

Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission
Community Policing Program
Annual Report

Section I

Appendix C

Agency: 79

Region #: IV

Date Report Submitted: 11/18/2022

Submitted By: Name: Michael A. McDermott

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Number of sworn members: 10

Non-sworn members: 2

Jurisdictional Demographics: Population: 2900

Square miles serviced by the agency: 3

White: 53.8% Black: 41% Hispanic: 3.6% Asian: .8%

Native American: .3% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: .03% More than one race: .47%

Section II

Instructions: Provide a detailed description of your agency's Community Policing Initiative by responding to the following **key points**. These key points address the Guiding Principles of Community Policing, as well as the Six Pillars identified in the Task Force on 21st Century Policing Report (see Guidelines for Reporting for explanation). Examples of specific programs, initiatives, and partnerships with community groups should be discussed along with any statistics or other relevant information. See *Appendix D: Examples of Best Practices in Community Policing* for your convenience and consideration.

Key Points:

- How community policing is integrated throughout your agency and how your agency incorporates community policing into its daily operation.
- How top management emphasizes or supports community policing within the agency.
- Training your agency has received in community policing and future plans to provide additional or specialized training to agency members to improve interaction with community members or problem solving efforts.
- How crime problems or community issues are identified and the method of communicating any trends with communities the agency services.
- How your agency partners with all segments of the community to prevent crime and address identified community problems. Segments of the community should include residential and business communities, schools, youth, minority groups, hospitals, senior population, faith based organizations, etc.
- How your agency measures the effectiveness of its community policing program.

**Federalsburg Police Department
Annual Report on Community Policing
Year 2022**

1) How is community policing integrated throughout your agency and how does your agency incorporate community policing into its daily operations?

Response:

While we continue our previous departmental efforts of viewing community policing as a holistic approach, we have continued to stress the importance of an “out of the car” approach during interactions with the public. We have placed a high priority on public contact through traffic related enforcement with warning based outcomes in most cases. These encounters are, for the most part, very positive in nature and have provided our community with greater police omnipresence as a deterrent to crime. Warnings tend to produce smiles and relief which go a long way in making a strong positive impression that law enforcement is “here to help”.

We have also begun to implement an improved response to our community policing efforts when it comes to addressing citizens suffering from a mental health crisis. We have ensured all of our staff has received Crisis Intervention Training and are embodying stronger protocols for incidents involving Emergency Petitions. We hope to minimize force interactions and prevent the unnecessary escalation of a mental health crisis episode. Working with mental health professionals and our county based Crisis Response Team should greatly improve our service level to this particular community of individuals.

We have continued to increase our public surveillance system and have added several cameras to our Marina Park Complex through an approved Homeland Security Grant. This allows 24/7 monitoring of an area with significant juvenile activity and one area that sees strong public usage.

We continue to view our community as one that is made up of a variety of neighborhoods with each having unique issues and needs. This has kept us from applying a “one size fits all” approach to our policing efforts.

2) How does top management emphasize or support community policing within your agency?

Response:

Departmental efforts and goals are always screened through the lens of how to impact our community and particular neighborhoods for the most positive outcome. Strict, zero tolerance enforcement efforts are always couched in increasing public awareness and positive contacts. The administration is always looking for opportunities to laud praise and recognition on squads and individual members for instances that have had a positive impact on the community. This prioritization is constant evidence of what the administration desires to see manifest by staff. We are always looking for ways to integrate a community response in solving crime or hardening potential targets of criminal acts. The administration remains open to ideas that challenge “the way we’ve always done things” with an eye toward giving opportunity.

Where the head of the agency is focusing attention, the staff moves in such a way as to support and please the command staff. This is certainly true in Federalsburg where the focus remains on policing all of the communities that make up our town in such a way as to have a positive impact.

3) Describe training your agency has received in community policing and future plans to provide additional or specialized training to agency members to improve interaction with community members or problem solving efforts.

Response:

We completed our efforts ensuring all of our staff has received Crisis Intervention Training. This has proved to be a very effective tool in widening the view of situational awareness for our staff members. It has encouraged them to adopt the holistic approach to policing and the needs of those we serve and protect.

We continue to utilize on-line training opportunities provided through Police One Academy to supplement in-person training experiences throughout the year. These include anti-bias and de-escalation reminders.

4) Describe how crime problems or community issues are identified and addressed, and the method of communicating any trends with communities the agency services.

Response:

The manner and form through which we identify, address, and communicate has remained constant during the past year; although we have created an "Office of Accountability" (OA) to address any complaints or concerns expressed to the department by the public. The OA conducts regular Performance Audits of staff, principally through the reviews of body worn cameras and subsequent paperwork filed by staff. These audits of our performance have served to strengthen our messaging to personnel of the need for positive outcomes whenever possible during public interactions. We have used this system to educate personnel and eradicate perceived attitudes that can become problematic in dealing with the community.

We continue to conduct weekly reviews of all reported criminal activity to identify areas where police resources need to be focused. This review is conducted by the command staff. Any developed patterns or other concerns are immediately addressed to the patrol supervisors to better direct assets in the field. These reviews include calls for service, reports of criminal activity, patrol observations, and historic information based upon previous trends. Surveillance cameras may be directed to focus on a specific area or target. Social media broadcasts requesting tips and other information assistance have been very effective for drumming up support and instant feedback from those we serve. We can also utilize a robo-call message for anyone in the community who signs up to receive messages, texts, or direct phone calls to relay information on community concerns or criminal activity. If a problem is isolated to a specific area served by management, such as an apartment complex, our staff contact the persons in charge directly and seek their assistance and support. Further, we often involve our local ministerial association to assist us in getting out our messages and to encourage the public to pray for the needs of our community in specific, targeted ways. This has been a very effective tool in helping involve congregations in a very positive, meaningful way to support the community policing efforts in town.

5) Identify how your agency partners with all segments of the community to prevent crime and address identified community problems. Segments of the community should include residential and business communities, schools, youth, minority groups, hospitals, senior population, faith based organizations, etc.

Response:

Upon reviewing our response to this question during 2020 and 2021, I find that we have continued to move in the same fashion and direction. We have increased our agency transparency through social media and our follow ups with any complaint received. We have worked through the same patterns and contacts to continue these relationships in order to provide services to those we serve. The only truly effective policing in small towns involves direct involvement with individual members of the community and the various organizations in which they serve. In Federalsburg, we partner with any group, organization, or individual that expresses an interest in doing so. The police department is often the first place people look for information in small towns and we pride ourselves on being the conduit for directing folks to the right door. Because our resources are limited, we encourage the various organizations we serve to identify areas where we can provide directed assistance that will affect the greatest impact. This has often involved speaking engagements to address specific subject matter including race relations, crime prevention, and personal defense tactics for women, active shooter training for area churches, directing charitable giving in support of various clubs and organizations. We have worked with minority support groups targeting at risk youth in our community to provide mentoring assistance, such as "Men for Change". When schools are physically meeting, our staff often interacts during lunch periods at our local elementary school to help break down any barriers to communication with the coming generation and we provide a complimentary effort with those being provided by the assigned School Resource Deputy at our elementary school. We continue to work diligently with business owners to assist them with crime prevention and serving as their property agent through signed agreements to better facilitate and address trespass and nuisance loitering issues and have made this material available on our website. We have also provided safety lectures, specifically addressing Active Shooter training for some of our large scale industrial employers in coordination with their own safety personnel as well as local churches. We have partnered with our local power company to enhance street lighting in at risk neighborhoods by surveying and identifying those areas that would most benefit from improved lighting. We have partnered with the Caroline County Board of Education to improve pedestrian safety near our elementary school by identifying the need for enhanced traffic controls and securing the funding to see the project through to fruition. Our agency model is to find a way to say "yes" to any group or individual who asks us if we can help them address an issue or ongoing problem. If we must pass the concern onto another agency, we ensure that we follow up with the group or individual to check on the progress.

6) How does your agency measure the effectiveness of its community policing program?

Response:

I believe it can be quantified with overall crime numbers and statistics. While the absolute measure of success would be the absence of crime in our community, we can adopt the premise that reductions in known crime are indicative of a measure of success. With that as a backdrop, crime continues to fall in Federalsburg for the third straight year. We are on track for a record low crime period in this calendar year and have recorded 50% reduction in Part One crimes when measured against the same time period last year (2021) which was, in and of itself, a record low year. Overall crime has dropped by 50% during the same time period. We also look to the numbers as it relates to public contact and the measured police activity as a means of identifying the amount of attention being targeted in our various communities and neighborhoods.

Of course, the greatest thermometer for measuring effectiveness is morale. We certainly look to that in our department and the same can be said in a community. Our feedback on social media remains supportive, positive, and robust. Our officers are frequently engaged in positive conversations while performing their tasks, and public cooperation with investigative efforts continues to rise. The perception of our community members are that they "feel safer"; and the reality statistically is that their overall feelings are justified.