

# Lowell Police Department Volunteer Program

The mission of the Lowell Police Department is to work with the community to reduce crime, the fear of crime and improve the quality of life in the City of Lowell.

In an effort to increase citizen participation and integration into the community-policing model, a formalized volunteer program has been in place since 1996. Our Volunteer Program allows community members as well as students seeking practicum experiences to contribute to the betterment of their community.

## ***Induction and Process***

There is a structured process in place for both student interns and community volunteers who apply to the Lowell Police Department (LPD) Community Volunteer Program. Initially an application is completed and submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator. References are called, a criminal history check is completed and the Volunteer Coordinator conducts an interview. Skills, qualifications and interests are discussed as well as available positions. Applicants accepted into the Volunteer Program are required to read and adhere to the LPD's "*Standard Operating Procedures for Volunteers*". Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the work, community volunteers and interns are also required to sign a Volunteer Assignment Contract.

## ***Training***

Training for student interns takes place individually and on site. Traditionally, students performing practicums are here for short periods of time (one semester/4 month period) or occasionally for two semesters if it is a graduate student. Community volunteers are trained on site and are also required to participate in the LPD Citizen's Police Academy. This 13-week course educates citizens about how the LPD operates and the policing challenges facing the city.

## ***Position Descriptions***

Attached is a booklet of position descriptions for community volunteers and interns that include supervisor name, duties, qualifications and time commitments. These positions are reviewed and updated annually.

## ***Program Objectives***

It is the objective of the LPD Volunteer Program to link community volunteers and student interns with departments that can use their assistance and to:

- Encourage and provide opportunities for citizen participation.
- Enhance LPD services by utilizing volunteers to supplement the efforts of staff.
- Increase cooperative efforts between the LPD and private citizens for the benefit of the community.
- Promote and assist citizen understanding of problems and issues facing the LPD.
- Provide a positive experience for volunteers that will enhance their knowledge and skills.

### ***Program and Volunteer Evaluations***

There are surveys currently in place to help evaluate the Volunteer Program. An annual program evaluation is conducted to help us determine whether volunteer positions need to be modified, expanded or discontinued. This evaluation enables the volunteers to perform successfully and helps the program meet the needs of the LPD, the community and our volunteers. Evaluations of community volunteers are conducted by department/precinct supervisors on a yearly basis and placed in the volunteer's file. Exit interviews and surveys are conducted with all community volunteers and interns. This vehicle also helps the Volunteer Coordinator keep up with the interests of both community volunteers and students and assists us in improving and further developing the Volunteer Program.

### ***Conclusion***

Our volunteers are seen as definite factors in providing a quality service to the community as well as enhancing the problem-solving efforts of the police and community groups tackling neighborhood problems. Volunteers help extend and expand the scope of existing positions by providing additional services as well as assist various departments by providing skills, expertise, ideas, objective viewpoints and much needed manpower. The LPD recognizes that volunteers enhance our existing work force and promote a closer relationship between the community and the police department and we are honored to include our volunteers into our community-policing model.