



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **OHIO STARTS PROCESS TO “CERTIFY” LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AFTER DEVELOPMENT OF NEW POLICE STANDARDS**

**Columbus** - As part of the state’s efforts to strengthen community and police relations, the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board is asking law enforcement agencies to become “certified” by meeting new statewide standards for the use of force, including deadly force, and recruitment and hiring standards. The standards are the first of their kind in Ohio and were developed by the 12-member collaborative in August.

To help certify Ohio’s nearly 1,000 law enforcement agencies, the state has partnered with the Buckeye State Sheriffs’ Association and the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police on a process to ensure that they are in compliance with Ohio’s new standards. The state is making model policies available to help law enforcement agencies come into compliance.

Ohio will publish a report by March 2017 listing all agencies that have adopted and fully implemented the new state standards.

“As our police departments implement these new standards, they will be taking an important step forward in strengthening relationships in their communities,” said John Born, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety and co-chair of the Ohio Collaborative. “Given how well Ohioans have come together on improving community-police relations and the positive feedback we have received about our new standards, there appears to be widespread confidence that we are moving in the right direction.”

The new standards established by the Ohio Collaborative in August include the following policy statements:

- **Use of Force:** Employees may only use the force which is reasonably necessary to effect lawful objectives including: effecting a lawful arrest or overcoming resistance to a lawful arrest, preventing the escape of an offender, or protecting or defending others or themselves from physical harm.
- **Use of Deadly Force:** The preservation of human life is of the highest value in the State of Ohio. Therefore, employees must have an objectively reasonable belief deadly force is necessary to protect life before the use of deadly force. Deadly force may be used only under the following circumstances: To defend themselves from serious physical injury or death; or to defend another person from serious physical injury or death; or in accordance with U.S. and Ohio Supreme Court decisions, specifically, *Tennessee v. Garner* and *Graham v. Connor*.
- **Agency Employee Recruitment and Hiring:** The goal of every Ohio law enforcement agency is to recruit and hire qualified individuals while providing equal employment opportunity. Ohio law enforcement agencies should consist of a diverse workforce. Communities with diverse populations should strive to have a diverse work force that reflects the citizens served. Non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity is the policy. Law enforcement agencies shall provide equal terms and conditions of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, veteran status, military status, or disability. This applies to all terms or conditions associated with the employment process, including hiring,

promotions, terminations, discipline, performance evaluations, and interviews. Agencies should utilize due diligence in ensuring that their prospective employees have the proper temperament, knowledge and attitude to handle this very difficult job. Agencies should have appropriate mechanisms in place in order to achieve this mission. Further, agencies should ensure their employment requirements are related to the skills that are necessary to be a successful employee.

Recently, the Ohio Collaborative also hired a public relations firm to begin developing a new education and outreach campaign to strengthen the bond between police and the communities they serve.

For more information on the Ohio Collaborative, please visit: <http://www.ocjs.ohio.gov/ohiocollaborative/>

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