



CRIME STOPPERS USA® NEW PROGRAM GUIDE AND CHECK LIST

The following areas are vital to the success and planning for launching a community Crime Stoppers program. Use this outline to develop talking points, and as a guide for activities, time lines and objectives. They are in a logical order of priority; however, each area is important for successful program operation. Many questions will be answered working through the following check list. Crime Stoppers USA, Inc. will also appoint a Director to assist your program development and to answer any additional questions that are not specifically addressed.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- **Understand the history, mission, and philosophy of Crime Stoppers.**
- **Develop operation standards, and policy and procedures necessary for a successful Crime Stoppers program.**
- **Establish the essential elements of a three-part relationship with the community, law enforcement and media as outlined below.**

CHECK LIST

CRIME STOPPERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESPONSIBILITIES (Crime Stoppers is a non-profit organization of citizens against crime)

Board and Organization Development:

- Determine Incorporating Board Members (four to six people).
 - Elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.
 - Decide upon name of the corporation including Crime Stoppers (two words) in the name.
 - Establish the legal entity/Articles of Incorporation for the organization.
 - Apply for status as a non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation or equivalent.
 - Publication 557 Tax Exempt Status for your organization tool kit.
<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf>
 - Applying for 501 (c) 3 tax exempt status
<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4220.pdf>
- Identify potential volunteer board members.
 - Invite potential candidates to an introductory briefing.

- A board should ideally have between 7 – 25 members who represent a broad cross section of the community.
 - The mix should be comparable to that of the community served, including geographical and any other socio/demographics requirements. Seek suggestions from other city and county leaders.
- Provide a Crime Stoppers training/induction course for the Board of Directors. Contact Crime Stoppers USA for training assistance.
- Determine frequency of meetings. (Suggest biweekly meetings when organizing then moving to monthly meetings ongoing.)
- Set up sub-committees for Resource Development, Publicity etc.
- Produce a strategic plan including vision and mission statements, objectives and evaluation.
- Establish the Bylaws for the organization.
- Develop policy that establishes the ownership of all Crime Stoppers property by the corporation. Property should include but not be limited to phone lines, equipment and software, office file storage, supplies, correspondence, forms, and tips documentation.
- Plan for insurance to protect the program and board members. (Crime Stoppers USA has low cost policies for member programs.)
- Establish membership in Crime Stoppers USA (within the first twelve months).

Financial Planning:

- Prepare a budget to address set up costs and the first 12 months' operating expenses.
 - **Guarantee** finances to meet the projected set up costs and first 12 months' operating expenses.
 - Costs to be included in the budget should include publicity material, advertising, rewards, administration needs, and expenses for office set up, telephone calls, and computer equipment.
 - Address resource development plans – 3 years. (Volunteers, Board Members, Finances)
- Identify supporters and sponsorship opportunities.

Marketing Strategies:

- Produce a marketing plan
 - Design 'Brand/Logo'.
 - Design publicity material accordingly such as posters, leaflets, calling cards, banners and methods of distribution.
- Identify target audiences
 - What is the message to those audiences?
 - How will you reach them?
- Track results/successes – (i.e. donations, media coverage, calls). How are others hearing about Crime Stoppers?

Program Personnel:

- Program Coordinator(s)
 - Requirement for a community program (see Law Enforcement responsibilities).
 - Not required for a State or Regional program that is providing administrative assistance only.
- Executive Director
 - Optional position but can be a cost-effective use of resources, especially for larger programs.
 - May be a part time or full time position.
 - Works under the guidance of the Board and is responsible for:

- Implementation of policies set by the Board.
 - Financial management of the corporation, including the development and implementation of the annual budget.
 - Achieving goals and objectives of the program.
 - Leadership of staff.
 - Being a liaison with other organizations.
 - Overall operation of the program.
- Administrative Assistant/Clerical
 - Optional position but can be a cost-effective use of resources, especially for larger programs.
 - Coordinates and manages the office administrative functions.
 - Works with any/all of the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and Coordinator.

Law Enforcement Partnership:

- Identify Law Enforcement Team.
 - Police Chief
 - Sheriff
 - Head of Criminal Investigation
 - Head of Intelligence
 - Divisional/Area Commanders
 - Head of Press/Media Relations
 - Head of Community Relations/Crime Prevention
 - All law enforcement officers and staff
- Law enforcement officers shall take on an advisory role only as non-voting board members, in order to maintain Crime Stoppers integrity as a community program.
- Work with Law Enforcement to determine scope of program area. Will the area include a municipality, county, or multiple counties?
- Draft a Letter of Understanding between the Board of Directors and Law Enforcement to establish partnership guidelines.

Caller Rewards:

- Set reward criteria.
- Adopt a payment procedure which will protect the anonymity of the caller such as using a drive through bank.
- Establish a written agreement/disclaimer with provider (i.e. bank).
- Establish a unique reference number system for callers.

LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES
(Proper handling of information is critical for a successful organization)

Law Enforcement Operational Duties:

- The Chief Law Enforcement Officer(s) should assist in the introduction of Crime Stoppers to all law enforcement officers, emphasizing the importance and benefits of the organization and the date of the program will be launched.
 - Arrange briefing sessions for all relevant department senior officers and appropriate staff, and general assemblies for all officers, and/or attend shift roll call to provide information.
 - Prepare an Operational Order outlining how the program will be implemented.
 - Include the operational details of Crime Stoppers in all appropriate police training courses.

- Chief Law Enforcement Officer(s) should attend the program launch event.
- Design the internal on-going promotion of Crime Stoppers to law enforcement officers.
 - Include promotional opportunities such as Crime Stoppers decals on police vehicles.
 - Prepare and distribute a Crime Stoppers briefing leaflet to all police officers and staff.
 - Promote Crime Stoppers at all times for all crimes through wanted posters, press releases etc.
 - Train Public Information Officers.
- Prepare a policy on the handling and disseminating of Crime Stoppers information throughout the department, assuring confidentiality and anonymity, and assigning responsibility.
 - Assign a Coordinator(s) to work with the Crime Stoppers Board of Directors and train accordingly.
 - Work with the Board to develop 24 hour tipsline Call Center responsibilities (coordinators, dispatchers, after hour's answering service, etc).
 - Be reminded that to protect the integrity of the program that all calls and documents generated through Crime Stoppers are the property of Crime Stoppers and not the Law Enforcement agency.
- Investigate all calls received by Crime Stoppers.
 - Protect the anonymity of the caller.
 - Feed back results to the Crime Stoppers Coordinator in a timely manner – establish deadlines. (General suggestion is two weeks.)
 - Abide by the criteria as set forth by the Crime Stoppers concept.

IT/Communications Operational Procedures

- Plan for the tipsline Call Center.
 - Where will the call center be situated?
 - Plan training for tipsline call handlers.
 - Determine set up costs.
- Evaluate Telecommunication Equipment/Software needs.
 - Determine number of telephones and incoming lines needed.
 - Evaluate the use of encrypted electronic submission software and acceptance of online tips.
- Arrange for the alternatives and acceptance of tipsline calls 24/ 7.
 - Consider whether a coordinator(s) should carry cell phones when out of the office or after hours.
 - Employ a trained Crime Stoppers Answering Service for after hour's calls or 24/7.
 - Utilize other alternatives such as law enforcement dispatch center.
- Develop the procedure for taking tipsline calls.
 - Calls should be routed to the call center or correct call takers with a back up system.
 - Incoming calls must be toll-free.
 - The Telecom provider should be aware that calls must not be traced or recorded by the staff.
 - Calls must not have 'caller line identification'.
 - Arrange 'test calls' prior to launch.
- Set up the Crime Stoppers telephone number and telecommunications provider with care.
 - Acquire an easy to remember or appropriate local number. If available, a local number ending in TIPS (8477) is suggested.
 - Utilize the nationwide number 1-800-222-TIPS for toll free calls. The anonymity of the caller is protected due to no detail billing.

Coordinator Position Design:

- Work with the Crime Stoppers Board to prepare a job description – Civilian or Law Enforcement.
- Determine the chain of command.
- Set the location for the office.
- Post the position and accept applications.
- Interview applicants and appoint successful candidate.
- Provide Crime Stoppers training.

Program Evaluation Tools:

- Coordinator’s report
 - Number of calls received
 - Categories of calls
 - Number of arrest and charge
 - Categories of arrest and charge
- Interesting/difficult cases investigated and solved.
- Identify the number of items provided to the media (i.e. reenactments, wanted individuals, public service announcements).
- Utilize the reward determination form approved by the Board of Directors.
- Submit statistics to the Crime Stoppers CSIM database at least quarterly.
 - Cases Cleared
 - Arrests
 - Property Recovered
 - Drugs Seized
 - Total Recovered

THE MEDIA
(Publicity is the lifeblood of Crime Stoppers)

Program Launch:

- Format the event agenda.
- Choose a location and time with easy access for the media.
- Develop a press packet for the media and distribute at a press briefing prior to the launch of the program and secure media representatives for the program kick-off event.
- Take the opportunity to maximize publicity with high profile photos with local leaders, celebrities and create interest with an unusual event or location, VIP list, and refreshments.
- Hand out promotional items.

Ongoing Media Support:

- Plan for the development of a plan for regular media support.
 - Television – reenactments, cold cases, wanted individuals, public service announcements etc.
 - Radio – regular Crime Stoppers program, interviews, public service announcements etc.
 - Press/Newspapers – program information articles, crime features, wanted individuals.
 - Prepare dead space slicks for each media outlet which include the logo and phone number.
- All media outlets should provide free publicity.
- Plan for the development of a program web site to include general program information, wanted individuals, links to state, national, and international sites and other agencies and supporters.

Resource Link: www.crimestoppersusa.com

Samples available:

Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
Board Member Application/Job Description
Coordinator Job Description
Executive Director Job Description
Crime Stoppers/Law Enforcement Letter of Agreement
Reward Determination Form and Policy

Tip Taking Information Kit
Statistics Submission Form
Bank Payment Procedure
Bank Instruction Letter
800 Number Report
800 Number Startup