


EASTHAMPTON POLICE DEPARTMENT		Department Manual: Policy No. 8.15
Subject: Community Engagement Work Plan		
MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED:		GENERAL ORDER
Issue Date: 1-22-2021 Effective Date: 1-27-2021 Revision Date:	Issuing Authority <i>Robert J. Alberti</i> Robert J. Alberti Chief of Police	

Easthampton Police Department Community Engagement Work Plan

I. Community Engagement Specialist:

The Community Engagement Specialist (CES), also referred to as the departments Community Police Officer (CPO), is responsible for reaching out and directly engaging the city's diverse communities to ensure that Easthampton residents have unrestricted avenues to share collective input about their concerns and views regarding issues surrounding public safety. The CES shall develop, implement and monitor the impact of a variety of strategies, protocols, arrangements, systems and procedures to ensure the continuity of these efforts. The CES will create and foster opportunities for residents to engage within their neighborhoods and with public safety officials in a way that enhances trust, transparency, spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and ultimately strengthens community-police relations. The CES will develop a robust community outreach and engagement plan that involves a wide range of diverse Easthampton communities, including affected communities (those with higher levels of police calls for service), broader Easthampton communities, and key community stakeholders. The Community Engagement Specialist will work closely with

the Easthampton Police Chief and Community Services Lieutenant to establish engagement opportunities wherever appropriate and feasible.

II. Phase I:

Key aspects of “Phase One” of this community mobilization and engagement effort shall include:

- Recruit an advisory group to further develop ideas and to create buy-in from the community.
- Promote benefits of neighborhood watch groups.
- Support existing NWG efforts.
- Create new NWGs.
- Align shared strategies with community-based organizations and existing initiatives.
- Create Business Watch and Community Organizations MOUs as outlined in Chief’s strategic plan.

Goal One:

Promote Benefits of Neighborhood Watch Groups (NWG) with input from community members, organizations, non-profits and stakeholders.

***In some areas of the city, the concept of a NWG will be entirely new and greater outreach and awareness will be needed.**

Strategy 1: Bring together representatives from the community including residents, business owners (small and large), community organizations, faith community, with elected officials & representatives from existing community building initiatives. The group will also include the Easthampton Police Chief and members of the EPD Community Services Division. Other potential members and/or presenters include drug court alumni, successful parolees and others involved in past criminal activity who are looking to be part of the solution in their community.

Activities:

- Analyze proposed strategic work plan and provide input.
- Provide information and potential resources that will assist in executing work plan.
- Align shared initiatives wherever possible.
- Provide engagement opportunities in the community and within their respective organizations.
- Ask members what they need and what could be provided by the City to create safer environments and to be connected in the community.

Strategy 2: Promote reasons for NWGs as outlined in the USAonWatch (https://www.bja.gov/Publications/NSA_NW_Manual.pdf), a national neighborhood watch program:

***Basic Crime Prevention:** Practice crime safety measures that eliminate opportunities for criminals. Encourage others to join in crime prevention efforts. Aid others when they become victims of crime. Work for a better and safer neighborhood through protecting and honoring the rights of others.*

***Disaster Preparedness (Snow Preparedness):** Learn skills to prepare for man-made and natural disasters. Local, state, and the federal government do a lot to prepare for disasters but citizens have to be ready to care for each other. Encourage citizen involvement in preparation and planning.*

***Build a Stronger Community:** Get to know your neighbors. In our fast-paced world we don't spend enough time learning about our neighbors. Watch groups give community members a reason to get together and talk about making their community a better place. Neighborhood Watch Activities are a fun way for community members to get to know each other while making a difference.*

Activities:

- Promote and hold "Safety Solutions" community forums in all sectors of Easthampton.
- Make presentations to Community Based Organizations (CBO's) promote NWGs and to help identify groups ready to mobilize (parent groups, issue groups, etc.)
- Write and distribute press releases to media outlets to encourage residents to contact Community Engagement Specialist in starting NWG.
- Promote to city councilors as way to engage among constituent groups.
- Work with EPD to identify "areas of need."

Goal Two:

Support existing efforts and establish new Neighborhood Watch Groups

Strategy 1: Identify existing NWGs (and other active community groups) and provide support and guidance as outlined in the USAonWatch NWG manual that summarizes methods and strategies to build capacity and cohesiveness.

Work with CBOs to identify groups that are ready to be set up as a NWG.

- Disseminate messaging flow chart, how and when to communicate with EPD.
- Facilitate training by EPD personnel for residents on safety measures, recognizing and reporting suspicious activity, communicating with neighbors.
- Establish communication line with EPD to receive information on criminal activity in or near their neighborhood so residents can take precautions and be an eye and ear for EPD.
- Promote vacation/vacancy watch, senior watch, vulnerable residents, adult oversight for young children.
- Review police surveys for best ideas and areas of concern.

Strategy 2: Create new NWGs in areas of most need and where momentum to come together has been identified utilizing methods and best practices outlined in the USAonWatch manual.

Activities:

- Work with CBOs, EPD and other stakeholders in prioritizing areas to establish new NWGs.
- Engage residents near parks and use established park initiatives as engagement opportunities to gather.
- Work with EPD to identify areas with high call volumes for potential NWGs.
- Work with EPD, CBOs and other stakeholders in identifying informal community leaders/"block captains" (who is the person that sweeps the area around his/her residence, who are the "go to" neighbors).
- Identify groups that are more open to conduct neighborhood cleanups and work to establish NWG activities.
- When presenting to groups and residents, ask the question, "What could make this place better?"
- Promote various levels of "watching".
 - Active walkers for exercise.
 - Active walkers for surveillance.
 - Activities that result in information gathering.
 - Reasons to engage include improved lighting, pothole repair, sign repair, no signs, abandoned cars, general concerns.
- Engage parents that are already volunteering to walk kids to school.

Goal Three:

Promote Benefits of and Implement Business Watch Groups (BWG)

Strategy 1: Work with business owners to create business watch districts

Activities

- Leverage positive relationships established with Easthampton Chamber of Commerce and Rotary members as well as other business owners in the community.
- Facilitate connections with beat officers and store owners and managers, having officers develop working relationships with business owners in proactively addressing quality of life issues.
- Develop test pilot areas with businesses most receptive to effort.
- Use cleaning effort as engagement tool.
- Work to intensely clean these areas as a reward mechanism for participating businesses.
- Facilitate communication among business owners near each other.
- Work with business owners to develop emergency preparedness and to provide list of available for-hire snow removers (local residents).

Goal Four:

Establish MOUs with Community Organizations and other Key Institutions in Easthampton

Strategy 1: Identify existing and potential partnerships in the community and work to create an effective two-way relationship where stakeholders feel connected to safety initiatives and solutions.

Activities:

- Meet with all community organizations and inform of community engagement initiatives and how they can be part of effort.
- Facilitate communication with their constituents regarding community engagement efforts and NWG initiative.
- Ask for support in establishing new NWG among constituencies.

Key aspects of additional phases and activities of this community mobilization and engagement effort include but are not limited to:

- Continue to expand Easthampton Police-led system of care for substance use disorders (SUDs) such as our Drug Addiction Recovery Team (DART).
- Establish and work with Community Navigators, individuals whose primary function is to identify individuals in the community that are; homeless, struggling with SUDs, mental health and other risk factors, work with police to offer services first before needing to make criminal charges.
- Work in partnership providing additional supports to individuals in the community, where everyone works to problem solve why individuals are at high risk for hospitalization or arrest, work to engage in needed services.
- Convene a Downtown Taskforce, a collective of various social service agencies, City leadership, key departments (Planning, DPW), key property owners, Easthampton Fire Department, and others in a Hub-like model where members address environmental issues of why individuals are facing high levels of risk, member work together to solve problems and report back to each other with results.
- Youth Initiatives:
 - Identifying youth leaders and providing positive experiences (i.e., tour of EPD, Ride-a-long's, coffee with a cop, cookout with a cop, etc.)

- Look into bringing back feasible version of our former COPS Unit.
- Athletics League program and other efforts that foster mentoring opportunities, Officers participate as coaches in the Easthampton Youth Basketball League, Officers mentor youth from various housing developments.
- Identify all mentoring opportunities in Easthampton for Easthampton youth and serve as liaison with these programs.
- Establish a Citizen Police Academy.
- Look into creating comprehensive “Community Power” program that includes a mini-Citizen Police Academy that results in NWGs, this is also applicable to youth.
- Continue to seek out grant opportunities for community policing.
- Roll Call mini trainings (trauma informed care, substance use and mental health stigma reduction, personal and professional development, de-escalation, diversity, cultural awareness, etc)
- Continue and improve upon our DARE program.
- Support leadership in ways to recognize officers that are outstanding “engagers” .
- Create officer engagement opportunities like “Cookout/Coffee with a Cop” with assistance from local businesses.
- Cultural exchanges with EPD (i.e., community members teaching EPD about their culture).
- Marketing through social media, EPD’s Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube videos of successful engagement efforts and positive stories.
- Speak with Easthampton Media regarding having regular TV shows that highlight community engagement work, outstanding Easthampton officers; positive stories and ways residents can be involved.
- Facilitate leadership and cultural competency trainings for officers where feasible.