

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 18, 2022

Robert Chapman
Acting Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
Department of Justice
145 N Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Acting Director Chapman,

We are writing to express support for the Seattle Police Department's (SPD) application for a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's *Community Policing Development (CPD) Microgrants Program* to expand the Before the Badge program.

SPD's Before the Badge program is an innovative approach to building community trust—a critical cornerstone and foundational skill for effective public safety. In the short time the program has been in existence, it has demonstrated positive results for relational policing, local safety, improving trust, and fostering greater officer well-being and health.

Over the course of five weeks, future police officers learn SPD's bias-free public safety priorities, explore the profession's history, and experience firsthand the values of Seattle's diverse communities. Recruits and community service officers engage in honest and open dialogues with Seattle residents about expectations of how officers should interact with communities. The discussion centers communities' concerns and histories of policing. Increased cultural competency and accelerating the development of strong relationships help to enhance de-escalation efforts, allow for nuanced conversations on safety, and inspire a diverse next generation to see themselves as officers.

The Before the Badge program also supports the mental and behavioral health of police officers. Through research-based wellness techniques, recruits are trained in coping with the stresses and traumas associated with the job. Helping officers recognize their own needs and seek personal assistance when necessary increases the efficacy of community interactions. If funded, this project would provide for three enhancements to the program: (1) expanding face-to-face dialogues between recruits and those with lived experience in over-policed Black communities; (2) expanding face-to-face dialogues with formerly incarcerated individuals; and (3) enhancing gender responsiveness training. With the expansion of these aspects of the program, SPD hopes to continue its work building trust with the communities it serves.

For these reasons, we urge your full and fair consideration of the Seattle Police Department's application for a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's *Community Policing Development (CPD) Microgrants Program* to expand the Before the Badge program. Please contact our offices with any questions about our support for this application.

Sincerely,



PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Member of Congress



ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress



MARIA CANTWELL
United States Senator



PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator