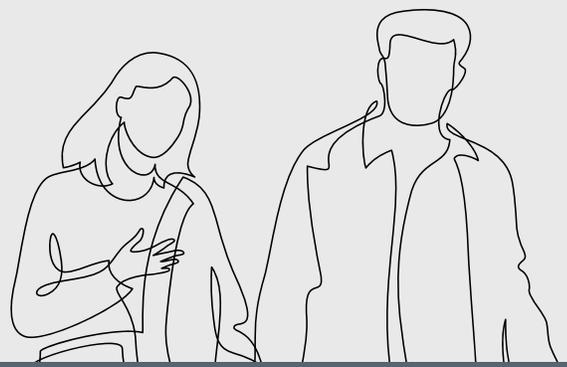


# Supporting Officers after the Badge: Considerations for Officer Retirement



For law enforcement professionals, the transition into retirement often comes with many changes and questions. This critical time also provides an opportunity for new hobbies, more quality family time, and different career paths. Planning for retirement throughout their career can help officers navigate changes in finances, family wellness, and social identity. This resource provides guidance and considerations for officers in or near the transition to ensure that they fully enjoy the retirement they've worked so hard for.

## Building New Routines and Relationships

You might have mixed feelings the first time you hear a police siren and cannot respond, but there are many ways you can continue serving your community and have a fulfilling retirement. When you transition into retirement, look for opportunities to mentally prepare yourself for the changes, stay connected to old friends, and continue to strengthen new relationships.

- Reflect on your accomplishments throughout your career and understand that this is a time of major change that can create unexpected feelings.
- Establish new routines and activities prior to retirement to ease the transition and stay active.
- Identify hobbies you enjoy outside of work and opportunities to pursue those.
- Schedule time to connect with family and friends.
- Build and maintain social networks outside of work.
- Create a support group or social group with other retired officers from your agency or in your local area to bond over shared experiences..
- Join or maintain memberships in law enforcement professional or fraternal organizations.
- Continue your public service by volunteering in your community, filling an auxiliary role with your department, or taking on a mentorship role for new officers.
- Begin researching early post-career educational opportunities such as degrees, teaching or technical skill certifications, or university class auditing, which can lead to other job opportunities.

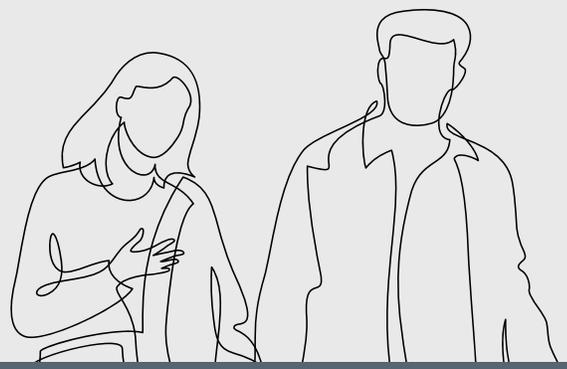
- Understand that if you retire suddenly for reasons such as an injury, you may struggle more with the transition than those who had time to prepare for retirement throughout their career.
- Maintain a sense of camaraderie and relationships with your former colleagues over social media or in-person activities.

## Maintaining Health and Resiliency

It is important to prioritize your mental wellness and physical health during and after the transition to civilian life. Consider the following approaches to support your mental and physical well-being.

- Maintain your physical wellness by scheduling annual physicals and regularly communicating with your primary healthcare provider. Refer to IACP's *Doctor's Visit Checklist* for more information on annual physical exams and doctor's visits.
- Identify strategies to ease the stress of the transition to retirement such as physical exercise, practicing mindfulness and meditation, or participating in your favorite hobby.
- Look to family and friends for support while you transition into retirement. If you encounter challenges, communicate with those around you.
- Speak with your department to understand available health and wellness services offered to retirees such as Employee Assistance Programs.
- Ensure you know how to access services if you need to talk with a mental health professional.

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Mental and physical health is equally important as you transition into retirement as it was throughout the course of your career. Prioritizing your mental and physical wellness will ensure that you can enjoy the opportunities that retirement brings.

While it is important to prioritize financial planning throughout your career, there are key steps to take as you get closer to retirement.

- Work with your agency to identify and understand changes in coverage for healthcare and life insurance for yourself and your family members who may be covered under your insurance plans.
- Discuss financial and coverage changes with family members who may be impacted by shifts in income or benefit coverage.
- Pursue post-retirement employment opportunities if you are looking to fill your time or supplement your retirement income.
- Consult with an agency representative or a financial expert on payout options for your pension and other retirement funds.

While retirement may cause emotions such as stress and confusion, taking proactive steps can help ease the transition and identify new opportunities with those around you.

For access to more wellness resources, visit [www.theiacp.org/OSW](http://www.theiacp.org/OSW).



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