

	PALACIOS POLICE DEPARTMENT	
	Policy 4.9 Community Outreach and Customer Service	
	Effective Date: 1/04/2021	Replaces: 02/07/2006
	Approved: <i>Milton Rivera</i> Milton Rivera, Chief of Police	
	Reference: TBP 2.24	

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Palacios Police Department to embrace the tenants of community policing and engage the community in a positive and trusting manner. Community involvement is essential to the successful operation of any police department. Without the assistance and acceptance of the community, a police agency's effectiveness will not reach its full potential. Whenever possible, all avenues should be utilized in promoting the respect and cooperation of the public we serve.

All employees will extend reasonable assistance to the public. Reasonable assistance means the level of assistance that call load and current demand levels would permit. Employees must not neglect community services in the belief that the police function is restricted to crime control. It is the goal of the Palacios Police Department to promote good relationships with the public and this goal can be facilitated by professional conduct and effective community outreach.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide personnel and to affirm the department's commitment to seek out opportunities to interact with the public and to build trusting relationships with the community. Feedback from the community and effective community outreach are expected from all employees.

III. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- A. Manager's and Supervisor's Role – Managers and Supervisors, by their words and actions, are to set the example for their subordinates in establishing and maintaining professionalism when interacting with the public and other employees.
1. All managers and supervisors shall ensure their employees maintain professionalism in their conduct, and support them in promoting the respect and cooperation of the community in our daily contacts.
 2. Managers and supervisors are expected to keep their subordinates apprised of specific community problems and concerns.

3. Managers and supervisors should strive to cultivate avenues of communications with individual residents and groups within the community where they are assigned. Whenever practical, managers and supervisors should assign personnel to attend neighborhood meetings and civic functions.
 4. Managers and supervisors are responsible to ensure that community feedback is sought by all personnel. (TBP 2.24)
 5. The Chief of Police (or designee) will coordinate the community surveys and approve the content of the questions.
 6. Regardless of workload, the Chief of Police and all command staff are also expected to attend community meetings and to seek out opportunities to meet with all segments of the community.
- B. The Employee's Role – No one can do more to foster positive police/community relations than the employee who is in contact with the public on a day-to-day basis. Employees must realize that their actions in every community contact have an impact on how the Palacios Police Department is perceived by those we serve. Whenever possible, employees are expected to cultivate the respect and cooperation of the public through these contacts.
1. Employees shall provide reasonable assistance to all residents in need of service.
 2. All personnel are expected to seek out opportunities to promote trust and positive dialog with the public.
- C. Community Outreach –The Palacios Police Department is committed to seeking out constructive community outreach programs that provide opportunities for members of the community and the police department to come together. Department employees are also expected to seek feedback from community members. If actions plans or a new approach is needed to help solve a community concern, police personnel are expected to follow established internal protocols to recommend viable solutions.
1. Examples of Community Outreach Programs that are endorsed by this agency include, but are not limited to (TBP 2.24):
 - a. Community forums
 - b. "Coffee with the Chief" meetings at local venues / restaurants
 - c. Open House at the police station
 - d. Social media outlets
 - e. Officers eating lunch at area schools with students
 - f. Police Activities League (PAL)
 - g. Community security surveys
 - h. Mentorship programs with local at-risk youth
 - i. Regular attendance at civic and religious functions
 - j. Blue Santa/Silver Santa
 - k. Infant seat installation safety checks
 - l. Citizens Helping in Policing

- m. Back to school – shopping with a cop
 - n. Are u OK senior citizen program
2. Community Feedback Mechanisms (TBP 2.24) – seeking community feedback, and just as important - following up on the feedback, is crucial to the success of police community relations. The Palacios Police Department is committed to actively seeking community feedback and whenever viable options for improvement can be found – to act on those findings. The following methods will be used to seek community feedback (with prior approval of appropriate city personnel):
 - a. An annual survey will be placed in the water bill
 - b. An electronic survey will be created and posted on the department website. The community will be encouraged by all personnel to take the survey and the Chief of Police (or designee) will seek out local media outlets to promote the survey
 - c. All forums with the public will include a survey that can be submitted by those attending the meeting
 - d. Feedback opportunities are available via the agency’s social media outlets.
 3. Social Media is an effective tool for community outreach; however, the Palacios Police Department will not rely solely on this mechanism for community outreach (TPB 2.24). It is important for all employees to seek out effective outreach programs that impact all segments of our community.
 4. All survey results will be sent to the Chief of Police for review and action.

IV. MANDATORY COMMUNITY OUTREACH ON IMMIGRATION STATUS

It shall be the policy of this agency that community outreach shall be established with regard to immigration status information.

1. A peace officer may not inquire into the immigration status of a victim or witness to a crime unless the officer determines the inquiry is necessary to:
 - (1) investigate the offense; or
 - (2) provide the victim or witness with information about federal visas designed to protect individuals aiding law enforcement.
2. Community outreach regarding immigration status shall include, but shall not be limited to, outreach to the following persons:
 - (1) family violence, as that term is defined by Section 71.004, Family Code, including those receiving services at family violence centers under Chapter 51, Human Resources Code; and

(2) sexual assault, including those receiving services under a sexual assault program, as those terms are defined by Section 420.003.