I. PURPOSE
The ability of this law enforcement agency to respond to emerging issues and long-range goals is dependent upon the ability to implement new policies, programs, strategies, and operational initiatives based on sound information, practices, and empirical evidence. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the establishment of collaborative partnerships between this agency and researchers or research institutions (referred to throughout as research partners) that often extend beyond a single research project. Law enforcement personnel have an obligation to review and understand the essential aspects of proposed research and its potential impact on resources and operations.

II. POLICY
It is the policy of this agency to establish collaborative partnerships with a research partner with the goal of enhancing law enforcement operations, services to the community, and answering operational questions through rigorous, scientific inquiry.

III. DEFINITIONS
Collaborative Partnership: A long-term, durable, structured commitment to a range of common goals or multiple projects over time.
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): A document designed to clearly define and outline the goals, expectations, roles, responsibilities, duration, and accountability mechanisms of the partners within a collaborative partnership.
Research: The systematic investigation of law enforcement-related subjects by trained personnel aimed at answering questions or addressing concerns that arise within law enforcement organizations.

IV. PROCEDURES
A. Establishing a Collaborative Partnership
1. When establishing a collaborative partnership with a research partner, this agency’s chief executive or his or her designee should actively participate in its development and implementation.
2. The chief executive or his or her designee should identify a program manager within the agency to coordinate all aspects of research conducted with the research partner.
3. Potential research partners shall be identified through prior established relationships or by
   a. reviewing social science research consortiums,
   b. attendance at criminal justice–related conferences,
   c. reviewing practitioner literature,
   d. contacting local universities,
   e. obtaining a referral from colleagues, or
   f. contacting the IACP or state and local law enforcement associations.
4. Factors to consider when selecting a research partner include
   a. subject matter expertise of the research partner;
   b. prior experience with the research partner by this or any other law enforcement agency;
   c. potential compatibility regarding values, staff, and goals of each partner;
   d. proximity of the research partner to the agency; and
   e. potential for staff turnover that may impact continuity of project.
5. After identifying a research partner, the program manager should make initial contact. The initial contact should be used to discuss
   a. the demographics of both organizations, to include staffing and available resources,
   b. specific problems relevant to the agency and/or research partner,
   c. general topics or problem areas for further discussion, and
   d. funding concerns.

B. Developing an MOU
   1. Once mutual interest in collaboration has been discussed and the decision made to move forward, formal discussions should take place. These discussions should include the following:
      a. Short- and long-term goals of the partnership
      b. Specific research questions to be addressed
      c. Specific strategy, methodology, and analysis relevant to agency characteristics, community needs, and the skills of the researcher
      d. General timeline of project(s)
      e. Roles and responsibilities of each partner
      f. Relevant community members or stakeholders
      g. Data collection and management
      h. Potential internal or external funding
   2. An MOU shall be established prior to the implementation of the collaborative partnership and start of any research project. The MOU should address the following items:
      a. Points of contact
      b. Roles and responsibilities of each partner
      c. Internal communication plan
      d. Community and media communication plan
      e. Facility access
      f. Resources (e.g., personnel, time, technology, office space)
      g. Access to agency information
      h. Data acquisition and storage
      i. Confidentiality
      j. Documentation of progress
      k. Deliverables
      l. Review and comment period on all products
      m. Dissemination of materials (i.e., publishing findings)
      n. Other products (e.g., reports, presentations, policies)
      o. Duration of partnership
      p. Accountability and dissolution mechanisms

C. Training
   1. Prior to starting any project, agency personnel involved in the project and the research team should be provided with training.
   2. The training should be codeveloped and presented by the agency program manager and the principal investigator for the research partner. This should be done for each research project conducted.
   3. Training for law enforcement personnel might include the following:
      a. Basics of research
      b. Data collection and management
      c. Application of research
      d. Overview of MOU
   4. Training for the research team might include the following:
      a. Practical law enforcement methods
      b. Agency-specific operations
      c. Obligations of law enforcement personnel

D. Sustaining the Partnership
   1. In order to sustain the partnership, the following should occur:
      a. Regular communication between partners
      b. Fulfillment of roles as outlined by the MOU
      c. Involvement of both partners in key aspects of the research process, including decisions on methodology, data collection, analysis, and interpretation
      d. Implementation and application of research findings
      e. Continued engagement of law enforcement personnel in research
      f. Collaboration to publish research findings in both academic and practitioner forums
      g. Identification of future research projects
      h. Exploration of future funding sources
      i. Regular MOU reviews to ensure it meets the needs of this agency, researchers, and the community
      j. Identification of areas that need improvement and development of a plan to address them
   2. The law enforcement project manager should evaluate the specific deliverables and overall experience with the partnership to determine what was or was not successful and prepare a document to that effect for review by both partners.
3. If the needs of one or both partners are not being met—and reasonable solutions cannot be found, this agency shall consider dissolution of the partnership.

Acknowledgment

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Every effort has been made by the IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center staff and advisory group to ensure that this document incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgment on this issue. Readers outside of the United States should note that, while this document promotes procedures reflective of a democratic society, its legal basis follows United States Supreme Court rulings and other federal laws and statutes. Law enforcement administrators should be cautioned that no “model” policy can meet all the needs of any given law enforcement agency. Each law enforcement agency operates in a unique environment of court rulings, state laws, local ordinances, regulations, judicial and administrative decisions and collective bargaining agreements that must be considered, and should therefore consult its legal advisor before implementing any policy. In addition, the formulation of specific agency policies must take into account local political and community perspectives and customs, prerogatives and demands; often divergent law enforcement strategies and philosophies; and the impact of varied agency resource capabilities among other factors. This document is not intended to be a national standard.

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