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GRANT ARMS POLICE WITH MORE TIME COMMUNITY-SERVICE OFFICERS WILL ALLOW THE KISSIMMEE POLICE TO BETTER USE ITS RESOURCES.; [CENTRAL FLORIDA Edition]

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Abstract (Document Summary)

KPD will use the money from the U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Police Services grant to hire four community-service workers to take over some of the paper shuffling chores that are being handled by armed, sworn officers.

Full Text (247 words)

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Kissimmee, Florida

It's hard to fight crime while shuffling papers.

That's why the recent announcement that the Kissimmee Police Department has been awarded an \$83,467 federal grant is good news.

KPD will use the money from the U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Police Services grant to hire four community-service workers to take over some of the paper shuffling chores that are being handled by armed, sworn officers.

In the criminal investigations division, for example, experienced detectives have been spending hours handling worthless check complaints. Part of that task involves contacting the person who wrote the check and trying to get the person to pay up. The job is not complicated, but it can be tedious and time-consuming. A clerk who is properly trained and supervised could handle that task effectively.

Utilizing a community-service officer for that chore frees a detective to pursue more serious crimes that require the experience and skills of a trained investigator.

Other community-service workers will be used to handle other routine tasks, such as distributing and keeping track of equipment issued to officers, assisting victims of domestic violence and handling non-criminal property-damage complaints.

This community-service worker approach makes sense. The Kissimmee Police Department has 106 sworn officers. It must stretch those valuable resources to the maximum to ensure residents the service the community deserves.

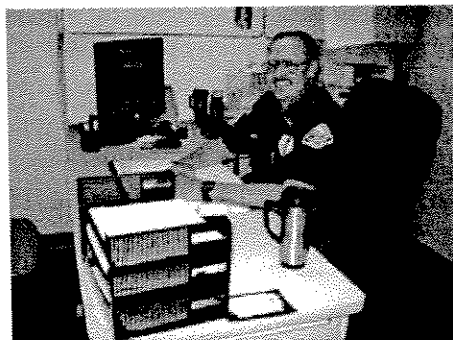
Police administrators and city officials must be encouraged to continue seeking opportunities to apply for state and federal grants that can help improve the effectiveness of local government services.

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Community Service Officer

The Kissimmee Police Department has increasingly utilized civilian personnel to assist the police officers in handling administrative and non-hazardous calls for service. In assigning paraprofessionals, overall efficiency has increased by relieving the burden on sworn police officers, who can direct their efforts in the area of crime prevention, criminal investigation, criminal apprehension and remain available for emergency situations which may arise. The Department currently utilizes the services of 12 Community Service Officers (CSO) throughout the agency. Five are assigned to the Uniformed Patrol Division to handle non-emergency calls for service throughout the community in addition to monitoring and training the School Crossing Guards. One is assigned to the Differential Response Office that is located in the Police Department lobby, which allows them to handle walk-in complaints, take reports over the telephone, and fingerprinting. The other six CSOs are utilized throughout the department in the Criminal Investigations Division, Neighborhood Resource Office and Administrative Division.



Community Service Officer requires classroom and field training similar to that of sworn Police Officers. Classroom training consists of a CSO version academy including classes such as criminal law, traffic accidents, traffic control, parking enforcement, first responder, and a variety of other classes. Once completed, the CSO then goes through a twelve week in the field-training program prior to adventuring out on his/her own.