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JOURNAL

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FEBRUARY 2026

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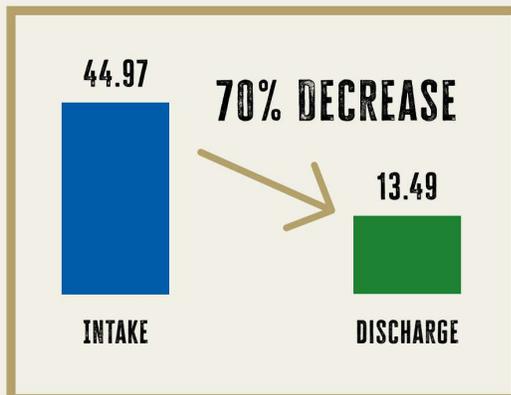
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Marco Montebalco,
Executive Director
Washington State FOP

To schedule a tour of our program or to get more information please reach out to Jeff McGreevy, Public Safety Advocate, Retired Sergeant and Peer Support Lead at jeff.mcgreevy@frhealth.com

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Updated 4-1-2025.

VALIDATED OUTCOMES

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Pathways to Excellence: The Future Begins With the Decisions We Make Today



// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Patrick Yoes at (504) 234-4300, or pyoes@nationalfop.org.

In every generation, the strength of the Fraternal Order of Police has been defined not just by our numbers, but by the quality of our leadership. Our commitment to professional development, ethical governance and strategic growth is what ensures this organization remains the most respected voice of America's law enforcement officers.

That is precisely why **Pathways to Excellence** has become one of the most important training initiatives within the FOP.

In a time when the policing profession faces extraordinary pressures — rising violence against officers, increased public scrutiny, evolving labor challenges and rapidly changing technology — effective leadership at the lodge level has never been more critical. The decisions made by local leaders today shape the experience of our members tomorrow. The quality of representation, communication, financial stewardship and member

engagement all begin with preparation.

Pathways to Excellence is designed to provide that preparation.

This training is not theoretical. It is practical. It is structured. And it is built specifically for FOP leaders who want to elevate their lodge operations and better serve their members. From governance best practices and financial accountability to member engagement strategies and leadership development, the program focuses on strengthening the very foundation of our Order.

We often say that “our structure is our strength.” But structure only works when leaders understand it, embrace it and execute it with discipline. Service to our members is not accidental; it is intentional. Excellence does not happen by chance; it is taught, measured and expected.

That philosophy is at the heart of Pathways to Excellence.

The lodges that thrive are those that invest in their leadership teams. They understand that strong internal

systems build credibility externally.

They recognize that consistency, transparency and communication foster trust. They prepare not only for today's challenges, but for the future growth of the Order.

With more than 382,000 members nationwide, the FOP continues to grow in influence and impact. But growth alone is not the goal. Sustained excellence is. And sustained excellence requires leaders who are equipped, informed and aligned with the mission of this great organization.

This training is an opportunity to sharpen those skills.

The registration deadline for Pathways to Excellence is in just a few days.

I strongly encourage lodge presidents, executive boards, trustees and emerging leaders to act now and secure their place before registration closes. Opportunities like this do not come often, and the impact of this investment will be felt long after the program concludes. Send your future leaders. Invest in your succession planning. Strengthen your lodge's foundation. The dividends will be reflected not only at the board table, but in the confidence and trust of every member you represent.

The challenges facing our profession demand prepared leadership. Our members deserve leaders who are disciplined, informed and committed to excellence.

Pathways to Excellence is more than a training event. It is an investment in the future of the Fraternal Order of Police.

And that future begins with the decisions we make today.

I look forward to seeing many of you there. **FOP**

Support the NFOP PAC!

We need your support of the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee (NFOP PAC), which, like our grassroots activism, is an essential part of our National Legislative Program. The NFOP PAC allows us to support candidates who support our members and our profession. As the oldest and largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, it is crucial we keep our PAC strong, so we can help the candidates who not only support our members but the entire law enforcement community. It is up to us to ensure that they get elected!

We need to increase member participation in our payroll deduction and monthly recurring credit card programs. Please help us advocate on your behalf and do so with the resources needed to be effective. Help us grow our PAC and amplify our voice in the nation's capital.

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SCAN TO
SCHEDULE A
MEETING

Training Events and Honoring Women's History Month



// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Jimmy Holderfield at (904) 813-0067, or jholderfield@nationalfop.org.

Greetings, my brothers and sisters. I hope this March edition of the *Journal* finds you safe. February was a wicked month, with major snow and ice storms plaguing most of the nation. We were forced to close the National Headquarters for three days due to icy roads in Nashville, for the safety of our staff. We even had snow flurries in Florida. Our gratitude goes out to our sisters and brothers, especially in the Northeast, who braved the cold and worked the streets to keep our communities safe.

I am pleased to report that we are caught up with the first half of 2026 per capita. At one point, we were running eight weeks behind. Talking about storms, it was the perfect storm this year in membership. We transitioned to the new membership database system, which required education on using it, had many glitches and didn't have core features we needed, such as printing cards, bank deposits and mailing labels. We were short-staffed due to personnel changes, and one of our massive card printers went on

the blink. In the end, our membership staff, in conjunction with our IT department, stepped up and met the challenges. Roxie Hollis and her team members, Noah Cornett, Elijah Brewer and our newest member, Zavier Hofsetter, did a great job at serving our membership. If you have not received your 2026 National Fraternal Order of Police membership card, please contact your local lodge secretary to find out why.

There are many exciting events approaching in the coming months, and you are encouraged to take advantage of the training opportunities. Many states are planning regional educational events in conjunction with their board meetings or conferences — New Mexico, Delaware, Georgia, Florida, New Jersey, Washington state and the Western States Coalition, to name a few. These training sessions are more specifically focused on issues in their states. However, the "Granddaddy" of training events is Pathways to Excellence, which is March 29 through April 3 in Las Vegas. Director

of Education Keith Turney and Seminar Coordinator Stephanie Simpson have put together a series of specific training blocks over the week-long program. Whether your interest is in wellness, legal, labor, chaplaincy, lodge management/administration or simply networking, you are sure to bring back much knowledge to your lodge. Please see the full descriptions on page 41.

March is National Women's History Month, which highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. The National FOP is proud of our women leaders at the National, State and local lodge levels. Please join me in thanking our female National trustees, State presidents, State secretaries and National FOP staff members in their contributions in moving the Order forward (see page 11 for a listing).

Last month, President Yoes, Sergeant-at-Arms Steve James and I attended the Southern States Association Conference

Continued on page 12 >



Attendees listening to social media training



Social Media Coordinator Savannah Nelson presenting training at the Southern States FOP Conference

WOMEN OF THE FOP

In recognition of Women's History Month in March, we salute the many women whose strength, talent, dedication and leadership play an invaluable role in supporting and advancing the mission of the FOP on the national, state and local levels. **FOP**



Sherri Martin
Director of
Officer Wellness
Services



Lisa Curry
Arkansas
State Secretary



Christine Kemp
Delaware
State President



Lynette Clinch
Florida
State Secretary



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Front Desk
Representative



Caprice Campbell
EXPO
Coordinator/
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Savannah Nelson
Social Media
Coordinator



Amber Hewitt
Wellness Services
Administrative
Assistant



Toni Dixon
Labor Services
Exec. Secretary



Robyn Lane
Labor Services
Data Entry



Emma Binkley
Labor Services
Clerical



Emily Carlson
Labor Services
Data Entry



Laura Gormally
Legislative
Liaison



Attendees participating in a mock social media post



Allen Hamby was re-elected as Southern States secretary, and Chet Effler promoted to chairman.

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE
Continued from page 10 >

in Charleston, South Carolina. The 12 southern member states were hosted by South Carolina State President and Southern States Immediate Past Chairman John Blackmon, the South Carolina State Lodge and Tri-County Lodge #3. Not only were the hospitality, food and business meeting outstanding, but the training portion fulfilled a great thirst for knowledge. President Blackmon contacted me months ago with an

idea of having a training session on social media. He asked if our national social media coordinator, Savannah Nelson, could conduct the training at the Southern States' annual meeting. I immediately replied, "Absolutely." The Southern States agreed to cover Savannah's costs, and she went to work on developing a lesson plan covering topics including reasons to participate in social media, how to set up the various platforms, the do's and don'ts of posting, what content to use for the greatest impact on the community and requirements from the National FOP. She was nervous since this was her first presentation, but she presented like a pro. She answered the attendees' questions and even gave some one-on-one instructions. She was well received, and we have planned for her to be a presenter at Leadership

Matters on the topic of social media during Pathways to Excellence.

Information on the National FOP Memorial Service, Police Week and other memorial service information will be released in the coming weeks. Local and State Lodge leaderships will be receiving housing information soon for the 2027 Biennial Conference to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah. Notice of desire to host the 2031 Biennial Conference closed on March 1. I received one request for consideration, which will be discussed at the upcoming National Board of Trustees meeting in Anaheim, California, April 24-25.

In closing, please feel free to contact me for any assistance my staff or I can provide you with. It is an honor and privilege to serve you. **FOP**

UPCOMING
EVENTS

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

MARCH 29–APRIL 3, 2026

South Point Hotel & Casino
Las Vegas, NV

Registration closes March 5!

SPRING BOARD MEETING

APRIL 23–25, 2026

State Presidents Meeting – April 23

National Board Meeting – April 24-25

Anaheim Marriott Suites | Anaheim, CA

Hotel Registration

State Presidents Meeting Registration

National Board & Committee Meeting Registration



Questions being asked about creating a social media platform

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SOUTH CAROLINA

Midlands Lodge #1 Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Midlands Lodge #1 in Columbia is celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2026. The first lodge to form in South Carolina that has stayed active was the Lexington County Lodge #2, which was made up entirely of deputies with the Lexington County Sheriff's Department. These officers started searching for a national organization to join to help them in their endeavors. They found that the FOP was the only organization that truly consisted of police officers who represented police officers. They contacted the North Carolina State Lodge, and these members came in to tell them about the FOP. Out of the 78 Lexington deputies, 75 became charter members on February 9, 1976. Application for charter was completed on February 3. The first meeting was held and the election of officers was done on February 9.

These officers set about trying to gather strength through numbers and community support. They started raising funds for activities and attorney fees if needed. Their plight became public, and support started coming in immediately. At about the same time that Lodge #2 was being formed, officers with the Charleston County Police Department began searching for a national organization to join. They contacted the Georgia State Lodge of the FOP for assistance. It was discovered that Lexington had just formed a lodge, and the officers from the Charleston County Police Department chartered the Charleston County Lodge #3. The officers from both lodges began to share information.

In early 1977, officers from Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties got together and formed the third lodge, called Tri-County Lodge #4. The reason why no lodge used the #1 number was that about six months before the officers from Lexington County Lodge #2 formed, there was a lodge in Lancaster County, which was Lodge #1. They quickly disbanded when their sheriff threatened to fire any FOP member. This number went unclaimed until Lexington County Lodge #2 became Midlands Lodge #1, which is documented as being incorporated by



Lodge #1 headquarters



The lodge hall

the South Carolina secretary of state on January 24, 1986.

In April 1977, these three lodges took a bold step and decided to form a State Lodge. The location of this first meeting was in West Columbia, at the Ramada Inn. National President Pat Stark came in to charter the new State Lodge and to preside over the meeting to elect State officers. The leadership from the three lodges met

and elected the following officers: State President Guy Osborne, Vice President Jim Cleveland, Secretary William Graham and Treasurer Gilbert Smith. James Longo was elected as the first National trustee.

The original lodge secretary, W.T. Scruggs, has been an active member for all 50 years. At our monthly meeting on

Continued on page 16 >



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ANP686950-03 CW 2025/01



The front office



The lodge lobby



The second lodge office

LOCAL LODGE NEWS

Continued from page 14 >

April 20 at 7 p.m., we will be giving W.T. Scruggs his lifetime membership. The South Carolina Senate and the House of Representatives are each going to be presenting us with a resolution recognizing us on this celebration. We will be hosting a Family Fun Day on Saturday, April 18, at our lodge. Anyone who is available to join us on this historic occasion, we would love to have you. This is the lodge building Pat and Jimmy visited two years ago when they joined us for the South Carolina State Meeting. The address is 4965 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29212. **FOP**



Fifty-year lodge member W.T. Scruggs with the board and anniversary challenge coin



The lodge's 50th anniversary challenge coin



The Midlands Lodge #1 board: Second Vice President Chuck Hamrick, Vice President Dave Black, President Dale Jones, Secretary Gary Altman, Chaplain Chris Brewer and Treasurer Fred Ellis



BENEFITS OF FOP MEMBERSHIP

The National Fraternal Order of Police is the world's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers, with over 373,000 members in more than 2,200 lodges. We are committed to improving the working conditions of officers and the safety of those we serve through education, legislation, information, community involvement and employee representation. Here's a quick overview of the wide variety of services and benefits that the FOP offers to its members.

Legislative Office

The office on Capitol Hill lobbies on issues important to rank-and-file law enforcement officers. The National Legislative Program is the most active and comprehensive of any law enforcement organization in Washington.

Legal Defense Plan

This self-funded plan is available to eligible FOP groups and individual members to cover law enforcement exposures, including administrative, civil and criminal legal coverage; H.R. 218 coverage; and the Moonlighting Liability Insurance Program.

Labor Services Division

Comprehensive resources and services designed to ensure that no officer goes to the bargaining table alone. Labor Services stands ready to provide the people and resources you need for contract information, experienced legal experts, training seminars, personalized labor research and more.

National Peace Officers' Memorial Service

This solemn event is held every year during National Police Week to honor those who have given their lives in the line of duty. Open to the public, it brings together the expanded law enforcement family and national leaders, pays tribute to the fallen and offers words of comfort to their surviving family members.

FOP Journal

Published digitally 12 times a year, the FOP Journal is the official publication of the National FOP. Each issue contains reports from the Executive Board, updates on law enforcement legal and labor issues and so much more!

Disaster Relief

As part of the NFOP Foundation, the Fraternal Order of Police Disaster Relief Fund (a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization) relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations and corporations and is always prepared to assist our members in distress.

Charity Partnerships

- **Easter Seals:** Helping children and adults with disabilities live better lives is at the heart of Easter Seals' mission, and the FOP, as a long-standing Easter Seals National Corporate Partner, has helped raise more than \$15 million. Donate online at www.easterseals.com and be sure to indicate your FOP affiliation when donating!
- **Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics:** The FOP is committed to helping people with intellectual disabilities learn to become self-reliant and contributing members of our communities.

Service Providers

The National FOP list of Service Providers currently includes Liberty Mutual insurance, Avis and Enterprise car rentals and a variety of licensed products from HALO, the official FOP merchandiser.

Education Services

The Education Services Committee develops and implements professional law enforcement training programs and events to equip members with the skills needed to enhance their careers, and has established a training schedule covering a wide spectrum of leadership, labor and legal issues. The National FOP also provides scholarships to eligible applicants.

National Fraternal Order of Police University (NFOPU)

Recognizing that four-year and graduate degrees are increasingly important for law enforcement career advancement, the FOP collaborates with a select consortium of universities willing to offer members the education they need with a flexible schedule and reasonable cost. **FOP**



For more information on all of these programs, visit www.fop.net.

FLORIDA

Hope Beyond Borders: Why Lodge #50 Is Supporting FUNDANA

HERNANDO G. PACHECO /
FLORIDA LODGE #50 TRUSTEE

The humanitarian crisis in Venezuela continues to devastate families, with children bearing the brunt of poverty, abandonment and social instability. Amid these conditions, credible organizations providing real, measurable assistance are rare and invaluable. FUNDANA (Fundación Amigos del Niño que Amerita Protección, or Friends of the Abandoned Child Foundation) stands out as one such organization.

The proposal for Lodge #50 to support FUNDANA was brought forward by lodge members who strongly believe in extending our core values — service, protection of the vulnerable and compassion — beyond borders when the need is urgent and the cause is legitimate. Several Lodge #50 members also have **family members and close personal connections to Venezuela**, giving this initiative deep personal meaning and reinforcing our commitment to ensuring that any organization we support is ethical, transparent and effective.

Who FUNDANA Is and What They Do

Founded in 1991, FUNDANA is a **nonprofit, non-governmental organization based in Caracas, Venezuela**, with more than three decades of uninterrupted service dedicated to protecting children at extreme social risk. Its mission, “**to protect lives in order to change destinies,**” is carried out through hands-on programs that provide safety, dignity and hope to those who need it most.

FUNDANA’s work includes:

- Providing **safe, family-style homes** for infants and young children who have been abandoned, abused or neglected
- Offering **medical care, nutrition, psychological support and early education**

to ensure children heal and develop in healthy environments

- Strengthening families through **prevention and reintegration programs**, helping reunite children with relatives whenever possible
- Supporting mothers and caregivers so families can break cycles of neglect, poverty and violence

Over the years, FUNDANA has assisted **thousands of children and families**, not merely offering temporary relief but building pathways to long-term stability and opportunity. Their work is deeply human, compassionate and focused on restoring childhood to those who have had it stripped away by circumstance.

Vetting and Legitimacy

Given Venezuela’s well-known challenges with corruption and political instability, Lodge #50 exercised appropriate diligence before proposing support for FUNDANA. The organization was vetted through:

- Its **30-plus-year operational history**, demonstrating sustainability and credibility
- Formal registration as a nonprofit organization with a transparent governance structure
- Publicly documented programs, partnerships and impact reporting
- Recognition and collaboration with international humanitarian networks and donors

This due diligence provides confidence that funds raised will be used responsibly and directly to support children and families in need.



The Lodge #50 Fundraising Initiative

The fundraising initiative is designed to be simple, transparent and mission-focused. Supporters will be able to **purchase designated fundraising T-shirts and make donations directly through a single official website**, ensuring clarity, accountability and ease of participation. A portion of the proceeds generated through this effort will directly support FUNDANA’s humanitarian programs benefiting vulnerable children and families in Venezuela. **To purchase T-shirts and donate, go to tinyurl.com/foplodge50-fundana.**

Conclusion

This initiative reflects the very heart of what the Fraternal Order of Police represents — standing up for those who cannot protect themselves and offering help rooted in integrity and compassion. Supporting FUNDANA allows Lodge #50 to make a meaningful, well-vetted impact where the need is greatest, while honoring the personal connections some of our members maintain with the Venezuelan people. During our February lodge meeting, we determined that more than 25% of our members have either friends, family or colleagues of Venezuelan descent.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **FOP**

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The Importance of Being Earnest and Doing Your Homework

WHY JUST ANY PROVIDER WON'T DO

SHERRI MARTIN / DIRECTOR OF WELLNESS

Artificial intelligence has become all the rage, reaching every part of our work and our world, and officer wellness is no exception. Out of curiosity, and in an effort to always do all that we can to serve our members, we recently asked our favorite AI tool, “What are common criticisms of officer wellness programs?” The number one answer was that stigma still persists that prevents officers from accessing wellness resources. We have always known this and continuously work to reduce stigma — through education, through conversations that normalize the use of services and through the development of programs that address the needs of officers and their families. And we have had some success. According to the findings of the FOP Critical Issues in Policing surveys, between 2021 and 2023, stigma was reduced by 11%, which is significant. But we still have a ways to go.

One thing that we know contributes to stigma is a concern that the mental health practitioner won't understand the nature of police work or police culture. As the topic of mental health comes up more and more commonly in law enforcement, one of the most frequently asked questions is “How do I find a qualified provider who will ‘get it?’” This may not seem like a big deal when we think about choosing a primary care provider or a dentist, but when we are looking for a provider with

whom we are going to talk about thoughts and emotions, it seems much more important, and it is. An effective therapeutic relationship between a mental health provider and their client has its foundation in respect, empathy and understanding of the client's circumstances. It can be hard enough to overcome potential stigma and actually reach out to a provider. It's only natural that we would want to make it more comfortable by connecting with the right provider, the first time.

The NFOP Division of Wellness Services has taken some of the guesswork out of the equation. Leaning on our experience and education in mental health and counseling, we understand the credentials, characteristics and capabilities that might make a provider ideal for working with members of law enforcement. We have developed a transparent and thorough review process for vetting many different types of wellness resources, including individual therapists, residential treatment programs (including those specialized for law enforcement and other first responders), hotlines, wellness-related training programs, and wellness products and tools, like smartphone apps and wearable devices.

We ask providers and programs to demonstrate their competence and interest in serving members of law enforcement and their families, to ensure not only that they understand the lives and stressors that officers experience, but also that they genuinely care about and support law enforcement. It is

our hope that by vetting resources in this manner, we reduce some of the noise that might make finding the right provider a confusing or daunting task. Let's face it, we often don't consider utilizing professional wellness services until the wheels start to come off, and that makes the choice even harder when we don't know where to turn.

The Approved Provider Bulletin (APB) at **FOP.net/officer-wellness/providers** is a national directory of vetted resources that have already been reviewed by the National Officer Wellness Committee, a group of members who "get it." Each resource in the directory has not only reached out to law enforcement, but also demonstrated experience and capacity in effectively connecting with and understanding members of the law enforcement community. So, what if you don't see a resource near you in the directory? Keep in mind that if a practitioner is licensed in your state, they can see clients via telehealth, expanding the number of services that may be available to you. Many of the providers in the directory are licensed in more than one state, so there are several opportunities to find a provider who is a good fit. If you are interested in taking a closer look at providers who aren't in the APB, we suggest using our Wellness Provider Vetting Guide, which can also be found linked on the APB page. Doing some work to identify the right providers on the front end can make a big difference in the outcome and be a time saver as well.

Speaking of being a time saver, if you don't yet have a mental health provider, think about identifying one now. You might say, "But I don't need that; I'm mentally well." Do we wait to

find a primary care provider until we are sick? Do we wait to find a dentist until we have a toothache? In some cases, maybe so, but the best time to build a relationship with a mental health professional is before we have a problem. Not only does this increase our comfort with the process of therapy and the therapist's office, it establishes a baseline for the provider, so that if something does go wrong, they already have an understanding of what normal should look like for you — in short, they know you and know the best way to go about returning you to health.

Let's turn our attention back to AI for a moment. While there might be a temptation to reach out to Dr. Google or try out one of the new AI-based therapy services, we strongly discourage this idea. Although they might seem like a quicker, more convenient service, or a stronger way to preserve confidentiality and privacy, AI-based services remain untested, unvetted and unproven. We don't want to see any of our valued members gamble with their health or that of their family members.

We are constantly learning and growing, keeping on top of the latest developments in wellness and working to respond to our members' needs and those of your families. As you explore the range of providers and services available, we hope that you will reach out to the Division of Wellness Services to share what you learn. We want to know if you have a good experience, or if there are things that need adjustment or improvement. Remember, monitoring your health includes keeping your mind and your spirit healthy, too.

Wishing you wellness! **FOP**



BLUE VIEW

TUNE IN TO THE FOP PODCAST

Listen in every week to hear from law enforcement experts, elected officials and other notable leaders to gain insight into the issues and current events surrounding the law enforcement community.

Available now on FOP.net, FOP's YouTube channel, Apple, Google, Spotify and Amazon Music.

CPR SKILLS PREPARE COMMUNITIES TO SAVE LIVES WHEN SECONDS MATTER

The American Heart Association is joined by the National Fraternal Order of Police in a call for Americans to learn lifesaving skills and “be the first responder until help arrives” during American Heart Month 2026.

When a medical emergency happens, time matters and a quick response is needed.¹ During American Heart Month 2026 in February, the National Fraternal Order of Police joined the American Heart Association in urging Americans everywhere to be the help until help arrives and learn how to respond in a medical emergency such as cardiac arrest — when providing help like cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can be the difference between life and death.

For the fourth consecutive year, American Heart Month highlighted the need to be prepared in an emergency and provide CPR because immediate action can change outcomes. In fact, providing immediate CPR for a person experiencing cardiac arrest can double or even triple their chances of survival.

“The American Heart Association is creating a Nation of Lifesavers by ensuring more people are comfortable delivering CPR when they witness someone experiencing cardiac arrest,” said Stacey E. Rosen, M.D., FAHA, volunteer president of the American Heart Association, executive director of the Katz Institute for Women’s Health of Northwell Health in New York City and senior vice president of women’s health at Northwell. “Anyone can be a first responder during a medical emergency until professional help arrives on the scene.”

Sudden cardiac arrest can happen anywhere and at any

Continued on page 24 >



¹ Merchant RM, Becker LB, Brooks SC, Chan PS, Del Rios M, McBride ME, Neumar RW, Previdi JK, Uzendu A, Sasson C; on behalf of the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association Emergency Cardiovascular Care 2030 Impact Goals and call to action to improve cardiac arrest outcomes: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2024;149:e914–e933. doi: 10.1161/CIR.000000000001196.

Take charge of your health today! Scan the QR code to explore more tools that can help you track your health, set goals and stay strong — for the job and beyond.

The American Heart Association and the National Fraternal Order of Police are proud to collaborate to improve the cardiovascular health and overall well-being of law enforcement officers.



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- Sgt. Justin Mims Chilton County Sheriff's Office, Clanton, AL



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CPR SKILLS PREPARE COMMUNITIES

Continued from page 22 >

time. Survival often begins with a person who witnesses the event and is strengthened by the rapid response of first responders. Law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical services professionals and other first responders bring skill, courage and compassion to cardiac emergencies every day. Their dedication reflects the highest standards of public service and reinforces the importance of community preparedness.

“Every day, our local law enforcement officers work to protect lives and keep communities safe, often arriving at moments when seconds make the difference,” said Patrick Yoes, president of the National Fraternal Order of Police. “By encouraging more citizens to act as initial first responders by knowing and performing CPR, we strengthen the chain of survival and reinforce a shared commitment to safety and preparedness.”

By expanding access to CPR education, communities can help ensure the chain of survival is activated earlier, ideally the moment a cardiac emergency occurs.

“When more people are trained, help is already in motion before sirens are heard, which can improve the chance of a positive outcome,” said Ashish Panchal, M.D., Ph.D., volunteer chair of the American Heart Association Emergency Cardiovascular Care Committee, physician and professor of emergency medicine at The Ohio State University. “The

sooner people realize help is needed, call 9-1-1 and start CPR, the better the odds are the person can recover. We need everyone to be ready to be a lifesaver and act as that initial first responder.”

This American Heart Month, the National Fraternal Order of Police and the American Heart Association encourage everyone to take action: learn CPR, refresh existing training and motivate others to do the same. Saving a life should never be left to chance. Preparedness is a shared responsibility — and together, communities can be ready to respond when seconds matter most.

Each year, approximately 350,000 people in the U.S. experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest — when the heart suddenly stops beating — which results in death 90% of the time, according to the Heart Association’s statistics.²

Additional resources:

- Follow AHA/ASA news on X @HeartNews.
- Get more information on Joining the Nation of Lifesavers at www.heart.org/nation_fop

² Martin, S. S., Aday, A. W., Allen, N. B., Almarzooq, Z. I., Anderson, C. A., Arora, P., Avery, C. L., Baker-Smith, C. M., Bansal, N., Beaton, A. Z., Commodore-Mensah, Y., Currie, M. E., Elkind, M. S., Fan, W., Generoso, G., Gibbs, B. B., Heard, D. G., Hiremath, S., Johansen, M. C., . . . Palaniappan, L. P. (2025). 2025 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics: A report of US and global data from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. <https://doi.org/10.1161/cir.000000000001303>.

WELLNESS PROVIDERS

Chateau Recovery Midway, UT

chateaurecovery.com/first-responders

FHE Health:

Shatterproof Program Deerfield Beach, FL

fherehab.com/services/first-responders

First Responder Wellness by Simple Recovery Costa Mesa, CA

firstresponder-wellness.com

Harbor of Grace First Responder Program Havre de Grace, MD

harborofgracerecovery.com/first-responders

Throttle and Thrive Palos Verdes Estates, CA

throttleandthrive.com

Warrior’s Heart Bandera, TX

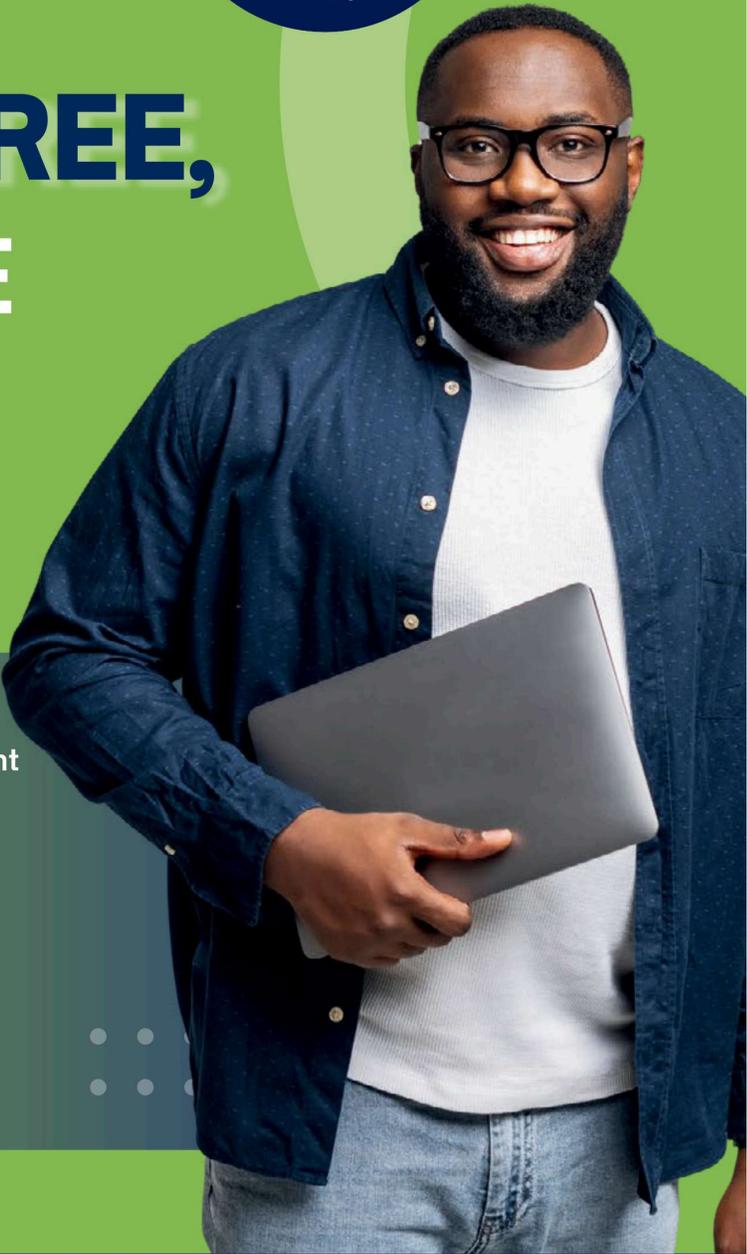
warriorsheart.com

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Upper Iowa University



Since its founding in 1857, Upper Iowa University (UIU) has remained steadfast in its mission to provide accessible, high-quality higher education and support lifelong learning. As a private, nonprofit university, UIU equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the classroom, their careers and life beyond graduation. Today, UIU serves approximately 4,500 undergraduate and graduate students across more than 11 U.S. education locations, in addition to its historic main campus in Fayette, Iowa.

UIU is proud to be a consortium partner with the FOP and to collaborate with numerous law enforcement agencies nationwide. Through face-to-face, online and self-paced learning options, the University supports the educational advancement of law enforcement professionals. UIU accepts police academy transfer credits and recognizes prior learning gained through military service and other experiential learning opportunities.

Students at UIU can choose from more than 40 undergraduate majors, all delivered through a flexible course schedule designed

for working adults and nontraditional learners. Undergraduate program offerings include accounting, business administration, criminal justice, emergency and disaster management, human resources management, human services, business analytics, cybersecurity, management, marketing, psychology and public administration with emphases in general studies, emergency management, fire science or law enforcement, and policy and politics. Among UIU's newest academic offerings are new emphasis areas of cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI) in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, a new emphasis area of cybersecurity in the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program, and new bachelor's degree majors of cybersecurity and business analytics, as well as a brand-new 90-credit bachelor's degree in business administration. UIU is among the first institutions in the nation to offer a reduced-credit bachelor's degree, designed to give students a more focused, affordable and efficient path to graduation.

At the graduate level, UIU offers master's degrees in business administration, counseling, education, health care administration, public administration

and psychology. The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program prepares students with practical leadership and management skills essential for careers in government and nonprofit organizations. MPA students may select an emphasis in criminal justice, emergency management and homeland security, general study, cybersecurity, health care management, nonprofit organizational management or public management.

UIU's academic calendar is designed with flexibility in mind, featuring five eight-week sessions each academic year and one accelerated six-week summer session. This structure allows students to focus on fewer courses at a time while maintaining steady progress toward degree completion. Students may also transfer up to 90 undergraduate credits or 12 graduate credits from other institutions or earned through experiential learning portfolios or approved college examinations.

Affordability remains a cornerstone of the UIU experience. The University



offers competitive tuition rates alongside a wide range of endowed and institutional scholarships, grants and financial assistance programs. Many students qualify for scholarships that significantly reduce the cost of their education. In addition, through the Corporate Advantage Partnership (CAP) program, students who are pursuing UIU's online program and are employees of participating organizations receive tuition grants, among other benefits. Eligible FOP members may receive savings of up to \$125 per course through the Bronze Level Grant.

UIU has a long history of meeting students where they are. In 1973, the University launched its external degree program to serve individuals balancing education with careers, families or military service. UIU expanded further in 1981 by opening education centers across the United States and abroad. In 1999, UIU introduced online learning options, and in 2011, it became one of Zoom's earliest higher education partners — continuing its legacy of innovation and access.

A participant in the Principles of Excellence and Yellow Ribbon programs, UIU has been recognized multiple times as a Military-Friendly School by VIQTORY, Military Advanced Education and *G.I. Jobs*. Additionally, *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked UIU's online undergraduate and master's programs among the best for veterans and active servicemembers.

To further support military families, UIU established the Military Family Grant in September 2020. This grant provides financial assistance to eligible spouses and dependents of active-duty, reserve and National Guard servicemembers. UIU's Patriot Grant is also available for all military personnel (active, guard, reserve and retired), as well as their family members, who are Department of Defense ID card holders. Additionally, UIU accepts tuition assistance, veterans' educational benefits and credit for military service.

For more information about Upper Iowa University, visit uiu.edu, email info@uiu.edu or call (800) 553-4150. **FOP**

The National Fraternal Order of Police University

The National Fraternal Order of Police University (NFOPU) has successfully paved the way for hundreds of FOP members to pursue higher or continued education. For more information on the NFOPU Consortium, go to

FOP.net/fop-university



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Manchester, NH



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Cincinnati, OH



Arlington, VA



Adelphi, MD



San Diego, CA



Williamsburg, KY



Fayette, IA



Minneapolis, MN



Wichita, KS

FOP.net/fop-university



A Successful Day on the Hill

Appropriations Update: DHS Remains Unfunded

Congress passed H.R. 7148, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026, early last month, which funds all components of the federal government with the exception of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). At this writing, it appears that Congress will not pass a DHS spending bill, which will result in a partial shutdown.

The operations of the U.S. Coast Guard, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the Transportation Security Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency will be impacted. The U.S. Secret Service and Immigration and Customs Enforcement will continue to perform their essential public safety functions, but a prolonged shutdown may affect their paychecks.

Federal Law Enforcement Raise Update

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a memo (tinyurl.com/opm-raise-memo) on the pay adjustments for federal law enforcement officers in accordance with President Trump's Alternative Pay Plan issued on August 28, which went into effect on January 11. OPM Director Scott Kupor designated additional positions at the departments of Homeland Security, Treasury and Commerce and their component agencies, as well as officials providing personal protection services at the departments and other agencies. In his memo (tinyurl.com/opm-kupor-raise-memo), he states: "These additional positions also support ongoing agency hiring efforts for mission-critical law

Just the Facts:

» The annual Day on the Hill event welcomed more than 100 FOP members to Washington, D.C., to advocate on law enforcement issues with legislators, adding many new co-sponsors on priority bills. In other updates, Congress has yet to pass a DHS spending bill, resulting in a partial shutdown. The FOP is engaged in ongoing conversations with White House officials about the need for OPM to make sure that all federal law enforcement officers receive the recent 3.8% raise. The FOP has also been active in the effort to reauthorize FirstNet, engaging with legislators to make sure they understand the network's importance to public safety.

enforcement occupations essential to implementing the Administration's priorities to secure the border, enforce Federal laws, and protect public safety."

The FOP is engaged in ongoing conversations with White House officials about the need for OPM to make sure that all federal law enforcement officers receive the 3.8% raise.

Schedule F Returns as Schedule Policy/Career

The Office of Personnel Management finalized a rule entitled "Improving Performance, Accountability and Responsiveness in the Civil Service," which was published in the Federal Register early last month and will go into effect this month.

The rule establishes Schedule Policy/Career in the excepted service and clarifies that such positions can include career roles not normally subject to change with a presidential transition. Employees become effectively at-will for removal purposes, which would allow termination for poor performance, misconduct or policy misalignment/subversion by reducing procedural hurdles and Title 5 protections.

Federal agencies will identify and submit lists of policy-influencing positions for review by OPM, which will make recommendations to the president. The president will then issue a specific executive order to formally place positions/employees into the Schedule Policy/Career position.

Legislative Update: FirstNet Reauthorization

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), established in 2012 to oversee a dedicated nationwide broadband network for public safety communications, is currently authorized through February 2027. Without congressional action, its authority would sunset at that time, potentially disrupting operations.

The FOP has been among the leaders in the effort to reauthorize FirstNet and has been engaged with members of the House and Senate to make sure they understand what law enforcement and other public safety officers need from this vital network.

In the House, Representatives Neal P. Dunn (R-Fla.) and Jennifer L. McClellan (D-Va.) have introduced H.R. 7386. National President

Yoes submitted a letter ([fop.net/letter/18039](https://www.fop.net/letter/18039)) outlining the FOP's concerns with some of the bill's provisions, which was passed by the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology earlier last month on a unanimous voice vote. The legislation would extend FirstNet's authorization until September 30, 2037, and enhance transparency and accountability measures. The bill would also place FirstNet under the oversight of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) within the U.S. Department of Commerce, effectively ending its independent status. This shift aims to address ambiguities in current law while preserving operational autonomy for day-to-day activities. The FOP has raised concerns about this provision, which may impose redundant governmental oversight, heightened procedural burdens and escalated expenses without tangible advantages for public safety. We remain engaged with the Committee on Energy and Commerce as the legislation proceeds.

In the Senate, the Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband held an initial hearing at the end of January to evaluate FirstNet's progress and open a dialogue on reauthorization. No draft legislation has been introduced in the Senate yet, but discussions have focused on similar themes of oversight, network reliability during emergencies and incorporating emerging technologies. The FOP will continue to work with our allies on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation as this legislation takes shape.

Legislative Update: Day on the Hill Success!

National President Yoes and I welcomed more than 100 of our brothers and sisters to Washington, D.C., for our annual Day on the Hill event. We, along with the staff of the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center, provided a briefing and update on the FOP's top legislative priorities and shared strategies for interaction with members of Congress.



Brother Gregg Pemberton also participated in the briefing and asked our Day on the Hill attendees to also tell their senators that they support H.R. 5107, the Common-Sense Law Enforcement and Accountability Now in (CLEAN) DC Act, which passed the House on a 233–190 vote. The bill would repeal the entirety of D.C.'s highly problematic Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022. National President Yoes recently sent a letter ([tinyurl.com/fop-yoes-hr-5107-letter](https://www.tinyurl.com/fop-yoes-hr-5107-letter)) to Senate leadership urging them to bring the bipartisan bill to the floor for a vote.

Representative Joshua S. Gottheimer (D-N.J.), the lead co-sponsor of H.R. 1551, the Protect and Serve Act, also spoke to the group about the dangers law enforcement officers face and the need to protect them.

Early results of our impact have been very good. We added:

- 10 co-sponsors to H.R. 3226, the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act
- Four co-sponsors to H.R. 1505, the Public Safety Employer–Employee Cooperation Act
- Eight co-sponsors to H.R. 1551, the Protect and Serve Act, and one on the Senate companion bill, S. 167
- One co-sponsor to S. 679, the LEOSA Reform Act

- Six co-sponsors to H.R. 2094, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act

We are grateful to all of our members who came to Washington, D.C., to participate in this event. For those who were unable to be there, you can still be an effective grassroots advocate! Genuine grassroots activism is not a one- or two-day event. Make contact with your members and always follow up. Each contact you have with them will reinforce the progress you made and make our efforts here more productive in generating strong and active support for our issues.

Other Legislative Activity

The FOP has supported the following legislation since the last issue of the *Journal*:

- **H.R. 2305**, the Corrections Officer Blake Schwarz Suicide Prevention Act, which would establish a grant program that would provide funding to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, states and localities to carry out mental health screenings and provide referrals, where applicable, to mental health care providers for corrections officers who are struggling with their mental health
- **H.R. 3598**, the De-escalation Drone Pilot Program Act,

Continued on page 30 >

Top Priorities in Brief



H.R. 3226, the Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act

House: 58 co-sponsors (15 R, 43 D)

Senate: Not yet introduced

H.R. 1505/S. 636, the Public Safety Employer–Employee Cooperation Act

House: 53 co-sponsors (9 R, 44 D)

Senate: 1 co-sponsor (1 D)

H.R. 2243/S. 679, the LEOSA Reform Act

House: Passed

Senate: 9 co-sponsors (9 R)

H.R. 1551/S. 167, the Protect and Serve Act

House: 102 co-sponsors (82 R, 20 D)

Senate: 25 co-sponsors (25 R)

H.R. 2094/S. 978, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act

House: 113 co-sponsors (42 R, 71 D)

Senate: 21 co-sponsors (7 R, 14 D)

To see a full list of legislation

supported by the FOP in the

previous Congress, please

visit tinyurl.com/ycy5k5rv.

Members should continue to

monitor the FOP's social media

platforms and our website for

the latest legislative news.



WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 29 >

which would establish a narrowly scoped, time-limited pilot program designed to gather data, assess effectiveness and report back to Congress

- **H.R. 7033**, the Federal Correctional Officer Paycheck Protection Act, which would establish a 35% increase to the General Schedule base pay for all Bureau of Prisons correctional staff, including GS, GL and custodial wage-grade employees
- **H.R. 7184**, the Preventing Rogue Equipment for Synthetic Substances (PRESS) Act, which would provide federal prosecutors and law enforcement agencies with the authority to hold foreign entities accountable for intentionally importing pill presses and precursor chemicals for illicit drug manufacturing
- **H.R. 7210**, the Fuel the Force Act, which would amend both the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide \$100,000 in annual federal income tax exclusion to full-time law enforcement officers with at least five years of service
- **S. 3023**, the Safe Cloud Storage Act, which would establish baseline security and data protection standards for cloud service providers that store sensitive government and law enforcement information

Sign Up for the FOP's Weekly Update

The FOP's *Weekly Update* from Capitol Hill is distributed every week, providing our members with the latest news from Washington, D.C.

If you're not getting it, go to tinyurl.com/FOP-weekly-update to sign up.

Also, make sure you are a regular visitor to all our social media platforms, as these frequent posts are the best way to keep up with the

National FOP's daily activity. Follow the National FOP on:

- Facebook (@GLFOP)
- X (@GLFOP)
- Instagram (@FOPnational)
- Truth Social (@FOPNational)

Do your part! Please **share**, **comment** and **like** our content.

NFOP PAC Update

The 2026 midterms are less than a year away, but our PAC is not ready.

We need more of our members to contribute to ensure that our PAC has the resources to support candidates who will fight for our officers and the issues that are important to them. With the next election cycle coming up fast, we have time to replenish our PAC funds — but we need to start today.

We are asking all FOP members to find a way to contribute to the National FOP PAC. Our profession depends on having well-informed lawmakers who listen to and understand the challenges facing law enforcement today.

We are urging members (and lodges) to sign up for recurring, monthly contributions using their credit card. This is the most effective and reliable way to contribute and to strengthen our PAC.

These contributions need not be for large amounts (though these are also very much appreciated) — but every dollar helps! If every FOP member gave just \$1, we could raise \$382,000! If 10% of our members gave just \$5 this year, we would raise more than \$191,100.

To donate online, please go to nfop-pac.firstresponderprocessing.com. If you would like to donate via check, please make it out to the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee and mail it to 328 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002. For inquiries about our effortless payroll deduction program or to sign up for recurring monthly donations, please contact the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center at (202) 547-8189 or David Taboh at dtaboh@fop.net.

Thank you to all of you who have supported and continue to support our PAC with regular contributions. **FOP**

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- \$75 Flat fee. No add ons. No pop-ups. No hidden fees.

Audit Protection Included For All Tax Returns

In the unlikely event of an audit or if your identity is ever stolen, we include \$1,000,000 Tax Audit Defense™ and Identity Theft Restoration services through a third party called We pay Protection Plus for you each year you file your taxes through us at no additional cost to you. We do this because we love and respect you for what you do. You deserve the extra protection and should not have to pay anything extra!



www.leaftaxes.com

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

- Satisfaction and maximum refund guaranteed. Easy to understand and use.
- Our software has been used for over 25 years and is licensed by the IRS.
- We use top-tier encryption and data storage and never share your information.
- US Based software and support. No call centers





Collective Bargaining Preparation

Successful collective bargaining starts long before anyone sits at the table. When you prepare like a strategist grounded in the law, aligned on priorities, unified as a team and disciplined in communication, you dramatically increase the chances of reaching a fair, sustainable agreement. Strong preparation is the difference between productive negotiations and a costly stalemate.

Avoid these weaknesses in your preparations:

- Poor preparation can lead to weak agreements, missed opportunities or even legal disputes.

- Unrealistic demands may stall negotiations, damage trust and undermine credibility.
- Fragmented teams create mixed messages and risk weakening your position at the bargaining table.

This checklist ensures that you walk into bargaining organized, confident and ready to negotiate strategically. Think of it as your playbook — covering research, objectives, team roles, proposals, communication and contingency planning.

Essentials:

- Research: Financials, past contracts, industry benchmarks
- Objectives: Must-haves, ranked priorities, fallback positions
- Team: Lead negotiator, HR/finance/legal experts, note-taker
- Strategy: Draft proposals with evidence, anticipate counterarguments and track issues with a checklist
- Communication: Set ground rules, confirm logistics (location, schedule), practice active listening and document agreements
- Contingency: Create communication plan for stakeholders and ensure legal compliance

Remember, nothing is more important than preparation, preparation and preparation! **FOP**

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!



The FOP constantly endeavors to hear about the experiences of our members, so that we can understand how best to serve you.

The FOP was selected to partner with the Department of Justice to build standardized training in law enforcement peer support. Share your thoughts with us on how this training can best help our profession at surveyMonkey.com/r/PowerInPeers.



Scan the QR code for more information about NFOP Labor Services.



The FOP Store

Built on Brotherhood



www.thefopstore.com



A Lodge Leader's Guide to the FOP Legal Defense Plan

As a lodge leader, you're more than an advocate — you're a trusted resource. Your members rely on you not just for representation, but for guidance, protection and access to benefits that make a real difference in their careers and personal lives. The FOP Legal Defense Plan is one of the most powerful tools you can offer to support your members and reinforce the value of lodge membership.

Why the FOP Legal Defense Plan Matters

Sponsored by the National Fraternal Order of Police and operated exclusively for FOP members, the FOP Legal Defense Plan is a self-funded legal defense benefit built specifically for law enforcement officers. It provides coverage for legal defense costs arising from:

- Administrative matters, including on- and off-duty incidents
- Civil actions tied to actions in the scope of employment
- Criminal proceedings, including grand jury matters arising out of job-related actions

When a member uses a Plan attorney, all reasonable and necessary attorney fees and costs are fully paid for covered claims.

This level of protection — available only through the FOP — helps remove uncertainty during some of the most challenging moments in an officer's career. For lodge leaders, it represents a clear, practical benefit you can confidently stand behind when speaking with both current and prospective members.

Grow Your Lodge With the Plan

Group enrollment in the Legal Defense Plan is an effective way to provide immediate value to existing members while strengthening your lodge's recruiting efforts. Many lodges position the Plan as a cornerstone benefit,

reinforcing the FOP's role as a trusted partner — not just in advocacy, but in day-to-day protection and peace of mind.

Offering group enrollment also sends a strong message: your lodge is proactive, organized and invested in the well-being of its members. By simplifying access to coverage and ensuring consistent participation, the Plan becomes a shared benefit that strengthens connection and engagement across your lodge.

It represents a clear, practical benefit you can confidently stand behind when speaking with both current and prospective members.

The Plan also offers concealed carry coverage (CCC) for retired law enforcement officers who are eligible to carry under LEOSA or state law. Many lodges use CCC to stay connected with retired members and provide continued protection after active service ends. Including CCC in your conversations helps position the lodge as a long-term resource for members during their careers and in retirement.

Manage Enrollment Through the Online Portal

To support lodge leaders, group enrollment and administration are managed through an online customer portal

designed to keep enrollment and ongoing management simple, accurate and efficient.

Through the portal, lodge leaders can:

- Submit and manage group enrollments
- Add or remove members as eligibility changes
- Track participation and coverage status
- Access enrollment forms and administrative resources

The portal reduces paperwork, improves accuracy and allows lodge leaders to assist members quickly without delays or unnecessary back-and-forth.

New Website and Lodge Leader Resources

We've updated our website! As part of this update, lodge leaders now have access to a dedicated resource page designed to help promote the Plan and support membership growth.

Visit foplegal.com/lodge-leader-resources to find:

- Ready-to-use brochures and marketing materials for member outreach
- Enrollment and administration resources to support group participation
- Customer portal support guides to help you manage enrollment with confidence

Everything is organized in one place so you can spend less time tracking down materials and more time engaging with your members.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

If your lodge isn't already enrolled as a group — or if you'd like more support — contact us at info@foplegal.com or call (800) 341-6038. We're here to support you and your members every step of the way. **FOP**

FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE



LEGAL
DEFENSE
PLAN

Defending Those Who Serve and Protect

Every year, law enforcement officers face growing legal risks - both in the line of duty.

The FOP Legal Defense Plan is here to protect your future with trusted legal support backed by the National Fraternal Order of Police.

Our plan offers:

- Legal defense for eligible administrative, civil, and criminal claims
- Your choice of attorney
- Affordable, flat-rate pricing

Join over 125,000 members who trust the FOP Legal Defense Plan to stand by them when it matters most.

800-341-6038 | foplegal.com





Get to Know Your National Executive Board: Treasurer James Smallwood

James Smallwood has built a career defined by service, leadership and an unwavering commitment to his family, his community and those who wear the badge. As a Nashville Police lieutenant, he brings years of experience, practical knowledge and steady leadership to his department and the officers who serve under his command. His work on the street and in leadership roles reflects a deep understanding of both the challenges and the honor that come with the noble profession that is law enforcement.

In August 2021, Smallwood was elected as the FOP National treasurer and has served honorably in that position, having been re-elected in 2023 and 2025. In addition to his service on the national stage, James continues to serve on the executive boards of the Nashville FOP Andrew Jackson Lodge #5 and the Andrew Jackson Police Youth Camp as immediate past president.

Throughout his leadership roles, Smallwood has negotiated improved pay, benefits and working conditions for Metropolitan Nashville Police



Department officers, implemented organizational reforms and overseen the successful management of multiple nonprofit entities. His work has focused on strengthening organizations, advancing officer welfare and expanding community-focused initiatives.

In his current position as a lieutenant with the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, Smallwood commands the Aviation, Marine and Logistics units. He was promoted in August 2024, and his career also includes assignments in patrol



operations, proactive crime suppression, criminal investigations, strategic development and supervisory leadership. During his tenure, he also served as a volunteer chaplain, peer supporter and adjunct instructor with the MNP Training Academy.

In addition to his professional duties, Smallwood serves on several nonprofit boards, including the Tennessee State FOP as a board member, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund as vice chairman and the Downwind Flying Club as treasurer. His nonprofit work reflects a longstanding commitment to officer welfare, community engagement and public service.

He also served at the national and state level as a commissioner on President Donald Trump's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice and Tennessee Governor Bill Lee's Enforcement Task Force, contributing to policy discussions on public safety and law enforcement.

Smallwood resides in the Nashville area with his wife and children. When not serving his community or fulfilling his FOP obligations, James enjoys his passion of aviation, riding motorcycles, traveling and spending time outdoors camping with his family.

The National FOP History Committee members are David L. Stevens (chair, Fla.), James Flores (N.M.), Dewey Stokes (Ohio), Bruce Evarrt (Md.), Ben Roberts (Texas) and Adolph South (Ala.). **FOP**



NATIONAL FOP AUXILIARY ROLL CALL OF HEROES

COMMEMORATIVE
CHALLENGE COIN

ORDER FORM



FRONT

Size: 78.7(w) x 83.3(h)mm
Thickness: 4mm



BACK

The National FOP Auxiliary is selling the above pictured Memorial Challenge Coins. This coin will contain the 2026 Roll Call of Heroes names as a reminder It's All About the White Chairs. Your support is greatly appreciated.

To order, please email the completed form to fopauxiliary@fop.net. You will receive an invoice via email from the National FOP Auxiliary Square account that includes a total for coins and shipping.

Total # _____ coins @ \$20 each = \$ _____

Shipping and handling: _____

4 coins or fewer = \$7

5 to 30 coins = \$10.85

31 to 50 coins = \$12.85

51+ will be calculated based on delivery address

Total amount for invoice to be mailed including shipping:
\$ _____

Purchaser and shipping information:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email address _____



A Preview of the 2026 Legal Counselors Seminar



The legal landscape affecting law enforcement continues to evolve at a rapid pace — driven by court decisions, legislation, media scrutiny and shifting public expectations. Against that backdrop, the upcoming Legal Counselors Seminar, scheduled for March 30–31 at the South Point Hotel Casino & Spa in Las Vegas, offers an intensive and timely program for police legal advisors, union counsel and attorneys representing officers and corrections professionals.

This year's seminar features nationally recognized practitioners to address the most pressing legal and strategic issues confronting law enforcement today. The following agenda outlines the key topics and issues that will be explored over two days of in-depth discussion.

Day One: Current Challenges and Strategic Responses

The seminar will open with welcoming remarks and an overview of the program from National FOP President Patrick Yoes, setting the tone for practical problem-solving for attorneys advising law enforcement officers and organizations.

The opening session will transition directly into a comprehensive legislative and administrative update. This will provide attendees with a clear picture of recent developments affecting law enforcement nationwide, including newly enacted and proposed legislation, administrative actions and policy shifts impacting collective bargaining, officer protections and FOP operations. Particular attention will be given to recent successes and ongoing priorities of the National FOP, helping counsel anticipate both opportunities and challenges ahead.

Case Study: In-Custody Death and Legal Defense

One of the most anticipated sessions of the seminar will feature a detailed case study

Just the Facts:

>> The March 30–31 Legal Counselors Seminar in Las Vegas will bring together nationally recognized experts to address the most pressing legal and strategic issues confronting law enforcement in today's rapidly evolving landscape, from constitutional litigation and labor arbitration to wellness, social media and corrections liability. The program is designed to equip police attorneys and advisors with the tools they need to effectively represent and protect those who serve.

from Phil Abdo and Marc Curtis, involving corrections officers charged with involuntary manslaughter following an in-custody death. Presenters will walk through the case from incident to prosecution, highlighting the union's response, interaction with the media

Brady/Giglio: Legal Developments and Model Policies

This session turns to the rapidly developing area of law surrounding *Brady* and *Giglio* disclosures. Attendees can expect an overview of leading court decisions, Department of Justice policies, state statutes and departmental guidelines governing disclosure obligations. The presenter, Skylar Limkemann from Iowa, will also explore prosecutorial ethics, officer due process rights and the professional responsibility issues attorneys must navigate when disclosure disputes arise.

Overview of the FOP Legal Defense Plan

Pat Fioretto will give an inside look at the FOP Legal Defense Plan so that attendees leave with a clearer understanding of this ERISA self-funded employee welfare benefit plan. The presentation will address plan structure, scope of coverage, operational strengths and emerging claim trends. High-profile cases will be used to illustrate the critical role of the plan in ensuring officers have meaningful legal protection in an increasingly adversarial environment.

Interest Arbitration: Preparation and Strategy

Interest arbitration remains a critical tool in public-sector labor relations. In

This will provide attendees with a clear picture of recent developments affecting law enforcement nationwide.

and coordination of a comprehensive defense strategy. The discussion will underscore the unique legal and factual issues that arise in representing corrections officers, including distinctions from patrol-based cases, custodial duties and evolving standards of liability.

this session, National FOP Associate General Counsel Michael Coviello will focus on effective preparation and strategic decision-making in arbitration, including issue framing, arbitrator selection and the use of mediation. Attendees will also hear practical insights into working with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, as well as navigating high-stakes arbitration proceedings.

Social Media Misconduct and First Amendment Protections

As social media continues to blur the lines between personal expression and professional responsibility, this presentation will examine misconduct investigations stemming from online activity. The discussion will focus on protecting officers' First Amendment rights while addressing legitimate departmental concerns. National FOP Associate General Counsel Marissa Borschke will summarize key court decisions, legislation and internal policies to help advise clients in this legally sensitive and highly visible area.

Officer Wellness and Disciplinary Proceedings

Day One concludes with National FOP Director of Wellness Sherri Martin, who will explore officer wellness in the context of disciplinary actions. Presenters will examine how mental health considerations intersect with investigations and discipline, including statutory protections and departmental policies. Practical strategies will be offered for safeguarding officers' privacy, ensuring fair process and addressing wellness concerns without compromising legal rights.

Day Two: Litigation Trends and Liability Management — Overview of Leading Cases

Day Two begins with an in-depth review of recent and significant decisions from the U.S. Supreme Court and federal and state courts that directly affect law enforcement. National FOP Associate General Counsel Chris Green will discuss topics like qualified immunity and litigation strategy, with particular emphasis on motion practice. Attendees will gain insight into the tactical considerations behind Rule 12(b)(6) motions versus motions for summary judgment, including their respective benefits and risks.

Officer-Created Danger: Legal and Policy Implications

Michael Coviello returns on Day Two to address the doctrine of officer-created danger — a recurring issue in civil rights litigation. Presenters will review key cases shaping the doctrine and discuss how training standards and departmental policies can mitigate exposure. The focus will be on aligning legal defense strategies with proactive risk management and policy development.

The seminar concludes with a forward-looking discussion of emerging issues, unresolved legal questions and potential topics for future programs.

Workers' Compensation, PTSD and Fitness for Duty

Matt Hill will provide an overview of workers' compensation laws across all 50 states for context from a national perspective on benefits and obligations affecting law enforcement officers. The session will pay particular attention to PTSD claims, fitness-for-duty evaluations, reasonable accommodations and the legal framework surrounding forced retirement. Practical guidance will be offered for navigating these complex and often emotionally charged cases.

Expert Witnesses in Use-of-Force Cases

Use-of-force litigation frequently turns on expert testimony. This session will bring together experienced practitioners Lance LoRusso, Andrew Duncan and P. Mason Riley to discuss strategies for selecting, preparing and presenting expert witnesses in civil, criminal and disciplinary proceedings. Topics will include policy-based experts,

Daubert challenges, discovery disputes and effective cross-examination of opposing experts.

Legal Duties of Corrections Officers

This presentation will focus on the constitutional and statutory duties unique to corrections officers. Richard Hodsdon will provide attendees with an overview of obligations to intervene, respond to inmate-on-inmate violence, provide medical care and prevent suicides. Emphasis will be placed on deliberate indifference standards, documentation and training practices that play a central role in litigation and defense.

Wrap-Up: Issues of the Day and Future Topics

The seminar concludes with a forward-looking discussion of emerging issues, unresolved legal questions and potential topics for future programs from National FOP General Counsel Larry James. This interactive session will give attendees an opportunity to reflect on key takeaways and identify areas where continued education and advocacy are most needed.

The 2026 Legal Counselors Seminar offers a rigorous, practice-focused examination of the legal issues shaping modern law enforcement. From constitutional litigation and labor arbitration to wellness, social media and corrections liability, the program is designed to equip police attorneys and advisors with the tools they need to effectively represent and protect those who serve. For practitioners navigating an increasingly complex legal environment, this seminar offers both insight and foresight. **FOP**

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Procrastination Ends March 5

Last Call for Pathways to Excellence in Las Vegas

OK, it's crunch time! You have approximately **zero days and zero minutes** left to register for **Pathways to Excellence**. Our hotel room block closes on **March 5**, along with registration. There's no more time to think about it, no more time to "check your schedule."

It's now or never ... or at least until next year.

We've seen an amazing amount of interest in this event, and I only hope that by the time you're reading this (because publishing always lags behind real life) we still have rooms available. Don't let procrastination become your assassination. Click those buttons and get the process started.

Clear it with the family. Clear it with the boss. Call your lodge president to secure the funding. Just don't call me if you miss the deadline!

Our **Wellness Summit**, led by National FOP Wellness Director **Sherri Martin**, delivers cutting-edge information to help you protect and serve your members. More than **30 sessions** are planned over two days, including renowned researcher **Dr. John Violanti**, one of the first to sound the alarm on police suicide long before it was widely recognized as the tragedy it is today.

If you've got the wellness side "well in hand," consider the **Labor Leadership Summit**. National Labor Services Director **Roger Mayberry** brings two days of impactful training — from "Finding the Money" and public-sector labor relations to use-of-force issues like the unforgettable "**Force and the Fur Missile**."

If the spirit moves you, **Excellence in Chaplaincy** may be exactly what you need. This inaugural program, led by

National FOP Chaplain **Rick Snyder**, explores the complexities of supporting members through everything from natural disasters to line-of-duty deaths.

Jimmy Holderfield, Treasurer **James Smallwood**, Sergeant-at-Arms **Steve James** and Chairman of Trustees **Rob Pride**.

With more than **50 presentations**, many repeated throughout the week, you can sharpen the fundamentals — or dive into advanced leadership tracks designed for seasoned leaders who often attend with their rising protégés.

And if that isn't enough, we're also offering a one-day **Wellness Professionals Forum** moderated by Director Martin, and a two-day **Legal Counselors Seminar** led by General Counsel **Larry James** — both offering continuing education credits.

As you can see, Pathways to Excellence features an all-star lineup. By attending, you'll have access to every aspect of the FOP and the opportunity to interact one-on-one with the people who make this organization what it is today.

So don't hesitate any longer — your window is closing fast. Registration ends **March 5**, and the discounted hotel rate disappears with it.

Click that button now ... before it's too late.

Until we meet again, God bless you and God bless the FOP! **FOP**

Don't hesitate any longer — registration ends March 5, and the discounted hotel rate disappears with it.

New to the FOP? New to leadership? Ask anyone with creds about **Leadership Matters**, and they'll tell you: this is the one place you can learn the most in the least amount of time. It's two and a half days of intense leadership training featuring National President **Pat Yoes**, Vice President **Joe Gamaldi**, Secretary

FOP DIVISION OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

If you have further questions, contact Director Keith Turney at kturney@fop.org, or (815) 482-5620. For more information on CRI-TAC, visit cops.usdoj.gov/cri-tac.

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT

MARCH 29–APRIL 3, 2026

South Point Hotel & Casino | Las Vegas, NV



[Register Today](#)

Packages are available.

See event registration page for details and pricing.

Exclusive Deal for Attendees!

We are pleased to offer a special room rate of **\$104 per night** (includes all fees) for event attendees. This rate is available Sunday through Thursday.

Wellness Professionals' Forum – \$200

(March 29)

The Wellness Professionals' Forum brings together mental health and wellness professionals for a day of learning and networking. Highlights include an introduction to FOP wellness initiatives, seminars on working with law enforcement and a networking session.

Officer Wellness Summit – \$450

(March 30-31)

This interactive event offers 20+ breakout sessions, expert panels and hands-on wellness activities, plus access to FOP-approved programs supporting officers, families and clinicians.

Labor Leadership Summit – \$525

(March 30-31)

This exclusive course delivers the latest strategies for today's evolving law enforcement environment. Build leadership skills, stay ahead of trends and prepare your team for tomorrow's challenges.

Legal Counselors Seminar – \$675

(March 30-31)

The Legal Counselors Seminar delivers two days of specialized training for attorneys representing law enforcement. Topics include *Brady/Giglio*, arbitration, workers' comp, PTSD, officer wellness, duty to intervene, corrections, social media, key cases and expert witnesses.

Excellency in Chaplaincy – \$300

(March 31-April 1)

Join the first national gathering of FOP chaplains! This "back to basics" event connects new and seasoned chaplains for growth, networking and advanced development opportunities.

Leadership Matters – \$500

(April 1-3)

Leadership Matters is designed for new and aspiring leaders seeking a full view of the FOP. Choose tracks for key roles like secretary or treasurer, or explore topics such as effective meetings, Robert's Rules, labor and legal defense.



Looking Ahead: 2026 National Peace Officers' Memorial

As we prepare for the 2026 National Peace Officers' Memorial Service, agencies and lodges across the United States are once again turning their attention to the men and women who have given their lives in the line of duty. Each May, the Memorial Service brings together families, friends, colleagues and many of our nation's leaders to honor the courage, commitment and sacrifice of officers who stood in defense of others. For those who serve, this observance is not just tradition — it is a reminder of the bond shared across the profession.

In recent years, officers have faced unprecedented challenges, from rising public safety demands to evolving threats that test the limits of training, resilience and community trust. Yet, through all

of it, the mission has remained constant: to protect, to serve and to uphold the principles that allow communities to thrive. This year's Memorial Service offers a moment to reflect on that steadfast dedication and the quiet professionalism that defines the job, even when the work grows more complex.

In the coming months, the names of the fallen will be etched into the Memorial, each representing a life of service that ended too soon and a family forever changed. As we gather for the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service, we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and we reaffirm our commitment to the officers who continue to serve with integrity, courage and an unwavering sense of duty.

We invite you to attend the National

Peace Officers' Memorial Service on May 15 on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Volunteers come to Washington from across the country to support survivors and assist with various tasks throughout the week. The Auxiliary welcomes volunteers to assist with survivor registration, stuffing programs with blue ribbons, passing out survivor handbooks, serving as escorts for survivors at the service or serving as bus riders supporting survivors on the ride to the service, just to name a few. If you are interested in volunteering, contact NPOMS Chair Julie Black at jblack@nationalfop.org, Volunteer Coordinator Debbie Swofford at magenta810@comcast.net or me, President Glenda Lehmann, at glehmann@nationalfop.org. **FOP**

There Is ALWAYS Another Option

FOP Vetted and Approved Crisis Hotlines



Crises Text Line is free, 24/7, and confidential



FOP.net/officer-wellness/crisis-hotlines

Family Helping Family

Support KaSandra, Trent and Hadley

front



A special keepsake with an even more special purpose. Purchase a beautiful remembrance coin/keychain to help support this sweet family during a difficult time.

back



Commemorative Penguin Coin

\$25 each

(\$20 coin + \$5 shipping/handling)

HOW TO ORDER

Email your completed form to:

fopauxiliary@fop.net

You will receive an invoice by email from the National FOP Auxiliary. Square account with your total for coins and shipping

ORDER DETAILS

Total # _____ Coins x \$25 each = \$ _____

PURCHASER & SHIPPING INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Thank you for helping us wrap this family in love, strength, and support.

Every purchase makes a difference



EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE DESERVES EXCEPTIONAL RECOGNITION



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100% USA MATERIALS



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