

# Police Department

---

LOB #196:

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**

### **Purpose**

The Public Information Office (PIO) is responsible for informing the community, assisting the media in covering news stories at incident scenes, preparing and distributing agency news releases, arranging and assisting at media conferences, coordinating and authorizing the release of information regarding crimes, victims and newsworthy occurrences involving the Department. The PIO also manages all social media platforms used by the Department to engage the community.

### **Description**

The PIO informs the public about police activities, matters of public safety, and operations through communications with the media, use of numerous social media outlets (Twitter, Facebook, Blog and SoundCloud), and responds to email and telephone inquiries. The PIO is also responsible for informing the Board of Supervisors regarding events which are of interest to the public.

The public has the right to be informed about police activities and operations, while the Department maintains sensitivity to the victims of crimes and their families. The PIO shall operate with a predisposition to disclose public records accurately, timely, and in an actionable format using multiple forms of communication, leveraging both traditional platforms and social media channels. The PIO is utilized in matters of public safety, missing endangered persons announcements and lookouts, as well as informing the community about offenders of serious serial crimes where more victims may be outstanding.

The office operates in concert with the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) through regular communication and attendance at weekly public safety PIO meetings. The PIO employs improvements to communication methods and updates policies in conjunction with results of media surveys and research conducted by OPA. In addition, OPA is the releasing authority for events that involve three or more County agencies.

Business hours for the PIO are Monday-Friday 7:00 am - 5:00 pm, excluding holidays. During normal business hours, minimum staffing will consist of two Public Information Officer's on-duty and one supervisor or commander on-duty or available for call-out response. Outside of normal business hours, phone lines will be forwarded to the Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC). DPSC will be provided a Public Information Officer call-out schedule for inquiries/response. One Public Information Officer and one supervisor or commander is on-call at all times.

### **Benefits**

Communication from the Department is vital to continuing to building public trust and maintaining a safe and caring community. Residents are informed of activity in their neighborhood, enhancing their knowledge of the community and ability to educate and protect themselves from potential victimization. In addition, their knowledge of police activity allows for actionable engagement in crime prevention. Direct PIO communication with residents assists in advertising activities and services available to the community. The PIO is charged with creating a culture of engagement through usage of two-way communication allowed by social media and invitations to events, meetings, and educational opportunities. The PIO utilizes feedback from the community to determine what information people are seeking and provide information to entities of the department about what services are requested.

### **Mandates**

This Line of Business is not mandated.

# Police Department

## Trends and Challenges

Urbanization and technology changes have led to the expectation that more information will be released and that this information will be released immediately, as social media allows any person the ability to send a widespread message in a short amount of time. The PIO is expected to report activities without the use of media and keep the community informed of events and activities in a short amount of time following their occurrence. Current challenges include a significant increase in the amount of information to be released which must be researched and determined factual and the protection of the rights of victims and witnesses. While workload has increased, staffing to complete the tasks has not increased.

## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>LOB #196: Public Information Office</b>			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$688,626	\$750,700	\$719,633
Operating Expenses	11,899	5,091	12,300
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$700,525</b>	<b>\$755,791</b>	<b>\$731,933</b>
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund</b>	<b>\$700,525</b>	<b>\$755,791</b>	<b>\$731,933</b>
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	9 / 9	8 / 8	9 / 9
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>9 / 9</b>	<b>8 / 8</b>	<b>9 / 9</b>

## Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Twitter Followers	NA	21,690	52,080	57,288	63,017
Facebook Followers	NA	18,377	35,635	39,199	43,118
WordPress Blog Email Subscribers	NA	1,007	2,011	2,212	2,433
Twitter Posts	NA	NA	5,959	6,555	7,210
Facebook Posts	NA	333	555	611	672
WordPress Blog Posts	NA	474	648	713	784

The PIO has found that followers subscribe to various methods to receive information. Therefore, the PIO believes there is not very much crossover among the various methods with which information is shared, until directed to each site from a different source. For example, posting information about a news release on the Facebook page and directing users to click a location to take them to the story on the WordPress blog site.