05/12/2025

RE: Expanding Ohio Crime Victim Notifications

Chairperson Manchester:

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know about our experience with using Community Connect for our communication center and RMS system.   At the end of 2021, with the help of our Local Byrne grant we were able to contract for a complement of automatic text messaging through this system.   Their staff is very knowledgeable, easy to work with, and understood our needs for messaging as a police department.

With integration to our CAD system we were able to send complainants that called into dispatch a receipt that their call for service was entered into the system.   If we were busy and their call had been waiting for 30 minutes it would send them a text update letting them know that we were delayed to their call for service and if the situation escalated to call back into dispatch.   Once officers were dispatched to the call it sent the complainant a message letting them know that we were on our way.   One of the most valuable pieces of this integration to our system was that once the call was complete it would automatically send the caller a survey to gauge their satisfaction with the outcome of their call for service and our officers.   Not only was this used as a tool to address any issues with dissatisfaction, but more often than not I was able to forward the comments in the survey to the officers that showed them how much they were appreciated and what a good job they did.

Having this software hooked to our RMS system allowed for us in real time to send text messages directly to those that made reports that gave them vital information including their report number, officer who took the report, and even a link to vital and mandatory victim's rights information that once filled out went directly to our Prosecutors Office.   But we were able to make that go even farther. Once a report was assigned to a detective a text message was sent letting the victim know that it had been assigned and giving them the name and email address of the detective assigned if they needed or wanted to contact them.   If a case was being closed it would message them and let them know if it was closed because we didn't have enough information or if an arrest was made.

In our first year of using this system we were able to use all three modules they provide, Patrol Module, Investigative Module and Insights module.   Each module was unique and a valuable resource not only to our officers but to the public we serve.   Unfortunately, in our second year of this software we did not have enough grant money to cover all three modules.   Community Connect did their best to help us out with this but we had to go down to only the Investigative Module.   Our Third year, with no funding left for this project left we had to discontinue its use.

It is important to point out that everything in this system was customizable to our department and contained information and additional resources that we selected with the help of Community Connect staff to ensure that we were providing the necessary information that our residents need. In addition to that customization we were able to select what call types we wanted messages to go out to. For calls like Domestic Violence, this was turned off on our CAD side of the system, because we did not want the suspect to know that the victim had called or that we were on our way to their location.

I do feel that this is a great way to provide valuable information to the public and to build trust and transparency by allowing them to have real time details of how their case is progressing, where to get a copy of their report, and to provide victims' rights information and resources right at their fingertips. However, our budget just does not allow for funds to be spent yearly on this type of system. With rising costs for the other items and training that officers must have to effectively do their jobs we just cannot justify spending funds on this software.

To prevent this "on again," "off again" funding situation, we fully support state funding for an integrated software system offered through the Ohio Attorney General Crime Victim Section so that departments like ours can stay connected to the citizens we serve and protect.

Sincerely,

Capt Lisa Broucker

Captain Lisa Broucker
Support Services Division Commander
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