



# SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY OUTREACH SECTION COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

## MISSION

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We are committed to ongoing and proactive communication with our neighborhoods, businesses and community based organizations to strengthen our public safety practices and programs to ensure the Seattle Police Department is working toward responding to and reducing the fear of crime.

## VISION

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Build, strengthen and sustain community relationships and open communications with respect, equality and trust.

## GOALS

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- Strengthen relationships and build opportunities for open communications and dialogues between the Seattle Police Department and Seattle's geographic and demographic communities.
- Increase participation of individuals from minority communities working in partnership with the Seattle Police Department on public safety issues.

- Facilitate honest and open interactions between the Seattle Police Department and Seattle's geographic and demographic communities, while adhering to the standards of mutual respect and a commitment to address problems and concerns.
- Respond to community concerns in an honest, timely and respectful fashion.

## CURRENT CLIMATE

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The formation of the Community Outreach Section resulted from 3 high profile incidents that created concern about SPD's policing practices (especially in communities of color). The communities' expectations have been heightened with the public announcement and commitment made by the Chief and Mayor regarding the priority the department has placed on improving community relationships. Key to responding to this is the acknowledgement that community engagement is a responsibility of all levels of the organization. Without a comprehensive and supported strategy to incorporate this into every corner of the organization the chance of successfully moving from the current climate is compromised.

## CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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Community outreach is the responsibility of everyone in the department, not just a selected few. Community outreach starts at the highest level (beginning with the Chief of Police) and filters throughout the agency to the newest employees, be they a police recruit, 911 dispatcher, PEO or records clerk. With over 1,800 employees SPD has hundreds of thousands of contacts with community members each year. By virtue of those contacts, each employee has a role in the community outreach efforts of SPD.

Experience has shown that relegating community outreach to a few, select individuals is a disservice to SPD and to the community it serves. Experience has also shown that community members will show deference, and in some cases affinity to department members, for whom they have established a relationship with, however those positive feelings do not transcend to SPD as a whole, and in fact it is very possible for community

members to trust one person in the agency while at the same time feeling very distant from the agency as a whole.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRATEGY

To be effective the community outreach strategy must be multi-faceted and diverse, in great part because the community we serve is multi-faceted and diverse.

The strategy we propose focuses on multiple areas:

- Precinct Frontline Involvement
- Demographic Advisory Councils
- Community Police Academy
- Youth Issues, Explorers
- Crisis Communication
- Community Meeting Notification/Protocol/Analysis
- Unit Manual
- Academic Collaboration
- Non-traditional Community Outreach
- Recruiting
- Media and electronic communications such as SPD Blotter, Twitter, Facebook, etc.

## PRECINCTS

Precinct involvement and support is essential to the success of the community outreach strategy. In addition, sustaining the mission of the community outreach unit is heavily contingent on precinct involvement. Community Police Team officers and patrol officers under the direction of Precinct commanders are the harbingers of the department.

The role of the Community Outreach Unit as it pertains to the precincts is to ensure information about specific issues and messages are consistent and are known to all precinct personnel. The unit will strive to ensure that community issues arising throughout the city are communicated to the precincts and facilitate responses that ensure the community concerns are addressed. The goal is to identify where precincts and community connects are missing (or could be stronger) and engaging them in a sustainable, positive manner where that is currently not occurring. This communication will strengthen credibility of the department with the community and show that we are serious about our commitment to transparency. Avenues for communication will continue via the Media Relation Unit, the Video Unit, the web page, Facebook, Twitter, and public service announcements.

## CITYWIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL

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The City Wide Advisory Council was created in October, 2003 to bring representatives from the ten demographic advisory councils, the five precinct advisory councils, and the now disbanded CPAC (Community Policing Action Council) together on a quarterly basis to discuss broad issues that affect many different segments of the community with the Chief of Police.

## DEMOGRAPHIC ADVISORY COUNCILS

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Strengthening the role and participation of the Demographic Advisory Councils (DAC) is important to the overall mission of the Community Outreach Unit. The DAC's will be more effective with consistent support staff from the department to record and maintain records and provide follow-up. An engaged and active liaison officer assigned to each DAC to assist with answering questions, providing speakers, and trainers will also enhance the effectiveness of the DACs. Ensuring the ability to track issues that are noted at various advisory councils and to distinguish where there are gaps in structure

or potential areas for problems will also enhance the DAC and allow SPD to get in front of issues that may be brewing or surfacing on the horizon. DAC will play an important role in educating the community and they will be a great resource for the department. As a step towards reinvigorating the DAC's, each has been asked to identify a project that they feel is important to them. The Council will then work with SPD to address the issue or problem. The hope is that this will focus energy and give those involved a sense of accomplishment and buy-in that participation on the Council is worthwhile. Already the East African Community Advisory Council has identified finding a place for Somali youth to get together for positive interactions as their project.

## COMMUNITY POLICE ACADEMY

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The Community Police Academy (CPA) has been an outstanding tool to educate the public about the realities of policing. Unfortunately there has been no curriculum change since its inception. A thorough review of the classes will be completed by both internal and external parties. This review will help ensure that participants are getting the most out of the academy. A third party analysis of the format and structure of the CPA to include an effectiveness survey will identify any potential areas of concern if they exist. The effectiveness survey would focus on determining how many participants attending the CPA pass the word along about the CPA and if or how that information about the CPA is shared.

In addition, we will perform a survey to determine if community members would be interested in a one day workshops specific to their communities concerns. If there is enough interest then we can “pilot” the program and evaluate the success of a one-day CPA.

## YOUTH ISSUES

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Currently we are in full participation with the Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative as well as full participation with the Mayor's Youth Commission, Role Reversals, Donut Dialogues, and various youth forums. These activities rely heavily on

consistent police involvement to be successful. Officers assigned to youth oriented outreach need high levels of energy and enthusiasm, youth-specific training, and flexibility.

## EXPLORERS

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Although youth-related in nature, the Explorer program is separated from youth issues as it is specific to young people who apply and dedicate time and work within the agency in a specific role.

## CRISIS COMMUNICATION

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Much of how the community perceives SPD hinges on our ability to communicate clearly in times of crisis. By the same token, how individuals respond to crisis internally also depends on our communication processes. To that end, an update of the current crisis communication plan is underway. The revised plan will provide specific direction when addressing internal and external communication and outreach in critical incidents. Whatever the crisis may be, it is important that these audiences be addressed in a timely manner:

- SPD employees
- Mayor's Office and City Council
- Media representatives
- Precinct Advisory Councils
- Demographic communities based on crisis via Demographic Advisory Councils

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH SHORT TERM WORK PLAN

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The Community Outreach Unit will:

- Engage in a comprehensive assessment of the department's activities in regards to community outreach and engagement. This assessment will look at geographic and

demographic needs as it relates to communication and continuity of response from the department. Included in the assessment will be the development of several key responses to institutionalize our community outreach and engagement activities, including but not limited to:

- Development of a comprehensive citywide calendar outlining all community meeting being held to address public safety issues. This calendar will be available to all SPD personnel and regularly updated.
- Develop a database system and protocol that will allow the department to track who is attending which meetings and if there are any actionable or policy issues that need attention based upon the meetings. This will be a valuable tool for precinct commanders, command staff, and the Community Outreach unit.
- Develop a Unit manual that clearly lays out how the unit will be run and delineates responsibilities for each participating party.
- Convene a committee of recognized academics to ensure focus, vision and innovation for the outreach efforts of the department.
- Implement a form of “living room forums” that will engage community members from every area of the city, particularly representatives of various demographic groups.

## PERSONNEL

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The overall COU mission is daunting and enormous and will need personnel assigned to the unit to complete. One captain and one lieutenant assigned to conduct community outreach on behalf of the 1,800 plus employees of the Seattle Police Department will not be sufficient to implement the operational components of the mission and/or to meet the stated objectives, particularly in light of the fact that there are additional responsibilities for the lieutenant and captain of the unit.

In order to be effective there has to be sufficient personnel assigned to carry out the mission, just as there needs to be sufficient personnel assigned to oversee the mission.

At a minimum the Community Outreach Unit will need:

- One sergeant to ensure there is consistent structure and supervisory oversight and that the necessary mandates and needs of personnel are handled at the squad level such as: sick time, vacation time, timesheets, evaluations, street skills, qualifications, equipment, inspections and other functions and checks are being handled. This Sergeant should have the ability to direct and focus the staff and take highly complex issues and develop operational responses to them.
- At a minimum, five officers are needed to complete a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the current state of community engagement in the SPD. Based on this assessment, the Sergeant and officers will work in cooperation with the rest of the Community Outreach staff to develop a work plan to ensure the following preliminary work functions are addressed.
  - Attend the advisory councils and provide continuity of information and protocol at DAC meetings.
  - Address specific issues that are trending and ensure the command staff person assigned to the DAC has someone to assign tasks to on behalf of the department.
  - Ensure that Precinct commanders are informed and consulted regarding overall strategies being implemented to address community outreach and engagement. Also ensure that each Demographic Advisory Council has the same level of communication to ensure continuity and open communication.
  - Ensure staffing levels to support the function of working with the explorers, updating manuals, and ensuring protocols are being followed.
  - Representation on the various panels and forums that we are asked to attend and coordinate with the precincts to ensure that their personnel stay involved in the outreach process.

- Assist in gathering facts, providing department approved information and messages as well as ensuring the information is researched, approved and is consistent for everyone that needs to be notified, when specific community issues arise.

## BUDGET

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- For operating expenses such as immediate marketing efforts, printing materials and organizing community functions, the Community Relations Unit will submit a \$10,000 grant request to the Seattle Police Foundation. (See Accomplishments to Date)
- Overtime budget to support the work of Community Outreach, including those of the Officer Liaison to ensure the responsibilities of the position is being met. An estimate of what this might cost will be presented with the 6 month work plan.

### Accomplishments To Date

- Application to the Seattle Police Foundation for \$20,000 was reviewed and the Section was awarded \$15,000 of the requested amount. In addition to having resources to implement a marketing strategy, the funds will also support the “Chief Kerlikowske Award” and the ongoing needs of the Demographic Advisory Councils.
- A second Seattle Police Foundation Grant was awarded to Officer Adrian Diaz to support the Youth Activities (Explorers)(\$2,000) and the Living Room Forums (\$3,000). The Foundation has also indicated that they would consider funding in the next round of grants for the additional funds that were not awarded in this cycle (\$10,000).
- Dr. Julias Debros, Dr. Michael Pendleton, Dr. Hubert Locke and Dr. Darlene Conley have agreed to participate as Academic Consultants and have scheduled their first meeting for December 9, 2010. The meeting will be moderated by Mercia Whitehall

- We have eleven (11) community members confirmed to attend the Perspectives on Profiling class being held on December 9, 2010
- A meeting with the Defenders Association regarding training in the area of immigrant and refugee issues, particularly as they relate to “unintended consequences” of arrests.
- Met with Communities Uniting Rainer Beach (CURB) and People Of Color Against Aids Network (POCAAN) to discuss concepts regarding diversion of bookings for low level offenders. Future partnership with SPD for community relations building.
- On-going Student Forums with Seattle Central Community College.

## STRATEGY TIMELINE

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**0-3 Months:** Comprehensive Assessment of all the efforts currently underway in regards to community outreach and engagement. This will look at geographic and demographic efforts, with an eye for gaps that currently exist, trends that are emerging, and what is currently working well.

**3-6 Months:** Development of a comprehensive set of strategies that will address the findings of the assessment. This work plan will incorporate information garnered from a “mini-summit” of all five Precinct Commanders and Training Unit Commander, which will be held to gather their input and solicit ideas about how Community Outreach Section can support their efforts and a similar process with the Demographic Advisory Councils. Present short-term and long term goals.

**6-12 Months:** Implement strategies that are finalized from the “mini-summit” and work with the DAC’s. Present a Year One report on the accomplishments of the Department as they relate to Community Engagement and outline goals for Year Two.

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