

# Uplifting the Image: Highlighting Heroes

## The COPS Office Photo Contest

### Rules, Terms, and Conditions

Please carefully review the updated rules, terms, and conditions before getting started. Please note that the COPS Office reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to cancel, suspend or amend the contest at any time without prior notice. Any changes will be posted on the COPS Office website.

**By submitting a photo, the entrant agrees with the contest rules, terms, and conditions and warrants that the photo complies with all requirements set forth below.**

### Who May Enter

This contest is seeking photos from state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies..

**The COPS Office will accept one official submission of one photo only from each law enforcement agency.** Submissions including more than one photo may be disqualified (no collages will be accepted).

### What To Enter

All contest submissions must meet the following criteria:

1. One photo of proactive policing with community members, stakeholders, local government, and others.
  - a. Photo may include community members of all ages; however, **we highly encourage photos depicting positive interactions with adults.**
  - b. **All pictured officers recognizable in the photo must be in good standing.**
2. Photo must be visibly clear and preferably sized to fit a rectangular header (horizontal images).
3. Submission must include a caption of the photo, including the date (month and year) the photo was taken and a detailed explanation of why it is an example of proactive policing and how it highlights the dedication and service of America's law enforcement officers.
4. Photo must include appropriate photo credit information; for example, "Photo courtesy of [name of law enforcement agency]" or "Photo taken by [name of photographer]."
5. Photo must not endorse or appear to endorse any commercial organization, product, or service including, but not limited to, by displaying brand names, logos, or trademarks on any people, equipment, or objects visible in the photo.

- a. If the organization, product, or service is featured prominently in the photo, the law enforcement agency should make every attempt to blur the image before submission.
6. Photo must not contain obscene, provocative, defamatory, sexually explicit, or otherwise objectionable or inappropriate content.
7. Photos featuring minors should be at a very highly public event focused on children (e.g., a youth outreach summit). **Consent by the parent or legal guardian must be given for all photos of minors.**
8. Submission must include an original, completed, and signed [Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release Authorizing Use and Disclosure of Photographic Image form](#) (unaltered) secured by the law enforcement agency from each individual (law enforcement and non-law enforcement) recognizable in the photo (with or without masks / face coverings) or, in the case of a minor, from each minor's parent or legal guardian. This form contains required Privacy Act consent provisions and authorizes the U.S. Department of Justice to use the individual's image for Federal Government purposes. If the law enforcement agency is unable to obtain consent from an individual, their image must be blurred out prior to submitting the photo to the contest. Please be advised that the law enforcement agency should consult its own legal counsel for guidance on securing separate permission to use an individual's photographic image for any purposes unrelated to this contest (e.g., posting the photo on the law enforcement agency's website).
9. Submission must include an original, completed, and signed [Permission and Release to Law Enforcement Agencies form](#) (unaltered) signed by an authorized representative of the law enforcement agency. This form certifies that the law enforcement agency secured Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release forms from all individuals recognizable in the photo and grants the U.S. Department of Justice a license to use the photo for Federal Government purposes.

The COPS Office reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to blur out any images (including branded commercial products and individuals without signed Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release forms) before using them.

The COPS Office may disqualify any submissions that do not fully comply with the contest rules, terms, and conditions.

## How To Enter

**Photos and the mandatory forms must be submitted by email to [tellcops@usdoj.gov](mailto:tellcops@usdoj.gov).** Emails must include all submission requirements.

Photos will be accepted in JPG, PSD, PNG, or EPS formats only. **We recommend that photos be sized to fit a rectangular header.**

## Timeline

**Photos taken during the 2024 calendar year are preferred.**

<b>Contest Submission Opening:</b>	Monday, September 29, 2025
<b>Contest Submission Closing:</b>	Monday, November 3, 2025 (8:00 PM ET)
<b>Notification to Winners:</b>	January 2026
<b>Winning Photo Featured:</b>	Winners may be featured during the 2026 calendar year

The law enforcement agency may be asked for supplemental information after the submission deadline.

## Judging

Our Selection Committee will judge submissions 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

The COPS Office will select approximately twelve (12) winning photos that may be showcased as headers on the COPS Office Twitter and Facebook pages and on the homepage of the COPS Office website. Winning agencies may also be featured in an article in the COPS Office e-newsletter, the *CP Dispatch*, or a COPS Office–issued press release.

If your law enforcement agency is not selected as a winner for this contest, the COPS Office may archive your photo for future use in official COPS Office or U.S. Department of Justice communications disseminated to the public.

**The COPS Office reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to not move forward with featuring a law enforcement agency, officer, or photo at any time.**

## Rights and Responsibilities

The law enforcement agency retains all existing rights including ownership, if applicable, to any photo submitted to this contest. An authorized representative from the law enforcement agency must complete the Permission and Release to Law Enforcement Agencies form and a signed original must be included with the official contest submission.

If the law enforcement agency does not own the copyright to the photo, it confirms that it has obtained the necessary permission from the copyright owner authorizing the U.S. Department of Justice to use, or authorize others to use, the photo in any format for Federal Government purposes.

The law enforcement agency confirms that it has obtained the necessary Privacy Consent, Waiver, and Release Authorizing Use and Disclosure of Photographic Image forms from all individuals, including the parents or legal guardians of minors, who appear in the photo authorizing the U.S. Department of Justice to use their photographic images in any format for Federal Government purposes.

The law enforcement agency must be prepared to promptly provide any missing forms to the COPS Office upon request.

## License

By submitting a photo to this contest, the entrant grants the U.S. Department of Justice a nonexclusive, irrevocable, and royalty-free license to use, or authorize others to use, the photo in any format for Federal Government purposes.

If the COPS Office or the U.S. Department of Justice uses a photo, proper credit will be given.

## Limitation of Liability

By submitting a photo to this contest, the law enforcement agency agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the U.S. Department of Justice and its employees, agents, or representatives, from any and all liability for any injuries, loss, claim, action, demand, or damage of any kind arising from or in connection with this contest including, but not limited to, any third party claim for copyright infringement or a violation of any individual's right to privacy or publicity right.

The law enforcement agency is solely responsible for ensuring that it has the right to submit the photo that it enters per the contest rules, terms, and conditions.

This contest is void where prohibited by law.

## Endorsement Disclaimer

Posting contest photos on COPS Office social media or in other formats is intended to provide the public with examples of proactive policing and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the U.S. Department of Justice of any law enforcement agency, individual, company, product, or organization that may be featured in the photo.