



## **CopsAlive.com suggestions for the Implementation of a Family Support System within your Organization**

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Family members to include: spouses, partners, parents, siblings, boyfriends or girlfriends, children, aunts, uncles, cousins etc.

Start a program: Invite families at the swearing in ceremony or while recruits are still in the academy. Start with an orientation meeting and continue with regular meetings, communications and training.

Discuss how the organization operates, how law enforcement may be different than other jobs and how the job of a loved one may impact the family. Give a tour of the department and its facilities.

Ways to communicate: add families to existing distribution lists such as press releases, training bulletins, crime watch notices, neighborhood watch announcements, internal memos, community information etc.

Involve the family members in your citizen's academy or create a special family academy.

Mechanisms for communication might include regular meetings, email blasts, training classes, training videos posted on YouTube, cell phone text messages, telephone calling trees, parties, picnics, fund raising events, holiday gatherings etc.

Some issues for discussion or education: law enforcement stress, the effects of shift work, warning signs and symptoms of depression and suicide for law enforcement officers, how to communicate within your family, issues surrounding drug and alcohol abuse, how the job impacts the officer and the family, the occurrence of overtime and time away in court, departmental support for families with EAP programs etc.

Consider creating a structure and communication system for critical incidents such as officer involved shootings and traffic accidents. Setup an "On-call" communications system and structure.

Expand your program to include issues surrounding:

- Public Health
- Natural Disasters
- Homeland Security
- Fund Raising
- Political Support for Law Enforcement Officers

Consider involving retired officers and their families, perhaps as part of a mentoring program where new families are paired with experienced family members.

Resources:

CopsAlive.com: <http://www.CopsAlive.com>

The Law Enforcement Family Support Network: <http://www.lawenforcementfamilysupport.com>

National Police Wives Association: <http://www.nationalpolicewivesassociation.org/>

Concerns of Police Survivors: <http://www.nationalcops.org/>

Shield of Life and Loved Ones: <http://shieldoflifeandlovedones.com/>