



# **POLICY AND PROCEDURE NO. 490**

## **Worcester Clergy-Police Community**

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6 Pages

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership is a coalition of Worcester's religious leaders who work in close partnership with the Worcester Police Department to serve the citizens of Worcester. Members of the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership attend regularly scheduled monthly meetings, are deployed in ride-alongs with uniformed police officers in the field and may be called upon to help citizens and our personnel in crisis.

### **POLICY:**

A primary objective of any police department is to effectively prevent, investigate, and mitigate crime and prosecute those who commit criminal acts. At the same time and consistent with public safety and the law, it is necessary that we provide comfort, support and assistance to the victims of those criminal acts, as well as to others who may call upon the police to aid them in some way.

Accordingly, it is necessary that the Worcester Police Department work in cooperation with the community, with families, and with other elements of the criminal justice system toward these ends. This department fully recognizes the critical role that faith-based organizations and clergy have as leaders in the community and among the individual citizens of our city.

#### **Partnership Members:**

The Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership is comprised of the members of the department's command staff, a designated liaison police officer or official, a member of the City Manager's Human Rights Office, and a diverse group of voluntary clergy and religious members whom represent an array of different faiths and religious traditions present within the City of Worcester. Other critical elements of the Criminal Justice system; such as the District Attorney's Office, shall be granted membership in this collaborative as well. With the objectives of inclusiveness and diversity in mind, new and/or replacement members of this partnership may be nominated by any existing Partnership member and be admitted with concurrence of a simple majority of the Partnership members.

#### **Communication:**

The Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership has been formed to create and maintain open and ready lines of communication between the police and the leaders of Worcester's faith groups. The objective of this working relationship is to foster mutual knowledge and understanding between the police and clergy and the clergy's respective congregations. Via monthly meetings and through personal communications initiated and fostered by participation in this collaborative, it is anticipated that improved mutual

understanding, communication and access will come about between the police department and leaders of Worcester's various religious faiths and traditions.

The Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership, as part of its mission, has assumed the responsibility, where possible, to serve as a catalyst in healing within the community. Toward the achievement of that objective, it is the policy of this collaborative that open lines of communication be created and maintained between the Worcester Police Department and Partnership clergy members and that these lines of communication be utilized to exchange information bilaterally as to critical incidents occurring in this city. It is the purpose of this communication that Partnership clergy members, may, at their own discretion, effect intervention measures to first, attempt to facilitate healing in the community, and secondly to assist in the prevention of future crime, and mitigation and investigation of past crime. Moreover, this Partnership may serve to facilitate access of these religious organizations to the department's administration for matters that they feel are important or are otherwise a source of citizen fear of crime or matters that serve to diminish the quality of life of our citizens.

It is understood from the outset that the Worcester Police Department as well as the respective clergy members of the Partnership are often times not disposed to complete information sharing to one another of privileged communications or data pursuant to law, or professional obligations. These privileged communications or information will be bilaterally respected and no effort will be made to overcome these factors by the Worcester Police Department. It is expected that the information conveyed between police and Partnership clergy remain confidential except where necessary to fulfill the clergy member's ministerial duties.

It is also fully understood that the Worcester Police Department may offer a victim, offender or family member the services of the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership or a referral thereto, but the decision whether or not to avail him or herself to those services lies entirely with the individual. The Worcester Police Department will not compel any person to engage in discussion, counseling or other intervention with a Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership member.

### **Mission, Goals and Objectives:**

The following delineates the Mission Statement and the goals and objectives of the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership.

### **Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership Mission Statement**

The Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership is comprised of faith organizations and law enforcement agencies working together to build and bridge relationships for the good of the community by creating sensitivity, respect and trust.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

#### **GOAL 1:**

To build mutually beneficial relationships between clergy, faith organizations and police and law enforcement agencies.

#### **Objectives:**

- Develop and participate in the Police-Clergy Academy

- Participate in ride-alongs and foot patrols with police personnel.
- Attend and participate in monthly meetings convened by the Chief of Police
- Periodic presentations of Police-Clergy Partnership at Academy and In-Service Training
- Participate in the Police-Clergy Mentoring Program.

## **GOAL 2:**

To serve as a catalyst to assist in healing within the community both to the participants in criminal matters as well as to the community as a whole who suffer the ill effects and fear of violence taking place in their neighborhoods.

### **Objectives:**

- Develop call list and procedures.
- Develop Police-Clergy-Community intervention policies and procedures
- Participate in outreach efforts including mentoring program, and foot patrols.
- Available to police officers for spiritual/emotional support.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Critical Incident:** A criminal and/or violent incident of significance within the city that has the potential to cause unrest and fear within the community, or may give rise to retaliation or subsequent violence, or otherwise has a detrimental effect on the community. Typically, incidents of this type include homicides, shootings, stabbings, or other high-profile violent and/or criminal activity. Non-criminal incidents such as motor vehicle fatalities, accidental deaths, suicides, SID occurrences deaths and other incidents which give rise to or provoke profound emotional responses may be considered Critical Incidents as well.

**Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership:** These individuals include recognized active members of the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership. Each member is to have completed the Police-Clergy Academy or is committed to undergoing such training when available.

**Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership Contact Point Person(s)** This is the partnership Clergy member or members who is/are designated by the partnership as the contact person(s) for the purposes of either personally providing or designating a response to the acute ministerial needs of a community member. (It is fully acknowledged that resources, abilities, case circumstances and availability of partnership clergy members may be such that an immediate response is not possible.) In cases where no immediate response can be rendered, follow-up efforts should be made to ensure that the involved individuals are provided ministerial care as soon as practicable thereafter.

**Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership Police Liaison:** This is the police officer or official that has been designated by the Chief of Police to coordinate interactions between the department and the clergy members of the partnership. He or she shall be the point of contact for the exchange of information between the elements of this partnership. This officer or official is designated to receive electronic notification of the aforementioned critical incidents and then, in turn, if indicated, make notification thereof to the Worcester Clergy and

Police Community Partnership Contact Person(s). An alternate police liaison officer/official shall be designated to serve in this capacity in the absence of the primary liaison.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **Critical Incident Initial Notification:**

The Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership Police Liaison officer is to be notified of critical incidents occurring in the City via electronic notification from the City's Communications Department.

Additionally, if any police official of the Worcester Police Department, concludes that persons associated with the any significant incident; i.e. victim, witness, suspect, family member, a member of the community-at-large, etc., may benefit from outreach from clergy members of the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership, that official may contact the Partnership Police Liaison officer directly via telephone.

Lastly, if any police official of the Worcester Police Department concludes that an employee of the Worcester Police Department is in need or could benefit from outreach from clergy members of the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership, that official shall may contact the Partnership Police Liaison officer directly via telephone.

### **Clergy Notification and Response:**

The Partnership Police Liaison officer, after having received notification of a critical incident shall review the call record and then make inquiry with the primary investigating unit (Detective Bureau, Traffic Division, Operations, etc.) to determine whether a clergy response is indicated. If such contact can be useful and would not unduly compromise the investigation and/or expose the clergy member to an undue level of personal danger, the police liaison officer shall notify the Clergy and Police Community Partnership Contact Point Person to arrange for a response.

### **Critical Incident Clergy Response:**

Upon receipt of notification, the Clergy Contact Point Person, if resources permit, shall either respond personally or delegate a response to a more appropriate clergy member. If no response is possible at that moment, the Partnership Police Liaison should be so notified and the Clergy Contact Point person should make follow-up efforts to ensure that the involved individuals are provided ministerial care as soon as practicable thereafter. Ongoing communications between the Partnership Liaison officer and the Clergy Contact Point Person are encouraged in order to assure that updated and newly developed information is conveyed where possible.

In locations such as hospitals, other facilities or with members of organizations that have a pre-existing associations with a chaplain or other ministerial support, that existing clergy, chaplain or ministerial support should be contacted rather than the partnership clergy point person.

### **Immediate Response to Critical Incidents:**

Partnership Clergy response in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident involving violent crime, mass casualty/deaths or any other critical incident that brings about considerable community outrage, shock or trauma likely requires the immediate response of Partnership Clergy members in order to comfort and counsel those involved. Clergy responders should be

mindful that these incident scenes are unpredictable, rapidly-evolving and dynamic in nature, and can be a source of danger. Police personnel will assist responding Partnership Clergy members to the degree possible however there are instances where Partnership Clergy members will be denied access to persons or places where there is an undue level of risk. The commander of the primary investigating unit will make this determination.

Upon arrival to such scenes, Partnership Clergy members must identify themselves to the scene commander and inform that official of their scene arrival and intervention plan. To minimize personal risk to the Clergy member and to preserve the integrity of the investigation, an exchange of information, to the degree possible, should occur between the Clergy member and the scene commanding official.

### **Non-Acute Response to Critical Incidents:**

In the aftermath of a critical or other substantive incident, after the acute phase and where the scene has stabilized, persons associated with the incident; i.e. victims, witnesses, suspects, family members, or a members of the community-at-large, etc., may benefit from future (non-acute) and/or ongoing contact from clergy members of the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership. In these instances, Partnership Clergy members, at their discretion, may contact and interact with these individuals in order to provide comfort counsel and healing.

### **Subsequent or Retaliatory Violence, Community Unrest Police-Clergy Communication:**

As leaders within the community and in their congregations, clergy members have a high and inherent level of credibility, trustworthiness and an ability to communicate unlike most others. In the aftermath of a critical incident, especially one that leaves a neighborhood or populace in a state of unrest, it is clergy members who can assist police in heading off subsequent or retaliatory violence. Additionally, the access that Police Community Partnership clergy members have with the police department will enable them to receive timely and fully accurate information into investigations or other matters that concern their congregations.

Accordingly, Partnership clergy members are encouraged to contact the department for information anytime they learn that subsequent or retaliatory violence may occur, where disinformation or a lack of understanding is or has occurred or in any other matter where this information will assist the clergy member in his or her ministerial duties.

Conversely, when police learn that subsequent or retaliatory violence may occur or where rumors, myths and disinformation have created unrest in the community following a critical incident, the police may contact Partnership Clergy Members, via the partnership liaison officer/official, informing them of the facts of a case or matter so that accurate and factual information can be conveyed from a trusted and authoritative source to the community. This information may be directed to all Partnership clergy members or to those whose congregants are specifically impacted.

With any response by partnership clergy members, the following are acknowledged:

- As the ministerial specialties, congregation members and geographical attributes of each Partnership clergy members is best known by the clergy members themselves, the authority and responsibility to determine whom is most appropriate to respond to this

critical incident should be made by the Partnership Contact Point Person receiving the notification.

- The type, method, medium of contact made upon the occurrence of a critical incident is left with the discretion of the responding clergy member.
- The responding clergy member will be assisted by police personnel to the greatest extent possible.
- Partnership clergy members are under no obligation to participate in any matter so brought to their attention at their discretion. Moreover, Partnership members are cautioned not to subject themselves, their family, congregants or community member to any danger in their outreach, intervention or healing endeavors.
- As it is the goal of this partnership to effect healing within the community in the aftermath of a critical incident, no demand or other effort will be made by the Worcester Police Department to determine what good faith actions or other measures were undertaken by the Partnership clergy member toward the achievement of this goal.

#### **Youth Outreach Procedures:**

The Police-Clergy Partnership may develop procedures which are intended to facilitate the intervention of Partnership clergy members with youth who have become involved with the criminal justice system. These procedures may provide for intervention with the aforementioned youths' families as well.

The Police-Clergy Partnership is to develop and periodically update a resource guide listing available resources and services of the partnership members. The services of this department's Gang Unit and other municipal resources may be listed as well.

The target audience of this publication will be the parents/guardians of juveniles (under the age of 17) with the objective of providing these parents/guardians a resource listing to assist them and their family in guiding a problematic child in their household.

In the aftermath of a arrest of a juvenile, the Worcester Police Department shall cause the parent or guardian of that juvenile to receive a copy of the resource guide identified above along with correspondence which invited those parents/or guardians to partake of the services offers by the clergy members of the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership.

The aforementioned resource guide shall be made available to line personnel who shall disseminate to youths they encounter who may require those services.

#### **Clergy Ride-Along Procedures:**

Clergy member ride-a longs with uniformed personnel in marked cruiser patrol will be in accordance with established ride-along procedure.

Scheduling of these ride-a longs will take place at the discretion of the Deputy Chief of Police in charge of the Operations Division.

Per:

*Gary J. Gemme*  
Chief of Police