

Media Release

Ontario's Police Chiefs Unveil Best Practices Guidelines for Police Serving LGBTQ Communities

Groundbreaking document aims to strengthen relationships between gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities and police

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(Toronto, ON) – Ontario's police leaders have released a best practices document – the first of its kind in Canada – which will help police services address issues of importance to members of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities across the province.

The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police's (OACP) 80-page *Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ Communities in Ontario* is the result of an extensive research project led by Kyle Kirkup, a lawyer and criminal law scholar who examines LGBTQ issues.

Chief Paul Cook, the OACP's President, said the guidelines examine critical areas for improving how police interact with LGBTQ communities.

"Ontario's police leaders acknowledge that our relationships with our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities have often been marked by discrimination, prejudice, and harassment," said Chief Cook (North Bay Police Service). "This document sends a strong signal to our LGBTQ communities and to everyone in our police organizations, that police are determined to proactively address issues that are of importance to our LGBTQ citizens, their families, and their friends."

As a living document, *Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ Communities in Ontario* will assist police services to actively deal with issues related to police and members of LGBTQ communities. By having Ontario police services and community organizations share their knowledge and experiences, the OACP is seeking to equip police leaders and personnel to better serve all members of our communities.

Kyle Kirkup, a Trudeau Scholar at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, hopes the work will also lead to projects in other jurisdictions.

"Police Chiefs, officers, and community groups from across Ontario have been incredibly supportive in the development of this resource document," said Kirkup. "This is the first document of its kind ever published in Canada, and we hope that it will serve as a model for other police organizations in Canada and internationally."

Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ Communities in Ontario was developed under the auspices of the OACP Diversity Committee. It received extensive input from police and community groups across Ontario. For a copy of the document, please visit www.oacp.ca.



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**The Ontario Association of Chiefs of
Police is the voice of Ontario's
Police Leaders**

*Members of the Ontario Association of
Chiefs of Police serve their
communities as the senior police
leaders in municipal, regional,
provincial, national, & First Nations
police services across Ontario.*

The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police's *Best Practices in Policing & LGBTQ Communities in Ontario Project*

Under the leadership of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police's (OACP) Diversity Committee, Ontario's police leaders have developed *Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ Communities in Ontario* as a resource for Ontario police services. The document is a continuing project and will be updated with new information over time. This is the first document of its kind ever published in Canada. Ontario's police leaders hope that it will serve as a model for other police organizations in Canada and internationally.

As a living document, *Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ Communities in Ontario* will assist police services to proactively address issues related to policing members of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities. By having Ontario police services and community organizations share their knowledge and experiences, the OACP is seeking to equip Ontario's police leaders and their police officers to better serve all members of our communities.

Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ Communities in Ontario was developed over a two-year period. The principal investigator, Kyle Kirkup, is a Trudeau Scholar and PhD law student at University of Toronto. As a gay man working in the legal profession and growing up with a father who continues to serve with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Kyle is familiar with both the policing and LGBTQ communities. His legal background and ability to provide a comprehensive approach to the project have made this project possible.

During the development of this resource document, the OACP reached out to all police services in Ontario, many open and closeted serving LGBTQ police personnel, and LGBTQ community organizations. It includes sections on:

- i. Checklist
- ii. Definitions
- iii. Training
- iv. Policy
- v. Liaison
- vi. Community Engagement
- vii. Recruitment/Retention
- viii. Know your community
- ix. Operational
 - Hate Crime
 - Partner/Spouse Assault
 - Bullying
 - Affinity Group / Employee Network
- ix. Resources/Networks

As this is a living document, it is anticipated that *Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ Communities in Ontario* will be updated regularly and made available through the OACP. We welcome input and inquiries to:

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