

Springfield Police Department

Community Engagement Annual Report 2023

I. Introduction

This Annual Report memorializes the efforts made by SPD to engage and build collaborative relationships with the Springfield community. In the spirit of transparency and collaboration, this report is meant to detail the current community engagement efforts the SPD has made within the past year and identify areas of continued improvement for ongoing community relationship building. We recognize that work in this area is ongoing and will continue to expand and grow as our relationships with the community do.

This report is intended to highlight for the Springfield community what the police department has done, is doing, and intends to do in the future regarding community engagement initiatives. As part of this report, SPD will identify deficiencies and opportunities for improvement in community engagement initiatives. The report will include specific problems addressed and steps SPD and the community took toward their resolution. The report will describe how SPD has sought input from the community regarding the Agreement's implementation. The report will also identify SPD's steps to measure officer outreach to community members.

The goals outlined in this document specifically address the obligations and goals delineated within Paragraph 211 of the Consent Decree. This is the first Annual Report covering 2023, and the police department will issue one every year identifying the ongoing relationship building, continued growth, and dedication to sustained community engagement.

II. Current Community Engagement Efforts

Community meetings/events create opportunities to meaningfully engage with the Springfield community and learn about citizens' concerns. Communities themselves should drive the agendas at these events so that we can learn from their knowledge and experience and better understand the problems they face. To succeed as public safety officers, we must also build and maintain trust and credibility with community members. We want community members to express and develop solutions to their public safety concerns and to further build trust and legitimacy with the Springfield community through cooperation and collaboration.

SPD sworn members interacting with the public regularly are encouraged to participate in neighborhood meetings/events and community engagement opportunities.

- Weekly C3 Meetings are held in Mason Square, Forest Park, and the North End and South End communities.

These weekly meetings have been in place since March 2015 and have allowed officers to interact with these communities through robust dialogue and attendance at community relationship-building functions, holiday events, sporting events, and festivals. C-3 and Beat Management Team Meetings always include officers and supervisors so that community issues can be heard and appropriately acted upon. Supervisors attending strengthen the effectiveness of the meetings. Ordinance officers attend all Beat Management Team Meetings and offer guidance and support for the quality of life issues. Each police sector has an assigned dedicated Ordinance officer. They are available by cell phone and email, so access is convenient. Additionally, 311 calls are routed to appropriate sector officers.

- Monthly Beat Management Meetings in all (9) city sectors.
 These monthly meetings have been in place since 1996. Neighborhood volunteers chair meetings, an opportunity for the community to share issues, identify problems, develop solutions, and review crime reports and prevention strategies. The Beat Management Team Meetings are at consistent times and locations, and the city's EVERBRIDGE (Robo Call/Text program) sends specific reminders of the meetings, encouraging the public to attend and participate.
- Monthly Neighborhood Council and Civic Association meetings in all (9) city sectors.
 (There are 17 recognized Neighborhood Councils and Civic Associations in Springfield.)
- The Springfield Police Department conducts a Citizens Police Academy to provide information about Policing and its processes in Springfield.
 These 12-week academies occur at a cadence of approximately 2 to 3 per year.
- Any additional community events identified for SPD participation

Quarterly Community Meetings

The Quarterly Meeting held on March 22, 2023, was the impetus for the quarterly meetings. It included a robust dialogue that, at times, grew contentious; as a result, the process was refined. Since we have had a meeting every quarter in 2023, we will continue a similar cadence in 2024.

We have implemented an agenda allowing community input/perspectives after the presentation. All parties involved were respectful, and after the meeting, some relationships were started, and others strengthened. We found value in sharing varying points of view and came to a consensus that we would continue to strive to bridge the gap between the SPD and our community partners. Lessons were learned regarding the ability to solicit the participation of those traditionally underserved and to go beyond the understood method(s) of reaching these members of our communities. These strategies and partners will be leveraged to seek participation in future events.

The quarterly meetings discussed topics such as explaining metrics critical to the SPD's success and its progress in meeting these objectives. We will also continue to discuss the department's efforts toward the development and sustainability of transparency and accountability in our processes, the development and release of new policies and training, and the status of the BOPC and IIU procedures.

During 2023, the Springfield Police Department was either responsible for facilitating or participating in the following events;

Four C3 Meetings a Week (192 Yearly)

- The essential goals of C3 Policing:
- Create a safe and secure environment
- Promote and foster community relationships/partnerships with local, State Police, community leaders, and local organizations
- Reduce gang activity and violence
- Establish positive and effective youth/parental programs
- The C3 policing effort will be based in four geographical areas of Springfield.

The goals of C3 policing are achieved through citizen and business interactions through community meetings, walking and bike patrols, and officer availability through phone calls and office visits—events like coffee with the cops, youth sports events, community picnics, etc.

C3 Weekly Meetings (Meetings occurred both in person and via Zoom based on community member availability)

- a. Forest Park: Held every Monday @ 10 a.m.
 - b. Mason Square: Held every Wednesday @ 11 a.m.
 - c. Metro: Held every Wednesday @ 11 a.m.
 - d. North End: Held every Thursday @ 11 a.m.
- 2) Beat Management Meetings
- a. North Division
 - i. Sector A – 2nd Tuesday of the Month
 - ii. Sector B – 3rd Thursday of the Month
 - iii. Sector C – 3rd Tuesday of the Month
 - iv. Sector D – 3rd Wednesday of the Month
 - v. Sector G – 4th Tuesday of the Month
 - b. Central Division
 - i. Sector E – 1st Thursday of the Month
 - ii. Sector F – 3rd Thursday of the Month
 - c. South Division
 - i. Sector H – 1st Wednesday of the Month
 - ii. Sector I – 1st Tuesday of the Month (February, April, June, August, October and December)
 - iii. Sector I – 3rd Tuesday of the Month (January, March, May, July, September, November)
 - d. Any additional community events identified for SPD participation
- 3) Seventeen Monthly Neighborhood Council and Civic Association meetings in all (9) city sectors.

Community Work and Vehicle Day – children explored police vehicles and spent time with Law Enforcement.

MLK Read Aloud/Events at Elementary schools in Mason Square – Officers read to the Children

Coffee with a cop—Seniority House, every other month—These are Monthly events where residents have an informal chat and coffee with Officers to express concerns and build relationships and trust.

ALL YEAR - Breakfast Books EVERY Friday in FP Elementary Schools – Officers read books every morning during breakfast with the elementary students

Black history read aloud/breakfast – Officers read books to elementary school children.

Career Fairs (3 High schools) – Provided resources on becoming law enforcement, answering questions, and engaging with students about the profession; Cadets are included.

College Fair – Officers share their experiences in Law Enforcement also discuss their college journeys

Educational Presentations for Elders – Officers share safety tips, answer questions, and engage with residents.

Coffee with a cop – Highland house, every other month - Monthly events where residents have an informal chat and coffee with Officers to express concerns and build relationships and trust. Bring in different agencies for additional resources.

Catholic Charities Presentation/Intro to positive relationships with police – Speaking with migrants about the city, laws, and processes if needed to speak to a police officer

Christina's House presentation to youth on Drug Prevention – speaking to youth on drug prevention, Q&A's

4 Easter Events – participating and engaging with the public

Cops and Bobber Fishing Derby – Officers and Children spend the day fishing, gifts, raffles

Awards Ceremony – Mason Square C3 participate and engage in the Awards Ceremony

Community Clean-ups – Officers and community members clean up the neighborhood together

National Drug Takeback – Officers engage with the public and aid in the collection of prescription medications to be disposed

Hoop UP Springfield – vendor – Officers are available to students at a job fair to answer questions and provide information about law enforcement opportunities.

End of School Elementary School BBQ – Officers attend, participate, and engage with students and families

Kensington Field Day - Officers attend, participate, and engage with students and families

Summer Field Day - Officers attend, participate, and engage with students and families

Summer Carnival - Officers attend, participate, and engage with students and families

Back-to-school events in all 4 C3 areas

10 National Night Out locations – Officers engage, provide resources/demos, and participate in all events to celebrate a “NIGHT OFF OF CRIME” with community residents throughout the city.

Halloween – Trunk or Treats about 7-10 different locations throughout the city

Thanksgiving dinner the Elks – Officers participate, serve food, and engage with residents

Shop with a Cop – Students are chosen, given a gift card, and can shop around the store with Law Enforcement Officers to take and develop trust with law enforcement.

Fill a Cruiser—Police Cruisers are filled with toys donated by the public, which are then gifted to children at a Holiday event established by our C3 Teams.

Christmas party at the Elks

Big Brothers Big Sisters—Officers are mentors to young children who need a positive role model in their lives.

Toy Give A-ways to Children's Hospitals – Baystate

Canned goods collected for the Gray House (Shelter)

Turkey Give A-ways

Drive through food and toy drive

Identify specific families in need and donate and prepare Christmas dinners to families in need.

Neighborhood Crime Watch Collaborations

Several collaborations with Religious Institutions – Attend, engage, and participate in events and food drives.

Faith and Blue working with religious on outreach and working together

Meetings with Landlords and Business owners when safety concerns arise and need to be discussed several times a year – Officers hear concerns, provide solutions, develop a plan

Neighborhood Resource Fairs/ Block Parties – Officers engage, participate, and provide resources to build trust and open dialogue.

She raised money, donations, and gifts to families who may have dealt with traumatic situations.

Social Media – share information with the public on a routine basis.

III. Identified Deficiencies and Opportunities for Improvement in Community Engagement Initiatives

A continued lack of trust on behalf of the community and gaps on behalf of the SPD in providing or recognizing missed opportunities for engagement produced slower-than-expected communication efforts.

- During multiple meetings, SPD provided contact information or the ability to sign up for different modes of contact, but these options were not leveraged.
 - o SAIU@Springfieldpolice.net
 - o Publicpolicy@Springfieldpolice.net
 - o Everbridge Robocall network
 - o Social media feeds

We have identified the lack of internet access that prevents some members/segments of the community from taking advantage of some technology-based initiatives. A more analog approach to these community members is necessary.

IV. SPD Sought Input from The Community Related to The Agreement's Implementation

Community Calendar

The SPD has developed a community calendar accessible to all citizens. The calendar identifies all public meetings held within the city that SPD hosts or attends. The SPD community calendar is posted on the Springfield Police Department's website. Events will also be publicized through social media, email, and automated calls and messages from EVERBRIDGE.

The SPD's community liaison moderates this calendar. It provides an opportunity to update events in real-time, so if there are cancellations or delays, such notices can be promptly posted and publicly accessible. Additionally, community events such as Learn-to-Skate, Halloween Trunk-or-Treat events, National Night Out locations, Holiday parties, Cops and Bobbers Hooks and Ladders Fishing Tournament, and the C3 Youth basketball league, and others are additional community events SPD holds annually will be advertised on the community calendar.

If there is a community event you would like SPD to be aware of and possibly attend, please forward the event information to sarce@springfieldpolice.net and submit it to be included on the [community events calendar](#).

Ongoing efforts to continue and develop sustainable relationships need to be continued and further developed using:

- Social media campaigns, pamphlets, and community engagement to expand attendance at established meetings;
- Multifaceted community outreach through information sharing, virtual platforms, resource materials (e.g., Good Neighbor Handbook and other similar resources), and stakeholder development
- Direct positive experiences with members of the SPD and its partner agencies
- Community Portal that provides an interactive space to engage with pertinent information of possible interest to the community

Community Portal

The Community portal was developed with community insight and in collaboration with community organizations. The Community Portal will include, but not limited to, the following:

- Graphs showing Sworn Personnel demographics
- Use of Force by Level(s)
- City Protect Portal (heat map of calls for service geographically)
- Crash Reports
- Reference chart for available city resources (311 calls)
- IIU Reporting Information and Options

V. Steps SPD Has Taken to Measure Officer Outreach to Community Members

- a. SPD identified potential metrics for capturing engagement globally; while not implemented in 2023, these strategies target interaction between parties rather than efforts by either party.
 - i. Attendance at meetings
 - ii. Input by the community on policies
 - iii. Increase in SERV lists
 - iv. Cadence of meetings
- b. Public education is critical to our efforts; community members must attend meetings for this purpose. Developing meetings to provide education on our processes increases transparency. Examples are force training, policy review, and officer certification through POST.

- c. The SPD will solicit feedback from the community on its engagement efforts and overall experience with and perceptions of SPD and public safety through various means, including an annual community survey. Information about the survey's release will be disseminated, and officers are encouraged to participate in getting the survey out to as many community members as possible.

VI. Conclusion

In light of the above, SPD will continue and expand its use of social media to proactively communicate with community members about community engagement opportunities, inform them about Police Department reforms, and publicize newly released public reports and essential information related to reform efforts as they become available. While critical to our goals, the trend of moving towards digital interaction must be supported by an analog approach in the form of phone calls, printed materials, and leveraging partners (community groups) to guarantee actual communication with members unprepared for virtual engagement. We cannot exclude this segment of our community as they may be those most in need of services. The community newsletter, on-street engagement/relationship building, and in-person meetings will solidify a traditional approach.