

**Using Volunteers in Handicapped Parking Law Enforcement:
Report for the Kentucky Council on Developmental Disabilities**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Police departments in at least twenty states use citizen volunteers to supplement sworn officers in law enforcement activities. These volunteers perform a variety of functions, including, in many cases, writing citations for violations of handicap parking laws. Departments who use volunteers for these and other purposes have identified a variety of challenges and solutions to the use of volunteers and have found volunteers to provide considerable benefit. This report describes

- The use of volunteers in law enforcement around the country
- The apparent lack of such use in Kentucky
- The variety of tasks performed by police department volunteers
- Variations in the authority and approach to practice of police parking enforcement volunteers
- How volunteer programs work in six communities
- Benefits communities realize from the use of police department volunteers
- Problems communities have encountered
- Solutions to those problems

INTRODUCTION

Handicapped parking provides accessible and proximate parking for individuals with disabilities, but it is often the case that parking privileges are abused by persons who do not meet state qualification criteria and who simply don't want to walk from a more distant spot. The Kentucky General Assembly approved HB 71, which increases fines for violating handicapped parking statutes and it was signed into law by governor Fletcher. The goal of the bill is to discourage use of handicap parking privileges by ineligible individuals. This law takes effect in July, 2004, and the Kentucky Council on Developmental Disabilities is interested in helping to ensure that the law is enforced and that handicapped parking spaces are made available to the persons for whom they are intended. Many solutions are possible, such as training and publicity, but one solution of particular interest has stands out from the rest—the use of volunteers in law enforcement activities.

Voluntarism is on the rise in the United States, with numerous community and public organizations serving communities and population groups to improve their quality of life. Federal policy has become more favorable to these organizations with recent provisions securing support for faith-based and community-based institutions. President George W. Bush has challenged the American people to participate in volunteer organizations. Federally-supported programs, such as Americorps, aim to improve volunteer opportunities by supporting individuals and organizations where such services can be put to much needed use. Robert Putnam has studied and reported on the decline of social capital in the United States over time, but many individuals are still very community-minded and wish to participate and serve in their own towns and neighborhoods. Students and elderly persons, such as the retired or semi-retired, are particularly interested in contributing their time and efforts to nonprofit and public organizations.

East Kentucky PRIDE mobilizes students and citizens in Appalachian Kentucky to pick up trash and keep the environment clean. Local Kiwanis club members plant flowers in the town square. Volunteers are hard at work all around us everyday, and the opportunities that voluntarism provides our public sector have not yet been fully realized.

Though still largely untapped in Kentucky settings, volunteer efforts positively affect law enforcement and community safety around the country. As the chart below suggests, Volunteers provide valuable services to law enforcement agencies in a number of ways. For example, many provide clerical assistance, some transport vehicles, some pick up recovered stolen property, some participate in neighborhood watch programs, some work with AA and other programs, and some write citations for parking and other non-moving violations. Whatever the service provided, there are two distinguishing characteristics of a volunteer program within a police department: the need for security and sensitivity to the organizational atmosphere (<http://www.Energizeinc.com/supervise/law.html>). Volunteers in police settings often take great risks, but through their efforts, community safety is improved tremendously at little or no cost to the public. Given this broad use of volunteers in law enforcement settings, the Kentucky Developmental Disabilities Council is interested in the use of volunteers to enforce handicapped parking laws.

CHART 1. Tasks Performed by Police Department Volunteers:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Parking: Disabled</u>	<u>Parking: Fire Lane</u>	<u>Traffic</u>	<u>Other:</u>
Meridian, MI	YES	YES	NO	
St. Petersburg, FL	YES	YES	YES	Tag & Impound Vehicles, Transport Found Property
Seminole County, FL	YES	YES	NO	Special Investigations, Crash Investigation, Search & Rescue, Clerical, Victim Advocates, Chaplain Corps
Fremont, CA	YES	YES	YES	Animal Services, Forensics, Investigations, Records
Riverside, CA	YES	NO	NO	Anti-Graffiti Patrol, Mobile Neighborhood Watch, Clerical & Public Education Programs
Arcadia, CA	YES	YES	YES	Translators, Radio Operators, Investigation Support, Maintenance Assistants, Crime Lab, Clerical, Admin.
Lenexa, KS	YES	YES	YES	Sign Ordinance Enforcement, Street Light Inventory, Crime Analysis
Montgomery Co., OH	YES	YES	YES	Vehicle Maintenance Officers, Clerical Assistants

This report considers generally the opportunities for individuals to perform volunteer work with local law enforcement agencies—activities that help to improve the efficiency of those organizations, and which improve public safety overall. More specifically, this report examines the feasibility of involving volunteers in a specific law enforcement activity—citing violators of handicapped parking laws. In addressing this topic, we highlight the geographic breadth of such programs, identify key techniques of model programs, and identify the benefits that are associated with such activities. In closing, we also point out specific problems that have been encountered, as well as solutions, and then identify resources for learning more about similar programs and implementing a new program locally.

Police and sheriff departments use volunteers for a number of tasks that improve their effectiveness as law enforcement agencies. Among the volunteer opportunities available are neighborhood watch associations, traffic spotters who phone in problems, and office assistance with paperwork and other matters. Each department's needs are different, and the opportunities offered to interested volunteers likely coalesce through a combination of the department's needs and the volunteer's interests and talents. Suffice it to say there are many diverse possibilities for using volunteers in law enforcement settings.

One of the most common settings in which volunteers are used is in enforcing handicapped parking laws. There are many possibilities for why this is the case. Perhaps it is the large number of volunteers who are interested in seeing that handicapped parking is available; perhaps police departments allocate their effort and time to matters that are higher priority, such as traffic accidents, criminal investigations, and so on, rather than parking violations; perhaps parking regulations create a client group—individuals who need and use handicapped parking spaces—that is interested and active in protecting those rights. Whatever the specific cause, or the more likely combination of causes, the fact remains that volunteer enforcement of handicapped parking regulations is widespread, is growing, and interestingly enough, is not a particularly recent trend.

Many volunteer enforcement programs have been in existence for over ten years, and they certainly provide a valuable foundation on which to build new programs. Hillsborough County, Florida, for example, initiated its volunteer program in 1985. Of course, laws vary by state, so the specific programs will depend on legal feasibility among other things. A review of police department and newspaper websites revealed at least twenty states—from New York to California—in which a city or county has an active volunteer parking enforcement program in place. There may indeed be more states, and the number of organizations within a state that operate such programs is inestimable. States with these programs include:

- Arizona,
- Indiana,
- Oklahoma,
- Florida,
- California,
- Tennessee,
- Oregon,
- New York,
- Kansas,
- Ohio
- Washington
- North Carolina
- Colorado
- South Carolina
- Missouri
- Texas
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Hawaii

Following the initial search (using the terms “volunteer law enforcement” and “handicapped parking volunteers”), we conducted more specific searches to identify programs in Kentucky. Interestingly enough, we found no Kentucky examples. This, of course, doesn't mean that there are no programs, but that such programs are not widely publicized or brought to the public's attention. Kentucky cities have taken advantage of the opportunity to employ safety officers—persons who handle non-emergency matters such as traffic direction, parking regulation, and funeral processions—to supplement their

regular police forces. These persons are often elderly and semi-retired, and they work for relatively low salaries, making them a cost effective alternative to tasking regular beat officers with such duties. These individuals cover many of the duties that volunteers would be tasked to do; maybe this organizational alternative lessens the need for volunteer involvement by reducing violations. Whatever the case, Kentucky doesn't seem to utilize volunteers to the extent other states have.

Volunteer programs have a variety of structures. The tasks that volunteers are asked (or allowed) to perform differ by location, as do the program structures in which they operate. For example, some programs utilize volunteers exclusively for handicapped parking violation enforcement, while others include additional responsibilities. In the case of Meridian Township, Michigan, the volunteer program monitors both handicapped parking spaces as well as fire lane parking violations. Chart 2 details the variations among thirteen communities.

CHART 2. Variety of Volunteer Tasks, by Department

Department	Parking Violations Only	Multiple Tasks
Meridian, MI	X	
Hillsborough County, FL	X	
Indianapolis, IN	X	
Kokomo, IN	X	
Suffolk County, NY	X	
Mesa, AZ	X	
Miami-Dade Co., FL	X	
St. Petersburg, FL		X
Seminole County, FL		X
Fremont, CA		X
Kingsport, TN		X
Riverside, CA		X
Arcadia, CA		X

As Chart 3 indicates, in many handicap parking enforcement programs, volunteers only identify violations and notify police. Some programs empower the volunteers to photograph the violator's vehicle in the parking place, documenting the violation, after which the police department decides whether or not to issue warnings or citations to the vehicle owners. Some programs monitor parking and volunteers place "JERK" stickers on the violators' automobiles. Some allow the volunteer to issue warnings, some mock tickets, and yet others allow them to issue citations with the full force of the law—some with and some without photographic documentation. An example of the latter program type is the Suffolk County, New York, "Polaroid Posse." This program began about fifteen years ago, and it entails volunteers photographing violators, taking the film to the police station, where officers then cross reference the motor vehicle database and mail the tickets to the vehicle owner. The volunteer signs the ticket as a witness and testifies in court (Kibbe, 1998). One facet of these programs that is almost universally true is that some, if not all, of the volunteers enforcing these laws are persons with physical

handicaps or other disabilities. It is very important to note that they are able and willing to make this important contribution to society; they represent a strong resource with the necessary motivation to be involved.

A common point of variance is with the authority afforded the volunteer. Some are uniformed, some wear street clothes. Some are actually deputized, some are reserve deputies, and some are entitled to insurance and other benefits that would be associated with regular law enforcement officers. Again, this varies by organization and by state. According to the Hillsborough County, Florida website, “Disabled citizens were given training and issued special uniforms as members of the team,” yet they “are not armed and do not have the power of arrest.” These officers are “entitled to Worker Compensation benefits.” Marco Island Police Department volunteer Bob Fowler enforces city parking laws. He is given polo shirts with the city insignia on them, a city employee photo identification badge, a police radio, and a city issued cell phone to assist him with his work and to provide for his personal safety (Bruce, 2004).

Chart 3. Authority of Police Parking Enforcement Volunteers

Photograph Only

Suffolk County, NY
Richland, SC
Andover, MA

Warning/Citation

Amarillo, TX
Meridian, MI
Hillsborough Co., FL
Indianapolis, IN
Kokomo, IN
Mesa, AZ
Miami-Dade Co., FL
St. Petersburg, FL
Seminole Co., FL
Fremont, CA
Kitsap, WA
Colorado Springs, CO

Other differences in programs are in participation requirements. Some programs are open only to disabled individuals. Others have age requirements. Some require a background check. Still others require only that you be able to complete a citation and place it on the windshield of the vehicle. Chart 4 illustrates the variety of requirements. The many examples provide as many different requirements, and they are too detailed to address at length here, but some examples follow. The Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office Parking Enforcement Specialist Team (PEST) consists of members appointed by the Sheriff who are at least 19 years of age, residents of Hillsborough County, have passed a background examination, provide their own transportation, are able to fill out a citation and place it on the windshield of a vehicle, are able to be clearly understood during verbal communication, and who complete the 40 hour training course approved by the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission. These requirements seem daunting, but they are not among the most stringent. The City of Mesa requires their volunteers to be 21 years of age, be able to communicate effectively with upset or

agitated persons, be available for court duty, submit monthly activity logs, and pass a polygraph test prior to service. The Seminole County, Florida, Sheriff’s Office Parking Enforcement Program requires volunteers to complete a 14-week Community Law Enforcement Academy, in addition to other basic requirements.

CHART 4. Volunteer Program Training and Other Requirements

<u>Department</u>	<u>Training Required</u>	<u>Background Check</u>	<u>Other Requirements</u>
Meridian, MI	?	?	None
Hillsborough County, FL	40 Hours	YES	Community Resident, Verbal Communication, Ability to Write Citation, Provide Transportation
Indianapolis, IN	8 Hours	YES	U.S. Citizen, Community Resident, Valid Driver's License
Kokomo, IN	8 Hours + Internship	?	Must Take Oath of Office
Suffolk County, NY	?	?	None
Mesa, AZ	?	YES	Valid Driver's License, Provide Transportation
Miami-Dade Co., FL	20 Hours	YES	Ability to Write Citation, Good Communication, Speak English, Complete Required Reports
St. Petersburg, FL	40 Hours	?	None
Seminole County, FL	14 Weeks	YES	Photograph, Fingerprinted, Valid Driver's License
Fremont, CA	Amount Not Known	YES	Driver's License
Kingsport, TN	?	?	None
Riverside, CA	8 Hours	?	None
Arcadia, CA	Varies by Task	?	U.S. Citizen, HS Diploma or GED, Valid Driver's License
Cortland County, NY	Amount Not Known	?	Must Take Oath of Office
Montgomery Co., OH	24 Hours	?	None

HOW VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS WORK: BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions of a select group of police department volunteer programs is based on interviews with officials in six communities.

- 1) The Fort Wayne, IN City Clerk’s office presently has a part-time volunteer supervisor and two active volunteers monitoring parking violations. This number is down considerably as a result of soaring gasoline prices—volunteers are required to provide their own transportation in this program, and gas prices are a barrier to participation. Approximately 45 people have taken the training class, but attrition rates are high due to people losing interest when they learn what the program entails.

Volunteers in this program go through a six-hour training course during which the police department speaks to volunteers about conflict avoidance and conflict management. The course also explains handicapped parking laws and describes what to look for on the street, and volunteers are trained on forms and procedures. When the classroom component is complete, volunteers go out with the volunteer supervisor on duty until that supervisor is comfortable with the individuals working on their own.

These volunteers do not issue warnings—just citations. They issue citations for handicapped parking zone violations, parking in access aisles to handicapped parking spaces, and for possessing a placard that has been altered in any way.

They are not required to photograph offending vehicles, but they do as a precaution. Volunteers are required to go to court as a witness, if necessary.

The supervisor works evenings with the volunteers and has a radio connection to the Police Department if necessary in the case of an emergency. The volunteers must go through the supervisor; they communicate with each other using walkie-talkie function cellular phones.

- 2) Meridian Township, MI, Police Department uses a total of 20 volunteers of which seven are assigned to the records division and thirteen assigned to parking enforcement and other duties. These may be distinguished in terms of “inside” and “outside” volunteers. All volunteers are given a 4 hour orientation to familiarize them with confidentiality, volunteer policies, dress code, and expectations of their conduct. After the orientation, another four hour block inside is conducted. During this instruction, volunteers are informed about policy and laws, and familiarized with the citation they will be using. They are given situational examples of angry recipients to teach the basics of conflict management. Volunteers are basically expected to retreat to their car, get away from the scene, and avoid conflict at all costs.

Volunteers may issue warnings or citations, and the offending vehicles are photographed. The cars used by parking enforcement volunteers are equipped with in-car cameras which must be focused on the vehicle in question. The volunteer carries a microphone to transmit to the camera. The police department maintains these tapes for a ninety day period. Volunteers are expected to testify in court, and they have had to do so an about two dozen occasions. All but one of these cases was a victory for the volunteer. The volunteer supervisor accompanies the volunteers to court on their first visit, and after that they are “on their own.” Volunteers must maintain a daily report to account for their time—where they were, what citations were issued, etc. These reports are used to monitor the volunteers’ productivity for an annual awards ceremony.

The volunteers in this program are expected to devote one four hour block per week to the program over a year-long commitment. The supervisor maintains a schedule for use of the car.

- 3) Access to Independence, Inc., is a non-profit advocacy organization in Cortland County, NY. This organization operates, and is responsible for, the volunteer parking enforcement program—SHAPE. They have approximately eight volunteers at present. These individuals are trained by the Sheriff’s Department, given uniforms and a badge, and asked to devote a given amount of hours per week to the program. (The specifics of the training program were not available at the time of the interview.) These volunteers only perform enforcement of disabled parking violations. They have discretion to issue warnings or citations. They do not take photographs of the offending vehicles. Volunteers do not go to court, and they do not fill out any other reports. The program is entitled to receive

the revenue from fines awarded by the court; however, judicial discretion in enforcement usually only results in a “slap on the hand.”

- 4) Kitsap County, Washington, utilizes a program known as Citizens on Patrol (COPs) to enforce handicapped parking laws as well as numerous additional functions. They currently use 22 volunteers, and they hope to grow the program to 30 plus. Volunteers go through 32 hours of classroom instruction and an additional series of ride-alongs with a checklist of individuals. One four hour ride-along is with a deputy, another is with senior volunteers, and so on. These components must be completed before the volunteer is released on the road. Also, during the first year, volunteers are trained in CPR, First Aid, Safe Driving, Blood-borne Pathogens, and other safety issues.

Within program guidelines, volunteers are authorized to issue warnings at their discretion, as well as citations. Photographs are not required, but the volunteers take them anyway, using Polaroid cameras. Volunteers are required to testify in court, and they maintain a log of their hours. Though no other forms or reports are completed for the handicapped parking violations, volunteers perform other duties that involve additional paperwork. For example, the volunteers also provide education to business owners about signage requirements and handicapped parking laws; when problems are identified, volunteers use a three-stage letter process to get businesses to comply.

Jan Koske is the volunteer coordinator for Kitsap County, and she oversees many volunteers in a number of programs, of which COPs is one. She works with the Sheriff’s Department Community Liaison who in turn works directly with the volunteers. Thus, recruitment is performed outside the Sheriff’s Department, freeing it from the responsibility and time associated with such duties. The Sheriff’s Department has established a military-like officer hierarchy among the volunteers (Lieutenant, etc.) with duties and expectations specified. This relieves the community liaison from many of the tasks associated with managing and supervising the program, and gives the volunteers the opportunity to self-manage most of their work. Volunteers are expected to provide two four-hour shifts per month with a one-year commitment. All volunteers are screened, and they must take a polygraph test due to the sensitivity of the information to which they have access.

The program now uses one van and three cars—all marked—for volunteers to patrol. Early on, volunteers used their own vehicles with magnetic placards affixed to the doors. Gasoline prices were a barrier to volunteer participation, and the new system works much better.

This program resulted from a single individual complaining frequently to the city commission about parking violations. A state legislator heard about his interest and invited him to Olympia to speak to the legislature. As a result, a new law was passed permitting volunteers to engage in law enforcement activities. The Kitsap

County program began in 1999 and, in 2002, they expanded to the COPs program which included various additional duties.

- 5) The Kingsport, Tennessee Police Department manages a volunteer parking enforcement program that focuses on shopping centers and two hospitals away from the downtown area. The downtown area is patrolled by a full-time parking enforcement officer, so their efforts are not needed there. Tennessee has a two-tiered system of laws pertaining to handicapped parking; that is, state law may be enforced in the state courts, or localities (such as Kingsport) may enact their own ordinances that are enforced in a city court system. The Kingsport volunteer program enforces only the local ordinance and has no authority to enforce the state ordinance.

Volunteers in the Kingsport program train with another volunteer for a number of hours. The single most important component of their training is to avoid confrontation at all costs. They are to excuse themselves, get in their car, leave the area, and call for assistance. Volunteers may issue warnings, but most are vigilant and choose to issue citations instead. They do not photograph offenders, citing the expense of film and paper as prohibiting. Volunteers are required to go to court if necessary. They do not complete any additional forms or paperwork.

Volunteers are given distinct uniforms and they patrol in marked cars (without lights). They are provided with cellular phones—not police radios. They generally work on weekdays, and to work on weekends, they must request prior approval and notify the supervising officer of their actions.

- 6) The Colorado Springs Police Department volunteer program was instituted in 1997. Nine active volunteers currently participate in this program, and they would like to grow the program to 20 volunteers. Volunteers participate in a mentoring system, and the Team Leader is responsible for approving that they understand the correct way to approach citizens and issue citations. Training consists of 40 hours with a supervisor and 40 hours paired with another team member before being allowed to go out alone. Training emphasizes how to fill out a ticket, and how to avoid confrontations. Volunteers are expected to dedicate 20 hours/month in addition to monthly training meetings (on the second Saturday of the month). Non-participation will result in removal from the program. Volunteers issue either citations or warnings, and they may be required to go to court if necessary.

Volunteers are not reimbursed for their mileage or gasoline, but they are encouraged to keep track of it for tax purposes. Volunteers are responsible for paying for their own uniforms which are made available by the department. Volunteers are recognized annually at a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. On the other hand, volunteers have hosted Bar-B-Ques and invited the police department command staff to attend.

BENEFITS

Suffolk County, New York designates the proceeds from the “Polaroid Posse” efforts to improving handicapped Accessibility in government buildings; In 1996, they raised \$6,000 in fines (Kibbe, 1998).

The Fremont, CA, H.A.P.P. program was established in 1995. This team of about ten volunteers writes an average of 25 citations per month at a rate of \$275 each. The program website reports that parking violations have decreased. Associated benefits of this program are ensuring that parking spaces are properly marked and offering informational talks and seminars.

The Volunteer Services Program of Kingsport, TN, provided 1,566 hours of regular volunteer duties. Included in this total are a net of 1,134 handicap parking citations, and 176 citations for violating the city two-hour parking limit. An interview with police administrators yielded additional information about the program. They average 100 citations per month under the city parking ordinance (which is addressed in city court, not a state-level judiciary). These citations range from approximately \$25 for a first offense to \$50 for a third-time offender. On average, \$2,500 to \$3,500 per month is raised in fines. Handicapped parking violations at shopping centers and the two local hospitals have been drastically reduced since the program’s inception.

The Kissimmee, Florida, Police Department Volunteers delivered 632 hours of service, saving the police department more than \$5,000 in personnel costs.

The San Diego Police Department benefits include: 1) over \$1.5 million worth of policing man hours from 800 volunteers, 2) the addition of new policing services, 3) better community/police relations, and 4) Allowing police officers to focus more time on serious crimes (Kessler & Wartell, 1996).

The Maui Police Department realized 551 handicapped parking violation citations in the first six months following the inception of its Volunteer Disabled Parking Enforcement Project (Hawaii Joint Police Association).

The Colorado Springs Police Department volunteer program nets approximately 48 citations per month (or 584 during 2003).

Jan Koske, Volunteer Coordinator for Kitsap County, Washington, indicated that their Citizens On Patrol (COPs) program has yielded tremendous benefits. For example, in March, 2004, 955 volunteer hours were logged. 51 NOIs (Notices of Infraction—what we would call a ticket) were issued for disabled parking violations. The volunteers issued fourteen citations for other parking violations, marked 80 abandoned vehicles, conducted 155 VIN inspections, and gave 73 written and 59 oral warnings to handicapped parking violators. She noted that parking enforcement was not being done prior to this program, because there was not time for the deputies to monitor parking; since inception, there has been a major decrease in parking violations. Fewer people are

parking in disabled parking spots than before the program was instituted. The program has been very helpful to the Sheriff's Department, and the Sheriff has been willing to support the program and help it to grow because of the benefits he receives. The fines levied for parking fines revert to the program to pay for uniforms, vehicles, and other equipment.

The Meridian, MI, Police Department volunteer program nets between 50-60 citations per month, and brings in between \$1,500 and \$2,000/month in revenue from fines. This money reverts to the city general fund, not to the police department. These revenues are up from about \$200/month prior to the program's creation (Interview with Tom Couling).

The Fort Wayne, IN, City Clerk's Office notes that disability zone parking violations have dropped considerably since the program was created, and public awareness of laws and handicapped parking zones has greatly increased. They net approximately 30 tickets per week, with fines of \$50/ticket, yielding \$1,500/week in revenues.

PROBLEMS/SOLUTIONS:

A concern that frequently appears in accounts of volunteer programs is that of drivers who become hostile toward volunteers. Among the solutions to this problem are uniforms, police radios, cell phones, photo identification, and, of great importance, training.

The City of San Diego's volunteer program evaluation (Kessler & Wartell, 1996) identified the following barriers (and solutions) to volunteer policing:

- 1) Concerns over legal liability
 - a. Identify types of liability involved
 - b. Review by legal counsel
 - c. Identify how other organizations manage the problem
 - d. Identify policies and procedures that increase liability and modify them, if possible.

- 2) Union opposition
 - a. Involve Union in the process before implementation
 - b. Provide a comprehensive account of the planned program
 - c. Obtain community backing
 - d. Emphasize enhancement, not replacement
 - e. Identify benefits to the Union

- 3) Internal resistance from officers
 - a. Chief executive personal commitment
 - b. Involve paid staff in the planning process
 - c. Deal forthright but sensitively with signs of opposition
 - d. Educate staff on the role of volunteers and benefits
 - e. Cite other successful programs

- 4) Perception that the program would cost too much
 - a. Identify hard costs and weigh benefits
 - b. Volunteers save money without using budgeted funds
 - c. Volunteer hours equate to approximately \$12.00 an hour equivalent salary

- 5) Volunteers could breach confidentiality
 - a. Conduct background investigations
 - b. Provide instruction and training
 - c. Follow specified procedures in managing information
 - d. Build trust

San Diego: Problems Encountered in Implementing Volunteer Program

- Legal Liability
- Union Opposition
- Resistance from Officers
- Potential Cost
- Potential Confidentiality Breaches

Problems Encountered by Other Cities:

- Hostile Citizens
- Hostile Volunteers
- Lack of Law Enforcement Agency Cooperation

During interviews conducted with representatives of local police department volunteer programs, we raised questions about problems they had encountered during the program's implementation or administration. The most common problem raised was angry citizens becoming confrontational with volunteer parking enforcement personnel. Limited examples of volunteer hostility were cited, but most agencies are aware that this too is a potential problem. The following are summaries of problems and problem abatement efforts in the interviewed programs:

Fort Wayne, IN, did not report any serious conflicts caused by volunteers yet. They did note that many citizens claim volunteers are unreasonable, particularly in situations where they are using someone else's placard illegally, and when they are parked in the access aisles adjacent to handicapped spaces noting that "there was nobody parked next to me." Citizens, however, have caused problems for volunteers. Volunteers do not command the respect of a uniformed officer, and citizens feel they are unreasonable. To address this concern, volunteers are sent out in pairs, and their training emphasizes avoiding conflict and informing citizens of the appeals process.

Meridian, MI, Police Department notes that its biggest problem involves the use of senior volunteers who are not very lenient. They have had problems with volunteers losing their tempers and acting inappropriately. Mr. Couling noted that many of these seniors have

never been in positions of authority, and they love the opportunity to write tickets; “they are too rigid.” He noted that they were forced to let one volunteer go after he twice attempted to arrest individuals who confronted him. The individual called for backup and demanded that the violator be arrested when they refused to move their vehicle out of a handicapped parking space. When the uniformed officer refused, the volunteer threw his shirt on the ground and walked back to the police department. To address this kind of problem, their training emphasizes flexibility with citizens, and encourages volunteers to waive the ticket if the person comes back and gets in the car while they’re writing it. Mr. Couling noted that many citizens get upset as a natural reaction to receiving a citation—particularly from someone who is not in a regular police uniform.

Access to Independence, Inc., in Cortland County, NY noted that they had had some problems with both citizens and volunteers, but none that were serious. Their biggest problem was getting the Sheriff’s Department to find time to perform the training for the volunteers.

Kitsap County, Washington hasn’t had problems with volunteers because of the structure of their training program. They use techniques in their training and selection process to identify potential “hotheads” and weed them out of the group. Volunteer reactions to situational questions demonstrate who is likely to cause a problem, and they are simply not allowed into the program. As for citizens causing problems, their volunteers always work in pairs, and they utilize radios, cell phones, and marked vehicles—these minimize citizen problems. They specifically train their volunteers to back off if someone becomes abusive. They did have one incident where an offender pushed the volunteer with a vehicle.

Kingsport, TN has had no problems with its volunteers, noting that all of the people who are cited deserve the citations. Citizens frequently get angry when they receive a ticket—especially when they use a placard but are not handicapped. Frequent excuses are used to avoid the fines, such as “I was just in the store for a minute,” and “the placard must have fallen off the mirror.”

In addition to these questions, specific questions about problems with insurance and liability were addressed. The following responses were generated:

The City of Colorado Springs covers volunteers for both injury and liability. Whatever their personal insurance does not cover with regard to personal injury, the City may also pay (such as deductibles and co-insurance) up to a certain amount. If the volunteer or the department is sued for liability, they are insured, so long as they were active and trained when the infraction took place.

The City of Kingsport encountered a liability issue when a volunteer who was placing a roadside sign or radar device was struck by an automobile that left the roadway. They did not recall how this issue was resolved.

Kitsap County, Washington did not report any problems with insurance or liability. They carry volunteer insurance that covers law enforcement activities for this program and other law enforcement volunteers.

Access to Independence, Inc., in Cortland County, NY, did not report any liability issues, but added that the volunteers are insured “to a certain extent.”

The Meridian, MI, Police Department has not had any liability problems. Their volunteers are tied in with RSVP (the Retired Senior Volunteer Program operated by Catholic Services) throughout the greater Lansing area. RSVP provides volunteers with medical insurance, worker’s compensation insurance, and a stipend for gasoline expenses.

Fort Wayne, IN, did not report any liability problems, but did note that volunteers were responsible for providing their own insurance.

RESOURCES:

Advocate Guide to Mock Parking Tickets. <http://www.state.in.us/gpcpd/pdf/14-PT.pdf>
Accessed June 18, 2004.

This seven page document provides a synopsis of two alternatives—mock ticketing and volunteer citations—that are available to communities in Indiana. Examples of several Indiana cities that have implemented these programs are provided, and these cities’ contact information is provided.

“City of Mesa, Arizona Volunteer Opportunity.”
<http://www.ci.mesa.az.us/jobs/pdf/ja7021.pdf> Accessed June 18, 2004.

This document describes a volunteer position for disabled parking enforcement, and includes a sample volunteer application form and questionnaire.

“Law Enforcement Volunteers of California: LEVOC Conference.”
<http://www.levoc.org/conf.html> Accessed June 18, 2004.

This page provides information about LEVOC’s fifth annual conference which focuses on law enforcement volunteer programs. The conference obviously has a California context, but it might provide valuable information about starting and operating similar programs.

“Home Page of the National Reserve Law Enforcement Officers Association.”
<http://www.nrlo.net> Accessed June 18, 2004.

This organization was established over twenty years ago, and it is a national organization (headquartered in San Antonio, Texas) representing law enforcement volunteers. In addition to the organizational role it provides, they also offer e-training programs and

provide insurance coverage for on-duty volunteers. In particular, this site highlights new volunteer programs and provides information about things going on in the field nationwide.

“Energize, Inc.: Supervising Volunteers in Law Enforcement Settings.”
<http://www.energizeinc.com/supervise/law.html> Accessed June 18, 2004.

This website provides brief advice from leaders of law enforcement volunteer programs based on their experience. This site is about general law enforcement volunteerism, not parking enforcement specifically.

“Management of Volunteer and Auxiliary Programs in State Law Enforcement Agencies.” http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/fcjei/SLP%20papers/Stephens_E.htm Accessed June 18, 2004.

This abstract is for a study that compares the differences in sworn-officer volunteer programs with regular volunteer programs. A full-text copy of the article has been requested, but was not available at the time of this report.

“Public Entity Policy: Law Enforcement Liability Coverage Form—II; Occurrence Coverage.” National Casualty Company.

This document (attached) is an example of a liability policy available to law enforcement agencies; it covers volunteer officers as well as sworn officers and elected officials.

“Tennessee Association for Disability Rights: Disability News”
<http://www.tadr.org/disnewsA4.htm> Accessed June 18, 2004.

This website, maintained by the Tennessee Association for Disability Rights, provides news and information about disability issues in TN. One of the notable news stories on this site is an update on the status of the Columbia, Tennessee, volunteer handicapped parking program—Tennessee’s first such program (established in 1997). A related news story discusses the Association’s discovery, in establishing the Columbia program, that the state law permitting it needed some changes. A brief summary of their successful process undertaken to change the law is provided. For more recent information from this organization, their homepage is: <http://www.tadr.org/tadr2.htm>

“Disabled Americans Have Rights Too!: The DAHRT Dispatch.”
<http://www.dahrt.net/dispatch.htm> Accessed June 18, 2004.

This organization is based in the state of Washington, and although it is a bit outdated, their newsletter highlights recent changes to Washington parking laws. In light of these changes, a number of cities are undergoing implementation of volunteer enforcement programs. This organization sells hot pink “jerk” stickers to leave a “not-so-gentle reminder on...violator’s cars” as a fundraising effort. They recount humorous stories from their members’ experiences with the stickers and in encounters with police.

“Volunteer Program.” Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 28, Article 14, Section 886 (28-886).

<http://www.azleg.state.az.us/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/ars/28/00886.htm&Title=28&DocType=ARS>

This link takes you to Arizona’s law which permits volunteers to monitor parking violations and issue citations. The law, in its entirety states: “A local authority may establish a volunteer parking enforcement specialist program for parking for persons with physical disabilities. Under this program, the local authority may authorize volunteers to issue citations only to persons who violate section 28-884 or an ordinance regulating parking in parking spaces for persons with physical disabilities.”

“Volunteers in Police Service: Find VIPS Programs.”

<http://www.policevolunteers.org/programs> Accessed June 18, 2004.

VIPS is a national organization that seeks to involve volunteers across the gamut of law enforcement activities. This page provides access to a search engine that allows programs to be identified by state and type within the US, and also worldwide. In Kentucky, only four cities turned up in their VIPS database—Florence, Independence, Louisville, and Paducah. These cities are in Kentucky’s urban areas, and none of their programs appear to involve volunteers in parking enforcement. Each program has a detailed description. The general homepage for this organization provides many interesting resources pertaining to volunteerism in law enforcement, and is worth a visit.

“Volunteer Programs: Enhancing Public Safety by Leveraging Resources (Executive Summary).” http://www.freedomcorps.gov/PDFs/vips_executive_summary.pdf Accessed June 18, 2004.

This executive summary provides an outline of the complete document (which can be found on the police volunteers webpage at: <http://www.policevolunteers.org/resources/guide/>). The Executive Summary provides links to valuable volunteer resources, including federal programs.

Washington Department of Labor and Industries. “Application for Elective Coverage of Excluded Employments.” Olympia, WA.
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/forms/pdf/213112a0.pdf> Accessed June 18, 2004.

This is a government application form for insurance coverage for “excluded employments,” which includes “volunteer law enforcement officers.” As such, this document represents an example where a state has taken action to remove a barrier to the use of volunteers for law enforcement activities.

Kessler, Kathy, and Julie Wartell. “Community Law Enforcement: The Success of San Diego’s Volunteer Policing Program.” Reason Public Policy Institute: Los Angeles.

1996. (Policy Study Number 204: May 1996.) <http://www.rppi.org/ps204.html>
Accessed June 18, 2004.

This policy study evaluates San Diego, California's unique volunteer program—a program that uses approximately 800 citizen volunteers in community policing. San Diego undoubtedly has one of the most comprehensive volunteer programs in the nation, and it includes RSVP—the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol—the duties of which include handicapped parking enforcement. The benefits of the program are discussed, program organization is described, and profiles of actual volunteers are provided. Key barriers to volunteer programs are identified, as are the city's solutions. An appendix provides the “nuts and bolts” of setting up a volunteer program.

“Auxiliary law-enforcement personnel; workers' compensation benefits.” North Carolina General Statutes, Article 13, Chapter 160A, Section 282 (§160A-282).
<http://www.comp.state.nc.us/ncic/PAGES/statute/160a-282.htm> Accessed June 22, 2004.

This North Carolina Law, copied verbatim, permits the establishment of volunteer law enforcement programs:

(a) A city may by ordinance provide for the organization of an auxiliary police department made up of volunteer members.

(b) A city, by enactment of an ordinance, may provide that, while undergoing official training and while performing duties on behalf of the city pursuant to orders or instructions of the chief of police of the city, auxiliary law-enforcement personnel shall be entitled to benefits under the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act and to any fringe benefits for which such volunteer personnel qualify.

(c) The board of commissioners of any county may provide that persons who are deputized by the sheriff of the county as special deputy sheriffs or persons who are serving as volunteer law-enforcement officers at the request of the sheriff and under his authority, while undergoing official training and while performing duties on behalf of the county pursuant to orders or instructions of the sheriff, shall be entitled to benefits under the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act and to any fringe benefits for which such persons qualify. (1969, c. 206, s. 1; 1971, c. 698, s. 1; 1973, c. 1263, s. 1; 1979, c. 714, s. 2; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1247, s. 28.)

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Accessed June 18, 2004.

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<http://www.ci.mesa.az.us/jobs/pdf/ja7021.pdf> Accessed June 18, 2004.

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