Improving Community-Police Relations: Raising the Standards, Together
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John R. Kasich
Governor, State of Ohio

John Born
Director, Department of Public Safety
Continuing Ohio’s intensive agenda to improve community-police relations in the state, the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board (Ohio Collaborative) and the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) released a report listing agencies that have and have not adopted and fully implemented statewide standards on use of force, including deadly force, and agency recruiting, hiring and screening of potential law enforcement candidates.

The standards are the first of their kind in Ohio and were developed by the Ohio Collaborative in August 2015.

“We are extremely proud of these agencies and the commitment and leadership they have shown to their community by engaging in this certification process,” said Karhlton Moore, OCJS Executive Director. “We are encouraged by the number of agencies who became certified in just a little over a year.”

The certification process began in February 2016, and the state partnered with the Buckeye State Sheriffs’ Association and the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police to help certify Ohio’s law enforcement agencies. Within that time, more than 480 agencies employing more than 26,000 officers, (or 76 percent of all law enforcement officers in Ohio, including agencies and officers in most of Ohio’s metropolitan areas) are participating in the certification process and appear in the public report.
"We are extremely pleased to learn of our agency achieving certification through the Ohio Collaborative," said Gahanna Police Chief Dennis Murphy – pictured on the cover – whose agency was certified in January and is listed in the report. "This initiative is but one example of Gahanna’s efforts to engage our community, be transparent in our operations, enact sound procedures and train our officers in common sense policies all with the ultimate goal of ensuring we are delivering superior law enforcement services to our community and our partners in central Ohio."

Additionally, the Ohio Collaborative established statewide standards on Law Enforcement Telecommunicator Training, Body Worn Cameras, Community Engagement and Bias-Free Policing:

**Law Enforcement Telecommunicator Training**
Law Enforcement call taking and dispatching are critical elements to ensuring a proper and safe response to reported incidents affecting public safety. Ensuring proper training and performance by telecommunicators performing these functions is essential.

**Body Worn Cameras**
Law enforcement agencies and the community will benefit from clear guidelines involving the use of body-worn cameras and related privacy issues.

**Community Engagement**
It is the shared responsibility of law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve to work together to build relationships based upon trust and mutual respect. A strong relationship between law enforcement agencies and the community will improve public safety and allow communities to thrive and prosper.

**Bias-Free Policing**
Law enforcement agencies must prohibit the use of any bias based profiling in its enforcement programs.

"The additional standards established by the Ohio Collaborative are just another step in our continued effort to strengthen trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve," said John Born, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, who co-chairs the Board with former state Senator Nina Turner.

For more information on the Ohio Collaborative, including the certification public report and statewide standards, please visit: www.ocjs.ohio.gov/ohiocollaborative.
For more on this story, watch the latest episode of Contributing to a Safer Ohio at youtube.com/user/OhioPublicSafety.

Photo credit: Ivy House
Ohio ILO Program Expands in Effort to Improve Security

A recent expansion of Ohio Homeland Security’s (OHS) Intelligence Liaison Officer Program (ILO), with the intention of increasing awareness and education on reporting suspicious activity, has helped contribute to a safer Ohio. By expanding the partnership to include eight new sectors, an increased number of trained experts are available to recognize and report suspicious behavior or activity.

The ILO Program, a federal program administered at the state level, is designed to support fusion centers by creating a network of trained volunteers from various jurisdictions and disciplines and by fostering two-way information sharing.

Ohio’s program began in 2007 and included only law enforcement personnel. In 2013, the program expanded to also include those from the fire sector. Beginning in 2015, the program grew to include the following sectors: military, public health, government, emergency management, education, corrections, transportation and select private sector organizations.

An ILO is the principal point of contact for his or her organization or jurisdiction in matters related to homeland security. ILOs become certified by attending OHS training on recognizing and reporting suspicious activity.

Mary Tyler, OHS Regional Coordination Unit supervisor, has led the expansion of the program. “The inclusion of these sectors is important because law enforcement can’t be everywhere. Everyone has the responsibility to protect our homeland, not just law enforcement and the first responder communities,” Tyler said.
“Throughout the year, we have trained nearly 500 new ILOs, and as a result of including additional sectors, partnerships have doubled and suspicious activity reports have increased about 45 percent,” she said. “This program bridges the gap between local agencies and the Ohio Fusion Center Network to increase a level of awareness.”

Expanding the program has provided additional resources to the analytical pool while simultaneously educating communities throughout the state about the Ohio Fusion Center network. The newly added sectors also benefit, as their information exchanging networks have expanded. The public benefit is equally positive, because there are now more trained professionals from various sectors and organizations who can recognize and report suspicious activity.

“We currently have about 50 ILOs in our region. They are doctors, nurses, clinical staff, safety, security, healthcare and emergency management personnel,” said ILO Mark Hollar, disaster operations specialist with the Central Ohio Trauma System. “One of our essential functions is information sharing. The ILO program has greatly enhanced our ability to do this,” Hollar said.

“Having the right information at the right time and place allows for better resource allocations and ultimately saves lives and helps us to build a safer Ohio,” Hollar said.

If your organization is interested in the ILO Program, email ILO@dps.ohio.gov.

From our “Stories not Stats” files that highlight the real value of the ILO program:

A Regional Intelligence Coordinator in northeast Ohio received an alert from an analyst in Ohio Homeland Security's Strategic Analysis and Information Center pertaining to a local high school. The Regional Intelligence Coordinator contacted the School Resource Officer. The 16-year old student responsible for the tweet was arrested that day for aggravated menacing.

The Regional Intelligence Coordinator said this about the collaborative work that day: “We would not have known about this so quickly without the assistance of the SAIC. I called the analyst and thanked her for her help. I wanted to pass this along to let you know of yet another success story of our partnership. Please pass along my gratitude.”

In Central Ohio, a brand new Public Health ILO reported that individuals were at a local hospital taking pictures of a patient’s room. When the individuals were approached, they fled the area. The ILO reported the incident, a situational awareness report was generated and disseminated to all public health ILOs, hospital safety and security staff, as well as the hospital executives.
It’s April 13, 2015, and an Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) agent and a food stamp recipient pull into the driveway of a house northeast of Cincinnati. A car with agents from both OIU and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Inspector General is nearby. The recipient exits the car and greets a man named Francis Racicot. The recipient hands Racicot two food stamp cards. Racicot heads to his truck and calls in the transactions.

Racicot, 33, sells meat for the Butcher Shop in Fairfield, which is an authorized food stamp retailer. Racicot, who is an independent contractor, is not authorized to accept food stamp benefits. However, the food stamps recipient and Racicot are not talking about purchasing and selling meat. Instead, they’re trading benefits for 50 hydrocodone pills. Furthermore, the recipient is actually working as a confidential informant.

Between the two food stamp cards, which were provided by OIU, the informant was given more than $1,300 to catch people like Racicot who commit food stamp fraud. In this case, the informant purchases 50 pills and 2.94 grams of heroin. The informant does not leave with the cases of beef that were purchased, only the drugs. Instead, Racicot will sell that beef on the side or use it for himself.

Two days later, the informant and Racicot meet in a parking lot of a big box store on Cincinnati’s northwest side. This time, the informant hands over a food stamp card with $600 in benefits for food purchases in exchange for $300 in cash.

The same informant would return to the same parking lot for a separate case on May 1, 2015. Two employees of U.S. Beef Cincinnati, LLC – Keith Blankenship, 33, of Loveland, and Dalton Traum, 21, of Cincinnati – traded $3,026 in food stamp benefits for $540 in cash and 13 oxycodone pills.

Throughout the investigation, informants continued exchanging benefits for money or drugs. OIU and USDA began the investigation into the employees and the business owners of the Butcher Shop and U.S. Beef Cincinnati, LLC., in Fairfield in 2013. The companies were involved in exchanging food stamp benefits for drugs in the Cincinnati and Dayton areas.

This is not unusual. Throughout Ohio, agents investigate both authorized retailers who fraudulently accept benefits, often for 50 cents on the dollar, and the recipients who are selling their benefits. Ohio is one of 19 active states authorized by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to utilize food stamp benefits to investigate the criminal misuse and trafficking of benefits.

In 2016, OIU completed 150 food stamp investigations. Many ended with the felony prosecution of some of the retail owners, employees and individuals. More than a dozen of the retailers were permanently disqualified from accepting food stamp benefits. In fact, during the last three years, OIU has reported more authorized retailers for disqualification than any other state contracted with the USDA to enforce the food stamp law.

At the conclusion of the investigation, OIU and USDA determined that the two businesses made fraudulent transactions amounting to approximately $1.45 million.

In all, 16 people were charged for their role, including Racicot and Blankenship. They later entered guilty pleas and are both currently serving multiple year sentences in federal prison. They were also ordered to pay restitution. Traum entered a guilty plea in December 2016 and will be sentenced this spring. The owners of these two businesses will also be sentenced this spring.

OIU and the Inspector General were joined by the Butler County Sheriff’s Office, the Cincinnati Police Department and the United States Secret Service during the investigation.

If you know of fraudulent food stamp activity taking place, contact the Ohio Investigative Unit at #677.

For more on this story, watch the latest episode of Contributing to a Safer Ohio at youtube.com/user/OhioPublicSafety.
Statistics

Food and Nutrition Services works with state partners to establish State Law Enforcement Bureau (SLEB) agreements to improve program administration and ensure program integrity. Through these agreements, FNS authorizes state agencies to conduct investigations into possible food stamp fraud, and to obtain Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) benefits for such law enforcement and investigative activities.

Approximately 9,700 retailers are authorized to redeem these benefits.

From July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016, Ohio processed $2.4 billion in food stamp benefits.

National Comparisons

Ohio is one of 19 active states authorized by the USDA to utilize SNAP benefits to investigate the criminal misuse and trafficking of benefits. Other states are: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin.

From January 1, 2013 – August 30, 2016, Ohio led the country in all sanctions. The sanctions are based on investigations by the Ohio Investigative Unit. Only 14 states completed investigations of retailers resulting in permanent disqualification sanctions.

Permanent Disqualifications Implemented

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Local Governments Practice Hazardous Materials Disaster Response

At least 87 hazardous materials (hazmat) exercises are held each year by local governments in Ohio. This is done to help ensure first responders are better prepared to deal with an actual hazmat emergency.

"Practice makes perfect," said Russ Decker, deputy director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. "While no hazmat response is necessarily perfect, drills and exercises that occur regularly around the state each year play a big role in keeping response personnel sharp."

Decker should know; he spent 20 years as Director of Emergency Management in Allen County before joining the state EMA two years ago. He also serves as Director of Public Safety’s designee to the State Emergency Response Commission.

In May 2014 in Allen County, Decker, along with his Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), organized a full-scale exercise at the local refinery near Lima. Several state agencies and dozens of local entities were involved in the exercise where the scenario included an explosion at the refinery. Local emergency response plans were exercised. About eight months later, there was a real-life explosion at the refinery.

"While it was a chaotic scene, everyone knew where to go and what to do because we had just practiced an eerily similar scenario," Decker said from his office overlooking the state’s Emergency Operations Center.

The federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) was adopted by Congress in 1986, creating LEPCs that must develop an emergency response plan, review the plan at least annually, and provide information about chemicals in the community to citizens.

Required elements of an emergency response plan:

- Identification of facilities and transportation routes of extremely hazardous substances;
- Description of emergency response procedures, on and off site;
- Designation of a community coordinator and facility emergency coordinator(s) to implement the plan;
- Outline of emergency notification procedures;
- Description of how to determine the probable affected area and population by releases;
- Description of local emergency equipment and facilities and the persons responsible for them
- Outline of evacuation plans;
- A training program for emergency responders (including schedules); and
- Methods and schedules for exercising emergency response plans.

In Ohio, there is a four-year exercise cycle for all the LEPCs. Through various hazmat exercises (tabletop, functional and full-scale), they must demonstrate 13 different capabilities. The State Emergency Response Commission oversees the appointment of local LEPC members and approves local plans and exercises.

This is all in a coordinated fashion to help make Ohio a safer place to live, work and play.

For more on this story, watch the latest episode of Contributing to a Safer Ohio at youtube.com/user/OhioPublicSafety.

At right: In May 2014, Allen County’s Local Emergency Planning Committee organized a full-scale exercise at the local refinery near Lima.
State Medical Director for EMS Earns Honor

Ohio Department of Public Safety State Medical Director Carol A. Cunningham, M.D. earned a prestigious distinction by becoming a Fellow of the Academy of Emergency Medical Services (FAEMS™) at a special awards luncheon in New Orleans, LA, in January 2017.

Fellowship status within the practice of medicine is a distinction granted to physicians who have made a significant impact to their profession during their lifetime and/or career.

Dr. Cunningham and several colleagues were honored for contributions to the association and the specialty of EMS medicine. This important designation speaks to her contributions to the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP®) and highlights her commitment to the advancement and refinement of EMS medicine.

Statement from Dr. Carol Cunningham

"I am humbled to be selected as one of 194 EMS physicians for inclusion in the inaugural cohort of Fellows of the Academy of EMS. Following the formal recognition of EMS as a practice of medicine by the American Board of Medical Specialties in 2010, the fellow status in EMS further solidifies the invaluable role that EMS holds as an essential partner in our nation's healthcare and emergency response system.

"Ohio's EMS providers are highly trained professionals that are integral to the health, safety, and protection of our communities. The days of being tasked solely to the transport patients to a hospital are ancient history. Today's EMS providers deliver advanced medical care that often makes a critical difference in whether a patient will live or die. They transport patients to the appropriate facilities by ambulette, ambulance, and aircraft, but also provide care in a patient's home to facilitate the maintenance of health and avoid preventable hospitalizations. Their role spans from providing medical support to law enforcement personnel and public health agencies to simple acts of kindness such as sharing a teddy bear to calm a frightened toddler or holding the hand of a frail elderly patient.

"A successful EMS system requires dedication, expertise, innovation, and collaboration within a skilled team that places patients and people as the top priority. In my personal opinion, this honor from the Academy of EMS is not as much about what I have done, but more of a reflection of what we have done together. As State Medical Director, I am most honored to serve Ohio EMS and our nation. It is a privilege that I will treasure for a lifetime."

Safer Ohio Standout

Attention PISGS licensees! Do you have an exemplary employee? Someone who deserves recognition? Private Investigator Security Guard Services (PISGS) is now offering an opportunity for you to acknowledge those individuals who go above and beyond to contribute to a safer Ohio.

Send us a photo of the employee to PISGStips@dps.ohio.gov, along with a short description of what makes him or her a “Safer Ohio Standout,” and PISGS will recognize the employee!

Jim Turner of Whelan Security was the first PISGS Safer Ohio Standout. Whelan Security submitted the following on Jim: “Jim is always aware of his surroundings and concerned about the safety of others. Jim goes the extra mile for his co-workers and the client. Jim is a great role model for his team members.”
On January 20, the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) released the Governor’s Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force Report. The report highlights the significant efforts of anti-trafficking agencies to build a sustainable, cost-effective infrastructure of response that will assist exploited individuals and their responders over the long term, thus outlining the “building blocks” of Ohio’s anti-trafficking policy initiatives implemented in recent years. These blocks are organized within the “3P” framework (prevent, protect, prosecute) for responding to trafficking.

“Today in our state, more victims and survivors are being identified and receiving assistance than ever before, and that reflects the hard work of Ohio’s agencies, advocates, law enforcement partners and survivors themselves,” said Elizabeth Ranade Janis, Ohio Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator. “In 2017 and 2018, the Governor’s task force will continue to build on that progress by prioritizing efforts that support investigations and strengthen services for survivors.”

Through coordinated partnerships with federal, state and grassroots partners, Ohio’s service providers are identifying victims of human trafficking and providing them with trauma-informed services to allow them to become thriving survivors. Here are some highlights of the report:

- Between January and June 2016, the Ohio Network of Anti-Human Trafficking Coalitions served 130 human trafficking survivors.
- Between January 2015 and December 2016, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and the Ohio Department of Youth Services identified and referred for services 259 human trafficking survivors through the implementation of a human trafficking screening tool.
- Between July 2014 and September 2016, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Rescue & Restore grant partners identified 114 foreign national human trafficking survivors.
- Between July 2013 and September 2016, the Ohio Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers identified and served 251 minor and youth survivors of human trafficking.

Through Gov. John R. Kasich’s Executive Order 2012-06K signed on March 29, 2012, the task force has worked to marshal the resources of state agencies to help identify victims of human trafficking, support law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute crimes of human trafficking and provide the services and treatment necessary for survivors to regain control of their lives. Over the last five years, the 11 task force agencies have worked to bolster existing resources and services available to meet these goals and to strengthen a coordinated response throughout the state.

See the full report at [humantrafficking.ohio.gov](http://humantrafficking.ohio.gov).

**State Representative Teresa Fedor hosted the 8th Annual Ohio Human Trafficking Awareness Day at the Ohio Statehouse on February 2.**
On July 4, 2015, the Stark County Sheriff’s Office was searching for a 15-year-old boy with autism who was missing from his home. Time being of the essence, a call for assistance went into the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), and a Patrol pilot was soon overhead of the search area.

Shortly thereafter, the pilot located the boy on a soccer field behind Lake High School. The boy ran off into the woods, where ground officers and EMS personnel were directed to him and were able to render aid and return him home.

This is an illustrative example of how the OSHP’s aviation assets continue to be a force multiplier not just for state troopers, but for law enforcement agencies across the state. In fact, during 2015 and 2016, Patrol pilots flew 1,208 missions, and 762 of those – equivalent to 63 percent – were in support of other agencies.

The OSHP maintains an aviation component consisting of uniformed officer-pilots, American Eurocopter turbine-powered helicopters, and Cessna airplanes.

While the primary mission of Patrol pilots is enforcement of traffic safety laws and assistance to motorists, nearly every type of aviation service is also available to other law enforcement agencies by request.

In one such instance on May 15, 2016, OSHP Aviation assisted the Carroll County Sheriff’s Office with their search for a homicide suspect out of Harrison County. The suspect’s jacket was located in a field by Forward Looking Infrared RADAR (FLIR), and a positive K-9 track located the suspect hiding nearby in tall weeds.

The OSHP’s helicopters are a vital resource to ensure public safety in Ohio. They are often called upon to perform critical and time-sensitive missions for the Patrol and other local, state and federal public safety agencies.

Helicopters are equipped with FLIR, digital video recorder, moving map system, high-powered search light, navigation and other safety equipment. These systems allow the air crew to complete missions in a safe and efficient manner.

The demand for support from other public safety agencies has continued to increase since the OSHP purchased its first helicopter back in 1960. The law enforcement helicopter has proven to be an invaluable tool in supporting public safety missions. The helicopter is used for such services as searching for dangerous suspects, search and rescue missions, aerial reconnaissance, transporting key personnel to critical situations and transporting time-sensitive items.

A Patrol pilot can fly an OSHP helicopter from its hangar in Columbus to anywhere in the state in just over an hour.

And that became critical on February 27, 2015, when the Lake County Sheriff’s Office and the FBI were searching for an active shooter suspect who had murdered an elderly woman earlier in the day. An OSHP pilot located the suspect running in a wooded area. The suspect was taken into custody after an armed confrontation.

Whether for traffic enforcement, an ongoing search, aerial photographs, evidence relays from remote locations, or personnel transport, the OSHP’s aviation services represent a tremendous, life-saving asset throughout the state.

Never was that more evident than on November 26, 2015, when OSHP Aviation was requested by the St. Clairsville Post to locate an Amber Alert vehicle with two children and their mother, who was suicidal. A pilot located the vehicle traveling northbound on Interstate 77. Ground units were directed to the vehicle, where the children were taken into protective custody and the mother was provided medical aid.

Because of the expediency and professionalism of OSHP Aviation on that day, and so many others, there is little doubt that lives are being saved.
What will you do today to contribute to a safer Ohio?