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OSIG NEWS

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OSIG RECEIVES FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CERTIFICATION

The Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) recently received certification from the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) signifying that OSIG has met certain eligibility requirements, set forth by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), to obtain discretionary federal grants. Through the Presidential Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities, the discretionary grant funding is only available to state, local, tribal, college and university law enforcement agencies that have obtained, or are seeking, credentials certifying that they meet certain standards on the use of force. The certification is valid for three years.

“The executive order’s goal is to provide transparent, safe and responsible delivery of services to communities that improve community confidence in law enforcement,” said State Inspector General Michael C. Westfall. “These grants would provide more equipment, training and staffing for OSIG to serve the citizens of the Commonwealth. I am pleased that OSIG has met the criteria for the eligibility requirements established by the U.S. Department of Justice.”

The DOJ Standards of Certification identifies two safe policing principles that independent credentialing bodies, such as the VLEPSC, must consider when assessing law enforcement agencies when they apply for certification. They are:

1. Adherence to applicable laws. The applying agency maintains use of force policies that adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws.
2. Prohibition of choke holds. The applying agency maintains use of force policies that prohibit the use of chokeholds, except in situations where the use of deadly force is allowed by law.

“OSIG’s General Orders-Use of Force policy ensures that ‘OSIG law enforcement uses only the force reasonably necessary to accomplish lawful objectives and to provide sworn agents with guidelines on the use of lethal and less lethal force to protect life and provide for the public’s safety,’” added Westfall. “I am proud that OSIG’s policies, procedures and standards have been recognized by the VLEPSC and the Department of Justice.”

OSIG policies and procedures also comply with applicable local laws and ordinances.

“It is OSIG’s policy to value and respect the citizens we serve,” said OSIG Chief of Investigations Katrina Goodman. “That policy ensures that all sworn personnel are provided with the training, equipment and guidelines necessary to properly respond to situations needing law enforcement. These grants will help us continue to do that.”

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