



City of Seattle

Seattle Police Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Dan Eder, City Council Central Staff Interim Director
Councilmember Lisa Herbold, Chair, Public Safety and Human Services Committee

From: Adrian Diaz, SPD Interim Chief of Police

Date: September 17, 2020

Subject: SPD Report on CSO Program Implementation (SLI 11-A-1)

Pursuant to Statement of Legislative Intent 11-A-1, adopted with the 2020 Adopted Budget, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) has developed the attached report for review by the Public Safety and Human Services Committee and the Council Central Staff Director.

This report provides a brief background on the reinstatement of the Community Service Officer program and reflects on the status of the implementation and operations of the Community Service Officer (CSO) program, including information on the six new CSOs that were funded in the 2020 Adopted Budget (per the Statement of Legislative Intent).

We look forward to realizing the benefit of many months of work to implement this community-centric program in a way that promotes community collaboration for the purpose of improving public safety and wellness.

cc: Lorena González, Council President
Andrew Lewis, Councilmember
Tammy Morales, Councilmember
Kshama Sawant, Councilmember
Mike Fong, Deputy Mayor
Ben Noble, Budget Director
Angela Socci, Chief Financial Officer
Mark Baird, Chief Operating Officer
Jennifer Devore, City Budget Office
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The Seattle Police Department's (SPD) Community Service Officer (CSO) program operated for thirty-three years until its discontinuation in 2004 due to budget cuts. Large gaps in service had to be filled, and relationships the CSOs had made in the community were lost. The CSO unit provided exemplary customer service, kindness and respect to the community they served. With the CSO unit being absent from the department for fifteen years, parts of the community connections were lost. The community and SPD felt there was a disconnect and a large gap needed to be filled. Prompted by considerable community interest in the program's revival, SPD requested funding to reinstate the program during 2017-18 Biennial Budget process. The Seattle City Council subsequently set aside funding for CSO program development in 2017 and initial implementation in the second quarter of 2018.

Throughout 2017, SPD worked with Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) to conduct a racial equity analysis and extensive community engagement. The result was a detailed community engagement report which documents the community input that has informed every aspect of the CSO program development. The community engagement report was taken very seriously and implemented during the hiring process.

1. CSO Program Design Summary

The SPD CSO Unit is staffed by non-commissioned officers who are trained and work as liaison personnel between the community and the Police Department. CSOs do not carry weapons nor enforce criminal laws. Instead, they serve to bridge the service gap on non-criminal calls for service and perform a variety of public safety-related community service and outreach work.

The CSO Unit is a unique community resource that responds to and addresses public safety concerns that do not immediately require a police officer or other agency response. The CSOs provide information and service referrals to individuals who have been contacted by the police. They maintain an excellent working knowledge of available services and resources, which make them ideal "resource connectors." They receive training in police operations, social work, de-escalation, conflict resolution and mediation, crisis intervention, institutional racism and cultural competency, using internal and external training channels. They develop community partnerships to support increased collaboration between SPD and the community for the purpose of leveraging community strengths and identifying alternative strategies to various law enforcement and social issues.

CSOs work assigned areas of the city on foot or in marked CSO vehicles, responding to radio dispatched calls for service. CSOs assist with mediating non-violent disputes (e.g., family, neighborhood and landlord/tenant) and provide follow-up on calls for non-criminal emergency services (e.g., food, housing, transportation and social services). CSOs work closely with dispatchers, police officers, parking enforcement officers, crime prevention personnel and various social service agencies to coordinate police and social services and exchange information.

At full implementation, SPD initially planned to deploy 10 CSOs and 2 CSO Supervisors across two shifts, up to six days a week, Monday through Saturday, excluding Sundays and holidays. The 2020 Adopted Budget funded an additional unit: 5 CSOs and 1 CSO Supervisor. Calls for service are received and

dispatched through the CSO office or by police officer referral through the Communications Center. CSOs are easily identified by a clearly marked “soft” uniform (e.g., collared shirt with “Community Service Officer” in bold letters on back). They will drive vehicles marked with SPD CSO emblems.

The CSOs report to a central command and location to encourage collaboration amongst the unit personnel and ensure consistent training, supervision, and oversight. They are housed in the Community Outreach section, collocated with the department’s civilian Crime Prevention Coordinators, who work closely with the community to develop and implement crime prevention strategies and promote community safety through public education, community organizing, and information sharing.

Given the expertise that this group will surely develop on the job, there is an opportunity for CSOs to be deployed on a short-term basis to assist or advise on specific projects. However, the department believes that the scope of the program should not be exclusively limited to a single issue-area (e.g., homeless outreach). As stated above, the CSOs work closely with dispatchers, police officers, parking enforcement officers, crime prevention personnel, and various social service agencies to coordinate police and social services and exchange information – including, but not limited to the Navigation Team and the Crisis Response Unit.

The CSO program has been rolled out over several months and full implementation will happen as the COVID-19 pandemic allows.

2. CSO Program Implementation

SPD has continued to refine the CSO program details in preparation for program implementation. The department has a Police Sergeant who oversees the CSO Unit. Since January, the Sergeant has initiated the development of the job announcement, recruitment and hiring strategies, unit policies, training curricula and onboarding materials. The implementation of the CSO program was strategically planned to ensure that the CSO’s would be a diverse group of highly professional individuals that had a great variety of experience that would equitably serve the community. Additional program details are discussed below.

Recruitment / Hiring:

The SPD worked with the Community Police Commission (CPC) to develop a comprehensive outreach strategy to recruit a diverse applicant pool that is representative of the communities the CSO Unit serves. The job announcements were posted from May to September 2019 and widely distributed by the community partners who contributed to SPD/SOCR’s Community Engagement Report. SPD received over 1,000 applications for only 18 positions. Following an extremely competitive hiring process, candidates were identified for all positions. Fifteen of the eighteen had been fully on-boarded by March 13, 2020, when a City-wide hiring freeze was implemented. There are three positions whose candidates had not yet completed the background investigation and formal hiring process. The three positions include one CSO Supervisor and two CSOs. These positions will remain vacant due to budget concerns.

The CSOs started work on April 15, 2020 to help meet the communities needs during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Deployment:

CSOs work staggered shifts for evening and weekend coverage. The department plans to deploy two teams Monday through Friday (730-1600) and Tuesday through Saturday (1130-2000). Both teams will be stationed at the Seattle Justice Center (610 5th Ave), a central location conducive to efficient and effective deployment of a city-wide resource, like the CSO Unit. CSOs have assigned tasks and duties throughout their work shift. Their time is split between three categories of work: 1) community engagement and education, 2) resource guidance/connection, and 3) youth services and diversion. CSOs are dispatched by radio through the SPD's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.

Training:

To ensure CSOs have the skills necessary to provide these services, they will receive comprehensive training in police operations, social issues, de-escalation, conflict resolution and mediation, crisis intervention, institutional racism and cultural relevance. During the training process, CSOs participate in a ride along with patrol to experience what they could encounter in the field. The CSO unit's training was adjusted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All CSOs have been engaged in internal field training and other trainings that emphasize resources, and resource guidance/connection. The list below represents a sample of known courses available to new CSOs during their onboarding.

- CSO Academy
- Radio Procedures
- Geography
- Bias-Free Policing
- De-escalation
- SMCs / RCWs
- Crisis Intervention
- Domestic Violence
- Traffic Assistance (e.g., Flagging)
- Emergency Vehicle Operation Course (EVOC)
- Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)
- Landlord Tenant
- Mediation
- Court System Navigation
- Child/Adult Protective Services Navigation
- Motivational Interviewing
- Cultural Relevance
- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
- Records Management System (Mark 43)
- Defensive Tactics
- Wellness (For contact with homeless/elderly/vulnerable members of the community)
- Community Policing (For interactions at events and members of the public)
- First Aid (CSOs represent SPD and should have basic CPR/First aid to assist the public)
- Signs of Influence
- Emotional Intelligence

In the future, SPD will implement a field training model to train new CSOs. At the program's inception, the department will rely on internal and external training to prepare the first batch of CSOs to execute

their job duties in a competent and professional manner. In the early stages of the program, the CSO Supervisors are tasked with developing a field training program and corresponding curriculum. It will be modeled after the field training model used by the former CSO Unit as well as the existing field training program for new officers. In the meantime, the CSO Supervisors will create and maintain a professional and constructive atmosphere for daily on-the-job training. They will also be responsible for providing consistent, honest, objective assessments of individual CSO performance.

Vehicles:

SPD has identified eight existing hybrid and electric vehicles for use by the CSO Unit on an interim basis. The CSO unit will have marked Ford Fusions but are currently utilizing Nissan Leaf's that are marked community service. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic the production of the Ford Fusions has been significantly delayed. CSOs will need transportation to deploy to all areas of the city. The CSO vehicle will be visibly and distinctly different from patrol vehicles. It will be easy to spot and identify as community service. The CSO unit vehicle will have a friendly appearance and carry outreach supplies to immediately meet the need of an individual. Outreach supplies would include resource guides for individuals experiencing homelessness, bus tickets, and small food items such as granola bars. The CSO unit vehicle will lack tactical supplies such as a caged back seat. It is the CSO unit's goal to use the vehicles for emergency transport, such as transporting domestic violence survivors or children who are being placed in Child Protective Service's custody. The CSO unit vehicles will be an essential part of reaching all parts of the community and assisting with keeping the community safe.

Uniforms:

The CSO uniform is a friendly light blue shirt and black pants. The uniform was carefully designed to have a friendly and approachable look. It was top priority in the uniform process that a CSO is clearly different than an officer in patrol. This was done for safety reasons, as well as to emphasize a CSOs approachability. CSO's have different badges and patches than sworn officers and parking enforcement. The patch and the badge were selected to stand out from other law enforcement officials and make CSOs easily identifiable. The patch was created by the CSO team and great thought was put into the design. The CSO patch is a light blue with a dark silhouette of the Seattle skyline having the space needle in the center. The patch also includes the water and Mount Rainier looking over the great city. The uniforms are currently in the process of being ordered. The CSO badge will have an eagle with its wings down and CSO in the center of the badge. For temporary uniforms the CSO's are wearing light blue polos with an SPD logo.

Community Service Officers during COVID 19:

SPD's CSO unit has been performing vital and essential duties during the COVID 19 pandemic. During the beginning of the Stay Home Stay Safe Order the unit received requests for assistance from the community in the International District. A community partner in the International District was in need of assistance packing and delivering food for low-income elders who struggled to leave their home in fear of getting the virus. The CSO unit quickly responded to the request for assistance, and spent a day

helping members of the International District pack and deliver food. CSOs helped deliver approximately one thousand meals that day. The impact was so incredible that the community partner asked for additional assistance the next week. CSOs have been assisting this community partner for several weeks to ensure low income elders are getting food during this difficult time.

The CSOs have been patrolling the precinct areas and checking in with business owners and community members. The CSO unit emphasizes the importance on connecting with the community and having transparent and open modes of communication. During routine patrol CSOs are having conversations with community members about community specific needs and concerns. There have been several businesses expressing their concern with crime in the area and being unsure how to get help. CSOs have been able to educate these business owners and community members about how to report crime and what to do if they feel a crime is occurring. Some of these businesses and community members were able to build trust with the CSOs and share serious concerns or crimes that had happened to them or someone they knew. Building trust within the community is an incredibly important task as a CSO, as the aim to build trust between the community and SPD. Being visible in the community during this pandemic is vital to letting the community know that the CSOs are here for them, even in the most trying times.

These checks have led to CSOs assisting other communities in the city with food delivery. Currently we are assisting individuals in the Filipino community deliver food to community members who are struggling during the pandemic. Each week CSOs deploy from SPD headquarters to community centers in the south precinct to pick up meals and groceries to deliver. The CSO unit is providing an essential and vital service to these individuals who need groceries. The COVID 19 pandemic has altered the CSO routine watch, but the unit has adapted to the needs of the community. Adapting to the needs of the community is one of the CSO units most important tasks, as they recognize communities and the city are ever changing.

During this pandemic, the CSO unit has strived to bring a smile to the community's face by participating in the Friday Night Lights events. The CSO unit aims to let the community know that they are there for them, no matter the circumstances.