

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Virginia Association of Counties

Achievement Award Submission

Criminal Justice & Public Safety



The Chesterfield County Police Department

Chesterfield County, Virginia

Colonel Jeffrey S. Katz

Chief of Police

Chesterfield County Police Department
Uniform Operations Bureau
Chesterfield Police Experience Program “CPEP”

Executive Summary

The Chesterfield County Police Department's Uniform Operations Bureau is divided into two patrol divisions and a special operations division. Each patrol division has a sergeant and officers assigned specifically to community policing functions. These officers and supervisors report directly to the division commander, who holds the rank of captain. A community police officer's primary focus is on relationship building and long-term problem solving. Community police officers are given great latitude to innovate and develop programs aimed at establishing meaningful relationships with the communities they serve.

The community police officers serving the Ettrick and Virginia State University (VSU) community recognized the need to improve the relationship between the police department and those communities. VSU is one of the nation's top historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) and brings students from across the mid-Atlantic to its campus and the Ettrick community.

The main goal of the Chesterfield Police Experience Program (CPEP) was to connect with VSU students and gain a greater understanding and awareness between law enforcement and the community. The program sought to accomplish this goal through on-campus interactions and a structured police experience program at the police academy. Non-enforcement interactions and educational opportunities designed to expose students to the realities of policing were developed and employed to foster mutual understanding and respect.

Brief Overview

The community police officers serving Ettrick and Virginia State University (VSU), one of the nation's top historically black colleges and universities, recognized the need to improve the relationship between the police department and these communities. The main goal of the Chesterfield Police Experience Program (CPEP) was to connect with VSU students and develop a greater understanding and awareness between law enforcement and the community.

Beginning in 2016, the community policing unit partnered with VSU's criminal justice program. Officers began visiting classrooms and interacting with students during question-and-answer periods. After these initial interactions, the second part of CPEP was developed.

Working with VSU criminal justice professors, the department provides transportation for students to the Eanes-Pittman Public Safety Training Center for a four-hour block of instruction that includes use-of-force simulations and role-playing scenarios.

The cost of the program is low, but its impact is significant. Since its inception, over 100 students have participated in the program and their evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive. Students reported having a better understanding of police interactions and a different perception since the program. Officers have gained a greater understanding of their community and its needs and concerns. The program has also become a successful recruiting tool.

Problem

The community policing unit recognized that after 2014 the relationship between minority communities and police seemed to be at an all-time low. National events coupled with social media were driving perceptions in a negative direction.

Chesterfield County is a large and diverse county. VSU plays a major role in the Village of Ettrick, a predominantly African-American community, and is full of history and traditions. It is located in the far southeastern corner of Chesterfield County and borders the City of Petersburg. When patrolling Ettrick, Chesterfield County Police officers frequently interact with VSU students, as well as Petersburg residents. While off-campus, VSU students have often been the victims of violent crimes. In order to deter crime, Chesterfield Police officers have used the traditional proactive enforcement of law in Ettrick. As in many communities, proactive patrol techniques have on occasion unintentionally created friction between the police and the community they are trying to protect.

With this history in mind, the community police officers saw an opportunity to create a new program that touches many people and improves the relationship between the police and the community. The Chesterfield Police Experience Program (CPEP) at VSU is the result of their work.

Description

Beginning in 2016, the community policing unit partnered with VSU's criminal justice program. Officers began visiting classrooms and interacting with students in 1.5-hour blocks of time

structured as question-and-answer periods. These blocks created the opportunity for the officers and students to better know each other and exchange their perceptions of policing in their community.

The second part of CPEP was developed after these initial interactions. The community policing unit creates the opportunity for students to see what it's like to be a police officer for a night. Working with criminal justice professors, the department provides transportation for students to the Eanes-Pittman Public Safety Training Center for a four-hour block of instruction that includes use-of-force simulations and role-playing scenarios. This is offered twice over the course of a week to better accommodate the students' schedules.

The night begins with classroom instruction. The students learn the basic foundations of the laws and policies that regulate police actions. A main focus of this class is on the legal framework for police use of force. They are taught about the equipment police officers utilize to do their jobs. A tour of the training facility and the Emergency Communications Center is also incorporated into the class.

After completion of the evening classroom portion, students are divided into groups and use the department's MILO System, an interactive use-of-force scenario simulator, to complete real-world training scenarios. After the use-of-force simulator, the students are equipped with police training equipment including: radio, training ASP (collapsible baton), inert pepper spray, and a training pistol. The students then participate in several mock traffic stops. The traffic stops utilize police officers and volunteers as role players and include situations requiring no use of force all the way up to situations allowing for appropriate use of deadly force. These

mock traffic stops give the students the opportunity to understand the difficulty of dealing with uncooperative individuals and how situations can rapidly evolve or spin out of control. Each scenario is supervised by a police officer and is discussed upon completion.

Cost of the Program

The cost of the program is relatively low. The night portion of the program includes the cost of food. The items include pizza and drinks provided to the students and usually amounts to about \$150 per night. The classroom visits are incorporated into the duties of the community officers and therefore require no extra expense. The night of the interactive training requires approximately 10 officers supplemented with 10 volunteers. Thus far this program has worked well with adjusted time and has not required overtime or incurred any burdensome expenses.

Results

The success of this program is measurable in many ways, but its greatest success is largely intangible. The relationships and understanding developed through this program may have long-term effects that will hopefully ripple throughout the community. At the end of each session, the students are provided the opportunity to complete an evaluation of the program. Since its inception, over 100 students have participated in the program and the evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive. Students reported that they have a better understanding of police interactions and a different perception since the program. Officers have gained a greater understanding of their community and its needs and concerns. The program also received local media attention that highlighted the department's efforts.

Below are comments taken from some of those evaluations:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the training. It opened my eyes up to what it is like to be an officer and how not to believe the 'media hype' because a situation could turn in the blink of an eye and anything can happen."

"it was a very eye opening experience and also humbling. It's like you know what goes on with police officers but it's different actually going through it."

"I took away great contacts, an exciting mood for my future. I felt empowered during the training."

"Open my eyes and changed my views on certain things."

"I left the training with a better understanding of how police officers operate on a daily basis."

The program continues to develop and interest from the campus population continues to grow. The officers involved have become more involved in campus life, often being invited to both university and student sponsored events. This provides future opportunities for continued relationship development outside CPEP. In addition to student interest, CPEP has generated interest in the police department outside of the community policing unit. Initially, the participants were all community police officers and department volunteers. As the program has grown, increasing numbers of officers in general patrol assignments have volunteered to assist with role playing and teaching. The increased interest and interaction have created the opportunity for not only the students to experience positive non-enforcement related

interactions, but the very same experience for police officers who work in community but usually are required to focus on responding to calls for service and enforcement activities.

Lastly, the program has become a successful recruiting tool for public safety. Since the program began, two participating students have participated in the Chesterfield County Police Department's Internship Program and two others have acquired jobs as police officers with area police departments. What started out as a plan to bridge the gap in understanding has grown into a community program that benefits not only the participants, but our community as a whole.

Pictures





