

Community OutPost (COP) Outreach and Engagement Act

Main Goal: Promote community oriented policing nationwide. With better law enforcement-resident- communication, officers can build meaningful relationships in the communities they're working to protect..

Bill Objectives:

- Authorize a pilot program within the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office at the Department of Justice to provide funds for Community OutPost (COP) Houses.
- Require training and qualifications for police that work at a Community OutPost.
- Authorize COP Houses to provide additional community services.
- Authorize non-profits to make matching contributions towards COP Houses.
- Require Governors consider COP Houses and provide reasoning if they choose to establish alternatives.
- Require a report on the effectiveness of COP Houses within one year.

Community OutPost (COP) House: Community OutPosts collaborate with neighborhoods, non-profit organizations, and other local contributors to assess community needs, build and maintain relationships, and improve access to needed health, wellness, and other services.

- Researchers have found that even one positive encounter with police unrelated to their law enforcement duties improved the perception of law enforcement within the communities they serve.
- Many of the COP Houses currently in operation are established in neighborhoods of high crime and have often led to stronger community relationships between residents and law enforcement, reduced crime, and improved property maintenance.
- Some COP Houses have seen crime reduced in surrounding areas by up to 70 percent.

St. Cloud's COP House was the first in Minnesota and one of the first in the nation. COP houses offer more than just a police outpost; they provide a supportive environment focused on education, community development, and safety. The officers of the house are an integral part in connecting with residents.

COP Houses facilitate interactive partnerships between law enforcement agencies, their officers, and the people they serve. Police partner with agencies such as probation and parole, health and human services, schools, and other law enforcement agencies. All agencies benefit from sharing resources and experience.