

Uplifting the Image: Highlighting Heroes

The COPS Office Photo Contest

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: I am not affiliated with a law enforcement agency. May I submit photos?

A: No, only official submissions by state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies will be accepted.

Q2: How many photos can I submit?

A: One official submission of one photo only will be accepted from each law enforcement agency. Submissions including more than one photo (including collages) may be disqualified.

Q3: Can I send the photos through social media?

A: Photos must be submitted by e-mail to tellcops@usdoj.gov. Email submission must comply with all requirements outlined in the [Contest Rules, Terms, and Conditions](#).

Q4: What is the deadline to submit photos?

A: Photos must be submitted by 8:00 PM ET on Monday, November 3, 2025.

Q5: What is a complete submission?

A: A complete submission contains the following:

- Only **one photo** with the following information:
 1. a caption of the image, including the date (month and year);
 2. a detailed explanation of why the image is an example of proactive policing; and
 3. appropriate photo credit information.

Please note that all pictured officers recognizable in the photo must be in good standing.

- The following **mandatory forms**:
 - The [Permission and Release to Law Enforcement Agencies form](#) (unaltered) signed by a representative from the submitting law enforcement agency.
 - The [Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release Authorizing Use and Disclosure of Photographic Image form](#) (unaltered) signed by each recognizable individual in the photo.

Q6: What is the difference between these mandatory forms?

A: They differ in **who needs to sign them** and in **what they affirm**:

- [Permission and Release to Law Enforcement Agencies form](#): **An authorized law enforcement representative must sign this form.** By signing this form, the agency confirms the following:
 - It owns the copyright to the image (or has obtained the necessary permission(s) from the copyright owner).
 - It grants the DOJ authority to use the image in any media format for Federal Government purposes.
- [Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release Authorizing Use and Disclosure of Photographic Image form](#): **All recognizable individuals within the photo must sign this form.** By signing this form, the individual confirms the following:
 - The DOJ is authorized to use their photographic image for Federal Government purposes.
 - The individual consents to disclosing their photographic image to the public.

Please read the Contest Rules, Terms and Conditions for full details about the forms.

Q7: Do I have to submit both forms?

A: Yes, each photo submission must include the law enforcement agency's Permission and Release form and the Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release form(s) for each individual recognizable in the photo.

Q8: Where can I find the required forms?

A: The Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release Authorizing Use and Disclosure of Photographic Image form is located on the COPS Office website at

https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/photocontest/Photo_Contest_Privacy_Consent.pdf

The Permission and Release to Law Enforcement Agencies form is located on the COPS Office website at

https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/photocontest/Photo_Contest_Permission_Release_Form.pdf

Q9: Can I submit photos of minors?

A: Yes, photos of minors may be submitted if the original signed (unaltered) [Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release Authorizing Use and Disclosure of Photographic Image form\(s\)](#) are obtained from each minor's parent or legal guardian. Photos including minors should be taken at very highly public events focused on children (e.g., a youth outreach summit). Highly public events are defined as events open to the media.

Q10: Do I have to submit privacy consent forms for public figures?

A: Yes, privacy consent forms are required for all persons featured visibly in the photo submission, including public figures.

Q12: Can multiple people sign one privacy consent form?

A: No, each recognizable individual must complete their own separate privacy consent form.

Q13: Do I have to submit privacy consent forms for individuals wearing masks?

A: Yes, privacy consent forms are required for individuals wearing masks, as masks only partially cover faces and a photo subject could still be identified.

Q14: Can photos taken prior to 2025 be submitted?

A: We strongly encourage that photos submitted for this contest be taken during the 2025 calendar year. Please note that all photos, regardless of when taken, must include original signed (unaltered) [Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release Authorizing Use and Disclosure of Photographic Image form\(s\)](#) from each recognizable individual in the photo or, in the case of minors, each minor's parent or legal guardian. If these forms cannot be obtained because individuals featured in the photo cannot be located or refuse to sign the form, the photos may not be submitted unless recognizable faces are blurred.

Q15: Can previous winners participate and win again?

A: Yes, previous law enforcement agency winners can participate in this year's contest and will be judged based on the selection criteria included in the [Contest Rules, Terms and Conditions](#).

Q16: Can I submit a photo that I have previously submitted?

A: While photos taken during the 2025 calendar year are preferred, we will accept photos taken previously and submitted in prior contests.

Q17: How will the winning photos be selected?

A: Photos will be judged by a selection committee of COPS Office staff and executives. Photos will be judged based on the following criteria:

1. Photographic quality
2. Brief photo caption
3. Explanation of how the photo is an example of protecting and serving in the community
4. Completeness of submission package

Q18: When will I be notified if my photo is selected as a winner?

A: Winners will be announced and notified via email in January 2026.

Q19: Is there a cash award or other prize for being selected a winner?

A: No, there is no cash award or other prize for this photo contest.

Q20: Who can I contact if I need additional information?

A: Contact the COPS Office via email at tellcops@usdoj.gov.