactical medical training for first responders as proposed by the Hartford Consensus

- Train-the-trainer courses that allow law enforcement agencies to train community members on when to run, when to hide, when to fight, and how to stop the bleed, as these are commonly understood as the most critical skills and knowledge for civilians to most effectively escape or intervene in an active shooter situation
- Training on resiliency and post-event wellness to ensure that caring for law enforcement officers does not end when the scene is secured
- A suite of refresher courses, downloadable scenarios for intra-agency training, and other online resources to help officers maintain their knowledge and skills

The faster law enforcement can arrive to engage and neutralize the shooter and coordinate with other first responders to evacuate and treat victims, the fewer the fatalities. Professional first responders, led by law enforcement, need to be trained not only on the safest, most effective ways to engage with active shooters and treat casualties but also on working with civilian partners and community members on strategies and threat assessment activities that improve survivability.

There are more than 800,000 law enforcement officers in this country and large numbers of dispatchers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians (EMT) who are also integral to any response to an active shooter event. The

COPS Office is committed to training them all in integrated, scenario-based classes. When we train first responders using real-life scenarios in real-world settings, they are more likely to make appropriate decisions to contain and control an active shooter event in their jurisdiction. Through PASS, local responders are better prepared to understand how their roles will work together in a crisis, to ensure the necessary lines of communication are not just compatible but functional, and ultimately to more quickly stabilize and move the injured to where they can receive critical care while not impeding law enforcement's first duty to neutralize the threat. This training in communication and decision-making is critical to saving the lives of both civilians and officers. Incredible damage can occur in just minutes, with [data on past incidents showing that 70 percent of them end within five minutes.](#)

As the PASS program looks to the future, the COPS Office is working with the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center at Texas State University to create a mix of traditional classroom, train-the-trainer, virtual reality, and online distance learning modalities to serve the largest possible number of first responders in the most efficient way possible. PASS is a flagship training program for the COPS Office and a model of how innovation and efficiency underpins all our training programs, both in the past and for the future.

4

Cutting-Edge Technology for Cutting-Edge Law Enforcement



Helping the field employ cutting-edge technology

IN THE EARLY YEARS of the COPS Office, particularly as agencies across the country rushed to ensure they had technology systems that would function in the 21st century, there were funding programs to aid in the procurement of technology to improve public safety. The COPS Office provided funding that allowed agencies to upgrade

vital records management and call management systems, put advanced communication technologies into patrol cars, and help put more officers back on the street as technology upgrades improved efficiencies that reduced administrative burden and the time officers needed to spend at the police station. Between 1995 and 2002, the Making Officer Redeployment Effective program awarded nearly \$1.3 billion and helped redeploy more than 40,000 officers out of administrative tasks and onto the beat.

But simply purchasing technology is not enough; selecting and implementing the right technology effectively and efficiently is just as important and much more difficult. Recognizing that law enforcement agencies cannot afford to waste time and money when it comes to technology acquisition, the COPS Office provides technical assistance to help agencies navigate the process of acquisition and the development of policies for use. As the technology evolution expanded, the COPS Office also expanded its efforts to assist law enforcement leaders in understanding and selecting the right technology to efficiently and effectively enhance their law enforcement capabilities.

The COPS Office continues to create comprehensive resources like the [Law Enforcement Technology Guide](#) to assist agencies with complex procurements. Other publications focus on specific technology areas including interoperability, forensic evidence management, social media, body-worn cameras, and closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems. We produced [guidelines for the use of electronic control weapons](#) (ECW, commonly called Tasers), held forums on public safety broadband needs, conducted case studies on building 311

systems, and produced information to help police departments measure the effects of information technologies in support of community policing activities.

In its 25th year the COPS Office continues to assist law enforcement in its understanding of emerging technologies, including unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and facial recognition technology, that have broad public safety implications through the coordination of forums with subject matter experts and law enforcement leaders from across the nation. The forums cover [discussions on successful use](#), legal and ethical considerations, and promising practices for agencies looking to adopt the use of certain technologies.

Helping law enforcement operate on new technological frontiers is central to the COPS Office mission of advancing community policing and making communities safe. With working groups and projects devoted to the ongoing exploration of the use of drones, the implications of autonomous vehicles, and examining pursuit policies to account for technology modernization in passenger cars, law enforcement agencies can be confident the COPS Office is committed to collecting, documenting, and disseminating the best available information on all technology issues for SLTT law enforcement agencies.

Convening the Field

Listening to law enforcement

ONE OF THE UNIQUE STRENGTHS of the COPS Office is its commitment to engaging with the field to help the field tackle current challenges and emerging issues in law enforcement. The COPS Office routinely convenes law enforcement leaders in the field along with subject matter experts to discuss the most important issues of the day; share their experiences, successes, and failures; offer advice for other agencies that may be facing the same challenges; and develop roadmaps for future needs and work that influence both the field and the department's efforts to support the field. Through a variety of forums, the COPS Office promotes the sharing of important research that highlights both evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence to further law enforcement innovation.

Through the years the COPS Office has hosted forums to talk about body-worn cameras, the broadband needs of public safety agencies, risk management in law enforcement, suicide among law enforcement officers, views from the rank and file, improving the identification and reporting of hate crimes, managing mass demonstrations, and addressing opioids. Recent forum topics have included the uses of drone

technology in law enforcement, active shooter training, recruitment and morale in law enforcement, and the use of facial recognition technology in law enforcement.

In addition to its forums, the COPS Office has established a number of stand-alone working groups that make significant contributions to the law enforcement field. For example, the School Safety Working Group, which is composed of representatives from eight national law enforcement organizations, worked to identify 10 essential actions that can be taken by schools, school districts, and law enforcement agencies to help prevent critical incidents involving the loss of life or injuries in our nation's schools and to respond rapidly and effectively when incidents do occur. The *Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety* are applicable to school shootings as well as to other areas of school safety including natural disasters and traumatic events such as student suicide. Adopting policies and practices based on the recommendations in this publication can help make school communities safer and save lives.

There is no end to the number of topics that we still need to address and that the field is anxious to discuss. In debating the issues, hearing different perspectives and sharing what

has worked and what has not, law enforcement agencies are better positioned to make the critical decisions they need to make moving forward. The COPS Office looks forward to

continuing to create forums for the discussion and advancement of effective community policing practices in new and emerging areas of law enforcement.

6 The National Blue Alert Network

Protecting those who serve

IN 2016, the COPS Office was assigned the honor of overseeing the DOJ's implementation of the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015 (Pub.L. 114-12). Named in honor of New York City Police Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, who were killed in an ambush attack on December 20, 2014, the Blue Alert Act seeks to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans. Blue Alerts rapidly disseminate information to law enforcement agencies, the media, and the public to aid in the apprehension of violent criminals who have killed or seriously injured an officer in the line of duty. Blue Alerts can also be issued when a suspect poses an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement or when an officer is missing in the line of duty. Currently 37 states have Blue Alert plans.


The COPS Office created a National Blue Alert Network to support the use and integration of Blue Alert plans throughout the United States. Working with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), and many of the nation's law enforcement stakeholder organizations, the COPS Office created both a public and controlled access repository of informa-



NATIONAL
Blue Alert
NETWORK

tion about Blue Alerts, developed guidance documents on developing and enhancing Blue Alert plans, provided direct technical assistance to states, and continued to promote and educate the field and the public about the value and importance of Blue Alerts. The network of states with Blue Alert plans continues to expand as a result, and in 2019, the use of the BLU code for television, radio, and wireless emergency alerts was put into effect, constituting a major advancement in alerting capabilities that will benefit all 50 states and U.S. territories, including tribal lands.

The COPS Office continues its coordination efforts with FEMA to fully integrate Blue Alert plans into the national Integrated Public Alerts and Warning System (IPAWS). The COPS Office also continues to work with the FOP to monitor and track incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert, specifically shootings that result in the death of or injury to on-duty officers. These data are critically important to educating policy makers and communities about the need



for Blue Alerts. And work to promote the Blue Alert Network and assist state coalitions of stakeholders will continue until all the states and territories are part of the network. Leading the National Blue Alert Network is one of many ways in

which the COPS Office works to keep the men and women of law enforcement safe while on the job. It is part of a long commitment to ensuring officers return home safe at the end of every shift—a commitment that will not end.

7 Commitment to Customer Service

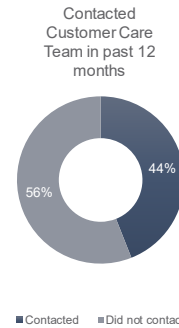
Building a tradition of meeting customer needs

CUSTOMER SERVICE has been a hallmark of the COPS Office since its creation. From the COPS Office Customer Care Center to congressional inquiries to meeting with local elected officials—the COPS Office has always been committed to providing the best customer service. Under the leadership of Director Phil Keith, the COPS Office Customer Satisfaction Index was recently rated as Excellent. The overall average Customer Satisfaction Index for the Federal Government is 68, and the COPS Office received a score of 83—proving once again that the COPS Office places a high value on its ability to best serve the needs of the law enforcement field. While those numbers are impressive, the COPS Office is constantly looking for ways to improve its business practices to be more in line with that of the private sector—customer needs are the driving force for business success.

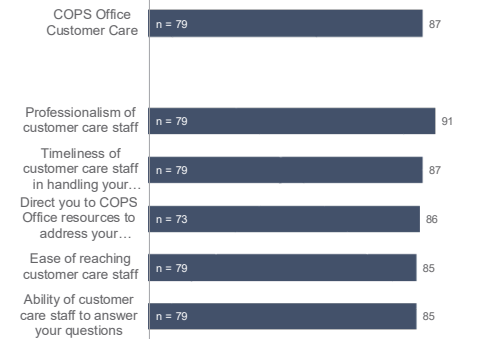
COPS Office Customer Care

Impact: 2.2

- Nearly half of awardees indicated they have contacted the COPS Customer Care Team in the past 12 months.
- Because it's a high impact, high scoring driver of the CSI score, the COPS Office Customer Care is considered a strength.
- Among the attributes that comprise this driver, *Professionalism of customer care staff* scored particularly high at 91.



CFI Group



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Source: CFI Group, *Department of Justice: COPS Satisfaction Draft 2020 Executive Summary* (Washington, DC: Federal Consulting Group, 2020), 17.

- The COPS Office received high marks for the way the office helps agencies develop community / law enforcement partnerships, solve problems, and influence organizational change.

- Seven in 10 grantees said informational products or grant programs addressing Child-Youth Safety and Enhancing Community Partnership with Law Enforcement would be “very useful” to their agencies.
- In addition to ensuring our customers are pleased with their experiences, the COPS Office executed a strategy to gain greater outreach to DOJ leadership, Congress, the

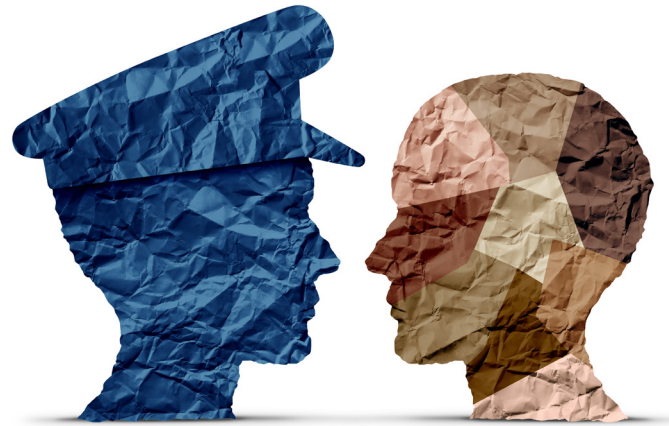
law enforcement field at large, and the media. Congressional appropriations are high, media coverage is substantial, approval of DOJ leadership is at an all-time high, and law enforcement stakeholders feel the COPS Office is listening to their needs and responding accordingly.

Process Improvements

Becoming a learning organization

DURING THE 25-YEAR HISTORY of the COPS Office, the agency has always looked for innovative solutions to streamline processes and reduce bureaucratic burdens for grantees and stakeholders. In 2010, the COPS Office developed an innovative online application for its hiring grants. The application has evolved through the years, and the COPS Office developed a software application to automatically score and rank applications. This automatic scoring reduces risks of user error and helps ensure COPS hiring funds get into the hands of the law enforcement agencies that can best use the funds to advance their community policing and public safety needs. The COPS Office is also focused on reducing the burden to the field in order to maximize access and the impact of federal funding and promote performance and results. Significant efforts thus far have included the following:

- Improving solicitations by simplifying and using plain language
- Reducing the content of grant applications to the COPS Office by nearly half
- Reducing the number of questions asked



- Streamlining and improving the process for the collection of impact information and reducing the frequency of reporting by 50%
- Establishing a standing working group representative of the COPS Office grantee pool to provide substantive feedback on how we can best reduce the burdens on applicants and grantees while accounting for taxpayer dollars

The COPS Office continually seeks to employ every opportunity to improve its processes and ability to efficiently and effectively meet challenges and respond to the needs of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Administration, and the law enforcement field to enhance public safety in our communities.



Flexibility and Responsiveness

Paying attention to the ever-changing needs of the field

ONE OF THE COPS OFFICE'S great strengths since its inception—and of which we are extremely proud—is the ability to rapidly conceptualize, develop, and implement innovative funding programs and other resources in response to both the emerging needs of law enforcement and the priorities of our nation's lawmakers. Working closely with law enforcement executives, practitioners, researchers, and other experts in the field, the COPS Office draws upon the knowledge of subject matter experts and those with hands-on experience in specific issue areas to develop creative and pioneering ways of addressing both longstanding community problems and evolving public safety issues.

"I think the COPS program has been successful. The purpose of the COPS Office was to demonstrate to local police departments that if you put additional people, feet on the street, that crime could be affected and that people would be safer and more secure. We believe that the COPS program demonstrated that conclusively."

– Then U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft, [2003](#)

"Serving as a law enforcement officer requires courage, strength, and dedication. The demands of this work, day in and day out, can take a toll on the health and well-being of our officers, but the Department of Justice is committed to doing our part to help. I want to thank the men and women of our COPS Office for their hard work to support our officers every day."

– Then U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr, [2019](#)

“Community policing has contributed to the decline in crime rates over the past seven years. The COPS Office, through its hard work and innovative grant programs, has been a major catalyst in spreading the practice of community policing and advancing the concept of community justice throughout the country.”

–Then U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, [2000](#)

“[COPS] has been beneficial . . . the goal of the program was to show that actually having police officers on the ground would be very important in deterring crime, and I think we’ve shown that. We put additional police officers on the street, and now we have crime at an all-time low for 30 years.”

– Then U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, [2005](#)

“Although we all can be proud of – and inspired by – the courage and commitment that our nation’s law enforcement officers exhibit every day, we must find ways to take this work to the next level. The COPS Hiring Program – and this Administration’s determination to create and restore law enforcement jobs across the country – will allow us to do just that.”

– Then U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, [2011](#)

“Our Office of Community Oriented Policing Services or COPS Office . . . is helping to ensure that local law enforcement officers have the resources they need to serve their communities fairly, faithfully, and effectively.”

– Then U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, [2015](#)

Reducing crime and improving the perception of safety


FOR 25 YEARS, COPS Office hiring funds have helped law enforcement agencies face the challenges of keeping their communities safe through community policing while maintaining sufficient sworn personnel levels in a changing economic climate. Through the years, departments of all sizes have told us that COPS Office hiring grants have helped them become more effective, more efficient, and more responsive to the needs of their communities. Police and sheriffs across the nation have used this funding to bolster their law enforcement efforts, connect with their communities, and improve public safety. To date, the COPS Office has funded approximately 134,000 additional sworn officer positions for more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 SLTT law enforcement agencies.

The need from SLTT governments for COPS Office hiring funds has always been high, especially during times of economic hardship. Funding decisions under CHP are based on a combination of factors and considerations that include community policing strategies, fiscal needs, and reported crime rates as well as administration priorities. Agencies applying for hiring

grants are required to complete a comprehensive community policing plan that incorporates a problem-solving component in which they identify the specific issue(s) they will target with hiring funding.

During periods of economic downturn, the COPS Office has focused not just on the creation of new officer positions but also on the preservation of existing jobs. As an example, in 2009–10, when so many of our nation's law enforcement agencies were facing dire economic challenges and thousands of jobs were lost, nearly 2,500 officer positions that would have been eliminated were preserved through COPS Office hiring funding. This preservation ensured that departments that might have otherwise had to enact hiring freezes were able to continue to put officers on the street.

While the economy may have turned around, crime rates since 2015 have been on the rise in a number of our nation's cities. In 2020, violent crime rates in many cities were disproportionately high. Under the leadership of President Donald J. Trump and then Attorney General William Barr, Operation Legend was launched as a sustained, systematic, and coordinated law enforcement initiative across all federal law enforcement agencies working in conjunction with state and



local law enforcement officials to fight the sudden surge of violent crime in American cities. In May 2020, the COPS Office provided \$51 million to support Operation Legend that is being used to hire 214 sworn law enforcement officers for state

and local law enforcement task forces. The recipients of the funding are deploying existing veteran officers to task force duties and use the COPS Office funding to hire new recruits to backfill those positions as practical.



Keeping our children safe at school

THE COPS OFFICE has long demonstrated a commitment to school safety and to ensuring students' success in supportive, safe environments, with significant grant funding dedicated to school safety programs focused on different yet related aspects of school safety. While the School-Based Partnerships program addressed persistent school-related crime and disorder problems through problem-solving techniques, the Secure Our Schools program provided funding for purchasing crime prevention equipment and other security improvements. The Safe Schools Initiative focused on delinquency prevention, community planning, and technology development.

In 2018, following the passage of the Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act, the COPS Office established the School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP), which provides funding to improve security at schools and on school grounds through evidence-based school safety programs and technologies. Awards may include funding for coordination with local law enforcement; training for local law enforcement officers to prevent school violence; placement and use of metal detectors, locks, lighting, and other deterrent measures; acquisition and installation of technology for expedited notification of local law enforcement during an emergency; and other measures providing a significant improvement in security. Between 2018 and

2020, more than \$106 million has been awarded through SVPP, with more than 14,000 schools and nearly 9.3 million students benefiting from the funded projects.

The COPS Office also believes that school resource officers (SRO) play a unique role in preserving order and safety, providing security, addressing crime and disorder problems, and serving as liaisons between the school and police. SROs can work with youth in a positive way through mentoring, developing relationships, and referring students to professional services within both the school (guidance counselors and social workers) and the community (youth and family service organizations). Between 1999 and 2005, the COPS in Schools program awarded nearly \$724 million for SRO hiring, and since 2011 CHP has enabled agencies to hire officers to address specific problem areas, including more than 1,450 officers dedicated to school-based policing.

As a result of the integral role SROs have in schools and the need for well-trained officers, the COPS Office requires training through the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) for all SROs awarded through CHP. The COPS Office has partnered with NASRO to cover the cost of this training for grantee agencies since 2016, which includes covering the registration cost and travel expenses for each COPS Office-funded officer. In addition, the COPS Office continues to develop publications and media that support SROs and school-based policing. NASRO and a partner, the Virginia

Center for Policing Innovation (VCPI), are developing an online SRO training course that will be available on the [COPS Training Portal](#) in early 2021.

Law enforcement agencies have become extremely proficient in responding to critical incidents, including school shootings, and tactics have changed significantly in the 20 years since the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Although statistically they are rare, school shootings and mass casualty attacks have an enormous impact on our communities. This impact often leads to immense pressure on school administrators and law enforcement officials to “do something” quickly to protect our children in school. Hasty and reactive decision-making often results in implementation of new policies and adoption of new equipment and technology based on scant—if any—evidence of their effectiveness. Understanding this challenge, in 2018 the COPS Office established a School Safety Working Group to identify the most essential actions that schools, school districts, and law enforcement agencies can take to prevent mass casualty attacks in our nation’s schools and, when prevention is not enough, to respond rapidly and effectively to end the threat as quickly as possible to save lives. The resulting report, *Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety*, was presented to the Attorney General in August 2020 as a multidisciplinary and balanced approach representing measures that can be taken to ensure school communities’ mental and emotional security as well as their physical safety.

Serving Indian Country

Providing funding and training to our sovereign nations

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT of the COPS Office, one of our most important achievements has been the partnership with and support provided to tribal law enforcement agencies of the 574 federally recognized tribal nations. In 2010, in direct response to concerns raised by tribal leaders that the grant process did not provide the flexibility tribes needed to address their criminal justice and public safety needs, the DOJ launched its Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS) to save time and resources and allow the department to gain a better understanding of the tribes' overall needs. Through CTAS, which includes the COPS Office's Tribal Resources Grant Program (TRGP), federally recognized tribes and tribal consortia were able—for the first time ever—to submit a single application for most of the DOJ's tribal grant programs.

With the increased understanding the CTAS application can provide, the COPS Office has proactively addressed the needs of law enforcement in many Native American communities through TRGP and built upon historical programs such as the Tribal Methamphetamine Program, Tribal Hiring Renewal

Grant Program, Tribal Mental Health and Community Safety Initiative, and Tribal Court Pilot Program. All of these programs addressed tribal needs by focusing on quality-of-life issues and covering law enforcement expenses. The COPS Office has awarded more than 2,500 grants totaling \$600 million to help Native American communities hire more than 2,000 new or redeployed law enforcement officers and has aided tribal jurisdictions in obtaining necessary training, equipment, vehicles, and technology. The COPS Office recognizes and supports the unique law enforcement and other needs specific to tribal communities as a result of their limited resources and high rates of crime and violence.

The COPS Office also provides resources and training and technical assistance (TTA) to further practical and specialized knowledge used to implement and enhance tribal communities' justice system efforts, particularly in the law enforcement field. The COPS Office supports resources and TTA that is not only specifically geared toward tribes but also generally applies across broader topic areas such as community policing, drugs, gangs, and youth safety. TTA services have included trainings such as Tribal Oriented Policing Strategies, Public Law 280, Regional Collaboration, and Youth Leadership. The COPS Office has also produced numerous publica-



tions and other resources specific to tribal law enforcement, including publications such as *Promising Practices in Tribal Community Policing*, *Successful Tribal Community Policing Initiatives*, and *Public Safety Partnerships in Indian Country*.

Recognizing the challenge tribal law enforcement agencies have in accessing national criminal justice databases and systems, the COPS Office also supports the Tribal Access Program for National Crime Information (TAP). The DOJ launched the TAP in August 2015 to provide selected federally recognized tribes access to national crime information systems for federally authorized criminal and noncriminal purposes. TAP allows tribes to more effectively serve and protect their nations' citizens by ensuring the exchange of critical data across the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) systems and other national crime information systems. After several expansions of the program, TAP is currently deployed to more than 75 tribes across the country with more than 300 participating tribal justice agencies.

In the coming years, the COPS Office looks forward to supporting the unique needs of Alaska, where then Attorney General Barr declared a law enforcement emergency in 2019. The COPS Office has focused on providing funding to Alaska

Native villages through TRGP to address their lack of law enforcement presence, including nearly \$5 million for 20 new officers in 2019. The COPS Office is also assisting the Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, also known as Operation Lady Justice, to engage tribal law enforcement leaders regarding the challenges and solutions to this crisis in Indian Country.

To provide guidance on cold case investigations in Indian Country, the COPS Office is providing funding to the University of North Texas and the University of Tennessee to develop and implement protocols both for addressing operational investigations of cold cases in tribal jurisdictions and for capturing data and performing investigations of missing and murdered native persons. The professionals associated with this project bring decades of combined expertise in forensic analyses, cold case investigations, system development, curriculum development, and implementation of training programs for law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, and other allied professionals.



Coordinating the Approach to Community Policing

Building relationships and solving problems

IN 2003, the COPS Office undertook a large-scale project to develop a single comprehensive definition of community policing.

The COPS Office further went on to develop a way for local law enforcement agencies to measure their own progress toward community policing implementation through the development of a Community Policing Self Assessment Tool. This easy-to-use tool was administered to COPS Office-awardee law enforcement agencies across the country more than 1,590 times and collected data from 166,932 individual participants. This tool is still available and enables agencies to accurately measure the extent to which they actually engage in community policing activities.

The COPS Office continues to advance the concepts of community policing through online training programs designed to educate the field and communities regarding community policing concepts and proven, evidence-based practices. For example, through programs like the Law and Your Community training program developed by the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), we help youth

meet law enforcement officers and understand the role police play in their communities. We also work with a number of programs that help bring young people together with law enforcement officers through organizations like Nancy Lieberman Charities; the Cal Ripken, Sr., Foundation; the Boys and Girls Clubs; and National Police Athletic League (PAL). We have also partnered with and supported community organizations that work to build relationships between police and the community—most recently partnering with Movement Forward to launch the National Faith & Blue Weekend, in which houses of worship around the country partnered with local law enforcement agencies to host community events and dialogues and begin to build the relationships that are necessary to addressing local crime and safety problems.

In addition, we continue to develop publications that assist agencies with implementing various aspects of community policing, including those that enhance the ability of agencies to conduct problem solving and problem analysis:

- Problem Solving Guide series
- *Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers in 60 Small Steps*
- *Using Analysis for Problem-Solving: A Guide Book for Law Enforcement*

- *Intelligence Analysis for Problem Solvers*
- *Implementing the Drug Endangered Children Tracking System*

Those that that enable agencies to engage in more effective partnerships:

- *Policing the Connected World: Using Social Network Analysis in Police-Community Partnerships*
- *Building Interdisciplinary Partnerships to Prevent Violent Extremism*

Community policing is a philosophy to promote organizational strategies supporting the systematic use of partnerships, resources, and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

– adapted from [Community Policing Defined](#)

- *Co-Producing Public Safety: Communities, Law Enforcement, and Public Health Researchers Work to Prevent Crime Together*
- *Police-Youth Dialogues Toolkit – Guide to Improving Relationships and Public Safety Through Engagement and Conversation*
- *How to Build Effective Community Partnerships to Prevent Teen Substance Abuse*

And, finally, products that enhance the ability of agencies to implement organizational changes that are supportive of community policing activities:

- *A Police Organizational Model for Crime Reduction*
- *The Integration of Crime Analysis into Patrol Work*
- *Implementing a Comprehensive Performance Management Approach in Community Policing Organizations*
- *Law Enforcement Best Practices: Lessons from the Field*
- *Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned*
- *Strategic Approaches to Information Sharing*

All of these efforts have been invaluable to the advancement of community policing as a concept that assists law enforcement agencies with clearly defining community policing while also providing them with the tools and knowledge to effectively implement its practices within their agencies and communities.

Training Portal

Training a modern police workforce



FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS the COPS Office supported the development and delivery of training for law enforcement officers across the country in several topical areas designed to advance knowledge in the field and promote safe and effective policing practices. The catalog of available trainings ranges from basic community policing to de-escalation techniques and improving investigation methods. While economic ups and downs leave state and local agencies without certainty in their training budgets, the COPS Office helps agencies access the training they need when they need it.

In late 2018, the COPS Office launched the [COPS Training Portal](#). In addition to hosting a catalog of all of our in-person training opportunities through nationally recognized provider organizations such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance, ALERRT at Texas State University, and NASRO, the portal hosts a catalog of asynchronous online courses. It exists to directly support agency training efforts by providing a no-cost means for entire law enforcement organizations, training academies, and individual officers to access high-quality and engaging materials and information to enhance the training already being conducted at the local level.

In the short time it has been operational, the portal's catalog has grown to 18 courses with more coming online each month. Courses are available in topics ranging from drug endangered children and ethical decision-making to homicide reduction and asset forfeiture. And in 2021 the COPS Office is partnering with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to bring new courses in drug recognition expert testimony, vehicular pursuits, and advanced roadside impaired driving enforcement to the online environment.

All officers who complete courses can access training packets necessary to ensure they can obtain in-service credit for their work if they desire. And newer courses coming online

are frequently certified by the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training's (IADLEST) National Certification Program, which ensures they are eligible for credits in more than two dozen states. To date more than 20,000 individuals have completed a course in the portal, and each month the subscriber list grows.

Tight budgets and limited time should not stand in the way of critical training needs for our nation's law enforcement officers. Under the COPS Office's leadership, the portal's library of interactive online content will continually be updated and will always be free.

Publications and Knowledge Resources

Eight million publications and counting

IN THE BACK of every COPS Office publication released today is the statement, "To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million [copies of] topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives."

The COPS Office is not only a grant-making organization; it is also a publishing and production house. When the COPS Office first opened, a few reports were published to highlight program accomplishments. Today, COPS Office publications have grown into an online library of more than 500 publications that are available at no charge to all those with a stake in advancing public safety. From issue briefs to implementation guides, case studies, and research reports, everything in the COPS Office Resource Center is aimed at the busy law enforcement professional who wants to be "in the know" on the critical and emerging issues in the field and familiar with what is working in communities like their own across the country.

The COPS Office respects evidence-based research into crime control and learns best from the practical experience of peers. Our library is full of examples of evidenced-based practices and represents one of the most comprehensive



collections of practice-based evidence related to the field of policing in the world. What law enforcement professionals can learn in our library (just to highlight our current top downloads) includes the following:

- *Preparing for the Unimaginable: How Chiefs Can Safeguard Officers Mental Health Before and After Mass Casualty Events*
- *Standards and Guidelines for Internal Affairs*
- *Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness*
- *Stop Hate and Build Inclusion*
- *Implementing the Drug Endangered Children Tracking System*
- *Combating Child Sex Trafficking*
- *Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program*
- *Breaking the Silence on Law Enforcement Suicides*

The COPS Office continues to produce many of its guides in print that readers can order from our warehouse.

In 2008 the COPS Office started the *Community Policing Dispatch*, a monthly e-newsletter highlighting successes in the field. *The Beat*, our podcast series, began in 2011 and in 2020 moved into Apple Podcasts for convenient listening. Also, in 2019 the COPS Office launched *What's New in Blue* on our YouTube channel. What's New in Blue is a series of short videos intended to keep viewers informed about inno-vative developments and critical issues in law enforcement. The episodes feature informative discussions about ideas worth spreading throughout American policing in a format useful for viewing in roll call or training classes or sharing with colleagues and across social media.

With more than 50 new releases every year, the COPS Office library of resources is going to continue to grow.

21st Century Community Policing Task Force

Facilitating a presidential project

THE COPS OFFICE is always prepared to answer the call of our nation's highest leaders in the efforts to advance community policing. In 2015, this responsiveness involved leading the effort to support then President Barack Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Created by [Executive Order 13684](#) in response to the shooting death of Michael Brown, the 11-member task force made up of law enforcement officials, academics, and civil rights activists had 90 days to present recommendations to strengthen public trust and foster strong relationships between local law enforcement and the communities that they protect while also promoting effective crime reduction and ensuring the safety and well-being of officers.

A team of COPS Office staff members managed the efforts of the task force and in this short period ensured the task force conducted seven public listening sessions across the country and aired them in live broadcasts. The COPS Office received hundreds of submissions of testimony and recommendations from a wide range of community and faith leaders, law enforcement officers, academics, and others and worked to review and synthesize all the submissions for the

task force to ensure a diverse range of voices would inform its recommendations. And the [task force's final report](#) was widely read, with thousands of copies distributed; the COPS Office also produced a subsequent [implementation guide](#) and an [annual report](#) to assist local communities in using the recommendations to evaluate their own efforts and expectations.

The task force represented a beginning, not an ending, for national discussions on law enforcement in American communities. It even called for the creation of a larger commission on law enforcement as its first overarching recommendation.

The President should support and provide funding for the creation of a National Crime and Justice Task Force to review and evaluate all components of the criminal justice system for the purpose of making recommendations to the country on comprehensive criminal justice reform.

– [Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing](#)

And the COPS Office demonstrated that it is the component that is well-suited to assist administrations in implementing major efforts that need to engage with stakeholders to facilitate critical conversations about the constant evolution of policing policy and practice. For example, the COPS Office was called on to lead the President's Commission on Law

Enforcement and Criminal Justice in 2020 (see "President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice" on page 57), and it remains ready to engage with our nation's leaders, law enforcement, and communities in these important engagements in the years to come.

CRI-TAC: By the Field, For the Field

Leading field-driven technical assistance

THE COPS OFFICE developed its premier technical assistance program, the Collaborative Reform Model, in 2011 to provide technical assistance to law enforcement agencies on a wide variety of topics. Among other things, the program was designed to assist agencies in enhancing and improving their policies and procedures, their systems, and their culture.

The COPS Office's first initiative under the Collaborative Reform umbrella was with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, which resulted in [a report](#) that went on to serve as an assessment tool for many other agencies that used the report to evaluate their own policies and to make changes in their own agencies.

Through the years and in response to feedback from the field to create a more responsive service to meet the needs of SLTT law enforcement agencies, the COPS Office retooled the program to become the [Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center](#) (CRI-TAC). It offers a "by the field, for the field" approach with the goal of listening to the needs of the field and offering the training and technical assistance spe-

cifically requested by the individual agency. This customized technical assistance uses leading experts in a range of public safety, crime reduction, and community policing topics and is provided at no cost to the requesting agency.



Led by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), CRI-TAC boasts an unprecedented partnership with an array of leading law enforcement organizations and stakeholders:

- Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy Associates (FBINAA)
- Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)
- International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA)
- International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST)
- Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA)
- National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE)
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
- National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)
- National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA)

The program continues to be a tremendous success. Ninety-three percent of the agencies surveyed reported that the technical assistance they received helped the agency to achieve the goals it set out to accomplish when requesting technical assistance. Through CRI-TAC, law enforcement agencies across the country are better able to serve both their officers and their communities.

CRI-TAC continues to be a tremendous resource to the field, and more than 400 requests for technical assistance had been filled as of fall 2020. One of the hallmarks of this assistance is the responsiveness of CRI-TAC, and we ensure that agencies that contact us get a quick response back; if it is determined that CRI-TAC can help with the specific request, that technical assistance is delivered promptly and completed quickly. Topics offered by CRI-TAC range from active shooter response to de-escalation, and from mass demonstration response to officer safety and wellness. A complete list of topics, as well as guidance to request assistance, can be found at the [CRI-TAC website](#).

Recognition of Law Enforcement Contributions

Honoring the best

EACH YEAR, the COPS Office is pleased to help the Attorney General recognize the outstanding work performed by members of the law enforcement field in protecting and serving our nation's communities.

Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service in Policing

Since 2017, the Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service in Policing honors the incredible work done by state, local, or tribal sworn rank-and-file police officers, deputies, and troopers for exceptional efforts in community policing that so often go unrecognized. Individuals receiving this award have all demonstrated active engagement with the community in one of three areas: (1) criminal investigations, (2) field operations, or (3) innovations in policing. From acts of bravery like saving the life of a gunshot victim or fearlessly pursuing a suspect who had just killed a fellow officer to increasing community support and reducing violent crime by creating a youth baseball league, these award recipients

demonstrate the courage, creativity, and dedication that is such an important part of this profession. By distinguishing and rewarding their efforts, the DOJ strives to promote and sustain its national commitment to policing and to advance proactive policing practices that are fair and effective. The COPS Office is proud to manage the award process on the DOJ's behalf.

L. Anthony Sutin Civic Imagination Award

The L. Anthony Sutin Civic Imagination Award is named in memory of Tony Sutin, who served as a deputy director and general counsel of the COPS Office from its creation in 1994 to 1996. This annual award is bestowed upon a collaborative team of law enforcement and community members whose innovative civic interactions have transformed public safety in their community. The ideal nominee creates community collaborations that are innovative, creative, and transformative; displays civic leadership through problem solving and collaborative partnerships; and promotes public safety through dedication to the community policing philosophy. An open nomination process results in awards made to teams

of two or more individuals involved in a high-impact collaboration—either a single project or a pattern of transformative projects—that best exemplifies community policing and contributes to violent crime reduction.

Community Policing in Action Photo Contest

In 2014, the COPS Office launched the annual Community Policing in Action Photo Contest, a highly popular initiative with the field designed to showcase positive community engagement by our nation's law enforcement agencies. Each

year, the COPS Office has invited SLTT law enforcement agencies to submit one photo that best depicts community policing in action and promotes trust building with community members, stakeholders, local government, and others. Photo contest winners are featured on the COPS Office website, through a COPS Office press release, and in *Community Policing Dispatch* articles, and the contest has received widespread support from law enforcement for providing a platform for agencies to share positive interaction with community members.

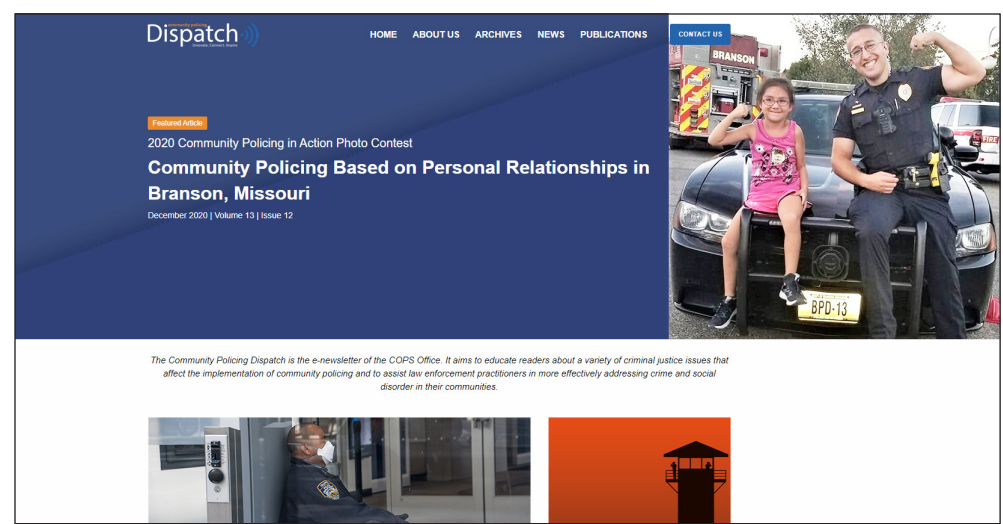
Advancing Community Policing Through Digital Media

Charging into the digital media world

IN THE 21ST CENTURY, there are lots of ways to reach law enforcement officers and community members with our message. The COPS Office recognizes the importance of outreach and engaging the community. That is why we make use of social media to interact with the field. The COPS Office was one of the first components in the DOJ to have a presence on Facebook and has more than 10,000 followers on that platform as well as nearly 17,000 on Twitter, making social media a primary way in which the office interacts directly with officers on the beat.

More than 9,000 subscribers receive the Community Policing Dispatch every month, where they learn about the newest released knowledge products, up-to-date program information, and promising practices from the field. After the creation of the Dispatch, the monthly e-newsletter of the COPS Office that launched in 2007, the continued engagement of the field through social media was a natural evolution. The COPS Office followed up the Dispatch with the creation of The Beat, a podcast series, in 2010. Each episode features interviews with leaders of all ranks in the law enforcement field,

as well as other subject matter experts, discussing a variety of topics related to public safety. In celebration of its first decade of production, 2020 saw it move to Apple Podcasts, one of the biggest podcast distributors, as part of an effort to further expand the listener base.



The COPS Office has also launched a YouTube channel where we host webinar recordings and other events as well distribute our latest innovative outreach product, What's New in Blue. What's New in Blue is a series of short videos intended to keep viewers informed about innovative developments and critical

issues in law enforcement. The episodes feature informative discussions about ideas worth spreading throughout American policing in a format useful for viewing in roll call or training classes or sharing with colleagues and across social media.

What's New in Blue premiered in late 2019 with a presentation on cardiac health in police officers by Dr. Jon Sheinberg that has been viewed almost 10,000 times. Widely shared by officers and agencies across the country, this inaugural talk has inspired officers to take ownership of their heart health

through two inexpensive and simple tests. In 2020 the COPS Office and Dr. Sheinberg heard from an officer who said he'd had no idea he was on the verge of a heart attack, but thanks to seeing the video he got the medical intervention he needed to still be alive and serving his community today.

Subsequent episodes have hosted presenters talking about the interdiction for the protection of children, the creation of Coffee With a Cop, coordinated responses to mass casualty events, officer suicide, women in policing, faith-based partnerships, and police use of tourniquets.

Supporting Drug Enforcement and Interdiction Efforts

Combating the scourge of drug abuse and violence

DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS, especially opioid-involved deaths, continue to increase in the United States. Deaths from drug overdose are up among both men and women, all races, and adults of nearly all ages, with more than 130 people dying every day in the United States after overdosing on opioids. The misuse of and addiction to opioids—including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl—is a serious national crisis. To help combat this epidemic, since 2015 the COPS Office Anti-Heroin Task Force (AHTF) program has provided more than \$104 million in funding directly to state-level law enforcement agencies with multijurisdictional reach and interdisciplinary team (task force) structures in states with high per capita rates of primary treatment admissions for heroin, fentanyl, carfentanil, and other opioids. This funding supports the location or investigation of illicit activities through statewide collaboration related to the distribution of heroin, fentanyl, or carfentanil or the unlawful distribution of prescription opioids.

The COPS Office has invested more than \$520 million since 1998 to combat the spread of methamphetamine through a variety of initiatives aimed at combating production and distribution, targeting hot spots, and removing and disposing of hazardous materials at clandestine labs. While law enforcement efforts and precursor chemical sale restrictions have been successful in decreasing the domestic production of methamphetamine, foreign drug traffickers have capitalized on this decreased availability by quickly expanding their avenues of methamphetamine distribution as users have sought out new, reliable supplies. Under the current COPS Anti-Methamphetamine Program (CAMP), the COPS Office awards competitive grants to state law enforcement agencies in states with high seizures of precursor chemicals, finished methamphetamine, laboratories, and laboratory dump seizures. Funds are used for investigative purposes to locate or investigate illicit activities including precursor diversion, laboratories, or methamphetamine traffickers.

The COPS Office has also developed a wide range of publications focused on specific drug-related issues, including reports examining strategic efforts to address methamphetamine in Indian Country, drug dealing in privately owned

apartment complexes, disrupting street-level drug markets, and successful partnerships between law enforcement and public health agencies to address opioid use.

COPS Office Leadership and Staff

Leading from experience; public servants dedicated to public service

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, the COPS Office has always been led by experienced, highly regarded law enforcement professionals. As the U.S. Department of Justice's one office whose sole purpose is to work with SLTT law enforcement, the creators of the office understood that the field needed one of their own to guide this critically important endeavor. From the first Director to the current Director, Attorneys General have always chosen COPS Office leadership from the law enforcement field to ensure we live up to our motto: "by the field, for the field."

The current COPS Office Director, Phil Keith, has more than 50 years of law enforcement experience, including serving on the mayoral task force that worked with then President Bill Clinton to create the COPS Office.

Then Attorney General Jefferson B. Sessions III appointed Director Keith, former Chief of the Knoxville (Tennessee) Police Department (KPD), the sixth Director of the COPS Office in 2018. Director Keith's priorities are assisting the Attorney General in carrying out DOJ initiatives, reducing the burden

on grantees, and serving as a sounding board for SLTT law enforcement agencies. He has held numerous high-level policymaking positions in law enforcement, public safety, and emergency management preparedness. His honors include Officer of the Year for the KPD, Law Enforcement Educator of the Year by the Southeastern Criminal Justice Educators Association, Law Enforcement Planner of the Year by the International Law Enforcement Planners Association (which subsequently renamed the award in his honor), Excellence in Public Service by the American Society for Public Administration, Frederick Douglass Family Foundation as the first recipient of the Human Rights Award for national leadership in combating modern day slavery, the John and Revé Walsh Award by the Governor of Florida, and the Law Enforcement Leadership Award by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Prior to Director Keith's leading the office, Ronald L. Davis served in the Obama Administration as Director of the COPS Office from 2013 to 2017. Chief Davis served more than eight years as Chief of Police of East Palo Alto, California, and 20 years with the Oakland (California) Police Department.

Bernard Melekian was the COPS Office Director from 2009 to 2013. Before coming to the COPS Office he served for 36 years in local law enforcement, including serving as the Police Chief for the city of Pasadena, California, for 13 years. Chief Melekian also served with the Santa Monica (California) Police Department for 23 years, where he was awarded the Medal of Valor in 1978 and the Medal of Courage in 1980.

Carl Peed was the longest serving COPS Office Director from 2001 until 2009. He served with the Fairfax County (Virginia) Sheriff's Office for more than 20 years. He began working in the Office of the Sheriff in 1974. Sheriff Peed was elected to that office in 1990 and was twice again elected to the position between 1990 and 1999.

Tom Frazier served as the Director of the COPS Office from 1999 to 2001. He came to the COPS Office from Baltimore, Maryland, where he was the Police Commissioner. Prior to that, Commissioner Frazier had been Deputy Chief in San Jose, California.

The first COPS Office Director was Hayward (California) Police Chief Joe Brann. He was selected by then President Clinton to lead the extraordinary and historic reform of American policing toward community-oriented policing. Chief Brann led the office from 1994 to 1999.

These exemplary law enforcement executives brought with them decades of practical expertise and leadership successes. They set a tone for accountability and responsiveness, and because of their unique experience, they have been able to serve as the voice of local law enforcement to the Federal Government and of the Federal Government back to local law enforcement. Along with such wise, talented, and experienced leadership, a hallmark of the COPS Office has always been the staff who have chosen a life of public service. While they may not be on the front lines, their support is critical to providing the resources and support to the field.

When Director Brann opened the COPS Office in 1994, it was a small, dedicated group of staffers who jumped into action to create a program to serve the needs of SLTT law enforcement across the country. This dedicated group of staffers came from all over—including law enforcement agencies, law enforcement stakeholder groups, social service agencies, academic organizations, and other federal offices. The energy, determination, and dedication of the COPS Office staff was a hallmark of its early days as they worked to achieve the major milestone of funding 100,000 officers. That same energy, determination, and dedication continues to this day, as COPS Office leadership has ensured the staff continues to be known

for being nimble, quick to respond to the ever-changing needs of the field, and always willing to go above and beyond to support the law enforcement community.

From the beginning, COPS Office leadership worked to secure the reputation of the office as a top-notch federal workforce. The direction from leadership to COPS Office staff was always to provide excellent customer service while establishing true partnerships with the law enforcement community. COPS Office staff worked with leadership to target new markets that traditionally had not applied for federal law enforcement grants, including small jurisdictions. That effort has been re-energized, with a renewed focus by Director Keith on rural agencies. COPS Office staff members have a history of traveling the country to make presentations to these and other agencies, with the sole goal of assisting those agencies that may otherwise never have applied for a federal grant. It was the ingenuity, creativity, and desire to

think outside the box that gave COPS Office staff the reputation they enjoy today—as a can-do, customer service-focused organization.

With the continued support of local law enforcement, in the next 25 years and beyond, the COPS Office will remain a valuable resource to law enforcement through grants, training, and other knowledge resources. The COPS Office will continue to be responsive to the changing needs of officers and the ever-changing situations in communities. Through economic fluctuations, recruitment concerns, tragedies, and changes in social norms, the COPS Office stands ready to follow through on our most important promise: to support the safety of law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. With the backing of Congress, which has continued through the years to show its support for the COPS Office, the relationships the COPS Office has developed with law enforcement will continue to make the office the go-to organization for the needs of law enforcement.



Engagement with the Law Enforcement Field

Engaging a profession

THE FACT THAT the Director of the COPS Office has always been a law enforcement professional means that the office is uniquely qualified to serve as an invaluable link between the law enforcement field and the Federal Government. In addition, because our sole mission is to serve the needs of SLTT law enforcement, the field has always had a special relationship with the COPS Office—one that has been nurtured by the office's leadership as well as a staff that is dedicated to the mission.

Under the leadership of Director Phil Keith, the COPS Office has focused on expanding our relationship with the nation's 93 U.S. Attorneys. In September 2018, in an effort to be more responsive to the needs of rural law enforcement, we worked with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and local U.S. Attorneys to develop a strategy to gather feedback from rural law enforcement executives throughout the United States. A series of five initial listening sessions was planned, and those sessions are continuing. The COPS Office has connected with nearly all U.S. Attorneys to discuss the needs of law enforcement in their districts regarding strengths and

challenges of law enforcement, their technical assistance and resource needs, and the most effective innovations in crime fighting and public safety responses.

Through the years, the COPS Office has made a specialty of its convening function: bringing together local law enforcement from around the country, often joined by other criminal justice practitioners, to discuss the needs of the field. These discussions not only form the basis of numerous COPS Office publications that are circulated widely throughout the field but also help guide the office in forming our many grant programs, fine-tuning our applications, and developing resources that are designed to be of maximum utility to the end user.

COPS Office leadership regularly participates in the conferences and meetings conducted by the national law enforcement stakeholder groups as well as local and regional meetings. All of these serve as tremendous opportunities not only to share the resources available to the field from the COPS Office but also to hear directly from the field: about current challenges, the areas where federal assistance is most desperately needed, and the day-to-day struggles of officers

and deputies and how the Federal Government can help. We regularly improve upon our processes and our way of doing business based on this invaluable feedback. Whether exhibiting at conferences, speaking at meetings, or simply ensuring that targeted COPS Office publications are made available, participating in these conferences and meetings is an important piece of our mission.

When the COPS Office is not out in the field, the field regularly comes to the COPS Office. The office has long been a popular destination for agencies to visit when coming to Washington. These visits are another opportunity for the field to share with the COPS Office what is needed from Washington. It is this constant exchange of information

that is just one more way the COPS Office stays attuned to the needs of the field, and the field is able to have a voice through the COPS Office.

Whether it is our premier technical assistance program, with 10 different law enforcement stakeholder groups taking part in CRI-TAC, or the hundreds of conferences and meetings that COPS Office leadership and staff members attend throughout the year, the needs of the field and the goals of the COPS Office are completely intertwined. Not only is that our past; it is also our future. As long as there is a need for law enforcement, there will be a need for the COPS Office—because supporting the needs of law enforcement is the reason there *is* a COPS Office.

Impact on the Reduction of Crime

The data speak, and the funding works

AFTER 25 YEARS, an important question is “do COPS Office grants and programs help to advance community policing and make communities safer?” Research assessing the impact of the office—and the hiring programs in particular—dates back to 2000 and the National Institute of Justice–sponsored evaluation of the first four years of COPS Office funding.

Two decades of research make it clear that the COPS Office has made a difference in the United States:

- A \$1 billion investment in officers in 2009 led to declines in reported Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Part 1 crimes of approximately 5 percent. A similar estimated decline in arrests was found, suggesting that deterrence, rather than incapacitation, may ultimately be the mechanism driving these results.
- The estimated social value per officer is \$417,456, and the total benefit of COPS Office programs from 2009 to 2013 is approximately \$5.6 billion, which suggests that the program easily passes a cost-benefit test.



- COPS Office funding results in higher police arrest productivity and a reduction in crime across four index crime categories. Each additional COPS Office–funded officer is associated with 2.9 fewer violent crimes and 16.23 fewer property crimes per 10,000 residents the year following their hiring.
- Each additional dollar devoted to COPS Office programs generates somewhere between \$4.00 and \$8.50 in savings to society.

Perhaps most significantly, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) concluded in its report on the COPS Office that “as a demonstration of whether a federal program can affect crime through hiring officers and changing policing practices, the evidence indicates that COPS contributed to declines in crime above the levels of declines that would have been expected without it.”

Although policing practice has changed over the last 25 years, research over this time has consistently shown the impact that police have on crime. Through its continued efforts to remain on the forefront of safe and effective policing practices, the COPS Office is committed to maximizing the impact our nation’s law enforcement professionals have on public safety.

Monitoring and Oversight

Safeguarding taxpayer dollars

TO PROTECT the Federal Government's investment in our nation's law enforcement agencies, the COPS Office actively monitors how recipients are complying with COPS Office award requirements. In addition, the monitoring component provides customer service and technical assistance to help ensure recipients understand how to remain in compliance while implementing their awards.

Award monitoring activities conducted by the COPS Office include site visits, enhanced office-based grant reviews, alleged noncompliance reviews, financial and programmatic reporting, and audit resolution.

- **Site visits.** The COPS Office strategically selects award recipients based on a variety of risk factors to conduct site visits to ensure compliance with award terms and conditions. The purpose of site visits is threefold: (1) to review for compliance with the terms and conditions of the award, (2) to review the recipient's community policing strategies, and (3) to provide customer service and technical assistance.
- **Enhanced office-based grant reviews (EOBGR).** In lieu of an on-site visit, awards may be selected for an EOBGR conducted via teleconference or video conference. EOBGRs are an alternative method for conducting monitoring reviews in support of the COPS Office's overall award monitoring strategy. In the past, EOBGRs were generally used for agencies less accessible for conducting on-site visits. However, starting in 2019, the COPS Office greatly increased the use of EOBGRs and made them a primary monitoring tool through the use of improved teleconferencing capabilities—resulting in significantly higher levels of both time and cost efficiency for the organization.
- **Alleged noncompliance referral (ANCR).** An ANCR is an allegation of suspected noncompliance that originates from an internal source in the COPS Office or an external referral from one of many sources (e.g., anonymous complainants, media reports, community members, law enforcement agencies, or other federal agencies).

- **Reporting.** All grantees are required to submit both programmatic progress reports (which track progress toward implementing community policing strategies) and financial status reports (which track and monitor the appropriateness of expenditures).
- **DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG).** The OIG may conduct audits for any recipient of a COPS Office award, and the COPS Office works closely with the OIG in resolving any reported compliance issues.

The objective of all COPS Office award monitoring activity is always to work with an agency to bring it into compliance with their funding requirements, ensuring that the taxpayer dollars invested achieve the goals of increasing public safety and advancing community policing.

President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice

Directing a historic commission

IN PART BECAUSE OF the COPS Office's long-standing and excellent relationships with local law enforcement, as well as more than two decades of partnerships with national law enforcement stakeholder organizations, the COPS Office—with the support of the Office of Justice Programs—led the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice in 2020.

Law enforcement had been asking for a commission for quite some time, and the last such commission was convened more than 50 years ago, when then President Lyndon B. Johnson authorized a commission to study law enforcement and the administration of justice. Since that time, although many of the same issues (violent crime, drug abuse, juvenile justice) remain, new challenges—such as those related to data and technology—have arisen. President Trump's [Executive Order 13896](#), which created the commission, said that its goal was “to study issues related to law enforcement and the administration of justice and to make recommendations to the President, on actions that can be taken to prevent, reduce, and control crime, increase respect for the law, and assist victims.”

In announcing the new commission, then Attorney General Barr said, “Law enforcement must use every tool available to fight ever more ruthless and sophisticated criminal predators, and then put those tools away to mediate the criminal actions of people beset by addiction, mental illness, homelessness, and other forms of social alienation. And they must manage these demands in an environment in which their moral and legal legitimacy is under constant attack from a variety of voices.”

The commission was led by Chair Phil Keith, Director of the COPS Office. The commission included 16 commissioners representing local, state, and federal law enforcement as well as public service agencies, and 156 working group members, who were state and local officials (or their designees) representing various aspects of the criminal justice system. Then Attorney General Barr designated the topics for the working groups in his implementation memo.

The 15 topic areas were as follows:

1. Social Problems Impacting Public Safety
2. Law Enforcement Recruitment and Training

3. Rural and Tribal Law Enforcement
4. Police Officer Health
5. Grant Programs
6. Technology
7. Respect for Law Enforcement
8. Business and Community Development
9. Reduction of Crime
10. Criminal Justice System Personnel Intersection
11. Juvenile Justice and Youth Crime
12. Victim Services
13. Data and Reporting
14. Reentry Programs and Initiatives
15. Homeland Security

The extensive work of the commission spanned 280 days. During that time, working group members heard from 173 subject matter experts. There were 15 public hearings (one in person and 14 virtual, because of the COVID-19 pan-

dem), where commission members held 51 panels and heard from 181 witnesses. The commission's work was also informed by public comment via a public comment email address established by the commission. In addition, working groups reviewed literature from a wide array of sources, including academic journals; federal, state, and local program offices; law enforcement agencies; news media; advocacy organizations; nonprofits; and think tanks. Working groups also queried organizations and their websites, met across working groups to discuss areas that intersected, and cast a wide net into the field to ensure all relevant information was collected.

The ultimate goal of the commission's work was to develop a series of recommendations that would serve as a blueprint for national action to improve the criminal justice system and provide greater service, better outcomes, and improved public safety for the American people. To that end, hundreds of recommendations were put forth to affect the various frameworks, processes, jurisdictions, and entities that compose the vast criminal justice system of the United States. This tremendous endeavor will continue to have a significant impact on the criminal justice system, as jurisdictions across the country work to implement the recommendations and put these practices into action.

Conclusion



Year 26 and beyond

FOR DECADES, the COPS Office has fostered a unique, direct relationship with state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) law enforcement, which has positioned the office as a trusted and vital resource in the law enforcement

field. According to the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), “the cornerstone of our national crime-fighting strategy is community policing. For the last 25 years, the COPS Office has served as the flagship of this effort.”

As we go to press, the COPS Office is leading the charge to implement President Trump's Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities—reinforcing once again the significant impact of the COPS Office and its work on the law enforcement profession. The President signed the Executive Order in June 2020, and it could have far-reaching implications, including the establishment of national standards. Its goal is to ensure that law enforcement agencies continue striving to provide transparent, safe, and accountable delivery of services to communities. This delivery will enhance community confidence in law enforcement and facilitate the identification and correction of internal issues before they result in injury to the public or to law enforcement officers. This work will have lasting impacts on policing, which will ensure the COPS Office remains center stage for the next 25 years.

Reflecting back on our first quarter-century, we see that the challenging space that the COPS Office fills is ever-changing and requires the utmost agility and flexibility to best meet the mission of advancing the practice of community policing. We still have much to accomplish. Even as old problems are solved, social, political, technological, and economic changes will present new challenges. But with the help of our many supporters, we will address every issue with the best training, expert information, and the highest dedication to the principles of community policing.

We welcome everyone who wants to join us in these efforts. Our past demonstrates that the COPS Office is more than capable of meeting the needs of the field no matter where they take us, and our present is focused on ensuring our programs and resources can adapt to whatever comes next. No matter what the next 25 years bring, the COPS Office is ready to assist law enforcement agencies advance both public and officer safety.

This report highlights 25 significant initiatives the COPS Office has contributed to the field in its first 25 years of serving the field. Supporting law enforcement is our mission; we are proud of the ways we have done that and excited about continuing, with the support of our law enforcement stakeholders and Congress, to play a critical role for law enforcement in the years ahead.



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
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To obtain details about COPS Office programs,
call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

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