



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Hanover

Program Title: Worship Watch

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Colonel David R. Hines

Title: Sheriff

Department: Hanover County Sheriff's Office

Complete Mailing Address: 7522 County Complex Rd., Hanover VA 23069

Telephone: 804-365-6249 Website: HanoverSheriff.com

Email: drhines@hanovercounty.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Cecil R. Harris Jr.

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

Worship Watch Program EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Similar to a Neighborhood Watch or Business Watch program, Worship Watch seeks to increase communication to members of our faith community and those they connect with. This goal is accomplished by enhancing faith community facility security, sharing community concerns and reporting crime. Worship Watch is a proactive program and is designed to encourage faith based organizations to become more involved in reducing the opportunity for crimes to occur on their premises, in the community and identify roles in responding to a disaster.

Participants in this program have an avenue to partner with the Sheriff's Office in addressing problems and concerns within their faith community as well as surrounding neighborhoods. They assist in helping reduce crime in their community through educational initiatives and by making their congregations safer. If they choose, members have the opportunity to participate in emergency preparedness functions and be an active player in disaster response.

Communication is enhanced by increasing awareness of neighborhood crime through a partnership and information sharing process. The Sheriff's Office provides information for faith organizations to help make their facility and community a safer place to live, work, worship and raise a family. Bi-weekly activity reports are provided to participants in addition to frequent communications and regular meetings.

Worship Watch Coordinators are asked to develop an action program where their organization remains alert and aware of their surroundings as they partner with the Sheriff's Office to address crime or concerns. They partner to create a collaborative community effort to identify community resources to be used in the event of a major event or disaster.

Worship Watch PRESS RELEASE

Hanover, Va. – Strong partnerships create safe communities. By partnering with the community law enforcement is better able to respond to the needs of those they serve and develop a shared vision for the future.

Worship Watch is a program for our faith community that builds on this community partnership model. Fully implemented in 2015, Worship Watch developed out of workshops during faith leadership summits held in 2013 and 2014. As faith leaders contributed to its design, it uniquely serves as a great partnership resource, provides training opportunities, security assessments and greater awareness of activity in the community. Similar to a Neighborhood Watch or Business Watch program, Worship Watch seeks to increase communication to members of our faith community and those they connect with. *“As a community partnering with the Sheriff’s Office, we work closely together to deter crime and improve quality of life for the citizens we serve.”* Said Colonel David R. Hines.

Worship Watch is a proactive program and is intended to encourage faith based organizations to become more involved in reducing the opportunity for crimes to occur on their premises. Worship Watch coordinators are asked to develop an action program where their organization remains alert and aware of their surroundings as they partner with the Sheriff’s Office to address crime or concerns.

Worship Watch PROGRAM DETAILED NARRATIVE

History of Methodology

Communication is the lifeblood of any law enforcement agency. Communication delivers information, provides inspiration and serves accountability. Law enforcement agencies and our communities are made of people, and people need to be taken care of and feel like their voices are valued and appreciated. People also feel respected when they are well informed and kept up to date with information so they can be more productive at their jobs or feel safe at home or in the community abroad.

This type of communication requires intentionality based on transparency and a sincere desire to share information. The type of information being shared will be critical in establishing partnerships as information of value will give credibility to the agency and further establish community trust. Some of our most innovative methods of communication with our community have been found through our Business and Neighborhood Watch programs.

The purpose of the Watch programs are to familiarize citizens with crime prevention information and develop partnerships within the community. The objective being to produce informed citizens who in turn assist in relaying a message to the community abroad.

Through our watch programs, citizens can then take away a better understanding of the police role in the community. Additionally, citizens bring a wealth of knowledge about their community and particularly, the problems in their own neighborhoods. In this way, the Sheriff's office is able to learn and better understand the concerns of the citizens.

As part of the community, law enforcement agencies play an important role in keeping the community safe. However, there cannot be an officer on every corner, so citizen involvement is essential to combat crime. Residents of a community are the ones who really have an in-depth idea of what is going on in their neighborhoods and can provide a source of invaluable information. By partnering with each other and law enforcement, people can help fight crime in their communities in the most effective way: before it begins. Understanding the critical need to partner together served to highlight the importance of communication in our communities and those programs which accomplish that goal.

An active Neighborhood Watch is one of the most successful and least costly crime prevention programs available. It is essentially a community making a concerted effort to come together and serve as the eyes and ears of their neighborhood. As such, citizens are encouraged to report any suspicious or criminal activity to law enforcement. The success of the program is based on the proactive and successful nature of law enforcement's response to these reported activities and the communications systems put in place. Participants also receive continual communications from the Sheriff's Office and are able to attend regular scheduled meetings.

Modeled after Neighborhood Watch, Business Watch takes the "Neighbors looking out for neighbors" concept to the commercial level, creating a partnership between business, law enforcement, and other organizations that represent business interests. The Business Watch philosophy centers on the concept of taking control of what happens in your business community and reducing your chances of becoming a victim.

Challenge

How could the Sheriff's Office continue to formally partner with the community and reach out to those citizens who do not live in neighborhoods or are part of businesses that participate in the business watch program? The response, based on recommendations from faith community forums, was to formalize a partnership process with our faith community.

It is estimated the faith community connects with approximately 70,000 Hanover citizens. Worship Watch would be a platform to further partnerships with the community.

Community Collaboration

This initiative started in 2013 and led to the first ever Faith Summit which was held in the fall of 2013. Over 100 faith leaders from the community attended a meeting designed to capture their perspective on ways in which the Sheriff's Office could partner with our community and their expectations of service during a response to a disaster.

The idea was developed from an observation that within our community there are three primary community structured elements which are, businesses, neighborhoods and faith communities. As business watch and neighborhood watch already formed an avenue of partnership and communication into those two areas, outreach was made to our faith community in order to increase formal communication to a very large population base in Hanover County.

During the 2013 Faith Summit, we opened the summit with dialogue that highlighted current partnership programs and then very intentionally held several small group workshops with

participants. The workshops were designed to capture their ideas in two core areas; *Community Partnerships* and *Disaster Response*.

In the *Community Partnership* workshops we asked: 1. What do you envision a partnership between the Sheriff's Office and the Church to look like? 2. What is the benefit of the Church and the Sheriff's Office partnering together? 3. What are specific ways partnerships can be established between the Sheriff's Office and the faith community? 4. In what ways can the Sheriff's Office better serve you today and in the future? 5. Would a Church Community "Worship Watch" program be beneficial to you? Why or Why not? 6. What are some specific ways we can partner together as we prepare for emergencies or disasters?

During the *Disaster Response* workshops we asked: 1. What are the expectations from the Sheriff's Office in the event of an emergency or disaster? 2. What do you envision your role as a faith community to be in the event of an emergency or disaster? 3. What do you see as areas needing immediate improvement or additional resources in the event of an emergency or disaster? 4. What would you envision a celebration of our partnership and an opportunity to report out the results of this work group to look like in 2014?

Following the workshops, the responses were gathered and reviewed in preparation for an April 2014 report out event. This second report out event occurred at Patrick Henry High School with close to 100 faith leaders present along with many non-profit organizations.

The top five results of information gathered from our 2013 Fall Faith Summit were the need to:

1. Enhance communications between faith based organizations and the Sheriff's Office.
2. Continue relationship and partnerships opportunities.
3. Develop a formal Communication

Process. 4. Establish primary contact persons within the faith based organization and Sheriff's Office. 5. Prepare for major disasters as a group, catalog resources available, shelters, etc.

The result of this extraordinary community partnership effort was the development of the Worship Watch program which went into full effect in 2015. The program expands communications to approximately 60,000 members of our community. It connects communities in many of our rural areas where neighborhoods and businesses are not common and provides access to identified resources in the event of a disaster. As an example, this past winter, two of our Worship Watch churches provided shelter in support of government response during heavy snow storms where there was an expected loss of power.

Program Design

Formally, Worship Watch members are connected with Sheriff's Office personnel to serve as liaisons with program participants. They receive up-to-date electronic notices about community crime trends. Regular meetings are held to ensure a lasting partnership. Opportunities are created for networking of resources in times of community need. Materials and resources are provided to educate participants on areas of public safety and security. Information about the Sheriff's Office facility security assessment program is provided and participation encouraged. Participants receive a *Worship Watch* sticker to be posted in a conspicuous place signifying their participation in the program and a visible message to would-be criminals.

Worship Watch Program participants now have a formal avenue to partner with the Sheriff's Office in addressing problems and concerns within their facility as well as surrounding neighborhoods. They assist in helping reduce crime at their facility and community. They have the ability to participate in emergency preparedness planning and have an opportunity to partner

with the Sheriff's Office by taking an active role in helping to make Hanover a wonderful place to live, work, worship and raise a family.

Results

The success of the Worship Watch program can be attributed to increased formal communications, access to law enforcement operations and a sense of transparency that builds trust essential to law enforcement and community partnerships. This platform has proven to be a highly effective community educational tool and a great way to develop partnerships.

Eugene Schneeberg, Director of the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships with the U.S. Department of Justice said in a March 2013 publication *"In this day and age the challenges are too large for one organization to try to tackle tough, ongoing issues alone. You will see great benefits while you work to better collaborate with groups that have the same goals you do. The work that faith-based and non-profit organizations do every day in some of the most vulnerable communities throughout this country is incredibly important. Working together can assist you in your efforts to strengthen your communities and transform lives."*

Worship Watch was developed out of a common vision for community and found its creation through the sincerest method of community partnerships. Designed and implemented by the community its success has been a shared victory. With currently 120 churches as part of this program, Worship Watch serves as an example of great partnerships.

Worship Watch has now joined the ranks of our most successful community programs. Constant communications and regular meetings ensure the sustainability of this program and has led to continued expansion. In addition to focused and increased community communication efforts,

Worship Watch members are also included in many of our neighborhood watch meetings and communications. This partnering with other successful programs has solidified its stability and added to a program that is rapidly growing.

Success in Sharing

Specific training programs using power point presentations and handouts have also been developed to teach others on how to start a Worship Watch program. The design is adaptable to other agencies and organizations and has been shared throughout the Metro Richmond Region. In addition, organizations at the federal level have considered adopting components of this faith based community partnership as well.