

# OUTLINE FOR COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS ON REFORM AND REINVENTION OF POLICING IN PUTNAM COUNTY

The Putnam County Sheriffs' Office serves the law enforcement needs of all the citizens of the County, and strives to do so in a professional manner, respecting the rights of all our citizens without regard to race, color, nationality, creed, gender or sexual orientation. Our policies and procedures are developed and carried out with that goal in mind and our Deputy Sheriffs are selected, trained and supervised with that goal in mind.

We use our knowledge, experience and professional judgment, combined with available information, data, analysis and research to develop our Putnam County Sheriff's Office policing strategies, policies and procedures. Some of the relevant strategies, policies and procedures and related issues are set forth below for community discussion and comment.

1. **Deployment:** Here is how/where our Deputies are currently deployed: We deploy six deputies each shift to provide police services countywide.

**Policing Strategy:** Our reason for deploying our resources where and how we do is based on sectors focusing on those towns and villages that do not maintain their own police department. We provide assistance and backup to the Brewster, Carmel, Cold Springs, Kent and State Police Departments. The PCSO also considers crime stats, calls for service and response times in monitoring our deployment.

Question: Do you see this deployment practice or policing strategy as demonstrating any racial bias?

Question: Do you feel that this deployment practice or policing strategy results in unfair, disproportionate policing of communities of color?

Question: Do you see any other problem with this deployment practice?

Question: Do you think we need fewer Deputies, or more Deputies to serve you?

2. **Use of Force.** Our policy on use of force is posted on the PCSO website for public access and comment. It was recently updated to conform to state and federal law and national best practices.

Question: Do you have questions/suggestions about our use of force policy?

3. **Procedural Justice:** Our policies that promote procedural justice are addressed in our Use of Force, Discriminatory Harassment, Standards of Conduct, First Amendment Assemblies, Limited English Proficiency Services, Community Relations, Biased-Based Policing, Crisis Intervention Incidents, Anti-Retaliation and Personal Complaints Policies. These policies address courtesy, respect, responsiveness, equal treatment irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc., transparency, citizen and community engagement, etc.].

Question: Are there additional steps we could take to give people confidence that we treat all citizens equally and fairly?

4. **Bias:** Our anti-bias and implicit bias training includes Cultural Diversity, Biased Related Incidents, Sexual Harassment, Procedural Crisis Intervention, Reality Based Training, Ethics and Professionalism, Community Policing and Contemporary Police Problems, and Professional Communications. All training is approved by the Division of Criminal Justice Services and Municipal Police Training Council.

Question: Are there additional steps we could take to assure citizens that our agency is free of bias in our actions? Are you aware of any studies that support such additional steps?

5. **De-escalation:** Our de-escalation training and practice includes Crisis Intervention, Defensive Tactics and Principles of Control, and Use of Force Training that all focus on De-escalation. They are also approved by DCJS and MPTC.

Question: Do you have questions/suggestions on our de-escalation policy?

6. **Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Programs:** The PCSO is involved in the Hope not Handcuffs program, where in appropriate cases individuals are diverted out of the normal criminal justice system in the early stages and into needed services and programs. The program is an initiative aimed at bringing law enforcement and community organizations together in an effort to find viable treatment options for individuals seeking help to reduce dependence on drugs and alcohol. The PCSO additionally makes referrals to mental health providers, Department of Social Services, Putnam Northern Westchester Woman's Resource Center and other service providers.

Question: Do you have suggestions on additional programs and services to which our agency could divert individuals in an appropriate case?

7. **Restorative Justice:** “Restorative Justice” is a response to crime that involves organizing a meeting between an offender and the victim, so they share their experience of what happened, discuss who was harmed and how, and to create a consensus for what the offender can do to repair the harm. [If your agency has such a program, mention it. If not, skip to the Question].

Question: Do you think such a program should be run by a law enforcement agency such as your Sheriff’s Office, or would it be more appropriately run by probation or a non-governmental agency?

8. **Community Based Outreach and Conflict Resolution:** The concept of community-based outreach works best in cities and smaller municipalities, where an officer can be regularly assigned to the same neighborhood. With larger geographic jurisdictions, it is more difficult. However, we do foster community-based outreach and non-arrest conflict resolution through the use of School Resource Officers, business checks, Phillipstown substation, public safety fairs and engaging the community at events.

Question: Are there ways we can expand community outreach without requiring additional resources. Are there additional community outreach programs that would justify expending additional county resources?

9. **Problem Oriented Policing and Hot Spot Policing:** Problem oriented policing and hot spot policing are similar concepts, involving identifying and analyzing specific crime problems and locations and targeting resources toward solving those problems. We employ those concepts, in effect, when we review crime stats, traffic stats, accident stats, complaint frequency, etc. to assign resources or form task forces when problem areas are identified.

Question: Are there additional ways we can identify and target high crime areas, serious crime trends, etc.?

10. **Focused Deterrence:** “Focused Deterrence” is a crime reduction strategy which aims to deter crime by increasing the swiftness, severity and certainty of punishment, usually directed at a specific crime problem such as gun violence. Law enforcement can play a role in focused deterrence, but the swiftness, severity and certainty of punishment are primarily determined by actions of the prosecution and the courts.

Question: Is there a particular crime problem in our county that you think could be best addressed by devoting resources and effort toward focused deterrence of that crime, and what steps would be taken to effectuate that?

11. **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design:** Attention to environmental design can help to increase the probability that an offender will be caught. Studies show that increased probability of capture tends to deter the commission of crime. Examples of crime prevention through environmental design would be better lighting in crime-prone areas, conspicuous placement of security cameras with attendant conspicuous signage, elimination of shrubbery where it could serve as a hiding place for an attacker, etc. Environmental design is not usually a function of law enforcement but law enforcement can play a role by identifying possible improvements in the built environment which could help deter criminal activity in the area.

Question: Who should have primary responsibility for identifying and addressing crime-detering environmental design issues?

12. **Violence Prevention and Reduction interventions:** Addressing violent crime has no one-size fits all solution. Data analysis, critical incidents reviews, investigating complaints and community input are vital in identifying and addressing violence.

Question: Do you think violent crime is a problem in Putnam County and do you have any suggestions on how to reduce or prevent violent crime.

13. **Model Policies Promulgated by the Municipal Police Training Council:** The State MPTC from time to time develops a model policy on one or another aspect of police operations, which it offers to police agencies for consideration for adoption. Other organizations also develop model policies. Not every model policy is suited to adoption by every agency. Many agencies develop their policies and procedures by studying model policies from many sources, and by studying actual policies being successfully used by other law enforcement agencies around the country. Our Sheriff's Office has adopted and modified its policies over the past two years to reflect conformity with state and federal law and national best practices.

Question: Are there any policies that you think should be reviewed or implemented by this department?

14. **The New York State Law Enforcement Agency Accreditation Standards:** The Law Enforcement Agency Accreditation Council establishes a set of standards which a law enforcement agency seeking accreditation must comply with. Law enforcement accreditation is not mandatory for police agencies in New York State, and not every agency is able to attain accreditation from the Division of Criminal Justice Services. The PCSO is not currently eligible for accreditation but has applied to become accredited

and has been working towards that goal through policy development over the past two years.

Question: Do you have any suggestions on how further increase our standards beyond the accreditation process?