



# LOVELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

## Justification:

The following community policing and engagement plan is predicated on recommendations that resulted from an audit conducted by Jensen Hughes, a law enforcement and public safety consulting firm, that was hired by the City of Loveland. The firm was asked to review all the policies and procedures in the Loveland Police Department and make recommendations to the City leadership team as to what improvements the Department can make with its image and reputation for the citizens of the community. On January 1, 2022, the firm produced the final written report.

On page 51 of the report, the firm made the following recommendation: *“4.1 Develop a formal, community policing and community engagement plan with goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes to assist the Department in establishing formal collaborative relationships with community members and community stakeholder groups. This would enhance the Department’s ability to incorporate the concepts of community-oriented policing in all its operations and should be part of its overall strategic plan.”*

The plan also addresses other recommendations made by the firm concerning improving social media platforms, the development of a structured public information office, improving media relations, and expanding participation in overall various community events.

## Communication Plan Guiding Principles

1. We strive to deliver timely and accurate information both internally and externally with the community.
2. We are committed to community outreach and facilitating a positive partnership with the community.

## Communication Team

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### Operations

Members of the Public Information Office and PIO Cadre will share accurate and timely information with the community. Methods may include, but are not limited to, social media, website postings, press releases, media interviews, press conferences, and various community engagement events.

### Staffing

Members of the Public Information Office currently consist of a Public Information Officer, a part time civilian social media specialist and a part time civilian community education specialist.

## **PIO Cadre**

The PIO Cadre is a collateral assignment and is managed by the Public Information Officer. Those who wish to participate will submit a letter of interest and complete a testing process; supervisor approval is required to serve on the team.

The PIO Cadre will maintain an on-call schedule to ensure 24/7 availability. Members will be equipped with agency-supplied technology and resources necessary to respond to incidents, receive information, and share timely communications.

Members will participate in ongoing training to build and maintain skills necessary to lead public communication efforts during on-call periods and when the Public Information Officer is unavailable.

*\* The composition, goals, and selection criteria are described in attachment A*

## **Goals for the Communication Team**

- The two part time positions will be examined and evaluated by the PIO and executive staff from time to time to ascertain if these positions should be upgraded to full time status.
- The Public Information Office shall provide statistics, number of listening sessions and community engagement events to be published in the Departmental annual report.

## **Social Media**

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### **Purpose**

Social media gives us the opportunity to engage both formally and informally with our community, stakeholders, prospective employees, and media. Narratives develop and news flows rapidly in the 24/7 digital environment, and it's imperative our agency participate in this space to maintain our credibility and relevance.

### **Operations**

The Public Information Office will manage content strategy, development, and moderation on agency social media channels. All social media content will support and reflect the mission, priorities, and values of the Loveland Police Department.

### **Platform Goals**

- Communicate critical information to impacted stakeholders in a timely manner.
- Build community trust in our agency and leadership by showcasing principles in action.

- Recruit qualified applicants for positions throughout our entire agency.
- Increase our social media footprint by creating new accounts through additional social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram. All social media platforms will be evaluated on a continual basis to gauge their effectiveness in accomplishing our outreach goals.
- The Department Social Media Specialist will monitor all social media platforms for general content and will report to the Public Information Officer any social media postings that would require an immediate response, or significant negative postings that would necessitate an urgent consultation or response from the Executive Staff.

## Goals for Social Media

- A video showcasing a virtual ride-along via body worn camera have at least one completed by December 31, 2023.
- Add at least one social media platform account as identified above, to our social media footprint by December 31, 2023.
- The Public Information Office will include a measuring strategy of the effectiveness of social media by adding this component to the departmental Cycle Report.

## Traditional Media Relations

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### **Purpose**

The press plays an important role in disseminating critical information to our community when it matters most. In a crisis, media has the power to amplify safety messages to a wider audience than we can reach through our channels alone. Maintaining a professional relationship with local and regional news outlets is necessary to ensure that we can share accurate and timely information with those we serve.

### **Operations**

The Public Information Office will respond to media requests in a timely manner and identify the appropriate response source and method. This may include responding to scenes, conducting interviews (phone, web-based, and in-person), facilitating interviews with leadership or subject matter experts, preparing speaking points, coordinating logistics for press briefings, and providing ongoing media training for select agency staff.

### **Body Worn Camera Video Release**

Periodically, the Public Information Office will receive direct requests from the media to release body worn camera video for a variety of reasons. When receiving these requests and to comply with SB20-217 and the Colorado Criminal Justice Records Act, these requests will be immediately forwarded to the Records Manager and the Public Information Officer should notify members of the Executive Staff.

## Goals for Traditional Media Relations

- Initiate a virtual ride along segment in the spirit of transparency and community engagement.
- Increase collaboration with other agencies concerning their community engagement strategies for example, increase meeting between Thomson Valley EMS PIO, Loveland Fire Rescue Authority PIO, City of Loveland Office of Community Engagement.

## Internal Communications

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### **Purpose**

Maintaining and delivering consistent communication within the agency and among the different divisions, units, and work groups is vital to morale and important to all employees as well as the volunteer staff. The flow of internal communications should not just be down the chain of command, but up and across the chain as well. Open and frequent internal communication is an expectation across all ranks of sworn and professional staff.

### **Operations**

- First line supervisors and team leaders are expected to keep their respective team members informed of any and all communication they receive through the chain of command in a timely manner. Further, solicitation of feedback should be attempted and recommunicated back up the chain of command. With the reinstatement of formal briefing times and dates, and frequent formalized unit meetings this should assist in this endeavor.
- Mid-level supervisors and managers should engage in formal and frequent meetings to discuss current issues. As a result of these meetings, any operational procedure or change to an existing operational procedure at their level should be communicated down their chain of command for dissemination and feedback.
- The Chief and or members of the executive staff will strive to attend FOP meetings, as circumstances necessitates, for the purpose of listening to any concerns or proposed operational changes this group may want to communicate to the executive staff. In kind, the executive staff should provide feedback on such concerns and proposals to the group in a timely manner.
- The agency will create an email address for suggestions from internal sources regarding ideas or concepts that are pertinent to the agency. This allows employees and staff to submit suggestions on a frequent basis. This email will be monitored by the appropriate administrative staff who shall pass on the suggestions to the appropriate management group. If a suggestion is made and adopted, it will be noted in the departmental update email.

- Assistant Chiefs, Lieutenants, and Managers should strive to attend Section, Unit, Shift or Team meetings on a consistent basis as they see fit to ensure a steady flow of internal communication.
- The Chief of Police and the executive staff should encourage an open-door policy with the FOP executive board and their members as invited or when the need arises.
- The Chief of Police and the executive staff shall strive to engage in informal meetings with the various shifts, units, and teams throughout the Department as circumstances dictate or arise.

## Goals for Internal Communications

- The Chief and members of the executive staff will create and maintain a departmental update via email to be disseminated no less than twice a month. This email should contain highlights of various events, promotions, reassignments, or other projects or activities that are an interest to the agency.
- Continue the application of internal communication via TV's placed around the police department, to include dispatch, to inform staff of case highlights, promotions, new hires, etc.
- Continue the application of internal communication via the TV placed in the briefing room for officers on all shifts to be on the look out for suspects, vehicles, attempt to identify persons of interest, etc.

## Community Engagement

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### **Purpose**

Interacting with our community in a proactive, non-incident-related environment builds trust, provides an opportunity to highlight the work and values of our agency, and creates a channel for public feedback and idea sharing. Trust is a foundational necessity that supports operational efficacy and public safety. When people trust us, they're more likely to report crimes, seek resources as victims, cooperate with investigations, amplify our mission, and support funding and resources for our agency. All employees, both sworn and professional staff members have the ability to relate and interact with the community in one form or another, whether it is a one on one or a group setting.

A Community engagement can be defined as any time a member of the department is approached by an individual, neighbor, or a group and the contact was based on the fact that the approaching party had or has knowledge that the employee is a member of the department and could provide information relative to public safety issues on any level. A community event/engagement activity can be further defined as any event that is conducted on a more formal level such as community education, discussing security awareness at churches, schools, or any other public safety issue for any group that request such an interaction.

It is the expectation of the Chief of Police and the executive staff that all members work with their immediate supervisors to develop a goal during an annual evaluation process that would satisfy the department increasing the number of community events/ engagement activities.

### **Operations**

- Sworn staff who are assigned to the patrol division, criminal investigations division, and the support division can utilize CAD to document any community event/engagement activities as well as notifying their direct supervisor of any more formal activities through email.
- Professional staff who do not utilize CAD can track any community event/engagement activities by informing their respective supervisor through email, weekly, or quarterly reports.
- Supervisors will be expected to document any of these activities in the annual evaluations for their direct reports.
- The Public Information Office will monitor and identify opportunities for the executive staff and other key leadership to attend such activities involving formal presentations to business community groups, ward listening sessions, and other formal community groups.
- The Public Information Office will attend and engage the PCAB through regularly scheduled meetings.
- The Public Information Office will support event logistics on request and attend as capacity allows.
- All agency staff members who participate in community events are strongly encouraged to take photos and submit them to the Public Information Office.
  - Photos may be used on social media.
  - If a juvenile is the main subject of a photo, ask parent permission to use on social media.
  - If photos are taken in a daycare or school environment, ask coordinator if any students have photo restrictions.

## Goals for Community Engagement

- The PIO should facilitate increased community engagement opportunities for the Chief and other appropriate departmental personnel to business organizations and other community groups no later than December 31, 2023.
- All four ward listening session should be completed on later than December 31, 2023.

## Police Department Website

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### **Purpose**

Our website serves as a platform to provide information that's accessible and available 24/7 to the public, job applicants, and media.

### **Operations**

The Public Information Office will maintain timely and accurate information on our website that reflects agency operations, values, and priorities.

The current “accountability” page on the department’s website will be renamed to “transparency” page. This page should contain current and separate divisional tabs and links that inform the public the scope and mission of each division as well as subservient units that report to that division. The page should contain an overall general message from the Chief of Police. The page should contain information pertaining to internal complaints, arrest data, number of filings presented to the Larimer County District Attorney’s Office to include the number of cases accepted by that Office.

The website will contain information to be accessed by the public reference upcoming community events that personnel from the Loveland Police Department will be participating in. Any events solely sponsored by the Loveland Police Department.

## Goals for Police Department Website

- Redesign of website should be completed no later than September 30, 2023.

## Community Pillars

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### Purpose

The City of Loveland is a thriving and growing community that attracts various and diverse segments of the community based on individual religious and cultural beliefs, customs, and lifestyle choices. Based on the number of these diverse segments within our community, not all can be identified in an overall strategic plan as this. However, these segments can be generally grouped into different pillars that require interaction and engagement by the Loveland Police Department.

### Operations

These pillars can be grouped and identified as the following:

- Victim Advocacy Groups – MADD, SAVA, etc. The PIO should contact these groups individually to facilitate engagement.
- At risk or protected class groups – Homeless, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Tribal, etc. These groups can be contacted with assistance from the City Office of Community Engagement, Loveland Food Bank, and the Encampment Program for engagement.
- Professional Business Groups – small business, large business, national retail and commercial business, real estate business, and specialized self-owned business. The Loveland Chamber of Commerce is an excellent resource for assisting the Loveland Police Department with engagement strategies.
- Philanthropic Organizations – Elks Lodge, Lions Club, Moose Lodge, Rotary Club, Breakfast Optimist Club, Sertoma, etc. The PIO should contact the presidents of each organization to facilitate engagement on a frequent basis as needed.
- Faith Based Community – organized churches, individual religious groups, commercial businesses that exist based on religious concepts and beliefs. The PIO should interact with the Loveland Police Chaplain’s unit facilitate engagement with these groups.

- Special Interest Groups - Agricultural Groups, Sport enthusiasts' groups, organized community hobby groups are all groups that can be contacted directly for engagement purposes.
- Veteran Groups – VFW, Disabled Vets are organizations that can be contacted individually for engagement purposes.

## Goals for Community Pillars

- The priority goal for the Department is to be aware of all existing community groups, and to maintain awareness of any incidents and activities that these organizations are involved in and increase engagement as circumstances dictate or request are made.
- The Public Information Office will strive to develop and maintain a directory that should include at a minimum, the name of leaders, board members, and contact information of the above identified community pillars.
- The Public Information Office shall strive for facilitating meetings with at least one of the above identified groups, per pillar, at least once every six months.



## ATTACHMENT A

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO) CADRE

### PURPOSE

This plan establishes an on-call structure and responsibilities for the PIO Cadre. This team will be responsible for responding to media inquiries, disseminating public safety information, and serving as official spokespeople for the Loveland Police Department.

### SCOPE

This standard operating procedure applies to all Loveland Police Department employees applying for the PIO Cadre or those requesting public information assistance from the team.

### RELATED POLICY

Policy 5.03 Public Information, Media Relations, and Social Media Use.

### RESPONSIBILITY

The Loveland Police Department Public Information Officer shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and procedure.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Establishing and maintaining an effective relationship with the news media is crucial in promoting public safety and maintaining public trust in the Loveland Police Department. PIO Cadre responsibilities include dissemination of time-sensitive public safety information, writing news releases, gathering information requested by media, and speaking with reporters via email, on the phone, in person, and on camera.

### STAFFING AND SELECTION

The PIO Cadre will consist of Police Department personnel guided by the Public Information Office. Cadre members must have demonstrated aptitude for strong written communication and public speaking. The PIO Cadre is considered a collateral duty. The selection process may include a writing assignment, mock interview, and other simulations that test candidates' abilities to effectively represent the agency. The number of staff in the PIO Cadre will depend on the amount of interest and applications received. An ideal minimum staff would be two to three members.

### ON-CALL SCHEDULE

The Public Information Office holds the primary responsibility for responding to media requests during normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 0800-1700) when available. The Public Information Office will establish an on-call schedule with Cadre members to handle media inquiries outside of normal business hours or when Public Information Office staff is unavailable. If staff is unavailable during business hours, the Public Information Office will coordinate coverage with the on-call PIO. On-call periods begin at 0700 and last for 24 hours. Cadre members will be issued device/s necessary for receiving and responding to internal and media communication.

### COMPENSATION

Non-exempt employees may receive overtime compensation for conducting unplanned business outside of their normal work schedule (i.e., incident call outs, media responses). Employees may choose to be paid in cash or compensatory time, with

supervisor approval. If a minor response is required (i.e., quick phone call or email), employees with the ability to flex their time are encouraged to do so with supervisor approval. In the case of planned events, all efforts should be made to arrange for time flexing, and any overtime should be approved by a supervisor in advance.

#### **MEDIA INQUIRIES**

The LPD public information line (970-962-2201) and email (MediaInquiries@cityofloveland.org) are the primary contact methods to reach a PIO spokesperson. All members of the PIO Cadre will have access to the designated devices and accounts necessary to perform this collateral assignment. Cadre members will be responsible for monitoring and responding to inquiries while on-call.

#### **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

With supervisor approval, officers may request the assistance of the on-call PIO at any time should they require assistance handling media at a scene. In the event of a critical or resource-intensive incident (i.e., officer-involved shooting, natural disaster, standoff, high-profile or ongoing incident), the on-call PIO and/or Public Information Office may request assistance from additional Cadre members.

#### **RESPONSE TIME**

PIOs should evaluate media inquiries to determine a reasonable time frame for a response. If a reporter requests non-incident-related information after hours or on a weekend, it may be appropriate to wait until the next business day to gather the information (this should be communicated to the reporter).

Incident-related questions typically warrant a timelier response. The on-call PIO should contact the appropriate internal party (i.e., incident commander, lead investigator, assistant chief) to verify information that will be shared with the public. If another agency has command of an incident, the PIO will direct media to that agency for information unless otherwise instructed.

#### **INFORMATION RELEASES**

The Public Information Office maintains and has access to multiple digital platforms for sharing information with the public. These include social media, LPD webpage, email, and Everbridge keyword alerts. Refer to information release SOPs for detailed instructions and guidance for use of these resources.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The on-call PIO will be responsible for updating LPD social media accounts if major incidents or timely information needs to be released after hours. Outside of these circumstances, the Public Information Officer and the Social Media Specialist are the primary account administrators responsible for strategic planning, content coordination, and scheduling.

#### **TRAINING**

Members of the PIO Cadre will attend training coordinated by the Public Information Office to build and maintain the skills needed to operate independently and professionally as the lead PIO while on-call.