



Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS)

Tulsa Police Department • 6066 E. 66th Street North • Tulsa, Oklahoma 74117
(918) 596-9313

BPAG 05/02/2001

SPANISH SPEAKING RIDE ALONG AND INTERPRETER PROGRAM

In order to address the needs of those in the community whose primary language is not English, the City of Tulsa Hispanic Affairs Commission and the Tulsa Police Department teamed up to create the Spanish Speaking Ride Along and Interpreter Program. This program provides Spanish-speaking citizens with an opportunity to assist Tulsa Police officers in better communicating with the Hispanic community. Bilingual citizens who volunteer for this program ride with on-duty officers and make their language skills available. The community has benefited in numerous ways such as:

- An interpreter is readily available to assist officers, as well as, citizens – which is a need that has been increasing rapidly, in part due to the increase in Tulsa’s Spanish-speaking population.
- Officers who have studied other languages have someone to assist them in practicing their pronunciation, vocabulary, and conversation skills.
- The partnership between department and the community is strengthened as officers gain deeper understanding of other cultures and interpreting volunteers gain an understanding in policing.

Persons wishing to participate in the Spanish Speaking Ride Along and Interpreter Program must submit a notarized Ride Along *Hold Harmless Agreement*, a Volunteer In Police Service (VIPS) application, and a brief resume of their qualifications regarding language skills.

This program combines the Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS) program with the Ride Along Program. Volunteer interpreters have unlimited ride along privileges. Upon approval of the application and submission of the *Hold Harmless Agreement*, volunteer interpreters are provided with a list of officers who would like to participate in the program. Interpreters may then contact the appropriate division and schedule ride alongs from the list.

Volunteer interpreters must be at least 18 years of age and pass a background check. Applicants must be of good moral character and have no criminal convictions for anything other than traffic violations. It is preferred that the applicant be able to volunteer at least four hours per week. If the applicant wishes to ride along as a Spanish-speaking interpreter, the Hispanic Affairs Commission will determine language proficiency in an interview with the applicant. For more program information, please contact the VIPS coordinator at 596-9313 or by email at volunteers@ci.tulsa.ok.us.