

**Maryland Police Training and Standards
Commission
Community Policing Program
Annual Report**

Agency: Montgomery County Department of Police

Region #: I

Reporting Period: 2017

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Number of sworn members:1301

Non-sworn members: 802

Population: 1,058,810

Square miles serviced by the agency: 507

In accordance with Public Safety Article, § 3-207, please accept this report detailing the Montgomery County Police Department's community policing program efforts in 2017.

Historically, the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) has made great strides over the past few decades of building trust and maintaining relationships within our communities. The segments of our communities with whom we share special relationships are defined by geographic areas (neighborhoods), religious beliefs, ethnicity, and many other factors. For the last 14 years, Chief Manger has always embraced the concept of community policing as a philosophy and an organizational strategy and requires all members of the department to be responsible for and involved in community policing. This approach allows the police and the community to work closely together in creative ways to solve the problems of crime or fear of crime; address physical and social disorder; and advance the overall quality of life in the community. This philosophy rests on the belief that the community deserves input into the process and that solutions to today's community problems require both the public and the police to address neighborhood concerns beyond a narrow focus on individual crime incidents. It includes community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving. It demonstrates that **community policing can only succeed when top management enthusiastically supports its principles and tenets**, one of the [*10 Guiding Principles of Community Policing*](#), as defined by the U.S. Department of Justice, and embraced by the Montgomery County Police Department.

Police effectiveness is a function of crime control, crime prevention, problem solving, community satisfaction, quality of life, and community engagement.

Approximately 10 years ago, the Montgomery County Police Department was required to cut positions in order to balance a budget that was significantly impacted by the economic downturn. At that time, several positions were eliminated from the former Community Services Division, and the remaining positions were redistributed throughout the department. Each district had at least one Community Services Officer (CSO) assigned. The CSOs serve as the liaison between the District executive staff and the respective communities and assist the district commanders with various community related projects: they conduct *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) surveys for residents and businesses; meet with business leaders, neighborhood watch groups and homeowners associations to address crime trends and how to prevent crime; and they engage with numerous groups throughout the County to educate, empower, and otherwise improve and enhance the relationship between the community and the police department. With more than a million people in Montgomery County, the CSOs could be easily overwhelmed with requests. During the Department's strategic planning process, a number of community meetings were held with existing community groups and advisory committees; surveys were also distributed throughout these groups. The number one complaint and/or recommendation from the community were the lack of, and need for more community outreach, education, and prevention programs. Community outreach and engagement was the focal point of 35% of the conversations. Many community members stated that eliminating the division in 2009 had a significant, detrimental impact on police-community relations. Although community members indicated that they were very appreciative of the current CSOs, many also believed that the CSOs were overwhelmed and overworked.

Separately, in 2015, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing published a report that outlined numerous recommendations to help support law enforcement's efforts to work cooperatively with the community to build trust and maintain partnerships. Most of the recommendations made by the task force were focused on the need for increased outreach, education, interaction, and cooperation with the community. The task force specifically referenced that law enforcement needs to make a commitment to community policing and concerted efforts to build and maintain the highest levels of public trust and confidence with its stakeholders. Thus, Chief Manger announced his strategic priorities included implementing outreach and prevention initiatives and improving community relations.

In 2015, the MCPD initiated a pilot body worn camera (BWC) program and in 2016, cameras were issued to every officer in Patrol Services. MCPD's body worn camera program is a valuable tool for both the agency and the community, because it promotes enhanced officer safety and transparency; stronger prosecutions; maintains public confidence, trust, and accountability; and strengthens police/community relationships. However, it is just one tool among many and not a panacea for solving all officer or community issues that arise. Trust and communication must be the foundation of the police-community relationship.

In 2016, the Chief also created and assigned a Captain to serve as the director of a newly created Community Engagement Division (CED). In 2017, the MCPD added two sergeants and two police

officers, and centralized the School Resource Officer (SRO) program under this division organizationally. The primary function of the CED is to build trust and establish legitimacy of the police department within our communities, encourage community engagement and to serve as a liaison between the police department, governmental service agencies, and the community on the local, state and federal levels. An important goal of CED is the pursuit of long term, collaborative solutions to diversified problems, while the CSOs continue to facilitate outreach and engagement at the district level. The vision of the new CED is to focus on countywide engagement levels, awareness, prevention, outreach, and education. This is done by establishing partnerships that create opportunities for enhancing communication and awareness to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding.



The Community Engagement Division used grant funding to purchase a trailer, which increased the department's capacity to reconnect with the communities they serve by giving the MCPD a more visible and more welcoming presence at community events.

Mutual trust between the police and the community is essential for effective policing.

The Montgomery County Police Department strives to maintain a relationship of trust and confidence and is committed to working in partnership with the community to identify and resolve issues that impact public safety. This is accomplished through a variety of efforts, including, but not limited to the following:

- African American, Hispanic, and Latino Advisory Committees that meet monthly with the Chief of Police and other executives, as needed to discuss crime and safety trends, and other topics of interest identified by members of their communities.
- District advisory committees in every police district and/or Montgomery County regional services centers that meet monthly with the district commanders about crime and safety trends specific to their geographic locations.

- Quarterly meetings with the Faith Community Advisory Council, a part of the Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships, which represents the full spectrum, of faith/religious communities throughout the County.
- Quarterly meetings of the LGBTQ community to address their fear of crime and/or other public safety concerns.

Communication is one of the most critical factors to establishing and maintaining trust between the police department and the community it serves. In mid-2016, the MCPD, in coordination with the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights, held a series of “town hall” meetings to discuss police and race relations in Montgomery County following several widely publicized police shootings of black men in other parts of the United States, and the ambush killings of police officers in Dallas and other locations. Based on discussions that took place during these town halls, the MCPD began to focus its efforts on increasing and improving our youth engagement and dialogue, seeking to create opportunities for positive interactions between young people and the police. There were several new initiatives in 2017 that began as a result of this effort:

Bigs in Blue: A national program that is part of *Big Brothers Big Sisters of America*. Bigs in Blue provides marginalized youth with police officers as mentors.

Safe Walk Home: In partnership with the Department of Recreation, the MCPD provided elementary school-aged children with a “chaperone” for their walk home.

Lunch Bunch: A simple way of interacting with students during their lunchtime, and sometimes in partnership with Montgomery County Fire & Rescue. This program offers a casual method of outreach and the Department of Corrections.

Speak Up, Save a Life: In response to the rising numbers of drug overdoses in Montgomery County, several agencies partnered to bring the *Speak Up, Save a Life* program to all Montgomery County middle and high school students, with the goal of educating students about opioids and other drug and prescription misuse and overdoses, and directing parents to the appropriate resources for support.

Officers assigned to these and other programs are tasked with establishing and fostering relationships with young people of every age and at every level. However, officers generally focus on at-risk youth and those in vulnerable or disadvantaged families, in the hopes of finding positive opportunities for them to avoid engaging in crime, and so their experiences with police contribute to mutual trust and understanding. For example, the 6th District officers teamed up with the Watkins Mill High School’s football team to play the 5th District officers and Seneca Valley High School’s football team in a game of flag football. Following this game, officers established two student youth liaison committees and organized several youth discussion circles at local middle and high schools to examine a broad range of perspectives about race and culture. This type of program improves

communication between law enforcement and youth, allowing students to establish a dialogue that helps them to better understand the challenges of law enforcement, and enables the students to get to know the police officers on a personal level, helping to build community trust in return.

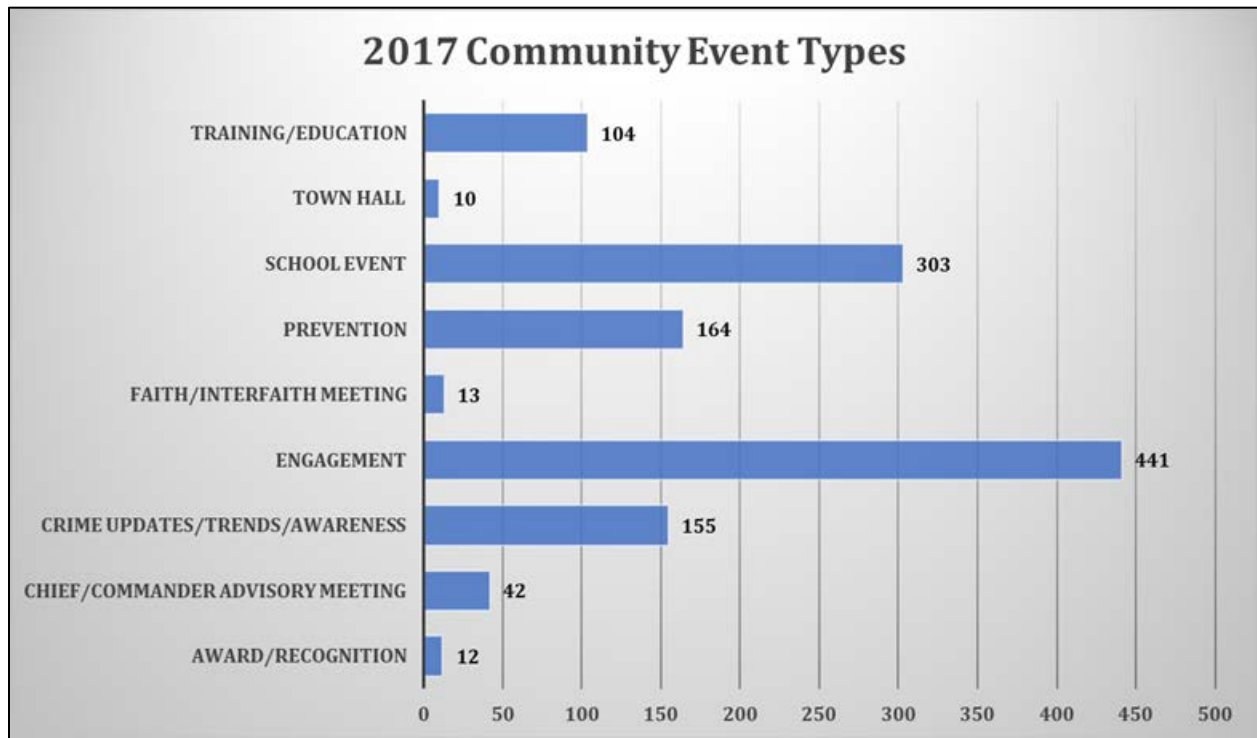
Other programs offer similar benefits in a more relaxed atmosphere; the annual *Shop with a Cop* program is a collaborative effort between local businesses and the MCPD. It is designed to provide children in need with the opportunity to purchase holiday gifts for themselves and family members, and it offers the children the opportunity to spend quality time with police officers in a positive and nonconfrontational environment.

In addition to the school and youth initiatives, the MCPD has hosted, facilitated, and attended multiple events, contributing to crime updates, awareness, and prevention; training and education; safety; and other engagement efforts that would contribute to fostering positive relationships, including but not limited to:

- A number of faith/interfaith groups, and the MCPD maintained its partnership with the county's Faith Community Working Group, working with Montgomery County Public Schools, Health and Human Services, the County Council, and an array of diverse faith leaders throughout the county to counter violent extremism, and respond to acts of bias and hate.
- Numerous safety initiatives provided to the county's seniors, offering public safety updates, training and education, and awareness and prevention tips to protect them from criminal activity targeting the elderly. The *Keeping Seniors Safe* program, a partnership between the Montgomery County Commission on Aging and the MCPD Volunteer Resources Sections is specifically designed to increase awareness of safety issues within the senior community and provide related guidance and resources to seniors in regard to these issues.
- Partnering with the County's Department of Health and Human Services to provide crisis intervention, the Opiate Overdose Response Program, and a program that deflects low-risk individuals with substance use disorders away from the criminal justice system and directly into community-based treatment. The MCPD also participates in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, which has expanded significantly across the County, as we've worked with senior living facilities to provide a responsible means of disposing unused medications and educated the general public about the potential for abuse of medication.
- Hosting multiple *Coffee with a Cop* outreach events throughout the county in an effort to remove the typical barriers that often prevent community members from approaching police officers, and allows for a more relaxed, two-way conversation.
- Building and celebrating safer communities at 30 different locations during National Night Out in 2017.
- Celebrating the cultural diversity and community partnerships throughout the county by attending neighborhood picnics and parties. For example, the MCPD participates in the

annual *Friendship Picnic*, which is endorsed and supported by the Montgomery County Committee on Hate/Violence, the Office of Human Rights, and the Human Rights Commission, and celebrates the diversity and inclusivity of Montgomery County, and calls for unity and respect for all members of the County.

In 2016, as part of the [Police Data Initiative](#), the MCPD established a dataset on the County’s open data portal, [dataMontgomery](#), which presents the wide variety of community events that police officers and command staff are involved in. In 2017, the MCPD hosted, facilitated, or attended more than 1,200 events throughout the county. Although 35% of the events were labeled generically as engagement, there were more than 300 events held in or around a school in 2017; overall, 46% of the recorded events were geared towards youths/young adults, and improving the relationships between them and the police, in an effort to minimize the factors that can contribute to future criminal behavior and/or recidivism.



Crime prevention is the responsibility of the total community. The police and community share ownership, responsibility, and accountability for the prevention for crime. Crime prevention must be a flexible, long-term strategy in which the police and community collectively commit to resolving the complex and chronic causes of crime.

In the 6th District (Montgomery Village), during a gang-related homicide investigation in which the victim’s body was located in a wooded area in the district, officers also discovered an area that was littered with evidence of ongoing, high-level, illicit activity (beer drinking, sexual activity, etc.), an area that was already known for increasing gang activity. The surrounding area was also defined by

the failing mall, a transit center, and neighborhood communities that believed that their fears and public safety concerns were irrelevant. Command staff at the 6th District had many concerns; there was an indication that foot traffic frequently traveled through the nearby elementary school property to get to the remote area where the activity was occurring. And the community was indignant about these issues, as they didn't think anyone else cared; it was a classic case of "broken windows" theory. Understanding that it would be imperative to target specific, vulnerable locations, communities, and priority areas, the 6th District CSO quickly conducted a CPTED survey of the MCPS property, and in a relatively short amount of time, a fence was put up to protect the students. Meanwhile, 6th District executive staff, in collaboration with a grassroots, community organizing group, began to focus on the community's concerns. Within 6 to 9 months, the MCPD had helped coordinate and champion the efforts, rallying support from within the community: the Montgomery Village Foundation, MCPS, MC Department of Transportation, homeowners' associations, and the people who lived there. The local Boy Scouts spent a day cleaning up the area and removed more than 150 bags of trash! The MCPD Montgomery Village team engaged local business owners at shopping centers nearby to address factors that the businesses could manage and help reduce the antisocial and criminal behavior. By promoting social cohesion through community crime prevention, the community itself became empowered to respond to adverse circumstances.

Community policing requires the knowledge, access, and mobilization of community resources.

The need to focus on solving community problems in creative ways includes challenging and enlightening people in the process of what policing entails. Not only does the MCPD grant greater autonomy to patrol officers, but as an organization, the MCPD imparts on its residents their rights and responsibilities implicit in identifying, prioritizing, and solving problems as equal partners with the police.

The Citizen Police Academy has been in existence since 1994, and in 2016, the MCPD began hosting a Hispanic Community Police Academy, which is taught in Spanish to engage non-English speaking members of the community. Both programs are 15-week courses in which residents are instructed on such topics as criminal and traffic laws, uniform patrol, and investigations. Participants receive an in-depth look at various aspects of the department, including many of its specialized functions, and ideally a better understanding of the department's functions and the challenges each officer faces every day when he or she puts on the uniform. These programs are both run twice a year and continue to be successful, with overwhelming numbers of applicants each time.

The MCPD also relies heavily on the services of a core group of people who volunteer their time and talent to the community through their involvement in nearly all aspects of the department's operations, from training to patrol work. The Montgomery County Law Enforcement Apprentice Program and Volunteers in Policing Program allow community members to engage with the MCPD, to work together more closely, and enhance policing services. More than 200 people participate in these programs. In 2017, the volunteers and interns recorded more than 32,300 hours of service to the department, a cost benefit of over \$780,000, or nearly 30 full time positions.

The [Montgomery County Police Foundation](#), a community-sponsored private organization dedicated to improving the quality of police service in Montgomery County and strengthening the relationship between the police and the community, is also a very important partner to the Police Department. The Foundation facilitates the exchange of management and technical expertise between the business members of the community and the MCPD. The Foundation also seeks to enhance the community's awareness of contributions made by MCPD toward public safety and provides funding in support of development of selected public safety projects. In 2017, for example, the Foundation provided backpacks and school supplies that were distributed by the Community Engagement Division to needy students.

Businesses and other private sector organizations within Montgomery County have also been very supportive of establishing partnerships with the MCPD. The department has partnered with ArcLight movie theaters, for example, to sponsor a monthly Senior Movie Forum, which provides aged Montgomery County residents with safety information and a free movie. The retail store, Target, has collaborated with several districts to hold *Coloring* and *Reading with Cop* events throughout the year, which aims to strengthen the bond between children and officers, and establishes trust at a young age. The Target store in the Westfield-Wheaton plaza hosted a *Cookies, Coffee, and Cops!*, which offered community members of all ages an opportunity to meet members of the police department and discuss issues that were of concern to them that may not have otherwise been heard. The MCPD has also partnered with other businesses in the hospitality industry to host events such as *Cocoa with a Cop* and *Cone with a Cop* and appreciates the willingness of our business community to support the MCPD's law enforcement mission, and their contributions towards community-based solutions developed through interaction and dialogue.

Community policing depends on decentralized, community-based participation in decision-making.

More than ten years ago, an MCPD officer recognized a rising concern related to an increase in calls for service attributed to those with Autism and Alzheimer's throughout Montgomery County. Most interactions were the result of "missing at risk" calls; however, general calls for service involving these special needs populations were also increasing. It was quickly realized that the department needed to focus on more than just response. Since then, the officer and coordinator of the Montgomery County Police Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) outreach program has worked tirelessly in the community to provide resources and support to caregivers and families of those with intellectual disabilities. Initially, the program consisted of resources for wandering prevention and general safety, but since then, Officer Laurie Reyes has created a layered approach to autism and intellectual disabilities awareness through education, outreach, follow-up, empowerment, and response. In fact, a challenging call for service actually became an opportunity for Officer Reyes to address a problem and develop a creative solution that had a significant impact on public safety and public trust. With input from a family in Montgomery County and a partnership with Pathfinders for Autism, Officer Reyes and the MCPD Autism Ambassador, a young man with autism who partnered with Officer Reyes to help educate police officers in Maryland and other states about autism and what behaviors to expect from someone with an intellectual or developmental

disability, were recognized nationally at the White House in 2015 for their work on autism awareness. To date, the MCPD Autism Ambassador has helped train more than 1500 police officers!

Community policing requires an investment in training with special attention to problem analysis and problem solving, facilitation, community organization, communication, mediation and conflict resolution, resource identification and use, networking and linkages, and cross-cultural competency.

The MCPD recognizes how important it is for the department to make a proactive effort to hire a workforce that has ties to the population it serves. Members of a community tend to have a vested interest and understanding of their community's cultural and environmental dynamics. In 2017, the MCPD started a Police Cadet Program, in partnership with Montgomery College, which serves those persons at least 18 years of age, who have an interest in pursuing a career with the Department. The goal of the program is to support recruitment and retention of the highest quality candidates from within the local community. In return, cadets receive an hourly wage and are immersed in the field of law enforcement, and complete course work that leads to a degree at a local college. It is believed that such interactions will foster conversations, understanding, and the ability to approach policing from a sociological perspective, immersing the cadets in community service by being able to empathize with people from different backgrounds and gaining a level of sensitivity to cultural diversity.

Montgomery County Police recruits receive training in the Public Safety Training Academy (PSTA) on the topic of community policing, which is delivered by one of the MCPD CSOs. This training provides an overview of the philosophy, the strategies and principles, and the stakeholders that benefit from community policing. In addition, recruits are introduced to the "SARA" model of problem solving and the three elements of the crime triangle and given guidance on developing effective response strategies. And the PSTA also ensures that training and understanding the philosophy of community policing extends beyond the classroom. The Field Training and Evaluation program contains a section on community policing in which probationary officers must identify and describe a community issue that the SARA method can be applied to. This activity is documented in their handbook and is a permanent part of their training record (*see excerpt from FTEP Handbook, p. 10*).

MCPD recruits also receive training in cultural diversity, implicit bias, and mental health first-aid, all of which help create awareness and sensitivity to different people and issues that may be encountered in the community and gives them the essential skills to develop rapport and establish trust.

Community policing allocates resources and services based on analysis, identification, and projection of patterns and trends, rather than incidents.

The MCPD conducts weekly CrimeStat meetings (the MCPD version of CompStat), in which all divisions gather to review and analyze data in order to devise solutions. Rather than responding to a crime after it is committed, this approach helps the MCPD prevent crimes from happening in the first place. Patterns and trends are more apparent, and resources or other services may be more

effectively dedicated to issues as they arise. For example, following the 2016 elections, bias-related incidents began increasing. Officer and command staff throughout the County attacked this issue immediately, discussing race and bigotry at school events and community meetings. Detectives adapted their investigative methods and received updated bias/hate training from the State's Attorney's Office, to ensure that investigations were conducted thoroughly, so subjects could be charged under the fullest extent of the law for acts of bigotry or racism. The MCPD was also represented on a newly organized network of diverse members who worked together to facilitate and increase support for programs, activities, and other initiatives that addressed hate and bigotry, [Communities United Against Hate](#). Because of the County's respect for diversity and the Department's commitment to engaging every segment of our community, these acts of hate violence served to strengthen our interfaith dialogues, foster tolerance, and increase understanding and unity among the residents.

Improvements made in analytical software has improved the department's capacity to see the "big picture". Community members are also able to use the public-facing [communitycrimemap.com](#) website to view criminal activity in their neighborhoods, which helps them make informed decisions for their own personal safety, as well as contribute to the neighborhood's safety, as a whole.

An active social media presence and well-established relationships with the media allows for efficient communication with the community. The MCPD encourages residents to consider joining the [Nextdoor](#) platform, which is used by all six district commanders to provide real-time crime updates and other important information to the neighborhoods within their districts.

Summary

Establishing and maintaining partnerships with the community is something the department has historically done and will aggressively continue to do in the future. These partnerships directly contribute to enhanced police-citizen cooperation, including the flow of information about community concerns, crimes and suspects; facilitate mutual respect among officers and the communities they protect and serve; and can be a force multiplier that allows law enforcement to tap into valuable community resources in efforts to prevent and deter crime. MCPD is focused on building trust and establishing legitimacy through engagement, communication, education, and prevention with all the communities that it serves. Ultimately, all officers are expected to be visible, accessible and accountable to the people they serve. An effective community policing strategy cannot be reactionary in nature, and must be comprehensive, improving the department's ability to communicate with and better serve the community and enhancing our ability to accomplish the department's mission.