



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure		
	<b>APD.SOP.7036 APD Explorer Program</b> <b>Effective Date: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024</b>	
<b>Chief Darin Schierbaum</b>	<b>Signature by: DS</b>	<b>Date Signed: 10/22/2024</b>

**SIGNIFICANT CHANGES**

APD Staff,

The Policy and Standards Section is dedicated to providing the department, and its employees, with accurate, understandable and transparent policies. In order to publish policies that reflect the most up-to-date standards, the Policy and Standard Section regularly reviews all policies to ensure that they are reflective of the current mission and objectives of the Atlanta Police Department.

No significant changes were found during the review and renewal of APD.SOP.7036 “APD Explorer Program”. However, we encourage you to read the policy below in its entirety to better understand how the program:

- Provides youth in the Atlanta Metro area leadership opportunities.
- Uses local events to introduce the Explorers to community & public service.
- Familiarizes youth with the field and career path to Law Enforcement.

**Thank you and stay informed!**

**Policy and Standards Section**  
**Planning, Research, and Accreditation Unit**

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## **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Atlanta Police Department's Explorers Program is to educate young people between the ages of 14 and 21 with basic knowledge in law enforcement by exposing them to police operations and providing career-based experiences, leadership opportunities and community service activities.

It is the Department's belief that by educating the youth through the Explorer program, it will instill values that will benefit them in life, and possibly lead them to a professional career in Law Enforcement with the Atlanta Police Department.

## **2. POLICY**

The Atlanta Police Department will educate and develop persons between the ages of 14 and 21 in the field of law enforcement by involving them in specified police operations and activities.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Division, section, and unit commanders will be responsible for the implementation of the applicable standards within this directive which involve their commands.
- 3.2 The Community Oriented Police Section (COPS) commander will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of this written directive within their command. The COPS commander will be responsible for identifying a sworn Atlanta Police officer to serve as the program coordinator for APD's Explorer program.
- 3.3 Supervisors will be responsible for the actions of their subordinates to ensure that APD Explorers will not be used in assignments requiring police authority and all persons under their command are familiar with this directive.
- 3.4 The Explorer Program Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that all Explorers are familiar with this directive. The APD Explorer coordinator will be responsible for the training, competition, service, practical, and recreational experience. The coordinator will also be responsible for evaluating the APD Explorer's performance.
- 3.5 The Training Academy alongside the Explore Program Coordinator, will assist with the development and implementation of the APD Explorer Program training curriculum.
- 3.6 The APD Explorer is a non-sworn member of the APD Explorer program and will be responsible for familiarizing themselves with and following all rules and regulations listed in this policy and as directed by the sworn administrators of the program. (CALEA 6th ed. Standards 45.3.1)

## **4. PROCEDURE**

### **4.1 EXPLORER OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1.1 APD Explorers must possess the "PPRT's of Life" – Pride, Professionalism, Respect, and Teamwork.
- 4.1.2 APD Explorers must have total commitment to the program.
- 4.1.3 The APD Explorer Program will provide the APD Explorers with education by providing the members with a basic knowledge of the field of law enforcement. Members will receive instructions in all phases of law enforcement, including criminal law, traffic law, criminal



investigation, crime prevention, traffic control and direction, accident investigation, juvenile delinquency and other related fields, which are an integral part of law enforcement.

- 4.1.4 The APD Explorer Program will include exposing APD Explorers to meetings, details, social functions and ride along programs. Explorers are given the responsibility and respect they deserve. In turn, they can make their public service felt among members of the community, especially members in their age bracket. This provides a link between the youth and the community.

#### **4.2 SELECTION OF APD EXPLORERS**

- 4.2.1 APD Explorer Program applicants will be selected through the APD Explorer Program Coordinator.
- 4.2.2 The APD Explorer Program Coordinator will interview and screen applicants to ensure that they meet the following criteria:
1. Applicants must be a resident of the Metropolitan Atlanta.
  2. Applicants must complete the Atlanta Police Department's Explorer Program application.
  3. Applicants must successfully complete a background check and have no criminal history.
  4. Applicants must be between the ages of fourteen (14) and twenty-one (21).
  5. Applicants must be in good academic standing (an overall grade point average of 2.5 or higher in all classes) and maintain minimum grades for entry and continuance in the program.
  6. Applicants must have an attendance rate of 90% or higher in all classes.
  7. Applicants must maintain satisfactory citizenship grades.
  8. Applicants may be terminated at any time for any reason the Atlanta Police Department and/or the Atlanta Police Explorer Program.

#### **4.3 EXPLORER CONDUCT**

- 4.3.1 All APD Explorers will obey all lawful orders given to them by a supervisor, the program coordinator, or exploring advisors. An APD Explorer that refuses a lawful order will be considered insubordinate and subject to disciplinary actions or dismissal from the APD Explorer Program.
- 4.3.2 The APD Explorers will be courteous to the public and act to not bring discredit on themselves, the Department, or the community. The APD Explorers will not verbally or otherwise abuse or harass supervisors, fellow Explorers, or members of the community.
- 4.3.3 APD Explorers will not directly or indirectly accept or solicit any gratuities, loans, merchandise, meals, beverages, fees, compensation or any other goods or valuables resulting from their official duties other than those given by the City.
- 4.3.4 APD Explorers will obey the law and will not possess or use any alcohol or tobacco products as specified by law and Department policy. Moreover, the APD Explorers will not possess controlled substances, except when legally prescribed by a physician. If an APD Explorer is taking prescribed medication that could adversely affect their performance, they must notify the worksite supervisor and the Explorer Program Coordinator.

- 4.3.5 All APD Explorers will complete an APD Explorer data sheet. This information will be filed with the APD Explorer Program Coordinator and this form will be kept confidential. APD Explorer advisors will only have access to the APD Explorer(s) personnel files with permission from the APD Explorer Program Coordinator.

#### **4.4 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

(CALEA 6th ed. Standards 45.3.3)

- 4.4.1 APD Explorers will only wear the issued Atlanta Police Department Explorer uniform while at authorized APD Explorer events. As non-sworn personnel, APD Explorers will not carry or utilize firearms, knives or non-lethal weapons such as, OC spray or a baton.
- 4.4.2 All uniform insignia will be properly placed on the uniform and securely attached. No unauthorized insignia, badges, or pins will be worn on the uniform.
- 4.4.3 APD Explorers will utilize Department equipment only for its intended purpose. APD Explorers will immediately report any damage to Department property or equipment assigned to them. APD Explorers will report any inoperative, defective or hazardous equipment that comes to their attention by notifying an immediate supervisor, or APD Explorer Coordinator.
- 4.4.4 Uniforms and equipment will only be issued to qualifying applicants when the APD Explorer Program Coordinator determines the applicant satisfies the standards of the Atlanta Police Department and the Explorer Program.
- 4.4.5 All uniforms, patches, badges or other equipment with the Atlanta Police Department, the Atlanta Police Explorer Program, or anything issued to represent the Atlanta Police Department or Atlanta Police Explorers will be the sole property of the Atlanta Police Department's Explorer Program and ownership may not be sold or transferred and the property may not be copied or altered in any way.
- 4.4.6 All issued Atlanta Police Department uniforms and equipment will be returned to the Atlanta Police Explorer Coordinator within fourteen (14) days from the date of graduation or termination from the Atlanta Police Explorer Program.
- 4.4.7 After 30 days from graduation, termination, or total absence from the Atlanta Police Explorer Program, any issued uniforms and equipment not returned to the Atlanta Police Explorer Coordinator will be considered stolen and the Atlanta Police Explorer Coordinator will seek criminal charges against the new applicant.
- 4.4.8 APD Explorers must wear the proper clothing to physical training as directed by the APD Explorer Program rules and regulations.

#### **4.5 APD EXPLORER TRAINING**

(CALEA 6th ed. Standards 45.3.2)

- 4.5.1 APD Explorers will receive training through the Atlanta Police Academy with the assistance of the APD Explorer Program Coordinator. In consultation with the APD Explorer Program Coordinator, the academy staff will develop the training curriculum.
- 4.5.2 APD Explorers will report to the designated training location twice every week to receive 2.5 hours of instruction until they complete the training course. All APD Explorers will be tested and graded. Upon their successful completion of the course, they will participate in a graduation ceremony.

#### **4.6 REPORTING TO DUTY**

- 4.6.1 APD Explorers will report to their assigned duties on time and dressed in their department issued uniforms. At no time will an APD Explorer wear their uniform off duty.
- 4.6.2 If an APD Explorer expects to be late in reporting to their assignment or cannot report to work due to illness or other circumstances, they will contact the APD Explorer Program Coordinator.
- 4.6.3 APD Explorers will be responsible for having their current telephone number and address on file with the Explorer Program Coordinator.
- 4.6.4 The APD Explorer Program Coordinator will submit Explorers' weekly sign-in time to the Community Liaison Unit on a weekly basis.
- 4.6.5 The Explorer Program Coordinator will submit a monthly report on the programs, events, and progress to the commander of the Community Oriented Policing Section (COPS).

#### **4.7 APD EXPLORER DUTIES**

(CALEA 6th ed. Standards 45.3.1)

- 4.7.1 APD Explorers will be responsible for attending the bi-weekly Explorer Program meetings at a predetermined location.
- 4.7.2 APD Explorers will be responsible for participating in the following events; however, they may be exempt with prior approval from the APD Explorer Program Coordinator:
  - 1. Recruitment drives at schools.
  - 2. Community service projects.
  - 3. Winter fest.
  - 4. Any event identified by the COPS commander, their designee, or the APD Explorer Program Coordinator.
- 4.7.3 APD Explorers will be provided the opportunity to participate in the ride-along program, if authorized by the COPS commander, their designee, or the Atlanta Police Explorer Program Coordinator in accordance with APD.SOP 3087, "Civilian Passengers in Police Vehicles."
- 4.7.4 APD Explorers will be encouraged to participate in areas such as crime prevention, record keeping, radio communications, and law enforcement scenarios. These activities are performed under the supervision of the APD Explorer Program Coordinator and demonstrate that APD Explorer Program can have more than a superficial role in law enforcement.
- 4.7.5 APD Explorers must perform all required community services hours.
- 4.7.6 APD Explorers must participate in and successfully complete the American Red Cross CPR course.
- 4.7.7 APD Explorers are prohibited from participating in activities and/or events that will undermine the integrity and mission of Explorer Program in the community.

#### **4.8 FRATERNIZATION**

The Department will not permit fraternization between APD Explorers and Employees. This applies to all APD Explorers and employees regardless of age and participation within the program, as fraternization does not reflect positively for the participants, Department, or on the Explorer Program.

#### **4.9 TRIPS AND OUTINGS**

4.9.1 At least two (2) sworn or volunteer adult leaders are required for all overnight trips and outings. A minimum of one (1) sworn female leadership is required at all overnight functions where female Explorers are involved. This does not apply to routine meetings.

4.9.2 APD Explorers are prohibited from driving marked or unmarked police vehicles.

#### **4.10 DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

4.10.1 APD Explorers will be disciplined in accordance with APD.SOP.2020, "Disciplinary Process," and in accordance with the APD Explorer Program Manual.

4.10.2 APD Explorers in violation of the APD Explorer Program Manual or any other Department directive or order will have disciplinary actions brought against them. Disciplinary actions can include the following:

1. Counseling
2. Suspension
3. Dismissal

4.10.3 All complaints filed against APD Explorers will be handled by the APD Explorer Program Coordinator(s).

4.10.4 APD Explorer advisors will be subject to disciplinary action if they are found to be in violation of the terms listed in this policy or as indicated in any applicable Department policy.

#### **4.11 MEDICAL RELEASE**

The parents and/or guardians of the Atlanta Police Department Explorer Program applicant, under eighteen (18) years of age, must sign the Atlanta Police Explorer medical release waiver before the Atlanta Police Explorer applicant can be considered to participate in the Atlanta Police Explorer Program.

#### **4.12 HOLD HARMLESS AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

The parents and/or guardians of APD Explorer Program applicants must sign the Atlanta Police Explorer Hold Harmless and Release of Liability Waiver. This indemnity and hold harmless agreement will be considered a complete and total waiver of any and all liability on the part of the City of Atlanta, agents, employees, and particularly the police officers engaged in supervision and control as set forth hereinabove.

#### **4.13 APD EXPLORER ADVISORS**

In order to qualify to become APD Explorer Program advisor, applicants must meet the following criteria:



1. The APD Explorer advisor applicant must have no open OPS complaints or sustained use of force complaints or any complaints of sexual harassment or of a sexual nature.
2. The APD Explorer volunteer advisor applicant must be able to provide their services to the APD Explorer Program outside their normal duty hours. All on-duty volunteer advisors must get written permission from their current supervisor.
3. The APD Explorer volunteer advisor applicants will be compensated with compensatory hours for their service to the APD Explorer program.
4. Participants in the Atlanta Retired Reserve Program (ARRP) may receive reserve hours of service for their participation in the APD Explorer Program. The ARRP members must receive prior approval from the ARRP coordinator before they are authorized to participate in the APD Explorer Program as an advisor. ARRP members must maintain compliance with APD SOP 2190 “Atlanta Retired Reserved Program.”

## 5. DEFINITIONS

APD Explorer: A non-sworn individual between the ages of 14-21 who meets the requirements listed in section 4.2; to further each Explorer’s education, encourage the Explorer’s participation in a rewarding and productive service activity, and enhance the Explorer’s preparation for future roles as citizen and community members.

APD Explorer coordinator: The sworn individual responsible for assigning, evaluating, and responsible for the over-all duties and functions of Explorers.

APD Explorer advisors: The sworn individuals responsible for mentoring, guiding, and providing instruction to APD Explorers.

Citizenship Grades: Citizenship grades are based on attendance, participation, preparation, and behavior, for both in person and virtual learning experiences.

## 6. CANCELATIONS

APD.SOP.7036 “APD Explorer Program”, effective September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## 7. REFERENCES

APD.SOP 2190 “Atlanta Retired Reserves”

APD.SOP 3087 “Civilian Passengers in Police Vehicles”

Scouts of America

CALEA 6th ed. Standards 45.3.1 - 3

The Atlanta Police Law Enforcement Explorer Manual