BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING

- Using the community's talents and resources effectively helps extend severely strained police resources.
- Citizens gain a voice in defining and prioritizing their law enforcement needs. Satisfaction with police services increases.
- Officers who develop creative solutions to community problems and find new roles also enjoy increased job satisfaction.
- Crime has gradually decreased since the early 1990s. Police executives, government officials, and researchers credit community-based policing initiatives as contributing to that decline.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Use this checklist to determine how the police department could improve its services to the community.

- ☐ Be more courteous
- ☐ Don't discriminate
- ☐ Improve training
- ☐ Hire more officers
- ☐ Solicit more community input
- ☐ Take incivilities such as loitering, noise, and public drunkeness more seriously
- ☐ Crack down on speeding, reckless driving, Driving Under the Influence, and other traffic problems
- ☐ Do more crime and drug prevention programs in the schools
- ☐ Have more foot patrols
- ☐ Conduct citizen academies
- ☐ Form citizen advisory groups
- ☐ Have a diverse work force

MCCPI
Maryland Community Crime Prevention Institute
(410) 750-6593
(800) 303-8802

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME®

Crime Prevention Tips from
National Crime Prevention Council
1000 Connecticut Ave., NW, 13th Fl.
Washington, D.C. 20036

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COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING

WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING?

Partnership, problem solving, organizational change, and prevention – that's community-based policing in a nutshell.

Why? Because crime does not flourish in strong, self-sufficient communities who work with and trust the police.

COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING HAS THREE COMPONENTS

Community partnership recognizes the value of bringing people back into the public safety process.

Problem solving identifies concerns that community members feel are most threatening to their safety and well-being.

Change management recognizes that a police department will have to change its organizational structure to forge partnerships and implement problem-solving efforts.

A FOCUS ON PREVENTION

In community-based policing, officers still maintain law and order, but they move beyond just "catching the bad guys" to examining specific conditions, including problems of disorder and neglect, that breed both minor and serious crimes. People talk about their concerns, which range from burglary to speed bumps, with community-based policing officers – who are familiar faces in the neighborhood – and ask for help.

Many programs that support community-based policing are old news to crime prevention specialists – Neighborhood Watch, citizen police academies, graffiti cleanups, neighborhood mediation centers, after-school programs for children and teens, school resource officers, citizen patrols.

BUILDING TRUST

Community-based policing cannot work without trust. Residents who trust the police provide valuable information that can lead to the prevention and solution of crimes. Mutual trust leads to advocacy for police activities and productive partnerships that find solutions to community problems.

A police officer who studies and listens to the community respects residents' instincts and concerns. On the other hand, residents need to learn how the police department works and what it can and cannot do. Then they need to work together.

NOT A QUICK FIX

Community-based policing strategies have evolved over the past 25 years, based on work by scholars and police research organizations. It's become the focus of policing in the 1990s, but community-based policing isn't a quick fix. Getting the public to cooperate with the police can be difficult, especially in neighborhoods with a record of antagonistic relationships between residents and police. Similar antagonisms may exist between community organizations and law enforcement.

The police must win the support of the public, through regular meetings with residents and delivering on commitments they make to solve problems. Community-based policing requires long-term commitment to work with community members and forge lasting partnerships.