

Comprehensive Social Services Information and Referral

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Currently, very few police agencies have formalized policies and procedures that guide their personnel in providing appropriate information and referrals to citizens. For community policing efforts to be successful, officers must have access to current, comprehensive information on all the community resources available to citizens, and make the needed referral(s) to address specific problems.

A major premise of community policing is that citizens, government agencies (local, state, and federal), community resource agencies, and the police work in concert with one another to resolve community problems. In order to accomplish this, the police (as well as other community members) must be familiar with available resources in the community, as well as how to access those resources. Research has been conducted on the community policing concept and the need for improved information and referrals in order to make the concept effective. Two police departments and one non-profit agency who have implemented different types of information and referral models have also been researched, and will be discussed as part of this paper.