

IACP NEWS

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Contact: Sara Johnson
(703) 836-6767 x209

VOLUNTEERS IN POLICE SERVICE (VIPS) PROGRAM CELEBRATES ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

ALEXANDRIA, VA, - Only one year after its birth, the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program -- managed and implemented by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) -- now includes more than 500 registered programs, representing more than 22,000 volunteers in 49 states and the District of Columbia.

The VIPS program is one of the Citizen Corps programs under the USA Freedom Corps initiative created by President George W. Bush. These programs share the common goal of helping communities prevent, prepare for and respond to crime, natural disasters and other emergencies.

Besides IACP, the VIPS program is supported in partnership with, and on behalf of, the White House Office of the USA Freedom Corps and the U.S. Department of Justice. The programs' ultimate goal is to enhance the capacity of state, tribal and local law enforcement agencies to utilize volunteers.

Volunteers who participate in VIPS programs assist departments by performing non-sworn duties, such as answering phones, compiling crime data, preparing incident reports and facilitating crime prevention programs.

"VIPs is the first program to bring together law enforcement volunteer initiatives nationwide to share resources and support each other's efforts," said IACP President Joseph Samuels, Jr. police chief of Richmond, Calif. "This national effort assists state and local law enforcement agencies by increasing the number of law enforcement volunteers, expanding or improving various components of existing programs, and aiding agencies without VIPS programs to establish them."

Samuels added: "The program is extremely important, particularly in this time of heightened terrorism concerns across the land."

Other highlights of VIPS very successful first year:

- The website for VIPS at www.policevolunteers.org serves as a gateway for

The International Association of Chiefs of Police
515 North Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314
www.theiacp.org

law enforcement volunteer opportunities. Over the past year, the website has had more than 4.8 million hits.

- The VIPS staff has made presentations and/or conducted site visits in 22 states and the District of Columbia.

- President Bush acknowledged the VIPS program in a letter read by Attorney General John Ashcroft at the 109th Annual IACP Conference in Minneapolis in October 2002.

- President Bush has recognized individual VIPS volunteers in some of his speeches and visits around the Nation.

The IACP is the world's oldest and largest association of law enforcement executives. Founded in 1893, the IACP currently has over 19,000 members in 90 countries.