



IMPERIAL VALLEY **REGIONAL** CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE

July 17, 2026

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

U.S. Department of Justice

145 N Street NE

Washington, DC 20530

Re: Letter of Support for the City of El Centro COPS Hiring Program Grant Application

Dear Review Committee:

On behalf of the Imperial Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce (IVRCC), I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the City of El Centro Police Department's application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program.

IVRCC is proud to support efforts that strengthen public safety and enhance the quality of life for the residents of El Centro. We recognize that effective law enforcement services are a critical component of a safe, healthy, and thriving community, and we appreciate the important work performed by the El Centro Police Department.

As the county seat and regional hub of Imperial County, El Centro serves residents, businesses, students, patients, and visitors from throughout the region. While the City's residential population is approximately 45,000, the daytime population grows to an estimated 75,000 people as workers, shoppers, students, patients, and visitors travel into El Centro each day. This significant increase places additional demands on public safety services and generates calls for service that extend well beyond what would typically be expected for a city of El Centro's size.

The City's staffing challenges have developed over decades. In 1987, the El Centro Police Department operated with 48 sworn officers. Today, despite substantial population growth, increased commercial activity, and expansion of the City's geographic footprint from approximately 7.5 square miles to nearly 12 square miles, the department employs only 54 sworn officers. This modest increase in staffing has not kept pace with the growing demands placed upon the department and underscores the need for additional resources.

Despite these growing demands, the El Centro Police Department currently operates with 54 sworn officers, representing approximately 1.22 officers per 1,000 residents. The City's established goal is 1.75 officers per 1,000 residents, and City analyses have identified a need for an additional 24 sworn officers and 11 civilian support positions to adequately meet current and future service demands.

The funding requested through this grant would provide approximately \$1.9 million to support the hiring of six additional police officers. While this funding would not fully address the department's identified staffing shortage, it would represent a significant step toward enhancing public safety services and increasing the department's ability to provide proactive policing, crime prevention, traffic enforcement, community engagement, and timely responses to calls for service.

Additional staffing would help alleviate workload pressures currently experienced by existing personnel and allow officers to spend more time engaging with residents, schools, businesses, healthcare providers, and community organizations. These additional resources would strengthen community-oriented policing efforts while improving the department's ability to address emerging public safety challenges and maintain a safe environment for all who live, work, learn, and visit El Centro.

Our organization recognizes the importance of investing in public safety and supporting law enforcement agencies that are committed to community partnerships and proactive policing strategies. The El Centro Police Department has demonstrated its ability to responsibly manage resources, collaborate with stakeholders, and effectively serve the community.

For these reasons, IVRCC strongly supports the City of El Centro Police Department's application for COPS Hiring Program funding. We respectfully encourage your favorable consideration of this request and appreciate your commitment to strengthening public safety in communities like El Centro.

Sincerely,

Sher Cowie

Interim CEO

Imperial Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce