

IACP/SAIC OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN LAW ENFORCEMENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS AWARD: 2007 WINNERS

In 2004 the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) established the Outstanding Achievement in Law Enforcement Volunteer Programs Award. This annual award recognizes excellence in leadership through the implementation of an effective, high-quality volunteer program that successfully integrates volunteers into overall organizational operations and administration. The award also institutionalizes the theories and practices of the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program.



The award recognizes agencies that exemplify the goals, concepts, and spirit of volunteerism in action. The IACP Police Administration Committee selects up to three winners. The award presentation is made at the annual IACP conference.

2007 Outstanding Achievement in Law Enforcement Volunteer Programs Award Winners

The Bellevue, Washington, Police Department, the Hazelwood, Missouri, Police Department, and the Vacaville, California, Police Department were winners of the fourth annual IACP/SAIC Outstanding Achievement in Law Enforcement Volunteer Programs Award. The awards were presented at the 114th Annual IACP Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, in October 2007.

Bellevue, Washington, Police Department

The Bellevue Police Department's 178 sworn officers protect a service population of about 116,000 with the help of 98 civilian employees, 55 of whom are dispatch staff members who also support other public safety agencies, and 50 volunteers. Citizens and Police in Partnership (CAPP), the Bellevue Police Department's volunteer program, began in 1994 under the direction of a full-time paid civilian coordinator.

How It Works

Any employee of the Bellevue Police Department can request volunteer help with a onetime event or an ongoing program. The volunteer program coordinator helps him or her write a volunteer assignment description that outlines the volunteer's responsibilities, describes any special skills or abilities the volunteer should have, and sets the hours the volunteer will work. The volunteer program coordinator then finds the best available volunteer for the assignment. Some volunteers have more than one assignment at a time. Volunteers in the program have served as archive managers, case assistants, bicycle registration and recovery specialists, fire lane parking enforcers, community projects administrators, quartermasters, and chaplains, to name just a few of the 30 or so roles they play.

Volunteer Program Achievements

In 2006 alone, CAPP volunteers reviewed thousands of old case files and identified which could be kept and which could be thrown out; eliminated a years-old backlog of data awaiting entry in the pawn database and created a data

retrieval system to help investigators find information more quickly; gathered case reports and suspect information from other jurisdictions that had recovered vehicles stolen in Bellevue, enabling Bellevue detectives to identify 36 car thieves; updated the case tracking system with case dispositions going back to 2001; helped more than 9,100 citizens who visited one of the department's three community stations; and shuttled the entire patrol fleet (more than 50 vehicles) to and from service appointments 35 miles away. Volunteers also developed the best leads to date in a commercial burglary case by viewing hours of store security tapes, spotting the suspect, documenting everything he touched for subsequent fingerprint recovery, and reviewing hundreds of vehicle licensing documents to help identify the suspect.

Recruitment, Screening, and Selection

The department recruits volunteers through its citizens' academy, a notice on the city's Web site, advertisements in the local newspaper, postings on college bulletin boards, presentations to community and professional groups, and earned media coverage of the program. Applicants undergo an interview, a background investigation, and a polygraph test before joining the program.

Benefits

As of the end of 2006, CAPP volunteers had recorded almost 125,000 hours of service since the beginning of the program, providing labor worth more than \$2.2 million, calculated at a value of \$18.04 per hour. Seventeen current volunteers have 10 or more years of service, and 11 others have between five and 10 years. Two CAPP volunteers have worked more than 5,000 hours each.

Hazelwood, Missouri, Police Department

The Hazelwood Police Department – 66 officers, 18 civilian employees, and 40 volunteers – protects and serves 26,000 residents in a service area of about 16 square miles in suburban Saint Louis. It started the Volunteer Services Unit, or VSU, in 1996. The number of annual volunteer hours has

risen sharply since 2003, when the department committed to increasing volunteer hours annually by 20 percent. It has exceeded that goal each year.

What Police Volunteers Do in Hazelwood

Citizen volunteers participate in every aspect of the department's operations. They perform administrative and nonintervention tasks such as entering data, disposing of confidential records, providing limited prisoner supervision, organizing neighborhood watch programs, placing speed radar trailers, assisting victims, and helping maintain police vehicles. In 2004 Hazelwood police volunteers began donating time at the municipal court, where proceedings take place most Tuesday nights. During four-hour shifts, the volunteers help set up the courtroom, distribute paperwork, and carry files between the courtroom and the pay window.



2007 Outstanding Achievement in Law Enforcement Volunteer Programs Award Winners: Marjorie Trachtman, volunteer program coordinator with the Bellevue Police Department; Susanne Johnson, special services supervisor with the Vacaville Police Department; Donald Routh, officer with the Hazelwood Police Department. Photograph by David Hathcox.

Program Administration

The VSU operates under the direction of the Neighborhood Action Team officer, who also acts as the volunteer coordinator for the department's chaplains, the neighborhood watch, and Law Enforcement Explorer Post 9217, which has 42 members between the ages of 14 and 21. The volunteer advisory board, composed of five volunteers, helps the Neighborhood Action Team

officer administer the VSU and the other units. Volunteers also serve on a team trained to respond to area disasters.

Citizen Observer Patrol

Volunteers who have completed the Hazelwood citizens' police academy are eligible to participate in a special initiative called the Citizen Observer Patrol, or COP. The department trains volunteers to patrol designated areas of the city, in a marked car or on foot, watching for and reporting suspect activity, talking to residents and business owners, and generally raising the profile of the Hazelwood Police Department. They look for disabled automobiles, injured persons, fires, and broken windows and open doors at homes and businesses. They also keep an eye out for teenagers who appear to be cutting through yards or otherwise causing mischief. Regulations prohibit COP volunteers from intervening in criminal activity, pursuing suspects, or engaging in any activities that entail personal risk.

Recruitment, Screening, Selection, and Training

The Hazelwood Police Department produced a volunteer recruitment video in 2003. It airs periodically on the community cable television channel, and it is available for viewing on the agency's Web site. The department also sets up an information booth at community meetings and shopping malls. Volunteer recruits must complete an application, interview with the volunteer coordinator, sign a release of liability, agree to a one-year commitment, and pass a criminal background check. Volunteers receive quarterly in-service training on such topics as traffic direction, radio procedures, first aid, and CPR. Each VSU volunteer must work at least four hours a week.

Benefits

Police volunteers in Hazelwood have donated nearly 23,000 hours, at a value to the department of roughly \$700,000 since the program began in 1996. One volunteer recently earned recognition for exceeding 4,000 hours in 10 years of service.

Vacaville, California, Police Department

The police department in Vacaville, midway between San Francisco and Sacramento, has 114 sworn police officers, 67 civilian employees, and 72 volunteers. It serves a population of roughly 100,000 in a service area of about 27 square miles. The department has used volunteers since 1980, but it formalized its volunteer program, called Volunteers in Police Service, in 2000, when it hired a full-time volunteer coordinator to run the program. In 2006 it added a part-time volunteer coordinator to the staff.

Volunteer Assignments

Volunteers assigned to the patrol division have the authority to issue citations for all nonmoving violations. They direct traffic, service police vehicles, relieve school crossing guards, assist with searches for missing persons, report unlicensed businesses, and help enforce municipal codes by identifying examples of neighborhood blight and reporting violations of all kinds. Volunteers also carry out assignments in other areas of the department, including the records section (releasing crash records, running citations for traffic court, providing customer service at the front counter), the property and evidence section (purging unneeded evidence, updating computer records), the K-9 unit (putting on the protective wear and standing in for the bad guy during training exercises), and the investigations division (coordinating the crime prevention program).

Recruitment, Screening, Selection, and Training

Vacaville recruits police volunteers by displaying brochures in city offices, advertising in local media, and making presentations about the program during public meetings of all kinds. Applicants must pass all background requirements, including a psychological test and a voice-stress analyzer test, and agree to complete 200 hours of service in the first year. Successful applicants must complete the 40-hour volunteer training academy. In one recent volunteer recruitment period, the department received 70 applications, interviewed 50 of those applicants, and selected 28 of them for the academy. Twenty-six completed the academy and joined the program.

Volunteer Achievements

In 2006, volunteers conducting senior citizen wellness checks uncovered two scams targeting the elderly in Vacaville and called for emergency services on behalf of a dozen seniors who were in danger or distress. Volunteers on patrol issued more than 3,700 citations, tagged 1,145 vehicles, and identified two stolen vehicles. Volunteers responded to three emergency callouts in 2006: they helped residents with cleanup and emergency relief efforts after a winter storm caused severe flooding; they conducted door-to-door checks on residents after power went out during a heat wave; and they stuffed and labeled 10,000 envelopes for a mass mailing to alert city residents in an area targeted by a serial rapist. One volunteer, while off duty, reported suspect activity that led to three arrests and the resolution of 15 auto burglary cases in Vacaville and several similar cases in neighboring jurisdictions.

Benefits

In 2006, 60 volunteers provided 14,441 hours of service in more than 20 separate job functions distributed across the agency's 14 divisions and sections. According to Vacaville's calculations, the donated hours were worth nearly \$400,000 to the city.

2008 Outstanding Achievement in Law Enforcement Volunteer Programs Award

The deadline for submissions for the 2008 Outstanding Achievement in Law Enforcement Volunteer Programs Award is May 15, 2008.

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The Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. VIPS is a program partner of Citizen Corps, an initiative helping to make communities across America safer, stronger, and better prepared for emergencies of all kinds. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) manages the VIPS Program in partnership with and on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice.



BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance

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