

Community Outreach and Support Team Standard Operating Procedure

226.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish operational guidelines for the Community Outreach and Support Team (COAST) within the University of Maryland, Baltimore Department of Police and Public Safety. COAST supports the department's mission by fostering a safe and secure environment through community engagement, focusing on relationship-building, education, visibility, and proactive involvement. The team participates in events, provides public education, and maintains a consistent presence to build trust and collaboration with the community. This SOP outlines the responsibilities and procedures for COAST, ensuring alignment with the department's mission through effective engagement and operations.

226.2 POLICY

The University of Maryland, Baltimore Police Department is committed to fostering positive relationships between its members and the community by treating all individuals with dignity and respect. The department actively engages the community in public safety strategy development and relationship-building initiatives, while ensuring transparency by making relevant policy and operational information accessible to the public. Refer to Policy 342 (Community Relations) for additional information.

226.3 DEFINITIONS

Community Engagement Activities: These are initiatives and events designed to foster positive relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. These activities aim to promote open communication, build trust, and enhance public safety by involving community members in discussions and collaborative efforts. The overarching goal is to encourage community involvement, address public concerns, and create a safer environment through partnership and collaboration.

Community Engagement Academy: This is a structured program that educates community members about the functions, policies, and practices of a law enforcement agency. The academy aims to foster transparency and build trust by providing insights into policing, crime prevention strategies, and community safety initiatives. Participants interact with law enforcement professionals, ask questions, and learn how they can contribute to their community's safety and well-being.

National Night Out: National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to enhance public safety. Typically held on the first Tuesday of August in the United States, this event encourages residents to engage with local law enforcement through activities such as block parties, cookouts, and various community events. National Night Out aims to foster relationships between police officers

Community Outreach and Support Team Standard Operating Procedure

and community members, raise awareness about crime prevention, and encourage community involvement in local safety initiatives.

Police Athletic League: The Police Athletic League (PAL) is a community-based organization that aims to build positive relationships between law enforcement and youth through sports, recreational activities, and educational programs. PAL programs involve police officers mentoring young people, fostering trust, teamwork, and discipline while providing a safe and supportive environment. The overarching goal is to promote youth development and deter delinquency by encouraging constructive engagement between law enforcement and the community.

Safety Awareness Meetings: These meetings are organized gatherings aimed at educating community members about safety practices, crime prevention strategies, and local law enforcement resources. These meetings typically involve discussions on various safety topics, including personal safety, emergency preparedness, and community engagement with police. The goal is to foster communication between law enforcement and the community, raise awareness about safety issues, and empower residents with knowledge and resources to enhance their personal and communal safety.

226.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

COAST Lieutenant: A lieutenant assigned to the Operations Bureau who is responsible for overseeing and directing COAST initiatives, ensuring they align with UMBPD's mission of public safety, education, and community engagement. The lieutenant ensures that community feedback is integrated into policy development and conducts audits and reports to assess COAST's effectiveness. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Oversee the implementation of the COAST SOPs.
- Represent UMBPD at major community and departmental events.
- Monitor the effectiveness of community engagement strategies and make strategic adjustments.

COAST Supervisor: An officer responsible for the daily management of COAST operations, including supervising the team and coordinating outreach activities. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Manage the daily operations of COAST.
- Ensure all team members are trained and prepared for their roles.
- Coordinate community events and manage the logistics of public engagements, including high-profile programs with the Office of the Chief.
- Organize and oversee the Community Engagement Academies and the department's National Night Out.

Outreach and Intervention Officer: An officer dedicated to engaging with vulnerable community members in need of support, coordinating services, and addressing concerns within the community. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Community Outreach and Support Team Standard Operating Procedure

- **Community Engagement:** The Outreach and Intervention Officer will proactively engage individuals who may need additional support or resources, working to build positive relationships with the community.
- **Coordination with Service Providers:** They will collaborate with local social services and community partners to ensure individuals receive appropriate care and support.
- **Crisis Intervention:** In the event of a crisis, the Outreach and Intervention Officer will take the lead in coordinating with relevant services to provide intervention, while maintaining detailed documentation of the situation and response.
- Provide support to the other COAST initiatives.

Therapy K9 Handler: An officer responsible for executing the Therapy K9 (Comfort K9) program, offering emotional support during outreach efforts and public events. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Deployment of K9:** The Therapy K9 (Comfort K9) will be used during both crisis events and community outreach initiatives, providing emotional support where needed.
- **Training & Certification:** The handler is responsible for ensuring that the K9 remains fully certified and undergoes necessary training.
- **Reporting:** All K9-related activities must be logged, including public engagements and training events, which will be reviewed by the COAST Supervisor.
- Provide support to the other COAST initiatives.

Foot Patrol Officer/Community Liaison: Officers tasked with maintaining visibility in designated areas, fostering relationships, attending community events, and supporting crime prevention efforts through proactive engagement.

- **Visibility and Interaction:** The Foot Patrol Officer will maintain a visible presence in their assigned areas, attending community events and meetings to engage with community members.
- **Support for Crime Prevention:** They collaborate with community members to promote safety through regular interaction and by being approachable to address any concerns.
- Provide support to the other COAST initiatives.

PAL Liaison Officer: An officer that coordinates youth engagement activities under the Police Athletic League (PAL) initiative, fostering positive relationships between UMBPD and the local youth. They ensure programs are well-organized, promoting trust, community involvement, and constructive youth development.

- **Youth Engagement:** They will coordinate activities with local youth, developing and leading programs under the Police Athletic League initiative.
- **Program Coordination:** They will organize youth engagement events that strengthen positive connections between UMBPD and the youth community.
- Provide support to the other COAST initiatives.

Community Outreach and Support Team Standard Operating Procedure

226.5 PROCEDURES

Operating procedures for the teams assigned to COAST:

A. Daily Operations

1. **Scheduling and Assignments:** The COAST Supervisor is responsible for daily scheduling to ensure all areas of responsibility are adequately covered, including assigning officers to community events, routine patrols, and crisis response duties.
2. **Equipment and Uniform Check:** Prior to each shift, all COAST members are required to conduct a standard equipment check. Uniforms must adhere to UMBPD policy, with the specific requirement that all COAST members wear black undershirts. Daily inspections will ensure compliance with cleanliness, uniform fit, and appearance, as COAST members are frequently in public-facing roles.

B. Community Engagement and Event Management

1. **National Night Out:** Each year, the COAST Supervisor, in partnership with the COAST Lieutenant, will coordinate the department's participation in National Night Out, overseeing all aspects of event planning and execution.
2. **Safety Awareness Meetings:** Every quarter, the COAST Supervisor will collaborate with COAST members to organize Safety Awareness Meetings aimed at educating and engaging the community on safety practices.
3. **High-Profile Events:** The COAST Supervisor will collaborate with the Office of the Chief to organize events featuring the Chief, such as Coffee with a Cop and Pizza with the Chief, ensuring that these initiatives align with community engagement objectives.
4. **Community Engagement Academies:** The COAST Supervisor will organize two Community Engagement Academies each year—one in the winter or fall and another in the spring or summer—to strengthen community connections and educate the public on safety and policing.

C. Crisis Intervention

1. **Response Protocols:** In the event of a community member experiencing a mental health crisis, the designated Crisis Intervention and Outreach Officer will take the lead, coordinating efforts with local social services and emergency response teams.
2. **Documentation:** All interventions will be thoroughly documented, detailing the nature of the crisis, actions taken, and the outcome. This documentation will be reviewed by the COAST Lieutenant to assess effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

D. Reporting and Monitoring

1. **Activity Logs:** COAST members will keep detailed logs of their daily activities, interactions, and observations. These logs are crucial for monitoring engagement efforts and gaining insights into community dynamics.

Community Outreach and Support Team Standard Operating Procedure

2. **Monthly Reviews:** The COAST Lieutenant will perform monthly reviews of all weekly statistics and reports to evaluate the effectiveness of COAST initiatives and implement any necessary adjustments.

E. Education and Training

1. **Continuous Learning:** The COAST Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all team members participate in ongoing training in areas such as crisis intervention, community engagement practices, and public safety education.
2. **Cross-Training:** To enhance versatility and provide comprehensive support, COAST members will undergo cross-training in various operational areas, including Therapy K9 handling, youth engagement through the PAL initiative, and effective community outreach.