



Re-certification Guidelines



Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
www.dcjs.virginia.gov



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RE-CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST

Application

- All summaries must be submitted as an attachment to an email in the same format as the original application (single-spaced with 12-point font) on standard 8.5 X 11 paper. A table of contents listing the different sections should accompany each summary. Each section should be clearly identified within the summary by a cover page.

Re-certification Requirements

➤ Core Elements

- Goals and Objectives
- Accomplishments
- Evaluation
- New Goals and Objectives

➤ Optional Elements

- Goals and Objectives
- Accomplishments
- Evaluation
- New Goals and Objectives

➤ Substitutions (optional elements only – maximum of 2)

- History
- Goals and Objectives
- Accomplishments
- Evaluation



The re-certification process consists of three phases: **Re-certification Application Development, Application Review, and Re-certification Certificate.**

1. Re-certification Application Package Development Phase

Program Update

In order to maintain their certification, localities must be re-certified upon completion of their third year in the program, and every three years thereafter. If requested in writing, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) may grant an extension of up to six months for good cause. Once DCJS receives the completed re-certification application and governing body resolution, DCJS will complete its review within 90 days. Localities failing to meet the re-certification requirements within the time allotted, and without obtaining an extension, will be required to apply for initial certification, in effect, start over.

Assessment of Core and Optional Elements

To obtain re-certification, applicants must provide written assessments of **12 core** program elements and **seven optional elements**. Each of the core and optional elements must be assessed. However, the locality may request that new or more successful, crime prevention programs implemented since the original application be substituted for up to two of the optional elements originally submitted. These substituted elements must be proposed using the same guidelines as in the original application.

All summaries **must be submitted as an attachment to an email** in the same format as the original application (single-spaced with 12-point font) on standard 8.5 X 11 paper.

- Each assessment should be divided in four main sections:
 1. Old goals and objectives of each element;
 2. Program accomplishments for the last three years;
 3. Evaluation of program effectiveness (have you met the goals and objectives from the original application); and
 4. New goals and objectives for the next three years. (These may be the same as the old goals and objectives if they still apply).

■ Goals and objectives

In this section, applicants should list, in numeric form, the goals and objectives for the element being assessed, with the objectives being listed underneath the goal to which they apply. The goal may or may not be the same as in the original application. Objectives should set out the actions the applicants plan to take for the next three years for each program. This section is particularly crucial because it shows what the applicant will use to determine the success of the element. Since goals and objectives can often be easily confused and difficult to define properly, some definitions and tips have been provided below to assist in the preparation of this section of the summary.



➤ **Goals**

Goals are the broad programmatic aims of a program. The goals should be clear, concise, and written in a manner that makes them easily understood by a lay person, unfamiliar with the program. For example, a neighborhood watch program may have as its goal, “to reduce citizen fear of crime.” Each program may have more than one goal, but each goal should be written in the same broad manner.

➤ **Objectives**

Objectives are specific actions undertaken to achieve the goal or goals listed for the element. Objectives should be clear, concise, easily understood, time specific and measurable. For example, if the goal is to reduce burglary, an objective may be to increase the number of neighborhood and business watches by 5% each year. Or, if the goal is to reduce citizen fear of crime, an objective may be to increase the number of participants in citizen’s police academies by 10% each year. Whatever the objectives, it is essential that they be quantifiable to determine the element’s success over time. It is also more important that they be realistic and not overly ambitious simply to impress the reviewers of the application.

■ **Accomplishments to date**

In this section, applicants should list the *significant* milestones and accomplishments of the element for the last three years. Particular attention should be paid to listing, if possible:

- The most noteworthy accomplishments or major activities after certification.
- Accomplishments/activities that have drawn significant local, statewide, or national media attention.
- Specific activities that have resulted in statistically significant reductions in crime, fear of crime, or other measurable results.

■ **Evaluation**

In this section, applicants should provide an evaluation of how successful they have been in achieving the goals and objectives listed in the original application. An evaluation must be provided on each core and optional program element.

Applicants should use one or more of the following types of evaluation measures:

➤ **Process/Efficiency Measures**

Process measures involve the documentation of activities associated with a program and/or the amount of time spent on those activities. For example, evaluating the effectiveness of a crime prevention specialist could possibly include documenting the number of security surveys conducted, the number of speeches/presentations made, etc.

➤ **Outcome Measures**

Outcome measures specify the impact of your program on a targeted problem. It is an assessment of the results of the local program rather than the program itself. For example, evaluating the effectiveness of a community policing program could possibly include documenting a reduction in calls for service, a reduction in burglaries, a reduction in robberies, etc.



➤ **Opinion Measures**

Opinion measures are exactly that: measures of opinions of the effectiveness of a program. These measures usually take the form of surveys and can involve, for example, measuring the general public's expectations of, or satisfaction with a program, measuring the opinions of those charged with administering a program, etc. Although these measures can be potentially meaningful regarding acceptance of the program, they can also be unreliable.

➤ **Anecdotal Information**

Anecdotal information normally consists of interesting stories, general observations, and isolated incidents that may illustrate the impact a program has had on an individual or community. For example, a neighborhood watch group may be able to cite an incident in which their activities helped to prevent a potentially heinous crime. Or a youth may have a story about how a particular delinquency prevention program had a major impact on his or her life. Anecdotal information is a good supplement for the other evaluation measures listed above but is not a substitute for them.

Substituted Optional Elements

If, while gathering information to seek re-certification, applicants determine that there are optional elements that have become dormant, unsuccessful or have been discontinued, they may substitute a maximum of two (2) new crime prevention programs/initiatives. The following format must be used when proposing new programs:

- History (see the below bullet)
- Program Operation
- Goals and objectives for the proposed program.
- Accomplishments of the new program
- An evaluation plan, part of which may be an implementation plan that includes a timetable.

■ **Local history of the program and program operation (Only for new programs)**

This section is **only necessary** if you are proposing to replace a previously approved optional element with a new element. In this section, explain in detail the history of the program element at the local level and how it operates daily in the applicant locality. Particular attention should be paid to answering all the following general questions:

- When did the program begin in the applicant locality?
- What specific local factors/circumstances/events led to the creation of the program?
- Was the program the idea of one person, a group of people, a local agency/organization, etc.?
- What process was followed to get the program started locally?



- What, if any, obstacles were faced in starting up and implementing the program?
- How long did it take for the program to go from idea/concept to reality?
- How does the program operate on a day-to-day basis?
- Who operates the program?

■ **Supporting documentation**

In addition to the information required for the program summary, other supporting documentation should be submitted to supplement the summary at the time of the final submission, including:

- Media coverage of the program (e.g., news articles, PSAs, video clips, etc.).
- Newly created documents that facilitate the operation of the program.
- Proofs of the success and operation of the program.
- Any other information deemed relevant by applicant.

Attachments **should not** be used as a substitute for critical information that should appear in the summary. It is the responsibility of the applicant to include all relevant and pertinent information in the summary, even if the information is included in attachments. The applicant should note in the summary the existence of any attached proofs. This may be done by including the notation “(See Attached)” after the mention of the item being used for proof.

2. Application Review/Verification Phase

Staff Review

Applicants will submit to DCJS the summaries of their programs and the detailed plans of any newly proposed programs designed to meet re-certification standards. DCJS staff will conduct **ongoing** review of the summaries for completeness, documented effectiveness of the summarized programs, and future goals and objectives of the programs and recommend changes or needed corrections. Plans for newly proposed programs will be judged for completeness of the assessment, goals and objectives, implementation plan and evaluation plan. **Staff review will be ongoing as elements are received for review.**

Upon completion of each review, DCJS staff will notify the applicant of any problems needing correction.

Verification Process

Upon completion of a final summary product, DCJS will contact the applicant to arrange a date and time for on-site verification of documented programs, or to receive a completed submission document. A completed submission will include element summaries and all proofs necessary to verify the efforts and success of the elements.

Upon completion of the verification process, DCJS will notify the applicant of any final problems needing correction. Applicants may be given a remediation and correction period of 30 days. Once this process is complete, DCJS staff will prepare the certification brief and all final documents for the Criminal Justice Services Board (CJSB) subcommittee review.



3. Board Review Phase

Criminal Justice Services Board Review

After the verification process is complete, DCJS will present all of the information gathered from the applicant to members of a subcommittee of the Criminal Justice Services Board (CJSB) for recommendation of approval. Upon the recommendation of approval of the subcommittee, the applicant information will be presented to the full Board for final approval. Upon approval of the full board, the applicant will receive re-certification from DCJS. *(CJSB review of application packages will coincide with regularly scheduled meetings of the CJSB).*

Once a community is re-certified or fails to be re-certified, DCJS staff will notify the re-certification coordinator within five working days of the status. The local re-certification coordinator shall have the responsibility of notifying the local governing body, law enforcement executive and any others his community requires. The timeline for any appeal begins with the notification of the certification coordinator.

4. Re-Certification Certificate

If the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services approves, the locality will be re-certified for three years. The locality will be required to re-certify every three years to remain in good standing.

APPEALS

If an applicant is denied certification by the subcommittee of the CJSB, DCJS will notify the certification coordinator of the community of the denial. The applicant community may attend and speak at the full CJSB meeting in which the motion to deny the application is made by the subcommittee or the community will otherwise have 30 days in which to notify the Director of DCJS of its intention to appeal. Upon receiving an appeal request, DCJS will hold an appeal hearing with the CJSB at their next available meeting. The locality will meet with the CJSB and present its appeal. All decisions by the CJSB will be final and binding.

Re-certification

Re-certified localities will retain their certification for a period of three (3) years. Certified localities must complete a reassessment process every three years to maintain certification.

REVOCATION OF CERTIFIED STATUS

The CJSB, upon recommendation from DCJS, reserves the right to revoke the certification status of any locality for good cause. This action will only be taken when all reasonable compliance efforts have failed. In the event of revocation of the certified status, the community will have thirty (30) days to remove all Certified Crime Prevention Community signs and to cease the use of the logo and claim of certification under this program.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Free technical assistance is available to any locality that has been certified in the program. Assistance can be provided on a range of issues, including:

- The preparation of summaries for core and optional elements.
- The development of programs intended to fill identified service gaps.
- Guidance on how to rejuvenate dormant programs.
- Guidance on fostering interagency collaboration.

Technical Assistance will be provided by the DCJS crime prevention programs staff.



SAMPLE RE-CERTIFICATION ELEMENT

1. OLD GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goal:

To increase the safety of the students, faculty, and staff within the school by helping to provide a safer environment in which to learn, and by providing a positive resource to all.

Objectives:

1. Ensure SRO or other police officers are on campus 95% of the time school is in session.
2. Conduct four (4) students, parent counseling meetings monthly.
3. Attend parent teacher organization meetings 75% of time during the school year.
4. Attend 10% of school extracurricular activities such as sports events, club meetings, etc., monthly.
5. Participate annually in School Safety Audit.

2. ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

In March 2022, the SRO, Officer X, received information that a middle school student had been initiated into the Bloods gang by an adult. This student then came into the school and recruited nine other middle school students into the gang and they had an initiation by beating them into the gang, inside the boy's bathroom at the middle school. Detective XYZ, who is also a trained gang specialist, was called to assist in the investigation. As a result of the investigation by the SRO X and the Det. XYZ, the adult suspect and middle school student who conducted the recruitment were charged and convicted in local courts. School administrators, staff, parents, and police were initially shocked at the scope of this recruitment process within the middle school system but were elated that a potential threat to safety of the school system had been thwarted. The police and school administration began to place a large emphasis on the gang situation and its potential in the school system in 2022. SRO X first began to receive gang training at local training sessions sponsored by the Department of Corrections and Virginia Gang Investigators Association (VGIA). In May of 2021, SRO X attended a week-long Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) training held in Philadelphia, PA and will implement the program within the school system to the 6th grade class in the 2024–2025 school year.

3. EVALUATION:

SRO X is assigned to the school campus whenever school is in session and is only away from campus while in the performance of other duties, such as obtaining petitions, preparing reports, etc. When the SRO is unable to be in the school due to training or other reasons, her immediate supervisor, Sgt. Brown or Captain Blue are notified, and they contact the on-duty road supervisor who makes the necessary arrangements for a road officer to be on campus. The on-duty supervisor ensures that an officer is on campus during critical times when many students are in certain areas such as the arrival of students, lunch, and the departure of students. The SRO briefs the officers on any critical incidents that they need to be aware of such as areas that need to be extra patrol or volatile incidents that have recently occurred.



During the evaluation period from 2021–2023, the SRO conducted an average of 13 formal parent/student counseling meetings each month related to student’s personal problems, problems with family members, problems related to other peers, drug and alcohol related, etc. Formal counseling sessions takes place in an office and involves the SRO, student, parent, and/or school administration. Informal sessions may take place in public areas, involves only the student or parent, and is very brief in nature. Formal and informal counseling sessions are initiated by the student or parent, or by the SRO when information is received through a third party, such as another student or staff member. Students are sometimes referred to the SRO by staff members, administrators, or by other students. In the 2020–2021 school year, the SRO conducted 112 formal counseling sessions and approximately 190 informal sessions, 136 formals in the 2021–2022 school year and approximately 200 informal sessions. The SRO serves as a valuable resource to students and parents and has earned their trust. An example of the importance of this trust occurred in the fall of 2022. The SRO was approached by a student who was good friends with another student who attended Anytown County High School. The night before, the Carroll student was found passed out in the bathroom of her residence after having an adverse effect from taking pain medication that had been prescribed to her grandmother. The Anytown student approached SRO X with concerns of her friend abusing prescription medication. SRO X and the student went into the office where they contacted the Anytown County SRO officer and advised him of the situation. The Anytown SRO officer then took the student to the guidance office where she received counseling and assistance and is living a normal life now.

The SRO has not been able to meet the objective of attending the PTO meetings due to the middle school eliminating the parent/teacher organization due to lack of parental involvement at the end of the 2021–2022 school year. The elementary school parent/teacher meetings consist primarily of an open house type session, with the main purpose evolving around grades, and there is no parent/teacher organization on the high school level.

Parents take the opportunity to interact with the SRO at extracurricular activities. It is at these informal settings that parents express any concerns they might have. The SRO has sent their name and contact information home with students in the student code of conduct to encourage parental contact with them if needed. They also attend extracurricular activities that parents may attend.

The Anytown Public School system offers a wide variety of extracurricular activities that students can choose to be involved in, for example, civic organizations such as band, drama club, etc., and the following sporting activities for 9th through the 12th grade levels:

- Varsity Football
- JV Football
- Golf
- Girls Varsity and JV Volleyball
- Girls/Boys Varsity Basketball
- Girls/Boys JV. Basketball
- Soccer
- Boys Wrestling
- Varsity Baseball
- JV Baseball
- Girls Softball
- Boys/Girls Tennis
- Varsity Track

During the evaluation period of 2021–2023, the SRO or designee attended approximately 7 % of the extracurricular activities that are offered including all varsity home football games and all girls’ and boys’ home varsity basketball games. On-duty patrol officers attend some games as well until called away to respond to other incidents. The attendance by on-duty patrol officers augments the SRO’s attendance and supports safety at extracurricular activities. There are also several officers from the Anytown Police Department and other surrounding agencies who regular attend events in their off



time due to their child being a participant or other to support the sports offered. The SRO attends all activities in which possible problems or other criminal activity has been brought to the attention of the SRO or school administration. The SRO's number one priority is to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors while on campus when school is in session or during a school sponsored event: The school and police administration work diligently to ensure that all are provided with the best protection during critical times of the day without overextending the workload of the SRO.

The policy and procedures changed at the end of the 2021–2022 school year in the way school safety audits could be conducted (see Core Element #8 – School Safety Audit). Anytown Public Schools no longer utilized a formal school safety team to conduct their safety audits. During this evaluation period, Anytown Public Schools have met the requirement as set forth by the state code. Since the evaluation period began, the school safety audit has been conducted on-line by Jim Blaze, Director of Support Services. Mr. Blaze seeks input from the SRO, faculty and other staff members on any safety concerns they might have before the report is submitted to Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, but they have not utilized a formal safety audit team. CPS Sgt. Brown and Jim Blaze, Director of Support Services, have discussed the importance of a formal school safety audit team and the school has agreed to implement the team concept by the end of the 2024–2025 school year that also involves the SRO in the school safety audit process (See Core Element #8 – School Safety Audit for further details).

4. NEW GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goal:

To increase the safety of the students, faculty, and staff within the school by helping to provide a safer environment in which to learn, and by providing a positive resource to all.

Objectives:

1. Ensure SRO or other police officers are on campus 95 % of the time school is in session.
2. Attend 5 % of school extracurricular activities such as sports events, club meetings, etc., monthly.
3. Conduct 15 student and/or parent counseling meetings monthly.
4. By the end of the 2024–2025 school year survey all students, faculty and staff members of Anytown High School in order to evaluate the performance of the SRO.
5. Ensure that law enforcement participates annually in the School Safety Audit process.