

The Escondido Police Department (EPD) uses community policing strategies to achieve its mission statement goal, "To enhance public safety and the quality of life in our community by fostering trust and preserving peace." Community partnerships, organizational transformation and problem solving are the bedrock of EPD's community policing efforts. Although community policing is a priority, recent fiscal challenges and lower staffing levels have forced re-deployment of assets to call response based policing. EPD proposes to use COPS Hiring Program funds to revitalize its efforts to proactively address issues of public safety, through a systematic use of partnerships and problem solving techniques.

For the past three years, the Escondido Police Department focused its attention on specific geographic locations that had been displaying signs of social disorganization. The Department's effort to reduce potential crime in this micro-environment is called the Neighborhood Transformation Project (NTP). The Escondido Police Department collaborated with its municipal and community-based partners: Escondido Education COMPACT; local business groups, Department of Public Works, Code Enforcement, Neighborhood Services, Planning, San Diego County Probation, and Mental Health Systems, Inc. to improve the NTP area. The Neighborhood Transformation Project is a community policing initiative that seeks to reduce crime and enhance the quality of life in Escondido through micro-environmental focus and social transformation. The multi-disciplinary approach targets habitual offenders, physically improves neighborhoods, and builds a sense of community that enhances the NTP's successes. The NTP concept creates an opportunity to bridge the social disorganization theory and community policing strategies.

The Escondido Police Department proposes to use COPS Hiring Program funds to assign two full time officers to the Neighborhood Transformation Project. These two officers would: 1) build strong, cooperative bonds with the community; 2) focus on proactive policing; 3) use Escondido Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (EGRIP) Community Based Partners to help divert juvenile offenders; 4) enhance homeless outreach efforts 5) aim to reduce recidivism through intervention 6) improve quality of life in the NTP area.

The NTP officers would provide service to the community seven days a week. These officers are not subject to radio-directed calls for service and are able to closely interact with businesses and community members full time.

Escondido Police Department's community policing strategies and partnerships would be greatly enhanced by COPS Hiring Program funding. Establishing a two full time Neighborhood Transformation Project officers would strengthen the Escondido Police Department's community partnerships with local school districts, Neighborhood Watch Groups, Crime Free Multi-Housing Complexes, Interfaith Homeless Outreach Group, Escondido Gang Reduction, Intervention Prevention (EGRIP) Partners, and the local business associations.

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The Neighborhood Transformation officers will be assigned to flexible schedules. These hours will be conducive to the systematic and strategic approach related to geospecific hot spots. Day shift would be the primary schedule to meet the needs of schools and businesses in the designated areas. At times, it may be necessary to adjust the shift from daytime hours to a schedule that is adaptable to the area's specific issues including community meetings, multi-housing/apartment complex association meetings, and neighborhood watch gatherings. The NTP officers will have the autonomy to work adaptable hours because they do not respond to radio calls for service, but instead are assigned a to a true community policing role.

Flexible schedules will allow NTP officers to: 1) build strong, cooperative bonds with the community; 2) focus on proactive policing; 3) use Escondido Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (EGRIP) Community Based Partners to help divert juvenile offenders; 4) enhance homeless outreach efforts 5) aim to reduce recidivism through intervention 6) improve quality of life in the NTP area.

Neighborhood Transformation officer assignments last three years. This allows officers to become familiar with the needs of the area, establish partnerships with the community, and find appropriate solutions to geospecific problems.

During their three-year assignment, NTP officers would strengthen EPD's community partnerships:

Community Groups - Neighborhood Watch Groups and Crime Free Multi-Housing Complexes are essential partners for the NTP officers. Together they can hold community meetings to work cooperatively with the public to find solutions to issues of neighborhood safety.

Non-profits and Service Providers – Escondido Education COMPACT have been long time partners. The NTP officers would attend Escondido Gang Reduction, Intervention Prevention (EGRIP) strategy sessions to discuss way to address youth, gang violence, truancy and substance abuse problems.

Government Agencies – The Neighborhood Transformation Project officers will work with the San Diego District Attorney's office to uphold gang injunctions and find effective punishments for crimes committed in the community of Escondido. San Diego County Probation Department, Regional Realignment Response Group, and San Diego County Mental Health Systems are allied agencies that will partner to find solutions to address community crime.

Schools - The NTP officers will work cooperatively with the local schools to address any truancy related issues. Preventing truancy will deter crime, encourage youth education and enhance community safety. They will work with community based organizations to deploy proactive approaches to neighborhood problems.

Businesses – Escondido’s Downtown Business Association, East Valley Business Group and other local business organizations will work cooperatively with the NTP officers to establish a plan to improve community safety and increase community outreach through police trust.

Media – EPD has active Facebook and Twitter accounts that are used to convey good news, safety tips, neighborhood information, alerts, and press releases. The NTP officers are often a focus of the good news portion of EPD’s social media campaign.

Working with the community, the NTP officers would develop solutions to community problems and increase trust in the Escondido Police Department.

Collection:

The Escondido Police Department tracks calls for service. A “top 25” list has been established. This list contains the 25 addresses that generate the most calls for service. The list is continuously monitored and the Neighborhood Transformation Project officers will be responsible for addressing the top 25. The Escondido Police Department constantly tracks the crime rate. Crime rates and responses to the crime rate are discussed both at Staff Meetings, patrol briefings, and detective meetings. The correlation between the arrest rates and crime rates will continue to be evaluated. Open community policing related projects/problems are tracked and monitored using data analysis monitoring, spreadsheets, crime analysis bulletins and project management databases.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the NTP officers, the Escondido Police Department will conduct quarterly comparisons of the above tracking sheets. The effectiveness of the program will be in conjunction with the calls for service and the crime rate being reduced. Public trust and partnerships will be evaluated by interactions with community members through community meetings. The Community Policing supervisor will be charged with ongoing evaluation and interaction with the team.

Need

The Escondido Police Department is committed to use Community Policing Strategies to be successful with the core values and goals of reducing crime, maintaining a high level of professionalism and building and strengthening community partnerships. Recent fiscal challenges and lower staffing levels have forced re-deployment of assets to call response based policing, however, the Escondido Police Department’s Administration has created new a strategic policing plan to re-emphasize efforts using known Community Policing Strategies

Additionally, The City of Escondido has established Economic Development as a strategic priority. EPD’s role in ensuring the City is successful in economic development is making Escondido safe and friendly for families and businesses. Community based policing is very effective in policing problems that are often associated with businesses and schools.

Geo-specifically based officers are an effective community based policing tool. These Neighborhood Transformation Project officers are not subject to radio directed calls for service and are able to closely interact with businesses and community members full time.

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school districts, Neighborhood Watch Groups, Crime Free Multi-Housing Complexes, Interfaith Homeless Outreach Group, Escondido Gang Reduction, Intervention Prevention (EGRIP) Partners, and the local business associations.