



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

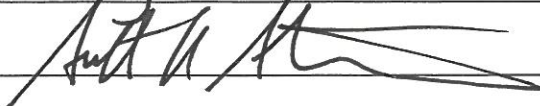
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: James City County  
Program Title: JCCPD Youth Engagement Programs  
Program Category: Criminal Justice and Public Safety

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Title: County Administrator  
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# **Executive Summary: James City County Police Department Youth Engagement Programs - Cultivating Trust and Future Leaders**

The James City County Police Department (JCCPD) proactively addresses the critical issue of youth distrust in law enforcement through its impactful Cops Camp and Pathfinders programs. Recognizing that positive engagement with young people is paramount for building community trust, preventing crime, and developing future leaders, JCCPD has demonstrated a profound commitment to this mission. Cops Camp, a collaborative initiative with James City County Parks and Recreation, provides middle school students with an engaging introduction to law enforcement, emphasizing citizenship and teamwork. The Pathfinders program further cultivates this connection by offering high school students interested in law enforcement a comprehensive overview of the profession while instilling values of good citizenship, academic excellence, hard work, and integrity. These innovative programs represent a significant investment in the future of James City County, effectively bridging the gap between youth and law enforcement and shaping responsible future leaders.

JCCPD's youth engagement strategy employs a two-tiered approach. Cops Camp utilizes School Resource Officers (SROs) to lead middle school students in a week-long summer program focused on building trust through positive interactions and educational activities covering community service, anti-bullying, and the role of police. The Pathfinders program offers high school students an in-depth exploration of law enforcement, emphasizing various operational aspects and the importance of citizenship, academic achievement, and ethical conduct. Both programs leverage the unique position of SROs to connect with students and are designed to be age-appropriate and engaging, fostering open communication and breaking down stereotypes.

The impact of Cops Camp and Pathfinders is evident in the stronger, more trusting relationships forged between students and police officers. Participants gain a deeper understanding of law enforcement. By proactively engaging with youth, JCCPD strengthens its community connections and cultivates potential future public servants. The innovative use of SROs as primary facilitators, the age-specific design of the programs, the collaborative spirit, and the emphasis on character development distinguish JCCPD's youth engagement initiatives.

Looking ahead, JCCPD is committed to the continued success and potential expansion of these vital programs. The James City County Police Department's Cops Camp and Pathfinders programs represent an investment in the youth of the community, building trust, fostering understanding, and cultivating values that shape future leaders. The dedication, innovation, and positive impact of these programs make the James City County Police Department a highly deserving recipient of this prestigious award.

## **James City County Police Department Youth Engagement Programs - Investing in Future Leaders and Community Trust**

The James City County Police Department (JCCPD) continues to work on a significant problem effecting the youth of the United States, which is the misplaced distrust of law enforcement. In order to build trust in the community, our police department has recognized that youth programs, hosted by police officers, is the most significant investment that can be made in order to bridge the gap with our youths, prevent crime, and develop future leaders. The James City County Police Department has demonstrated a profound commitment to fostering positive relationships with the youth in our community through our very impactful Cops Camp and Pathfinders programs. Cops Camp, a collaborative initiative with the James City County Parks and Recreation Department, provides middle school students with an engaging and educational experience focused on building trust with law enforcement, understanding citizenship and teamwork, and gaining insight into the role of police officers. The Pathfinders program further cultivates this connection by offering high school students interested in law enforcement a comprehensive overview of the profession while emphasizing good citizenship, academic excellence, hard work, and integrity. These programs represent a proactive investment in the future of James City County, building bridges between youth and law enforcement and shaping responsible future leaders. This submission highlights the significant contributions of these programs and their deserving nature for this prestigious award.

### **Program Description**

The James City County Police Department recognizes the critical importance of early and positive engagement with young people to build trust, foster understanding, and cultivate future community leaders. To achieve this, the agency has developed and successfully implemented two distinct yet complementary programs: Cops Camp and the Pathfinders Program.

#### **Cops Camp (Middle School Program):**

Cops Camp is a dynamic summer program specifically designed for middle school students residing in James City County. This week-long camp is expertly facilitated by the James City County School Resource Officers (SROs), who leverage their unique position to connect with students in a positive and engaging environment. The program is conducted in close partnership with the James City County Parks & Recreation Department, utilizing their facilities and resources to create a fun and educational experience. The primary goal is to break down barriers and foster positive interactions between middle school students and police officers. Through informal interactions, shared activities, and mentorship, students learn to see officers as approachable and trustworthy members of the community. The curriculum incorporates lessons on civic responsibility, the importance of following rules and laws, and the role of individuals in contributing to a safe and thriving community. Camp activities are designed to promote teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills among participants. Students learn to work together effectively in various scenarios. Age-appropriate and engaging activities provide students with a basic understanding of the roles and responsibilities of police officers, dispelling

misconceptions and fostering a sense of familiarity with law enforcement. The camp incorporates a variety of interactive and enjoyable activities, including physical fitness, team-building exercises, mock scenarios, and presentations, ensuring a positive and memorable experience for the participants.

Lessons taught during the week-long program, that runs in two different sessions are: Learning / developing a community service project, bullying education, touring the police facility, learning about technology as youths, academic quizzes, working with donations, learning about gangs, and various team-building exercises, all hosted / taught from various curriculum by our School Resource Officers.

### **Pathfinders Program (High School Program):**

The Pathfinders program is a specialized initiative targeted towards high school students within James City County who may have an interest in pursuing a career in law enforcement. This program, also led by the JCCPD School Resource Officers, offers a more in-depth exploration of the law enforcement profession while emphasizing the foundational values necessary for success in any field.

### **Key Components and Objectives of the Pathfinders Program:**

The program provides students with a comprehensive overview of various aspects of law enforcement, including patrol operations, investigations, specialized units, and the criminal justice system. Students gain valuable insights into the diverse roles and responsibilities within the field. A strong emphasis is placed on the importance of being a responsible and engaged citizen. Students are encouraged to participate in community service and understand their role in contributing to a positive society. The program reinforces the importance of academic achievement, critical thinking, and personal growth as essential components for future success, regardless of career path. Students learn about the dedication, discipline, and ethical standards required in law enforcement and are encouraged to cultivate these values in their own lives. The School Resource Officers serve as mentors, providing guidance, support, and real-world perspectives on the challenges and rewards of a career in public service. While not solely a recruitment tool, the program serves as an opportunity to identify and nurture promising future candidates for the James City County Police Department.

### **Impact and Benefits:**

The Cops Camp and Pathfinders programs have yielded significant positive impacts on the youth of James City County and the relationship between the police department and the community. Both programs have demonstrably fostered stronger, more trusting relationships between students and police officers, breaking down stereotypes and promoting open communication. Participants gain a better understanding of the complexities and challenges of law enforcement, leading to a more informed perspective and greater respect for the profession. The programs instill valuable lessons on citizenship, responsibility, teamwork, and integrity, contributing to the development of well-rounded and engaged young adults. The mentorship and guidance provided by the School Resource Officers offer positive role models and help shape the values and

aspirations of the participants. By proactively engaging with youth, the JCCPD strengthens its connection with the community, fostering a greater sense of partnership and cooperation. The Pathfinders program specifically cultivates interest in public service and law enforcement, potentially inspiring future generations to serve their community.

### **Innovation and Uniqueness:**

The James City County Police Department's youth engagement programs stand out due to many impressive features. Utilization of SROs as the primary facilitators leveraging their existing relationships with students and their unique understanding of the school environment. Both programs are carefully designed to be relevant and engaging for their respective age groups, ensuring maximum impact and participation. The collaboration with the James City County Parks and Recreation Department for Cops Camp demonstrates a commitment to leveraging community resources for the benefit of youth. The two-tiered approach, targeting both middle and high school students, showcases a long-term commitment to nurturing positive relationships and developing future leaders. Both programs prioritize the development of essential character traits such as citizenship, teamwork, responsibility, hard work, and integrity, which are valuable for success in all aspects of life. These programs support many of the James City County Police Department's Fundamentals including Leading by Example, Positivity, and Lifelong Learning.

### **Future Goals:**

The James City County Police Department is committed to the continued success and potential expansion of its youth engagement programs by continuously evaluating and refining the Cops Camp and Pathfinders curricula to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness. We strive to investigate the feasibility of expanding the reach of both programs in order to serve more students within James City County. Creating opportunities for program alumni to stay connected and continue their engagement with the police department is something that will help show the success of the programs to the public. The James City County Police Department always seeks collaborative efforts with other entities and, in doing so with these programs, only helps to strengthen our bond in the community.

### **Conclusion:**

The James City County Police Department's Cops Camp and Pathfinders programs represent a proactive and impactful approach to community policing and youth engagement. By investing in positive relationships, fostering understanding, and cultivating essential values in young people, the JCCPD is not only shaping future leaders but also building a stronger, more trusting, and more connected community. The dedication, innovation, and demonstrable positive impact of these programs make the James City County Police Department a highly deserving recipient of this prestigious award.