

Sheriff's Community Advisory Board

Proposed Structure and Membership Outline

I. Mission & Purpose

- Serve as a formal liaison between the community and the Sheriff's Office
- Review proposed policies and provide non-binding recommendations
- Surface community concerns, complaints, and priorities to the Sheriff
- Promote transparency, trust, and accountability
- Advise on (not direct) training, use-of-force policy, community outreach, and crisis response protocols

II. Authority & Scope

- Clearly define the board as advisory, not operational or disciplinary
- Specify what it can review: policy drafts, use-of-force reports in aggregate, community complaint trends, budget priorities related to community programs
- Specify what it cannot do: individual personnel decisions, active investigations, union-protected matters
- Define reporting relationship: to the Sheriff directly

III. Membership Composition

Target size: typically 9–15 members. It should be large enough for diverse representation, small enough to function.

Diversity criteria built into the selection process (not just aspirational language)

- Geographic representation by district, or zip code cluster so no single area dominates
- Race and ethnicity — reflective of the jurisdiction's actual demographic makeup (use census data as a benchmark)
- Gender — balanced representation across genders
- Sexual orientation and gender identity — explicit inclusion of LGBTQ+ community members, ideally through partnership with local LGBTQ+ organizations for nominations
- Age range should include youth/young adult voice and older adult representation
- Socioeconomic background — avoid a board skewed toward homeowners or business owners only
- Disability community representation
- Faith and cultural community leaders
- Language access — members or interpreters covering major languages spoken locally
- Lived experience — consider someone with personal or family experience with the justice system, alongside business, education, and civic leaders
- Immigrant/refugee community representation

IV. Selection Process

- Public, transparent application process (not appointment by the Sheriff alone)

- Nominations solicited from community organizations, faith groups, school districts, civil rights organizations, and local government
- Mixed appointment model to avoid concentration of power:
 - Some seats appointed by the Sheriff
 - Some appointed by County Council / Board of Supervisors
 - Some nominated by community organizations
- Published criteria and scoring rubric for selection
- Term limits (e.g., 2–3 year terms, staggered, capped at two consecutive terms) to keep the board fresh while retaining institutional knowledge

V. Roles & Responsibilities

- Review and comment on proposed policy changes before adoption
- Hold regular public listening sessions to gather community input
- Produce an annual public report on community concerns and board recommendations
- Recommend training topics: de-escalation, implicit bias, cultural competency, disability response
- Liaise with subpopulations (youth, immigrant communities, disability advocates) for targeted outreach

VI. Structure & Operations

- Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary (elected by the board)
- Subcommittees: Policy Review, Community Outreach, Training & Accountability
- Meeting frequency: monthly full board; subcommittees as needed
- Meetings open to the public with a public comment period
- Staff support from the Sheriff's Office (a liaison, not a controlling member)

VII. Onboarding & Training for Members

- Orientation on department structure, policies, and the legal limits of the board's authority
- Optional ride-alongs and facility tours
- Training on open meetings / public records law
- Conflict-of-interest disclosure requirements

VIII. Accountability & Transparency

- Publicly posted meeting minutes and recommendations
- Sheriff's Office required to respond (not necessarily agree) to board recommendations within a set timeframe
- Periodic community satisfaction surveys
- Annual review of the board's own composition and effectiveness against diversity goals

IX. Removal & Vacancy Process

- Clear criteria for removal (excessive absence, conduct violations)
- Defined process for filling vacancies that preserves the diversity balance of the seat