

**SCHENECTADY COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



***POLICE REFORM  
AND COMMUNITY  
COLLABORATIVE PLAN***

# **INTRODUCTION**

## ***Purpose***

On June 12, 2020, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo signed Executive Order 203, requiring each local government in N.Y. State to adopt a policing reform plan that will spur changes in local law enforcement policies and policing strategies to mitigate police-involved deaths while seeking to eliminate racially biased law enforcement. This executive order is intended to help police agencies across NYS to better maintain public safety while at the same time building mutual trust and respect between the police agencies and the communities they serve.

## ***Jurisdictional Information and Demographics Breakdown***

Schenectady County, founded in 1809, covers an area of approximately 209 square miles. While geographically one of the smaller counties in NYS, its small size belies its large and diverse population of 155,300 (as estimated by the US Census Bureau, 2019), with 29% of its population consisting of a vastly diverse group of minorities covering both urban and rural areas of the county.

The Schenectady County Sheriff's Office consists of three divisions covering the entirety of a broad spectrum of law enforcement services for the county, and include Civil, Corrections, and Patrol, however Executive Order 203 pertains solely to our Law Enforcement Division.

The Schenectady County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division consists of a diverse 21 uniformed staff members, of which 40% are minority officers. While we have jurisdiction over the entirety of the county, we mainly focus on the western parts including the towns of Princetown and Duanesburg. Aside from daily patrols, we also have a Narcotics Unit and a Street Crimes Task Force Unit where we partner with members of the District Attorney's office, the Schenectady Police Department, Rotterdam Police Department, and Social Services. Additionally we have two full time School Resource Officers that serve both the Duanesburg Central School District and Schenectady County Community College (SUNY), a Canine Unit consisting of five canines and a program administrator, and our Marine Patrol Unit with its four deputies certified to conduct marine patrol operations, is the sole law enforcement presence on the county's portion of the Mohawk River. We offer a variety of community oriented programs county wide.



Schenectady County Sheriff Dominic Dagostino

# ***MISSION STATEMENT***

The mission of the Schenectady County Sheriff's Office shall be the protection and preservation of the rights, lives and properties of all persons, through the fair and impartial enforcement of the law, regardless of such person's race, creed, color, ethnicity or social standing. The department will operate with total transparency while receptive to the voices of the community and our officers.

# ***EXECUTIVE ORDER 203***

On June 12, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed an Executive Order requiring each local government in the State to adopt a policing reform plan by April 1, 2021. To ensure these plans are developed through an inclusive process, Governor Cuomo called for the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative.

To rebuild the police-community relationship, each local government must convene stakeholders for a fact-based and honest dialogue about the public safety needs of their community. Each community must envision for itself the appropriate role of the police. Policies must be developed to allow the police to do their jobs of protecting the public, and these policies must meet with the local communities' acceptance. "Collaborative" is the key word.



No. 203

EXECUTIVE ORDER

**NEW YORK STATE POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE**

**WHEREAS**, the Constitution of the State of New York obliges the Governor to take care that the laws of New York are faithfully executed; and

**WHEREAS**, I have solemnly sworn, pursuant to Article 13, Section 1 of the Constitution, to support the Constitution and faithfully discharge the duties of the Office of Governor; and

**WHEREAS**, beginning on May 25, 2020, following the police-involved death of George Floyd in Minnesota, protests have taken place daily throughout the nation and in communities across New York State in response to police-involved deaths and racially-biased law enforcement to demand change, action, and accountability; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a long and painful history in New York State of discrimination and mistreatment of black and African-American citizens dating back to the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in America; and

**WHEREAS**, this recent history includes a number of incidents involving the police that have resulted in the deaths of unarmed civilians, predominantly black and African-American men, that have undermined the public's confidence and trust in our system of law enforcement and criminal justice, and such condition is ongoing and urgently needs to be rectified; and

**WHEREAS**, these deaths in New York State include those of Anthony Baez, Amadou Diallo, Ousmane Zango, Sean Bell, Ramarley Graham, Patrick Dorismond, Akai Gurley, and Eric Garner, amongst others, and, in other states, include Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Antwon Rose Jr., Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, amongst others,

**WHEREAS**, these needless deaths have led me to sign into law the Say Their Name Agenda which reforms aspects of policing in New York State; and

**WHEREAS**, government has a responsibility to ensure that all of its citizens are treated equally, fairly, and justly before the law; and

**WHEREAS**, recent outpouring of protests and demonstrations which have been manifested in every area of the state have illustrated the depth and breadth of the concern; and

**WHEREAS**, black lives matter; and

**WHEREAS**, the foregoing compels me to conclude that urgent and immediate action is needed to eliminate racial inequities in policing, to modify and modernize policing strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and to develop practices to better address the particular needs of communities of color to promote public safety, improve community engagement, and foster trust; and

**WHEREAS**, the Division of the Budget is empowered to determine the appropriate use of funds in furtherance of the state laws and New York State Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, in coordination with the resources of the Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Division of the Budget can increase the effectiveness of the criminal justice system by ensuring that the local police agencies within the state have been actively engaged with stakeholders in the local community and have locally-approved plans for the strategies, policies and procedures of local police agencies; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State of New York, in particular Article IV, section one, I do hereby order and direct as follows:

The director of the Division of the Budget, in consultation with the Division of Criminal Justice Services, shall promulgate guidance to be sent to all local governments directing that:

Each local government entity which has a police agency operating with police officers as defined under 1.20 of the criminal procedure law must perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develop a plan to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency and promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.

Each chief executive of such local government shall convene the head of the local police agency, and stakeholders in the community to develop such plan, which shall consider evidence-based policing strategies, including but not limited to, use of force policies, procedural justice; any studies addressing systemic racial bias or racial justice in policing; implicit bias awareness training; de-escalation training and practices; law enforcement assisted diversion programs; restorative justice practices; community-based outreach and conflict resolution; problem-oriented policing; hot spots policing; focused deterrence; crime prevention through environmental design; violence prevention and reduction interventions; model policies and guidelines promulgated by the New York State Municipal Police Training Council; and standards promulgated by the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program.

The political subdivision, in coordination with its police agency, must consult with stakeholders, including but not limited to membership and leadership of the local police force; members of the community, with emphasis in areas with high numbers of police and community interactions; interested non-profit and faith-based community groups; the local office of the district attorney; the local public defender; and local elected officials, and create a plan to adopt and implement the recommendations resulting from its review and consultation, including any modifications, modernizations, and innovations to its policing deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, tailored to the specific needs of the community and general promotion of improved police agency and community relationships based on trust, fairness, accountability, and transparency, and which seek to reduce any racial disparities in policing.

Such plan shall be offered for public comment to all citizens in the locality, and after consideration of such comments, shall be presented to the local legislative body in such political subdivision, which shall ratify or adopt such plan by local law or resolution, as appropriate, no later than April 1, 2021; and

Such local government shall transmit a certification to the Director of the Division of the Budget to affirm that such process has been complied with and such local law or resolution has been adopted; and

The Director of the Division of the Budget shall be authorized to condition receipt of future appropriated state or federal funds upon filing of such certification for which such local government would otherwise be eligible; and

The Director is authorized to seek the support and assistance of any state agency in order to effectuate these purposes.



BY THE GOVERNOR

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. C.", written over a horizontal line.

Secretary to the Governor

GIVEN under my hand and the Privy Seal of the

State in the City of Albany this

twelfth day of June in the year two

thousand twenty.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Andrew M. Cuomo", written in a cursive style.

# STAKEHOLDERS

To begin the reform process, the SCSO and its command staff have assembled a team of stakeholders that directly represent the community it serves, allowing for a deeper and more solid foundation upon which reforms can be implemented, and public trust can be assured. Aside from elected officials and criminal justice leaders, the stakeholders include representatives from youth groups, faith leaders, and community members themselves. Also included are local business leaders as well as professionals from the mental health and social services fields.

**Sheriff Dominic Dagostino**  
**Undersheriff James Barrett**  
**Chief Deputy John Lubrant**  
**Lieutenant Michael Geraci, Jr.**  
**Superintendent Ronald Walsh**  
**Deputy Superintendent Jack Purdy**  
**Inspector Christopher Foster**  
**Inspector Peter Forth**  
**Inspector Jeffrey Sauter**  
**K9 Director Jeffrey Calder**  
**Special Deputy Dave Leffingwell**  
**Unified Communications Center Director Kevin Spawn**  
**Schenectady County District Attorney Robert Carney**  
**Schenectady County Public Defender Stephen Signore**  
**Youth Life Support Network, Inc. President and CEO Jamel Muhammed**  
**Schenectady County Department of Social Services Director Paul Brady**  
**Northern Rivers Mobile Crisis Services Executive Program Director Jennifer Eslick**  
**Reformed Presbyterian Church of Duanesburg Pastor Kenneth McHeard**  
**Town of Princetown Supervisor Louis Esposito**  
**Town of Duanesburg Supervisor Roger Tidball**  
**Village of Delanson Mayor Gail Gifford**  
**Schenectady County Manager Rory Fluman**  
**Schenectady County Legislature Chairman Anthony Jasenski**  
**Schenectady County Legislator Richard Ruzzo**  
**Schenectady County Legislator Holly Vellano**  
**Schenectady County Legislator Michelle Ostrelich**  
**Schenectady County Attorney Christopher Gardner**  
**Alyssa Craig, Owner of Vintage 20 Wine in Duanesburg**  
**William Park, Owner of Adirondack Combustion Technologies Incorporated in Duanesburg**  
**Chris and Dennis Wolf, Owners of Wolf's Market in Delanson**  
**Jack White, Owner of White's RV Specialist, Inc. in Princetown**  
**Anthony Geraci, NYS DCJS Master Trainer of Principled Policing and Ret. Chief**  
**Thomas Collins from the Mariaville Civic Association**  
**Duanesburg Central School District Superintendent James Niedermeier**

# ***COLLABORATIVE PROCESS***

EO 203 requires local police agencies to develop a plan that reinvents and modernizes police strategies and programs based on community input through the stakeholders. Through discussions, SCSO and Stakeholders have devised a plan for policing reform that the whole of Schenectady County can be proud to get behind. In order to fulfill the goals and high standards that our community deserves, the reform plan needed to address many areas including but not limited to:

- **The use of force by police officers**
- **Crowd management**
- **Community policing**
- **Implicit bias awareness training**
- **De-escalation training and practices**
- **Procedural justice, addressing systemic racial bias or racial injustice in policing**
- **Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Programs**
- **Violence prevention and reduction interventions**
- **Community-based outreach and conflict resolution**
- **Law enforcement accreditation**
- **A transparent citizen complaint disposition procedure**

Per EO 203, this plan was then brought directly to the community for comments and input through public presentations/forums, after which any necessary or desired changes were made before presenting it to the County Legislature in the form of this report.

# REFORM PLAN

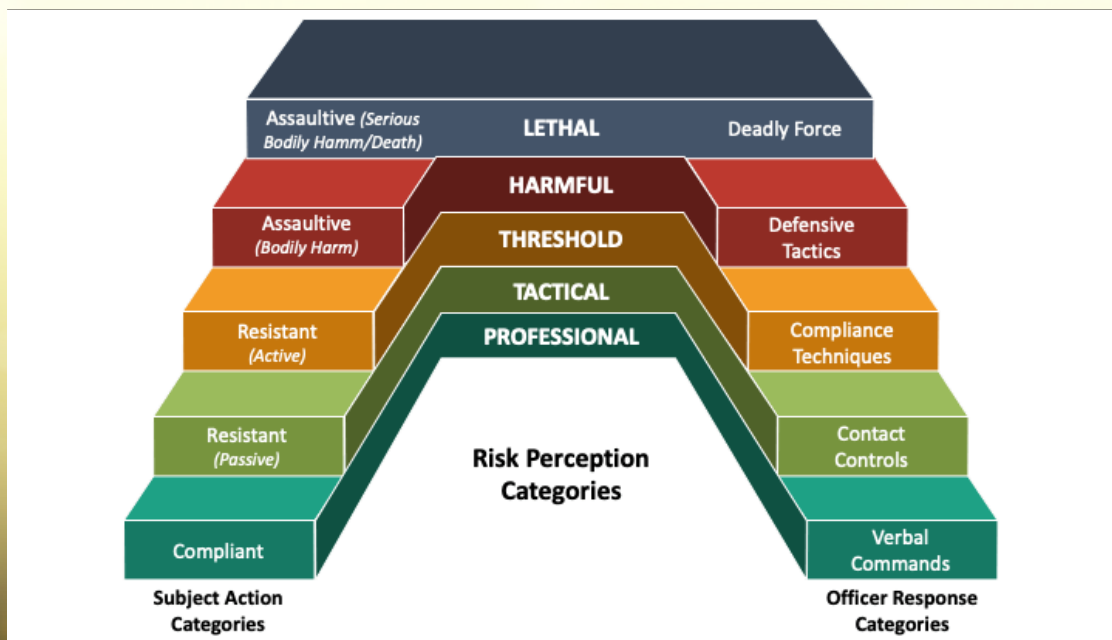
As stated above, the Schenectady County Sheriff's Office Police Reform Plan needed to address certain aspects of policing. While many of these reforms would be new to other police agencies, the SCSO under its current leadership had already implemented and have been performing some these strategies and practices for years prior to the Governor's executive order, and we are committed to building upon these practices as we navigate through this process.

An in-depth breakdown of each aspect and how it satisfies the goals of fairness, racial justice, and fostering community trust follows below.

## Use of Force Continuum

The use of continuum is a standard that provides law enforcement and civilians with guidelines as to how much force can be used against a resisting subject in a given situation. As you can see, it is progressive in nature. In its most basic form, a way to think about this concept is that officers' responses are most likely the reactions to the subjects' actions.

When our deputies use force against a subject, they self report this use by documenting the force and immediately notifying a supervisor. The deputies complete the SCSO Subject Resistance/Use of Force report. The amount of force used by our deputies shall be the amount of force that is reasonable under the circumstances for the deputy involved to effect a lawful arrest, prevent escape, or in defense of one's self or others. Our updated Use of Force policy meets the NYS Criminal Justice Services Accreditation standards.





# ***PUBLIC FORUMS***

After the SCSO team and stakeholders collaborated on the reform plan, the next step in this important process was holding public forum meetings to discuss this plan and invite feedback from the community as a whole. This provided for a direct and unfiltered dialogue between all stakeholders, more easily facilitating the reform plan's formation and fine-tuning. Due to the current state of the pandemic and with everyone's safety in mind, these meetings were held virtually, and were also recorded and posted for viewing on various social media outlets.

A community discussion was scheduled for February 11, 2021, and a follow-up discussion was held on February 16, allowing an additional opportunity for feedback and questions from stakeholders and the public in general. These discussions consisted of a virtual presentation of several topics, including the current state of policing by the Schenectady Sheriff's Office, our involvement in community programs, and new and upcoming training for deputies. Also covered in depth were the ideas of Principled Policing and Procedural Justice. The many facets of our criminal justice and law enforcement collaborations were also discussed. The presentation was followed-up by an opportunity for anyone to ask a question or express a comment or concern.



# SCHENECTADY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



## **POLICE REFORM AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

The Schenectady County Sheriff's Office is holding a series of community meetings to review and improve police strategies, policies, procedures and practices, in accordance with NYS Governor Cuomo's **Executive Order**.

The meetings are structured as panel discussions to gain input from local organizations and stakeholders, including:

- Community groups;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Business leaders;
- Public safety officials; and
- Social service organizations.

Topics to be explored include, but are not limited to: use of force policies, procedural justice, systemic racial bias, de-escalation training and practices, community-based outreach, Sheriff's Office accessibility and transparency.

Members of the public can **submit questions in advance** by filling out the form at [www.schenectadycounty.com/sheriff](http://www.schenectadycounty.com/sheriff)

## **MEETING SCHEDULE**

Thursday, **February 11**, 2021 5:30pm - 6:30pm

Tuesday, **February 16**, 2021 5:30pm - 6:30pm

**The virtual community meetings will be** moderated by the Sheriff's Office and **streamed live on** [www.youtube.com/SchenectadyCounty](http://www.youtube.com/SchenectadyCounty)

## ***Crowd Management***

Crowd management, also known informally as crowd control, is defined as the organized and substantiated planning and direction given to the orderly progress of events where large groups of people gather together. In certain large gatherings, it is common to encounter strong emotions such as joy, anger, and excitement, which can quickly spread and become dangerous to civilians as well as law enforcement personnel.

Our agency recently completed training on crowd management that included topics such as:

- *Knowing your crowd*
- *Informing your local partners*
- *Emergency and Contingency Plans*
- *Planning in advance*
- *Identifying potential dangers*
- *Using signage*

This training allows us to better serve the community during planned or un-planned large gatherings by protecting attendees, bystanders, businesses, and staff.

## ***Community Policing***

The words “community policing” are buzzwords that mean many things to the public, but for the Schenectady County Sheriff's Office, community policing isn't merely a phrase, but a way for us to become closer and more involved with the communities we serve. For the smaller size of our division and the amount of deputies we have, we are very much involved in the community, and host several programs and events that fully benefit, inform, and engage the public, both kids and adults alike.

We host events like pop-up bike rodeos where kids learn about bicycle safety are given helmets specifically fitted for them. Additionally we conduct child safety seat checks throughout the year, K-9 demonstrations, and various community holiday events including delivering meals on Thanksgiving and participating in Toys-for-Tots drives. We also conduct ongoing programs like SafeChild ID, Project Life Saver, and our prescription drug take back program. In an effort to further serve and assist our communities, we perform house checks and vehicle lock-outs. We engage and educate the public throughout the year with our pedestrian safety initiatives. These are but a sampling of the services and events offered by our department.

Our strong commitment to community policing brings police and citizens together to prevent crime and solve neighborhood problems. This helps us get a better sense of community needs and helps resident's to develop greater trust in the police.

## Training

Through consistent training, we empower our deputies with the knowledge and practical skills that enable them to make the appropriate decisions in every situation they encounter. Training includes but is not limited to:

*De-Escalation Techniques* – 100% of our patrol division has completed reality-based training. This provides deputies the knowledge of resolution methods and techniques to diffuse without violence many potentially violent situations. This training essentially “humanizes” our deputies in the eyes of the public by giving them the skills to connect with members of the community who may be in crisis.

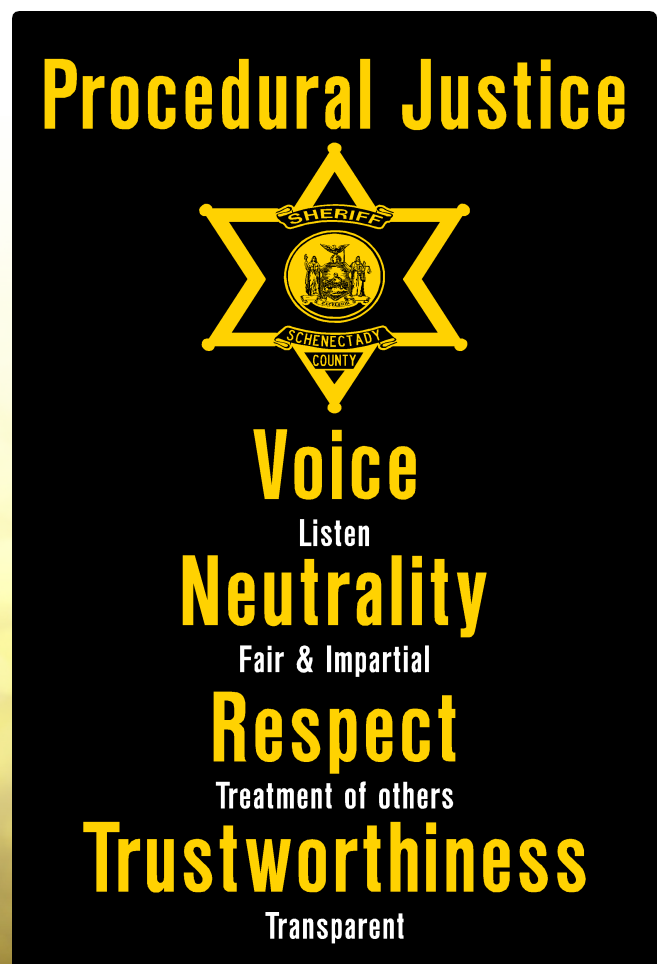
*Principled Policing* – includes procedural justice, implicit bias, and reconciliation. Focuses on the way police interact with the community, and how these interactions influence crime rates, the public's view of police, and their willingness to obey the law. To the Schenectady County Sheriff's Office, this is viewed as more than just a strategy, a program, or an initiative. It's viewed as the way we do business by treating people as human beings with respect and dignity and how we treat each other internally. Procedural Justice includes four basic yet profoundly important principles:

**Voice** – Giving citizens a voice during encounters.

**Neutrality** – Being neutral in decision making.

**Respect** – Treating people with dignity and respect.

**Trustworthiness** – Conveying trustworthy motives.



**SCHENECTADY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
COMPLAINT FORM**

<b>DATE RECEIVED</b>		<b>TIME RECEIVED</b>	
<b>COMPLAINANT'S NAME</b>			
<b>COMPLAINANT'S ADDRESS</b>			
<b>COMPLAINANT'S HOME PHONE</b>		<b>COMPLAINANT'S WORK PHONE</b>	
<b>COMPLAINT REGARDING</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> OFFICER <input type="checkbox"/> FACILITY <input type="checkbox"/> POLICY AND/OR PROCEDURE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____		
<b>HOW COMPLAINT WAS RECEIVED</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE <input type="checkbox"/> LETTER - DATE SEND AND BY WHOM: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____		
<b>DATE OF INCIDENT</b>		<b>TIME OF INCIDENT</b>	
<b>LOCATION OF INCIDENT</b>			
<b>PERSON(S) INVOLVED</b>			
<b>WITNESSES</b>			
<b>SUMMARY OF INCIDENT</b>			
<b>COMMENTS</b>			

It is a crime, punishable as a Class A Misdemeanor under the laws of the State of New York, for a person, in and by a written instrument, to knowingly make a false statement, or to make a statement which such person does not believe to be true. AFFIRMED UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY.

Complainant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Officer taking complaint (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Officer taking complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Copies to: Chief Deputy/Under Sheriff  
Sheriff

SCS0 CF-21

## ***Reform Meetings and Neighborhood Meetings***

Our department has partnered and collaborated as a stakeholder with several law enforcement agencies during their reform meetings. These agencies include the Schenectady, Rotterdam, and Niskayuna Police Departments.

One of the most important things we can do for a community is to give them a voice, and our department has and will continually strive to do just that. We regularly attend the monthly meetings in the areas we patrol, namely Duanesburg, Princetown, and the village of Delanson, and are actively engaged with the town and village boards and in the communities as well. We have also attended several neighborhood meetings in the City of Schenectady when requested, either by the community or through our outreach efforts.

## ***Violence Prevention and Reduction Intervention***

For the Schenectady County Sheriff's Office, the challenge in our communities is a complex and never-ending one that requires strategic partnerships. To further this effort we have partnered with Youth L.I.F.E. Support Network, Inc., a community-based non-profit organization with a focus on public safety in the Capital Region.

With Youth LIFE Support Network, Inc., we have initiated a new era of criminal justice and law enforcement partnership and collaboration. This has brought about many successful programs that are not only reducing violent crimes in our communities, but through intervention are preventing violent crimes as well. Some of our collaborative efforts include:

***1Life2Live*** – Gun & Gang Violence Prevention & Intervention Program – Implemented under the Sheriff's Department in October of 2014 and funded in part by the Schenectady County Legislature and the NYS G.I.V.E. Initiative (Gun Involved Violence Elimination), the ***1Life2Live*** program achieves its objective of reducing the number of retaliatory shootings in the county by using Violence Interrupters/Outreach Workers. Following a shooting, these workers respond to both the hospital where a retaliatory strike is likely planned due to high emotions, and the incident site in an effort to engage the community to get information in an effort to “contain de-escalate, and mediate” the conflict. The violence interrupters/outreach workers also engage individuals maintain a caseload of 9-12 participants each, all of who are those at the highest risk of committing a shooting and/or being shot at.

## ***Back2Life Reintegration and Transition Support Program***

The Back2Life program has two components: a facility component and a community component.

The Facility component falls under the auspices of the Inmate Services Coordinator at the Schenectady County Correctional Facility, where a part-time Masters in Social Work student acts as a discharge coordinator to assist inmates who are getting ready to make the transition back to the community. Assistance is provided with securing housing, support services, insurance, and identification if necessary.

The Community component consists of a Community Transition Coordinator who helps the newly released individual achieve a successful transition by following up with services such as DSS, mental health providers, or substance abuse treatment on his/her behalf, while securing appointments if needed. The Community Transition Coordinator also assists the individual with education, training, and job preparation and placement, and maintains follow-up contacts with the individual for up to one year after release.

### ***LEAD Initiative (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion)***

L.E.A.D. is a new harm-reduction oriented process for responding to low-level drug, alcohol and mental-illness based offenses. L.E.A.D. gives police officers the discretion to divert these offenses out of the criminal justice system for case management. The program is designed to be a multi-agency partnership between the County, District Attorney, Sheriff, Mayor, Police Department, Center for Community Justice, and the Business Improvement District and Youth L.I.F.E. Support Network, Inc.

# ***PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING***

The strategy of problem-oriented policing involves informed decision-making through data-driven analysis. Through collaboration with the data collection and analysis process, we were able to determine which tactics and strategies work best to fight crime.

## ***Focused Deterrence***

Focused deterrence is a crime prevention strategy that aims to deter crime by increasing the swiftness, severity, and certainty of punishment for crimes by implementing a mix of law enforcement, social services, and community mobilization. Under this model, law enforcement selects specific crime problems, such as gun violence, and conducts specific research to identify key offenders using unbiased and data-driven processes, then engages with them directly in strategic communication with these group members through call-ins or custom notifications.

Law enforcement community members and social services providers come together to deliver the message that violence will no longer be tolerated, and if violence does occur, every available legal lever will be pulled to bring an immediate and certain response. This hard message is accompanied by a soft message that emphasizes the communities' willingness to help individuals change, through programs such as training and job readiness. This message lets would-be offenders, and the community as a whole, to realize that law enforcement is much more interested in deterring gun violence than prosecuting violent offenders.

All available evidence indicates that these programs are notably effective at reducing gun violence. Concentrating law enforcement efforts on violent criminals in crime hot spots.



## ***Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)***

Examines how environmental features create opportunities for crime and how those features can be adjusted to eliminate those opportunities. Adjustments can be implemented in many fashions, including controlling or making access more difficult, deterring offenders by increasing the risk of apprehension, and increasing visibility.

Some examples of environment features that can create opportunities for crime include trees and shrubbery that block visibility, a lack of lighting, traffic direction or lack of signaling, abandoned buildings, alleyways, and empty lots hidden from the street. Adjustments that can be made to correct these features include cutting down or trimming shrubbery and trees to increase visibility, adding lighting to a dark alley, boarding up abandoned homes, or improve traffic conditions by adding signage, signals, and speed bumps. Most often, the cities' and towns' code enforcement plays a key role in the CPTED concept.

## ***Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS)***

This is an operational model that uses the analysis of location-based crashes, crimes, calls for service, and enforcement data to establish effective and efficient methods for deploying resources geared towards gun violence elimination and other serious crimes. Data analysts from the various agencies in the county help identify long-term high-crime locations and repeat offenders that are in those areas, and work this data into what is called “hot spot locations,” which is used to determine the deployment of resources.

On the enforcement side of DDACTS, the strategy is to conduct hot spot micro-level enforcement operations, as can be illustrated with our Crane Street model. In collaboration with Schenectady Police, the NYS Police, Probation, and Parole, the Street Crimes Task Force and Youth Life Support Network, Inch. conducted a community policing effort on a smaller, more focused area, essentially creating a neighborhood policing effort. On top of employing a high visibility presence and foot patrols, we engaged heavily with the neighborhood youths through programs like handing out bicycle helmets and free ice cream cards, and also playing basketball with the kids at the local playgrounds. The community engagement was positive all around, and our deputies came away as better urban community police officers, focusing on the principles of procedural justice.

## ***Unified Communications Center (911 Center) Emotionally Disturbed Persons (EDP) Diversion Program***

Other aspects of problem-oriented policing are collaborating with social services and the community in responding to scenarios involving emotionally disturbed persons. The Schenectady County UCC Director Kevin Spawn and his team brought forward an idea how to handle mental health and EDP calls throughout the county based on a model created by Broome County in which the 911 dispatcher evaluates mental health calls and determines if a mental health professional would be better suited to respond in place of law enforcement.

This particular model works very well in Schenectady County, given that the County dealt with nearly 2400 EDP calls in 2020. Those calls are time consuming and in many cases dangerous to the responders and the caller(s). Director Spawn states with great confidence that a percentage of those calls are people simply looking to talk to someone. Director Spawn has adopted this model and implemented it as of February 1st, 2021. We are now able to get members of the community the appropriate assistance they are in need of.

## Schenectady County Unified Communications

Subject: <b>EDP DIVERSION</b>		Policy
Effective: <b>02/01/2021</b>	Authority Director: <b>Director Kevin Spawn</b>	
Rescinded:	Amended:	

**Purpose:** To outline procedures for diversion of Emotionally Disturbed Person/Suicidal callers that qualify using risk assessment for the Schenectady County Unified Communications dispatchers.

### OBJECTIVE

Through research and discussions, it has been shown that there is a need to better handle calls from Emotionally Disturbed/Suicidal callers by emergency services. There are instances that Law Enforcement response is not the best option for a person in crisis. This procedure allows for a better level of care to our callers.

### DEFINITION OF CALLER TYPE

This refers to a suicidal subject or somebody who suffers from some sort of mental health disorder, is in a state of crisis, and is “thinking” about harming oneself or others. He or she has not actually done anything to initiate a suicide attempt.

*“I feel depressed/really down/not myself” “I just want to talk to someone”  
“I don’t feel like going on anymore”*

### PROCEDURE

When a first or second party call is received from an Emotionally Disturbed/Suicidal caller, the call taker will:

1. Obtain all basic information from the caller (name, address, telephone number), enter a call into CAD using call type 22 as the incident type.
2. The call-taker will then utilize the Emotionally Disturbed Caller Risk Assessment Guide.
3. If following the Risk Assessment Guide the caller meets the criteria to be transferred to an on-duty counselor the dispatcher will then transfer the call to Northern Rivers crisis line at 518-292-5499. The dispatcher will advise Northern Rivers Staff about the caller and provide the CAD number that was created for follow up.

## **Schenectady County Unified Communications**

Subject: <b>EDP DIVERSION</b>		Policy
Effective: <b>02/01/2021</b>	Authority Director: <b>Director Kevin Spawn</b>	
Rescinded:	Amended:	

4. This call for service will be left in the pending screen with notes stating "TOT Northern Rivers Counselor, awaiting call back".
5. Dispatcher will lower the priority of the call to a priority 3 and notify the appropriate on duty Officer In Charge that this call has been turned over to Northern Rivers pending evaluation.
6. Once the Crisis Center Counselor calls back, the status will be noted in the narrative of the call and will either be cleared by the dispatcher or appropriate units will be sent for Police, Fire or EMS.
7. Should the caller refuse the transfer to the crisis line, the call-taker will gather all pertinent information and dispatch appropriate agencies.
8. If dispatch is unsuccessful making a transfer do to no counselor available then the call-taker will gather all pertinent information and dispatch appropriate agencies.

### **NORTHERN RIVERS**

At the completion of the call, the Crisis Line Counselor will contact Schenectady County Unified Communications Center (518-630-0911) with status of the call. They will either state that it has been resolved with no further action or that a Law Enforcement Agency needs to respond. If Law Enforcement is needed, they will provide as much information about the call as they have, including weapons or mention of weapons, information on the individual and anything else that may aid patrols in their response.

Should the caller hang-up before any information can be ascertained by the counselor, the counselor will contact Schenectady County Unified Communications Center and advise them to dispatch Law Enforcement.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Currently Northern Rivers Crisis line is in operation  
Monday – Friday 7am-11pm  
Saturdays – Sundays 11am-7pm  
Holidays – 10am-6pm

**Schenectady County 911 EDP Diversion  
Emotionally Disturbed Caller Risk Assessment (Call Type 22)**

This refers to a suicidal subject or somebody who suffers from some sort of mental health disorder, is in a state of crisis, and is 'thinking' about harming oneself or others. He or she has not actually done anything to initiate a suicide attempt. Somebody who has actually initiated a suicide attempt dispatch would use call type 49 "person attempting suicide" and that call would be split to MED for immediate Police and EMS dispatch.

**Dispatcher:** Location of the Emergency?  
Phone Number you are calling from?  
Tell me exactly why you are calling?  
Name of Caller 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Party Callers - Name of Distressed Subject?

**Are you (or the person you are calling about) Attempting to hurt or kill yourself or anyone else RIGHT NOW?**

YES ←—————→ NO  
"Maybe" or "Silence is considered a "Yes"  
(Dispatch Law Enforcement)

**Are you (or the person you are calling about) thinking about hurting or killing yourself or anyone else?**

YES ←—————→ NO  
"Maybe" or "Silence is considered a "Yes"  
(Dispatch Law Enforcement)

**Do you have a plan and the means (gun, pills, etc) to do it?**

YES ←—————→ NO  
Reports specific plan  
(Dispatch Law Enforcement)

**When would you do this (suicidal subject)?**

YES ←—————→ NO  
Decided on Specific Time  
(Dispatch Law Enforcement)

**NO** = It sounds like it would be helpful if you could talk to someone for a little longer to help sort through what the best option for you is at this point. If you are willing I'm going to go ahead and try and connect you with an on-duty counselor who works with crisis management to help you.

**Dispatcher:** Attempt to connect caller to on duty counselor, stay on the line, introduce caller, provide counselor brief summary and event # that has been created for follow up.

**Dispatcher Follow Up:** Counselor will call back with outcome, either was able to assist caller or advise to send Law Enforcement with additional information obtained by counselor.

**YES** = Reminder Questions if any above questions are determined

1. Weapons involved or mentioned?
2. Location of the EDP if not obvious?
3. Description of the person?
4. Is he/she violent or known to be violent?
5. Method of harming oneself or others? (Somebody who is thinking of taking pills is treated differently than somebody who has a gun to his/her head)
6. Anybody injured or require medical attention? (Injuries resulting from a suicide attempts are most accurately categorized as call type 49 instead of call type 22)
7. Why the person wants to harm him/herself?

## Police Explorer Program

Law Enforcement Exploring is the preeminent career orientation and experience program for young people contemplating a career in law enforcement or a related field in the criminal justice system. This is why we created our Law Enforcement Explorer Post 319 in 2016, which now boasts a diverse membership of approximately 30 members. The program offers young adults, who are at least 14 years of age and have completed the eighth grade and not yet 21 years old, a personal awareness of the criminal justice system through training, practical experiences, competition, and other activities.

Additionally, the program promotes personal growth through character development, respect for the rule of law, physical fitness, good citizenship and patriotism. With a large focus on involvement in community service, our program enhances the Explorers' preparation for future roles as citizens, community members, and leaders, as well as a successful law enforcement career. Law Enforcement Explorer Posts are sponsored by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

In order to prevent any barriers or pay walls from discouraging membership, there are no costs to individuals who wish to join our program. Also, meetings are held at the Zone 5 Law Enforcement Training Academy, a centrally located building allowing our program to be even more accessible to potential members of the community.



***Join SCSO Explorers Now!!!!***

Law Enforcement career exploring is open to young men and women ages 14 - 20 years old.

***\* Upcoming Events \****

- NYS Police Aviation
- Schenectady County Correctional Facility
- FBI Field Trip

***\* Meetings \****

*Meetings every other Wednesday*  
Next meetings:  
*To Be Determined*

**Location:**  
Schenectady County Sheriff's Substation  
130 Princetown Plaza  
Princetown, NY

<p><b><i>You will develop:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership Skills</li><li>• New Personal Skills</li><li>• Improved Self - Confidence</li><li>• Team Building</li></ul>	<p><b><i>You will learn:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accident Scene Procedures</li><li>• Defensive Tactics</li><li>• Counter Terrorism</li><li>• Police Technology</li></ul>	<p><b><i>You will have the opportunity to participate in:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ride Alongs</li><li>• National Events</li><li>• National Competitions</li></ul>
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**Contact:**  
Lieutenant Mike Geraci: michael.geraci@schenectadycounty.com  
Phone: 388-4300

# MOVING FORWARD

## *Law Enforcement Accreditation*

Accreditation is a progressive and contemporary way of helping police agencies evaluate and improve their overall performance. Created in 1989 by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice services (DCJS), accreditation is intended to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and professionalism of an agency, while promoting training and public confidence in law. The many benefits to being an accredited agency are as follows:

- Provides sound guidance for the highly-effective operation and management of our agency based upon professionally developed and legally sound standards that reflect best practices
- Enhance the reputation of the Sheriff's Office within the community and will serve as a source of pride for our deputies
- Implementation of written policies and procedures which must be adhered to
- Can lessen vulnerability to civil suits and costly settlements

Out of the 609 law enforcement agencies in NYS, only 160 agencies have achieved accreditation. This is our ultimate goal, to achieve accreditation status, it elevates our stature within law enforcement agencies across the state. It is a long and involved process and, when achieved, it will be an accomplishment that all of us are extremely proud of.



## ***Accessibility***

Maintain and expand transparency in the community - This is about being as accessible as possible through various means including our social media platforms and the Sheriff's web page.

## ***Emotionally Disturbed Persons (EDP) Diversion Program***

Continuation of an innovative partnership for mental health calls for service. We have partnered with the UCC 911 Center and Northern Rivers Mobile Crisis where mental health professionals respond to emotionally disturbed persons calls. This is a priority issue nationwide that locally a major step forward has been taken by the Sheriff's Office.

## ***Training***

Enhance de-escalation training. Using techniques to diffuse tense situations.

Ingrain procedural justice into the Sheriff's Office culture.

## ***Violence Prevention and Reduction Intervention***

Strengthen our commitment for violence prevention and reduction interventions - We have a tremendous partnership with Jamel Muhammad. Our intent is to support his efforts as together we grow the Youth Support Life Network.

## ***Technology***

Construct adult and juvenile interview rooms with I-Record video technology.

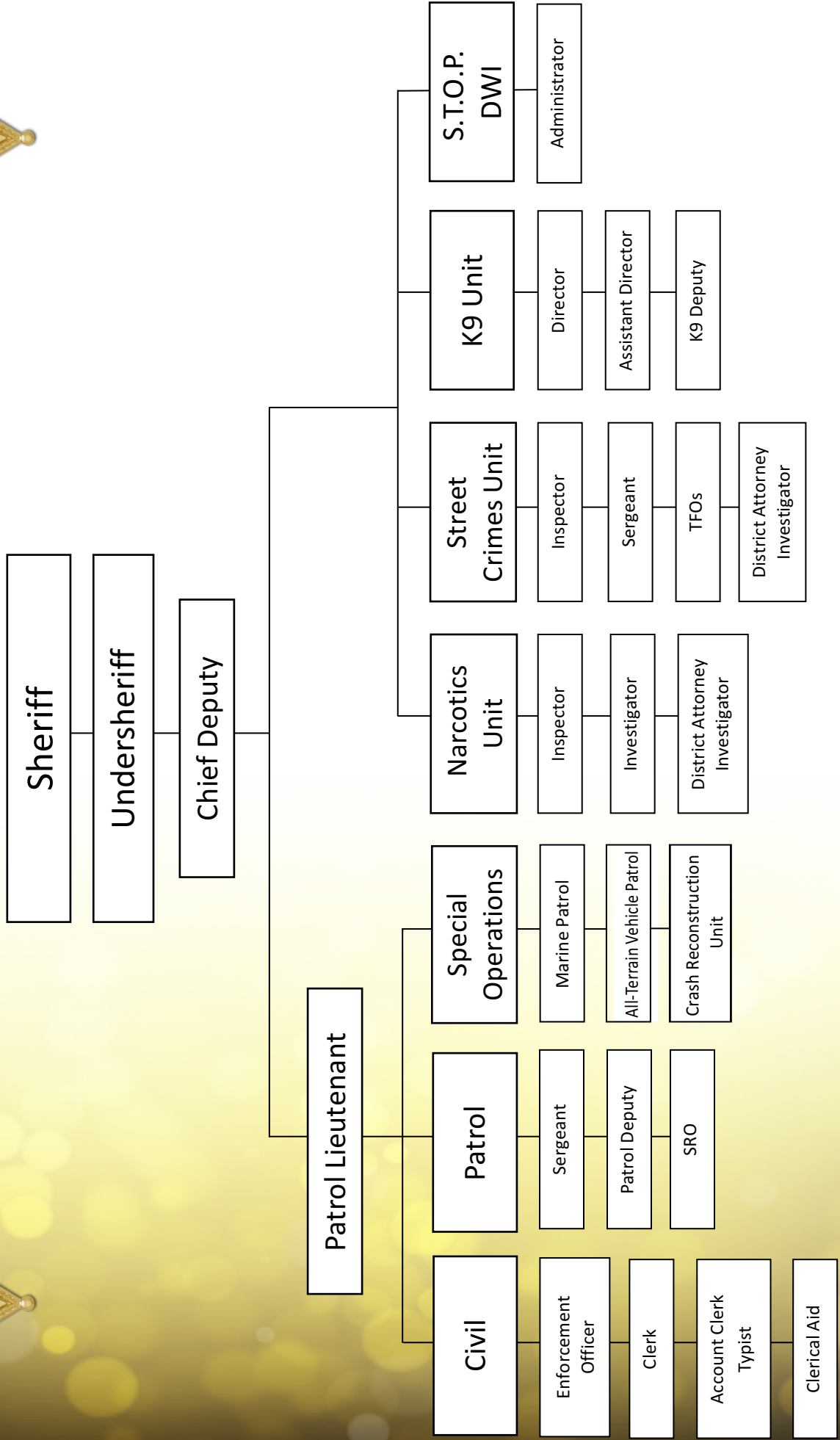
Research use of body-worn cameras for our deputies - this will have an impact on how deputies interact with the community and how the community interacts with deputies by not only increasing public confidence, but also by helping de-escalate anti-social behavior. Body cameras also help to reduce the number of complaints and allegations made against deputies, while reducing criminal justice costs due to an increased number of early guilty pleas. An additional benefit is the reduction of officer time spent on paperwork and skill enhancement through review and performance at incidents.





# Schenectady County Office of the Sheriff

## Official Patrol Division Chain of Command



***On behalf of the sworn and civilian members of the Schenectady County Sheriff's Office, I thank you for your interest in this report and for your ongoing support of our organization. Our public commitment is to continually improve the delivery of our services in partnership with the communities that we serve. Please never hesitate to contact us with your questions or opinions via any of the following:***

**Schenectady County Sheriff's Office  
320 Veeder Ave, Schenectady, NY 12307  
518-388-4300**

**Schenectady County Sheriff's Substation  
130 Princetown Plaza, Princetown, NY 12306  
518-388-4310**

**[www.SchenectadySheriff.com](http://www.SchenectadySheriff.com)**

*Sheriff Dominic Dagostino*

