



M. Jay Farr
CHIEF OF POLICE

ARLINGTON COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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June 11, 2020

Dear Community Member,

Thank you for taking the time to reach out to the Arlington County Police Department with your questions, thoughts and concerns. The horrible death of [Mr. George Floyd](#) has sparked a national conversation around policing in America. We remain committed to building strong partnerships with the community while doing our jobs in a way that earns and keeps the public's trust. For many years we have worked with the community to hear concerns, build a diverse workforce, train our officers to de-escalate situations, and ensure accountability. We strive to improve every hour of every day and we welcome the suggestions from many in Arlington and nationally on ways to better do our jobs. Shortly, the County Manager will be appointing a group to review our current practices and offer suggestions on steps to improve how we do our job. The County Manager, next week, will also propose the introduction of Body Worn Cameras to supplement our current in-car camera system.

Additionally, we have heard from many about the role of our department in responding to a mutual aid request at Lafayette Park in Washington D.C. on Monday, June 1, 2020. I want to address these concerns and also share the policies and practices we have in place to ensure professional conduct and to continue to earn the community's trust.

WHAT WE DO

Commitment to Training

We provide our officers with exceptional training built around the principles of de-escalation. During the hiring process, potential candidates are provided with realistic scenarios and are evaluated on their ability to make mature decisions while de-escalating tense and difficult situations. Once hired, new officers receive approximately 800 hours of formal Academy training followed by 630 hours of field training. This training includes, but is not limited to:

- use of force
- implicit bias
- fair and impartial policing
- how to best communicate with those with disabilities and cognitive disorders
- active listening.

De-escalation is constantly reinforced throughout our training curriculum. Over the past five years our sworn staff have attended over 55,000 hours of training annually. This training includes our [Crisis Intervention Training](#) program which is designed to equip officers with the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with a person in a mental crisis. These skills are also used to de-escalate a variety of situations, regardless of the mental status of parties involved. De-escalation principles are also a part of our training in control tactics, firearms qualifications and emergency vehicle operations.

Ensuring Accountability

Accountability is the basis from which we operate. To ensure compliance [with departmental policy and procedures](#), the Department's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) is tasked with internal audits on all allegations of misconduct and any concerns of use or misuse of equipment, personnel, or training. Our written directives outline expectations, use of force guidelines, procedures on investigating administrative matters, the disciplinary process, how employee performance is monitored and our prohibition of biased based profiling. We constantly monitor and investigate all complaints made against members of the agency. An annual analysis of calls for service numbers compared to [complaints](#) against our officers shows that we receive complaints in less than one-tenth of a percent of our documented police/citizen encounters.

When employee actions are not consistent with Arlington County policies and procedures, appropriate corrective measures are taken to ensure that type of incident does not occur in the future; this includes disciplinary action, up to and including termination. All [internal administrative investigations](#) are tracked and stored by the Office of Professional Responsibility. Failure to report an incident and/or misconduct by any member of the department is not tolerated.

Advancing Best Practices

I am proud of our efforts to pursue and improve our best practices. This past year, our department earned its initial accreditation through the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC). During the accreditation process, the department evaluated our policies to ensure compliance with the standards in the [Virginia Law Enforcement Program Accreditation Manual](#). We regularly review our policy directives to ensure compliance with accreditation standards and legislative changes. We have heard from community members about various policy reform initiatives and will review them as part of the group mentioned earlier. (Details on this group will be on the County's website in the near future).

Building Diversity

In order to provide the best professional law enforcement services to the Arlington Community, we strive to hire personnel that reflects our community's demographics. Our Personnel and Recruitment Unit works diligently to seek individuals from all backgrounds who possess the necessary qualifications to serve Arlington. While we recognize the police department's demographic data does not perfectly match that of the Arlington community, the hires since January 2018 show a positive trend towards

aligning more closely with our demographics. Arlington County Police Department [requires sixty semester hours](#) of college credit or prior military or law enforcement service, however, a significant majority of our sworn staff hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

	Arlington Community	Arlington Police – Current Staff	Arlington Police – Hires Since January 2018
White	64%	74.3%	64.9%
Black	8.2%	10.8%	15.5%
Hispanic	15.1%	8.7%	14.4%
Asian	9.6%	2.1%	5.2%
Other/Multi-Race	3%	4.1%	N/A

Arlington community data source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Working with the Community

Since the 1990's, the Arlington County Police Department has embraced community policing, a philosophy and practice that seeks to involve everyone in the safety and welfare of their community. We are committed to actively engaging with the public to build strong community-based partnerships and to foster police interaction and cooperation with those we serve. Throughout the year, our [Community Outreach Unit](#) hosts and attends various engagement opportunities, conducts seasonal donation drives, provides safety presentations, works proactively with businesses and commercial areas and conducts patrol and crime prevention initiatives. Some examples include: [Coffee with a Cop](#), [Facebook Live discussion with local Black Lives Matter organizer Yolande Kwinana](#), [Chief's Advisory Council](#), [Arlington Restaurant Initiative](#), [Homeless Outreach Coalition](#) and [Holiday Toy Drives](#).

OUR ACTIONS ON MAY 31 AND JUNE 1, 2020

Specialized Units

The Arlington County Police Department is committed to supporting the peaceful expression of First Amendment Rights. Over the past two weeks we successfully assisted thousands of residents who participated in a number of marches, demonstrations and rallies throughout Arlington to express their support for Black Lives Matter and concerns with police misconduct.

Our Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) is used only to maintain peace and order with crowds experiencing unrest. These officers are highly trained and skilled in peaceful crowd control and dispersal. The unit utilizes the Public Order Model of crowd control, based on the findings of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) CDU working group, established in May 2015 in the aftermath of the Baltimore riots. The COG working group concluded that practices in place prior to 2015 were outdated, required excessive amounts of personnel, and exposed both the public and officers to a

higher likelihood of injury. The group identified advanced tactics and equipment used internationally that are more effective, use fewer officers trained to a higher standard and rely on less force, including weapons, and more on dynamic movement, which is designed to relocate a crowd with minimal contact. The Unit is also trained to focus on those engaging in unlawful actions.

Regional Partnerships

Under our [Memorandum of Agreement](#) with the United States Park Police (USPP), Arlington responded to a request to [provide assistance from our Civil Disturbance Unit \(CDU\)](#) in Lafayette Park on Sunday, May 31 and Monday, June 1.

On Sunday, May 31, those officers were stationed near Lafayette Park, where large crowds of protesters had gathered. They were held in reserve until approximately 10:30 p.m. when they were deployed to help move protesters back from H Street, to make it possible for firefighters to extinguish fires that had been set.

On Sunday evening, the USPP requested Arlington units return on Monday to continue to assist them. On Monday, June 1, Arlington Police Officers returned to their staging area at Lafayette Park. At 2 p.m., the Arlington commanders were informed that their mission would be to close H Street to allow safe space for construction crews to build a physical barrier at the edge of the park. This did not occur until approximately 6:30p.m. under the command of the USPP. At no time were Arlington CDU officers, who were moving the demonstrators, consulted or made part of the decision-making process concerning a Presidential movement. Each member of the CDU followed orders to move the crowd for the sole purpose of permitting space for construction of a physical barrier.

Reviewing our Role in Mutual Aid

At the direction of the County Board and County Manager we will participate in a review of our role in mutual aid. Each of the officers who are part of the CDU unit joined so that the often fraught and tense circumstances surrounding the vital and necessary exercise of First Amendment Rights is protected and encouraged in a safe and peaceful way. The Police Department provides mutual aid to our partners willingly and proudly and we rely on our partners in the region to do the same for us. The basis for all these mutual aid efforts, however, must be built upon trust that our officers will be used solely for our shared law enforcement and public safety purposes.

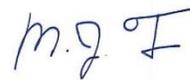
Next Steps

As noted earlier, we will be participating in efforts to review various proposals to review police practices. We have heard from community members about various policy reform initiatives. We are currently reviewing our policies and practices to ensure they are aligned with industry best practices and anticipate releasing additional information on our website in the near future. In addition, in 2015, 25 Arlington County Police Officers and Sheriff's Deputies participated in a test and evaluation of Body Worn Camera (BWC) technology. Our officers welcome the addition of Body Worn Cameras to supplement the in-car camera technology already in place.

The Arlington County Police Department has a longstanding history of community policing. We take great pride in the relationships we've built throughout Arlington. We are committed to remaining engaged and transparent with our community while holding ourselves accountable to the highest professional standards. Should you have additional questions, our Command Staff welcome the opportunity to meet with members of the Arlington Community and discuss their concerns during small group conversations. You can request a meeting by completing our [online form](#).

Thank you.

Sincerely,



M. Jay Farr
Chief of Police

Additional Resources:

- [ACPD's Commitment to the Community](#)
- [Arlington County Police Written Directives Manual](#) (available online via PowerDMS)
- [ACPD Data 2019](#)
- [Office of Professional Responsibility 2019 Annual Report](#)
- [Crisis Intervention Team training](#)
- [A letter to the Arlington Community from the Chief of Police](#)
- [Statement from the Police Chief, Union and Association Regarding the Death of Mr. George Floyd](#)
- [Press Release from Arlington County Board and Manager on Arlington's Decision to Withdraw its Police Officers from the District of Columbia](#)
- [Mutual Aid FAQs](#)
- [MOU with United States Park Police](#)
- [Emergency or Public Service Event Law Enforcement Support Request Form](#)
- [VLEPSC Assessment Report](#)
- [VLEPSC Program Manual](#)
- [VLEPSC Initial Accreditation Certificate](#)
- [Police publications](#)