

# Regional Police Study

Johnsonburg Borough, Ridgway Borough, and Jones Township  
Elk County, PA

JUNE 2025



Pennsylvania  
Governor's Center for  
Local Government Services

Governor's Center for  
Local Government Services

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## Executive Summary

This study provides data and information regarding the possible establishment of a regional police department, consisting of 12 full-time and two part-time police officers (13 Full-Time Equivalent or “FTE”) to provide 24-hour police coverage for Ridgway Borough, Johnsonburg Borough, and Jones Township all located in Elk County, Pennsylvania and their current combined population of 7,959 residents.

The study recommends the following operational positions be established within the regional police department:

- **Administration** – 1 Police Chief and 1 Lieutenant
- **Patrol Supervision** – 2 Patrol Sergeants
- **Patrol Officers** – 7 Full-Time Patrol Officers and 2 Part-Time Patrol Officers
- **Investigations** – Assigned and Supervised by the Lieutenant
- **Schools** – 1 School Resource Officer (Reimbursed by the School District)
- **Clerical Staff** – 1 Administrative Assistant / Police Secretary

The proposed budget provides funding for the salaries and benefits for all the above listed officers and staff, along with all other non-personnel and equipment items, beginning later in 2025, or in the first full year of regional operation.

- Provides for increased patrol coverage by having **a minimum of two officers in two separate patrol zones at all times**. Provides additional coverage by having three officers on duty approximately 57% of all weekly shifts (12 of 21).
- Maintains the total number of police vehicles, and all subsequent costs for the same, at seven vehicles. The budget includes funding for the re-painting and re-equipping of the current marked and unmarked vehicles, which will then be reassigned to and operated by the regional department.

The budget includes all costs and related expenses for the operation of the current police facility at the Ridgway Borough Municipal Building, which is proposed for use as the new regional PD Headquarters. Costs are included for a smaller sub-station facility to be maintained at the Johnsonburg Borough Municipal Building as well, with potentially even another small sub-station at the Jones Township Municipal Building, if required.

New and existing regional Police Departments qualify to receive various Federal, State, and County Regional Police Assistance grants.

## Introduction

The intent of this study is to determine if Ridgway Borough, Johnsonburg Borough, and Jones Township all located in Elk County, Pennsylvania, would benefit from consolidation by forming a regional police department to serve these three municipalities. The study was initiated at the request of the respective elected officials from these municipalities. The governing bodies made their requests via the submission of official "Letters of Intent" to representatives of the Governor's Center for Local Government Services (hereafter referred to as the GCLGS), located in the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The letters of intent officially requested that a study be conducted by the GCLGS and, furthermore, recognized that none of the participating municipalities were obligated or bound by the results of the study in any way.

Similar community needs and issues, population trends, local and county-wide drug enforcement issues, traffic concerns, fiscal constraints, part-time and full-time police officer shortages, the expense of obtaining specialized equipment, and other important issues have raised many new challenges for municipalities and their police departments. It is often difficult for smaller agencies, with limited staffing and resources, to positively address the problems faced in their communities. It has become necessary in many locations to consider ways to improve police services while stabilizing current and future costs. The concept of regional policing is one option that *many* municipalities in Pennsylvania are now exploring and subsequently participating in. Currently, there are 41 regional police departments in Pennsylvania, comprised of 143 municipalities, and covering a combined population of 747,000 persons.

Presented in this study is information to help each of these communities make that decision. Information collected and provided by the local officials, the GCLGS, and the participating Police Chiefs was used to determine the feasibility and the nature, size, and general design of the consolidation.

Recommendations are made concerning the organization of a governing body to serve as the regional police commission, the police organization itself, staffing levels of the regional police department, an estimated operating budget, facility information, some equipment recommendations, and various methods of equitable cost distribution.

Finally, on behalf of DCED and the Governor's Center for Local Government Services, Chief Joseph L. Kirschner (Ret.), the police consultant, would like to thank all the local government officials and the appointed employees of the participating municipalities for their excellent cooperation and assistance in completing the review of the police departments and municipalities to aid in accessing the feasibility of consolidation. Such cooperation was very much appreciated and contributed immensely to the successful completion of this study.

# Regional Police Services

## Definition

Consolidation of police services requires the abolishment of political subdivision boundaries for police services and the unification of existing police forces into one regional police department. The distinctive characteristic of this method of policing is that the operation of the new police department is outside the direct control of any one municipality. The police department operates under the guidance of what will be a newly formed “**Regional Police Commission**” consisting of elected officials from each of the participating municipalities.

## Legal Authority for Police Consolidation

Section 5 of Article IX of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania serves as the legal and constitutional basis for consolidation of police services in the state. Section 5 of Article IX states:

**A municipality by act of its governing body may, or upon being required by initiative and referendum in the area affected shall, cooperate or agree in the exercise of any function, power, or responsibility with or delegate or transfer any function, power, or responsibility to, one or more other governmental units including other municipalities or districts, the federal government, any other state, or its governmental units, or any newly created governmental unit.**

Act 180, as passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor on July 12, 1976, serves as the enabling legislation that makes cooperation of public services in the Commonwealth a legal process. Contained in the Act are the provisions for initiating the cooperation and identification of the necessary contents of the agreement.

Section 1202, clause 34 and 35 of the Borough Code; Section 1502, clause 53 and 54 of the First-Class Township Code; and Section 702, clause 40 of the Second-Class Township Code also bestow authority upon municipal governments to enter into agreements for the purpose of intergovernmental cooperation.

## Governing Law

While there has been no decision to date about whether any specific law (such as the Borough Code, Police Tenure Act, Civil Service, and/or others) applies, regional police departments have looked to such acts and codes for guidance and direction in the handling of their affairs.

However, in so doing, they have not been deemed in any fashion to have adopted or become so bound to abide by said acts and codes, by implication or past practice, unless they decide to do so. If such a decision is made, it must be stipulated within the Articles of Agreement.

## Expressed Authority

The newly created regional police commission should have the expressed authority to conduct business to include, but not limiting itself to, some or all the following:

- lease, sell, purchase real estate.
- lease, sell, purchase personal property.
- enter contracts for purchase of goods and services, and collective bargaining.
- agreements with department personnel.
- hire, fire, suspend, promote, demote, discipline, set salaries, and otherwise deal with issues involving its employees.
- serve as a hearing board for employee grievances.
- establish and maintain bank accounts and other financial accounts.
- invest and borrow money.
- establish and fund employee benefit programs, including the pension fund.
- delegate any of its powers, expressed or implied, to the Chief of Police or his/her second in command, at the discretion of the Regional Police Commission.

# Advantages of Regional Police Services

The general advantages of, and some of the more common arguments for, regional police services are described below. Similar issues arise regardless of the manner in which the agencies may be developed, the geographic conditions, or the special composition of the area.

## Improvement in the Uniformity and Consistency of Enforcement

Police regulations and local law governing police practices and performance often vary from community to community. The implementation of the regional police department requires the establishment of uniform policies, procedures, and regulations. The resulting standardization of law enforcement reduces citizen dissatisfaction and encourages voluntary compliance with the law.

## Improvement in the Coordination of Law Enforcement Services

Frequently, criminal investigations and law enforcement activities are limited by jurisdictional boundaries. In a regional police department, geographic boundaries are extended, permitting police officers to focus activity on the source of the disorder, rather than simply addressing the symptoms. Under central leadership and direction, with uniformity of purpose, procedure, record keeping, and policy, a regional department eliminates duplication of services and competition between local departments. **This results in a more cost-effective use of limited public funds.**

## Improvement in Recruitment, Distribution, and Deployment of Personnel

Recent statutory requirements regarding the selection, eligibility criteria, initial training, and the annual recertification of police officers have resulted in increased professionalism in the field. This has consequently resulted in higher wages, increased training costs, and much more competition between various law enforcement agencies in the recruitment of quality personnel, both full and part-time.

Smaller agencies, offering lower salaries and fewer incentives, are often at a distinct disadvantage in the recruitment and retention of such qualified officers. Consolidation of services across a larger area and with a broader tax base often results in improved recruitment and retention ability.

Law enforcement services should be distributed and deployed based upon justified demand for services. Small departments do not maintain the staffing levels required to meet such demands. Regional departments have greater flexibility in the scheduling and distribution of officers necessary to meet service demands, due to their increased staffing levels. Where municipalities may currently not be able to provide any local police services or part-time services at best, consolidation may permit several smaller local municipalities to provide professional, full-time police services through their cooperative management and the shared financing of a regional police department.

## Improvement in Training and Personnel Efficiency

Providing suitable and necessary police training is mandatory pursuant to Act 120, the Municipal Police Officer Education and Training Law. Annual in-service training sessions mandated by the Municipal Police Officer's Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) includes a minimum of twelve hours of classroom study, annual qualification with all weapons, CPR and first aid, deadly force and use of force training, and training in hazardous materials operations. At the current time, the minimum required time for training is nearly forty hours per officer each year. Small departments find it difficult to meet training requirements and still maintain appropriate staffing levels. When sending an officer for training it often means not providing police patrol during certain periods of the day or paying overtime wages to cover shifts. Officers who do not meet minimum training requirements are decertified as police officers. Any arrests made by such officers can become invalid and municipalities that choose to ignore these provisions may find themselves in lawsuits and defending them with costly litigation. Consolidation often means that more personnel will be available to attend this important training. In many cases, local officers can be certified as instructors, thereby reducing the need to send officers away from the department for training. In addition, vacations, losses due to sick time and work-related injury, court appearances, and personal days erode the ability of any department to properly staff both their patrol and investigative functions. Consolidation allows for more flexibility in scheduling as well.

## Improved Management and Supervision

In many smaller police departments, the Chief of Police and supervisory officers often function in the capacity of patrol officer, with little time remaining for administration and supervision. They are unable to devote the necessary time to develop and maintain sound management procedures. Consolidated departments, depending on size, may permit the Chief of Police to primarily become a full-time administrator/manager, thereby improving the overall functions and professionalism of the department. Consolidated departments are generally better able to offer higher salary and benefit packages which, in turn, usually attract and retain a more experienced candidate for the position of chief. Increased efficiency in police administration, management, and supervision is only one of the many positive results from police consolidation or regionalization.

## Reduced Costs

Regionalization of any public-sector service sometimes results in decreased cost to the individual municipalities involved if the municipality already provided that service. This is nowhere truer than in the area of law enforcement and police services. There are established minimum costs involved in the development and continued funding of any police department. These costs are centered in the police facility, communications, vehicle fleet, office equipment, records system, and administrative services. There are usually many instances where closely adjoining departments duplicate both infrastructure and support services. The duplication of support personnel is also a major consideration. Consolidation often results in decreased individual costs by reducing duplication of infrastructure and support requirements within the proposed service area.

## Disadvantages of Regional Police Services

Arguments against consolidation of municipal police services are basically the same. Similar issues arise regardless of the way the agencies may develop and serve the various geographic regions or the special composition of the proposed area.

### Loss of Local Law Enforcement Services

Police officers in Pennsylvania, as well as in every other state in the country, routinely perform many duties, which are not typically considered to be a police function. These duties are generally traditional in many communities and were assigned to the police department by default - there was basically no one else available at the time. These miscellaneous duties are still very much a part of the everyday job of many local police officers. Running errands, delivering documents, turning on lights for special occasions, flood watches, parking meter enforcement, school crossing duties, escorts for funerals, and issuing permits and/or licenses are some of the extra tasks “inherited” by local law enforcement officers. Typically, when consolidation occurs, the police department discontinues many of those extra tasks in order to maximize their officers’ time for patrols, crime prevention, traffic enforcement, criminal investigations, and the more necessary police related duties and functions.

### Loss of Local Control

In the traditional law enforcement situation, where each municipality creates and maintains its own police department, the entire governing body is often directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the police agency. Regional police departments are governed by a regional police commission, which provides broad policy guidance to an administrative Chief of Police, who is then directly responsible for all day-to-day operations of the department. The Chief has broad authority and responsibility and is directly accountable to the commission. The commission consists of an established number of representatives from each municipality. Political and personal control over the department is maintained through the members of the commission but is considerably reduced.

### Loss of Citizen Contact

Occasionally there is a concern that the citizens of a participating community will not have as close a relationship with the members of a regional police department as they do with their “own” officers. If this situation develops, it will be temporary and will exist only until the police officers become acquainted with their “new” area. Furthermore, many of the police officers employed in a regional police department will have previously answered calls for service, provided back-up, or participated in community functions in each of the other municipalities. With this already being the situation now in the two municipalities with police departments, the transition to a regional department for all three communities should proceed **very easily** and with no major concerns for the officers or the citizens.

### Loss of Position

Members of the local police department, current chiefs, and elected officials may initially fear a loss of position if regionalization efforts prevail. While it is certainly true that every current chief cannot retain the top position in the consolidated department and that some officers may choose not to

participate in the new venture, regionalization is not intended to eliminate individual employment positions. Such concerns can be addressed through negotiations and future discussions, if required. **However, in this proposed department it is not recommended that any full-time positions be eliminated. In fact, all 14 current officers' positions (12 full-time and 2 part-time) would be retained.** Some reassignments of rank or assignments may be required in this new regional department, depending on the final staffing and organizational chart that is developed and approved.

## General Information About the Municipalities

The three municipalities have a total combined population of 7,959 and cover an area of 149 square miles. This equates to an average population density of approximately 53 persons per square mile. These population figures were obtained from each municipality and from the 2020 U.S. Census. When viewed independently, the communities are similar in some ways but slightly different in others. Two of the municipalities, Ridgway and Johnsonburg, are smaller (3 square mile) and more densely populated boroughs, while the third municipality, Jones Township, is a 143 square mile and a very rural township. However, they are all near the City of St. Mary's, with a 100 square miles of area in that city, and a population of approximately 12,400. Because of their similar demographics and locations, there should be no major issues or other impediments to efficient regionalized policing once it has been fully implemented. Figure 1 shows a map of the proposed regional area and Figure 2 provides statistical data and information on the three participating municipalities and on both of the police departments.

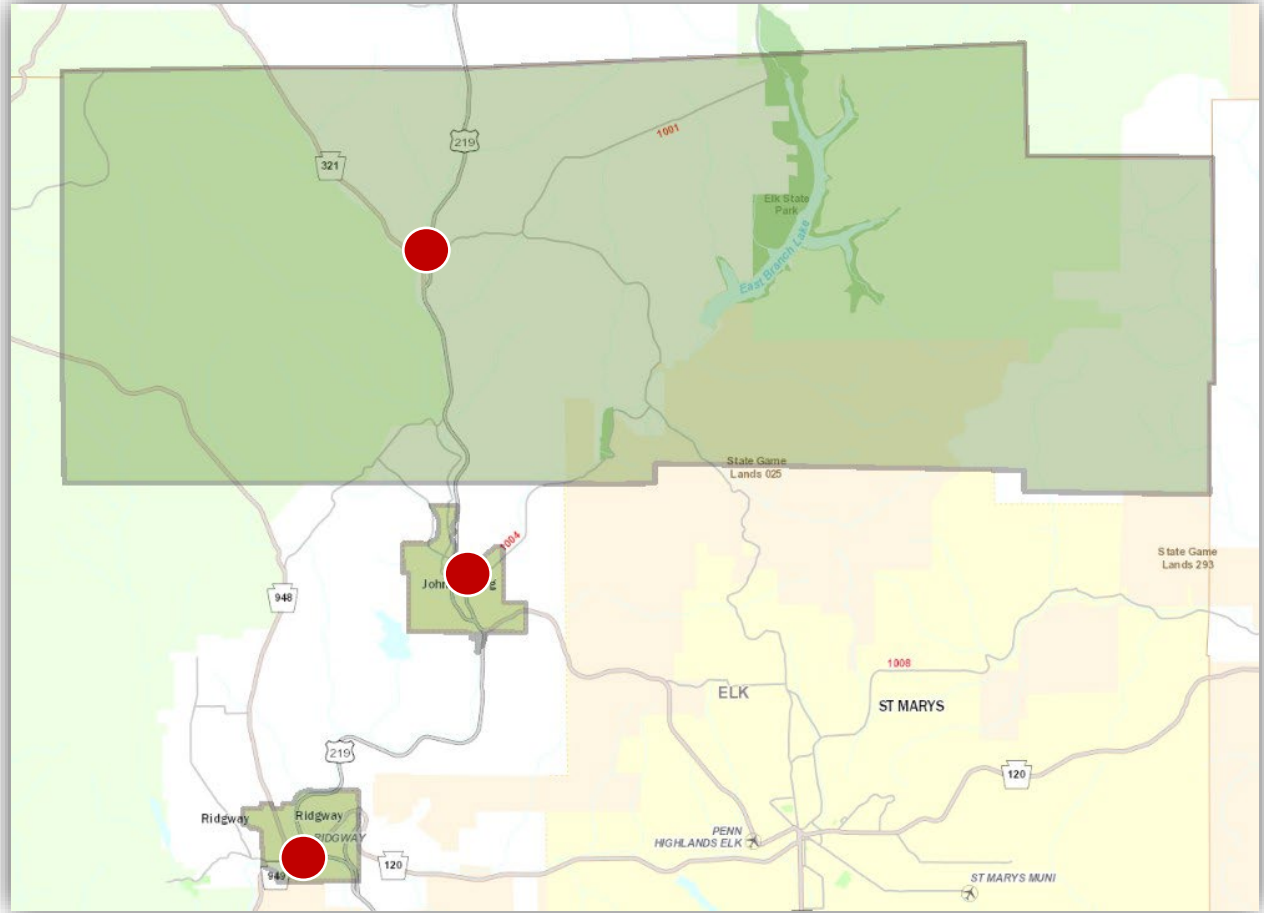
Along with their aforementioned proximity to the City of St Marys, there are some shopping, business and commercial areas, along with residential areas in each municipality. Jones Township, covering 143 square miles, has some large rural areas containing state forests, state game lands, and the Elk State Park. Portions of PA Routes 120, 219, 321, and 948 are within their combined borders. The municipalities are served by both the Ridgway Area and Johnsonburg Area School Districts. They also use area volunteer fire companies and regional ambulance services. All are served by the Elk County District Attorney's Office, the Elk County District Courts and the Elk County Common Pleas Court system. The county seat for Elk County, including the main Court House, the County Sheriff, and the County Detective's Office, are located in Ridgway Borough.

As mentioned, Ridgway and Johnsonburg Boroughs, currently operate their own police departments in separate police stations located in their respective municipal buildings. Both police stations were evaluated as to their size, location and potential to be the headquarters site for the future regional police department. By reportedly having more size and equipment, as well as some additional room to expand in the future if needed, the Ridgway Borough police facility was determined to be the best location for the new regional headquarters. It is however recommended that a smaller sub-station also be maintained at the current Johnsonburg Borough police facility, with the potential to open and maintain another very small sub-station at the Jones Township Municipal Building, if desired.

**Regional Police Department Coverage Map**  
**Ridgway Borough (3 Square Miles)**  
**Johnsonburg Borough (3 Square Miles)**  
**Jones Township (143 Square Miles)**

149 Square Miles and 124.9 Miles of State & Local Roads

● Indicates the Current Police Department's Headquarters Locations



~ 15 Miles from the bottom of Ridgway Borough to the center top of Jones Township

Figure 1. Proposed Regional Police Department Coverage Map

## Current Police Statistics of the Municipalities

(Sources: 2025 DCED Municipal Surveys, 2020 U.S. Census, Penn Dot, 2024 FBI Uniform Crime Reports)

CATEGORY		Ridgway Borough		Johnsonburg Borough		Jones Township		Total/Average*	
Population (2020 U.S. Census)		4,039		2,404		1,516		7,959	
% of Combined Population		50.7%		30.2%		19.1%		100%	
Police Expenditures (2024 Total Reported to DCED)		\$1,015,998		\$585,581		\$0		\$1,601,579	
Per Officer Cost (2024)		\$112,889		\$146,395		\$0		\$123,198*	
Per Capita Cost (2024)		\$252		\$244		\$0		\$248*	
# of Households		1,734		1,089		661		3,484	
Median Household Income		\$52,059		\$61,926		\$62,396		\$58,794*	
Square Miles	Population/sm	3	1,346	3	801	143	11	149	53.4*
Road Miles (2024 Penn Dot)		25.8		16.9		82.2		124.9	
Part 1 – The 8 Major Crimes (2024 UCR Totals)		47		33		16		96	
Part 2 – All Other Crimes (2024 UCR Totals)		182		215		39		436	
Total Reported Crimes		229		248		55		532	
Total Reported Incidents (2024)		2,289		1,079		459		3,827	
Full-Time Officers		8		4		0		12	<b>13</b> FTE
Part-Time Officers		2 = 1 FTE		0		0		1 FTE	
Officers per 1,000 Persons		2.2		1.7		0		1.6*	
Police Clerical Staff		1		0		0		1	
Police Vehicles		4		3		0		7	

Figure 2. Current Police Statistics of Municipalities

## Municipal Police Budget Information

As provided by the three municipalities, the complete police department budget information for **the year 2024** is listed below. The total combined police budgets/expenditures (100%) for Ridgway Borough and Johnsonburg Borough, both with their own police departments, was **\$1,601,579**.

- **Ridgway Borough 2024 Police Budget (63.4%)** **\$1,015,998**
- **Johnsonburg Borough 2024 Police Budget (36.6%)** **\$585,581**
- **Jones Township 2024 Police Budget (PSP Only)** **\$0**
- **Total Combined 2024 Police Budgets (100%)** **\$1,601,579**

## Crime Statistics and Incident Information

There are several methods of measuring and evaluating crime in a community. The most common and universal is participation in the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting System (UCR). The UCR's establish a standardized method of collecting and categorizing crime information. The primary objectives of the Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Program are to inform the Governor, Legislature, other government officials and the public concerning the crime problem in Pennsylvania and to provide law enforcement administrators with reliable crime statistics for administrative and operational purposes.

Although not designed to be used to compare one agency against another, many police departments do use the UCR's as a benchmarking process and compare their crime rate with that of other similar communities. A high or low crime rate by itself is not a valid tool to measure the effectiveness of a police department, but it may be used to help determine the number of police officers, or other positions, needed in a community. The FBI cites several factors that affect the crime rate in any municipality. These factors include:

- Population density and age or degree of infrastructure and buildings.
- Composition of population, including number of youth or elderly persons.
- Economic conditions including median income and employment.
- Cultural conditions including educational, religious, and recreational.
- Citizens' attitudes toward crime and police.
- Law Enforcement staffing and operational capabilities and considerations.
- Administrative, patrol or investigative emphasis of the police department.
- Crime reporting practices of the citizens and the police department.
- Regional transportation and traffic related concerns.

For the year 2024, the two municipalities with police departments, Ridgway and Johnsonburg Boroughs, reported their crime statistics via the Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System and are listed in Figure 2. The serious crimes, or Part 1 crimes, include the eight major offenses of Murder, Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Theft, Auto Theft, and Arson. All other offenses, such as DUI's, Simple Assaults, some Retail Thefts, Vandalism, Liquor Law Violations, Drug Offenses, Fraud, Disorderly Conduct, etc. are classified as Part 2 crimes under the federal

and state Uniform Crime Reporting systems. For Ridgway Borough, there were 47 Part 1 crimes and 182 Part 2 crimes. For Johnsonburg Borough, there were 33 Part 1 crimes and 215 Part 2 crimes. The statistics for all these crimes were obtained directly from both Police Departments at the beginning of this study and were confirmed by both the FBI and State Police Uniform Crime Reports. The total incidents, including the total crimes reported for Jones Township, were obtained both from Jones Township and from the PA State Police and were included in the 2024 incident totals listed below.

The list below of all reported incidents from 2024 was provided by each borough department. Compiled using the current Records Management Systems in each department, these lists show that there were a total of 2,289 reported incidents in Ridgway Borough and 1,079 reported incidents in Johnsonburg Borough. However, not knowing the specific reporting methods used by each department for reporting these incidents, this study will instead rely on a **standardized population based staffing formula**, developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for an estimated number of incidents. This estimated number of incidents will then be the basis for the recommended number of officers for the regional department (see the IACP staffing chart in Figure 4 on page 17). If formed, it is recommended that the future regional police supervisors be assigned to review all reports to ensure that they are properly written, appropriately classified, and assigned a report number pursuant to any new reporting policies enacted by the regional department, before they are entered into the department’s selected records management system.

MUNICIPALITY	2024 PD INCIDENTS	IACP FORMULA ESTIMATES
Ridgway Borough (PD Reported)	2,289	2,221
Johnsonburg Borough (PD Reported)	1,079	1,322
Jones Township (PSP Reported)	459	834
Totals	3,827	4,377

## General Staffing Information

Because of those many variations which always occur when reporting crimes and, more specifically, the many other non-criminal calls for service that occur, this study, as mentioned, will only use the “Calls for Service” formula specifically designed and used by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). This formula is based on an average **that 550 calls for service per 1,000 residents will occur annually** as the accepted standard for projecting police staffing needs. This formula has been used by DCED for many years and has been found to be a **remarkably effective predictor** of police staffing levels in many other regional studies conducted in Pennsylvania, as well as by other agencies throughout the country. When using this formula in several recent studies to predict the number of calls for service, and subsequently the number of officers needed, the “margin for error” has only been around 2% or 3%.

In determining the staffing needs for this new regional department, these projected “calls for service” statistics were carefully considered. Since the municipalities have a combined population of 7,959, the number of calls for service is projected to be 4,377 annually (7,959 x .550). Based on these projected calls, the square miles, the relatively low number of Part 1 crimes (80 crimes at 1.5 average per week), and the overall residential, business, and

geographical features of the communities, **a total of 12 full-time and two part-time officers (13 FTE total) are being recommended for this new department.**

That number is in accordance with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) staffing formula. Once formed, the positions in this new department should include: one Chief of Police, one Lieutenant, two Patrol Sergeants, seven full-time Patrol Officers, two part-time Patrol Officers, one School Resource Officer, and one Administrative Assistant/Secretary.

With 12 Full-Time Equivalent “department” officers, not including the School Officer, the actual “on-duty” hours per year would be a total of 22,750, including 1,300 hours of overtime. This would allow the department to provide a **minimum** of two officer coverage to the three municipalities for 24 hours each day. Approximately 57% of all weekly shifts would even have three officers on duty with this same number of hours – for a total of approximately 438 hours, **or 55 shifts per week.**

The Chief and/or the Lieutenant, with the possible contractual assistance of one of the municipalities, would also be responsible for all other administrative and financial matters that may be required within the department. These would include all purchase orders, accounts payable, payroll, and possibly even some pension management matters. The Administrative Assistant would be assigned to assist the Chief and the Lieutenant with many of those functions as time permits.

The Lieutenant would be responsible for the assigning and supervision for the investigation of all reported crimes. Additional duties, such as crime scene processing, evidence collection and retention, criminal case preparation for court, and so forth would also be the responsibility of the Lieutenant and possibly one or both Sergeants. Any criminal or serious/fatal traffic related cases that arise, which are beyond the capabilities of the department, should be investigated with the assistance of the Pennsylvania State Police and/or the Elk County District Attorney’s Office.

## **Determining Police Staffing Using the IACP Formula**

Police personnel needs are determined by workload. The workload of a police department is determined by the number of incidents reported to or observed by police, along with adequate time allowed for preventative patrol and the handling of other administrative tasks associated with municipal policing. It is necessary that appropriate staffing levels be established before making any decision to consolidate police services. Once the number of police officers necessary to adequately serve the area under consideration is established, then it is possible to determine how much it will cost each community to become part of a regional police endeavor, how much service is anticipated, and what type of services each can expect to receive from the new police department.

The formula used by the GCLGS to determine police personnel needs was developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The formula has been used and applied extensively throughout the Commonwealth by the GCLGS and found to be very reliable. However, like most situations where an overall standard is applied to a unique and specific set of circumstances, it is subject to error and should not be considered infallible. The IACP formula is applied on the assumption that 45 to 60 minutes is the time necessary to handle the average police incident.

Serious crimes, especially those involving an arrest or prolonged investigations, take considerably longer but minor incidents may take much less time to resolve; therefore the 45-minute or 60-minute number have been found to be reliable averages. It is recommended that only

approximately one third to one half of an officer's duty time be taken up with the response to and reporting of incidents.

An officer needs time to handle equipment service, court appearances, and administrative duties as well as additional time to conduct his or her preventative patrols to help ensure the safety and well-being of the community. This formula adds a "buffer factor" to account for those needs. It should be noted that an officer in a small department needs more administrative time since they are usually responsible for more record-keeping tasks than their counterparts in larger departments who have more support staff for those functions.

In addition, the formula recognizes that each officer is available for duty only 1,704 hours per year when regular days off, vacation, holidays, sick leave, training time, and court time are considered.

When applied, the calculations derived from the IACP formula only determine the number of patrol officers who would be assigned "on the street" and needed to handle calls and incidents. It does not include administrators and supervisors, or any detectives, traffic officers, or other specialist positions should they be in effect.

When forming a full service, professional agency, it is wise to consider this fact when deciding on staffing levels and then including extra officers for supervisory and investigative duties is recommended, even when officers assigned to these duties must also sometimes work the street. It is important that when using this formula, the number of incidents used for the calculations is accurate.

If accuracy cannot be assured, then an estimate of the incident level can be determined by applying the standard that approximately 550 police incidents occur for every 1,000 residents in the community, or .55 per person. In this study, to ensure uniformity between the three municipalities, we have decided that it was best to use this formula and used the projection of 550 calls for service for every 1,000 residents, as the most dependable.

## IACP Staffing Formula Breakdown

The following is a step-by-step description of the IACP formula with the applicable numbers displayed in Figures 3 and 4, which follows the formula's description to arrive at its projected numbers.

**Step 1** - Determine the number of complaints or incidents received and responded to by the police departments. **Complaints or incidents include all forms of police activity where an officer responded and/or took official action, including the filing of an incident report.** These incidents **do not** include situations where information was given over the telephone, delivering messages, handling internal police matters, routine patrols, foot patrols, etc. In most cases a department Record Management System incident number would be assigned, and a police report would be written or otherwise documented by the officer after the incident has been completed.

**Step 2** - Multiply the total number of incidents by .75 (45 minutes) or by 1.0 (60 minutes) depending on the type and number of incidents. It is generally conceded that 60 minutes is the average time required to handle an incident in departments with a somewhat higher number of crimes or serious incidents, or with a lesser number of officers and clerical support staff available.

**Step 3** - Multiply by 3 to add a buffer factor and time for preventive patrol. General experience has shown that about one third of an officer's time should be spent on handling requests for service. Other requirements that include servicing police vehicles and equipment, personal relief, eating, and administrative duties must be taken into consideration. Time must also be allotted for patrol.

**Step 4** - Divide the product by 2,920 - the total number of hours necessary to staff one basic patrol unit for one year ( $365 \times 8 \text{ hours} = 2,920$ ). The result of applying the IACP formula establishes the number of patrol units necessary to police the community (not the number of officers, but the number of units). To determine the number of officers required to staff each patrol unit, the assignment/availability factor must be determined. This is accomplished by determining how many hours the average patrol officer is not available for duty on the street and subtracting that time from the patrol hours of 2,920.

**Step 5** - Once the total available hours of the average patrol officer are established at 1,704, the assignment/availability factor is determined by dividing the available hours into the yearly patrol unit requirement of 2,920 hours. This results in a factor of 1.72. In other words, it takes 1.72 police officers to staff each patrol unit required to correctly police the community. This does not include administrators, supervisors, investigators, or other specialists, **only patrol personnel.** Staffing needs can also be estimated by using formulas based on calls for service, if higher than average, along with crime statistics. However, to create a police department that can provide a minimum of two officer coverage 24 hours each day, along with keeping the one currently assigned school resource officer, the staffing analysis in this study includes a recommendation for a total complement of **12 full-time and 2 part-time officers and one full-time Administrative Assistant / Secretary.** As described previously, this number then equates to 13 Full-Time Equivalent or "FTE" officers.

## General Breakdown of an Officer's "Unavailable Hours"

Category	Annual Unavailable Hours/Days
<b>Regular Days Off (2 per week)</b>	<b>832 (104 Days)</b>
<b>Vacation</b>	<b>152 (19 Days)</b>
<b>Holidays &amp; Personal Days</b>	<b>120 (15 Days)</b>
<b>Court</b>	<b>40 (5 Days)</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>40 (5 Days)</b>
<b>Sick/Injury Leave</b>	<b>16 (2 Days)</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Leave</b>	<b>16 (2 Days)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,216 (152 Days)</b>

**(2,920 Hours minus 1,216 Unavailable Hours = 1,704 Available Hours)**

*Figure 3. General Breakdown of An Officer's "Unavailable" Hours*

**Recommended Police Staffing**  
for the  
**Ridgway – Johnsonburg – Jones Township**  
**Regional Police Department**

(Using the IACP Formula of 550 Annual Incidents per 1,000 residents)

IACP Staffing Formula & Officer Staffing Recommendations using POPULATION	Total	
1) Population (2024 provided by the three municipalities & 2024 U.S. Census updates)	7,959	
2) Number of Estimated Incidents (@ 550 Incidents per 1,000 residents; 7,959 x .550)	4,377	
3) Time Spent on Incidents; 60 Minutes average (Multiply above by 1.0)	4,377	
4) Buffer Time (Multiply above by 3 for required Patrol and Administrative time)	13,131	
5) Staffing Hours (Divide above by 2920 to staff for 1 Officer; 365 x 8 = 2,920 Hours)	4.50	
6) Available Hours (Multiply above by 1.72 for the number of Patrol Officers)	7.74	
<b>PATROL OFFICERS (Minimum Required Patrol Officers per the IACP Formula)</b>	<b>8</b>	
Full-Time Patrol Officers <u>REQUIRED</u> :	7	<b>8</b>
Additional Officers <u>RECOMMENDED</u> : 2 Part-Time Patrol Officers (2 PT = 1 FTE Officer)	1	
School Resource Officer (Currently Assigned and Fully Reimbursed by the School District)	<b>1</b>	
Patrol Sergeants: IACP Recommends 1 Patrol Sergeant for each 4 – 7 Officers (Ratio = 1:5)	<b>2</b>	
Lieutenant (Patrol / Criminal / Traffic Supervision; Schedule Management; Patrol Coverage)	<b>1</b>	
Chief of Police (Administration/Management; Policy/Supervision; Community Meetings, etc.)	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Full-Time Equivalent Officers (13) + Clerical Staff (1) Recommended</b>	<b>13</b>	

Figure 4. Recommended Police Staffing for the Regional Police Department

## **Regional Police Commission and Police Department Administration**

As previously stated, it is recommended that the regional police department be developed and consist of 13 FTE officers. It is also recommended that if the regional department is formed, that it be governed by a five to seven member "Regional Police Commission." Those Police Commissioners should be comprised of two or three elected officials from each municipality, along with possibly one rotating "at large" community member. The term lengths of the board, along with the exact final number of members, should be specified under the "Articles of Agreement" between the three municipalities. It is also normally recommended that the elected officials be appointed for three-year terms on the regional police commission. Again, the final number of members and the exact make-up of the Regional Police Commission should be determined by the participating municipalities.

After reviewing both possible police facilities, it is apparent that because of its already established and convenient location, along with its current size and layout, the current Ridgway Borough police station should serve as the new headquarters for the regional department. In evaluating this facility, sufficient parking is available for both police vehicles and private/citizen vehicles. Also, borough officials have indicated that some additional space could be made available for future use by the regional department, if necessary. It is also recommended that the Johnsonburg Borough police station be maintained as a regional sub-station for the convenience of the public and the police officers. Potentially, a small sub-station could be maintained at the Jones Township municipal building, if desired, again 1460000 x .05 for the convenience of the public and officers, and at minimal cost for the operation.

The Chief of Police in a regional police department has many more administrative duties than his or her counterparts in an individual city, borough, or township police department. In addition to planning, directing, and supervising the activities of the department, the Chief of a regional department is also responsible for overseeing the financial affairs of the agency. He or she monitors the department's accounts, cash flow and disbursements, and oversees the payroll process. The Chief may also be involved in the administration of the health care plan, department insurances, and even the pension plan. Every effort must be made by the Regional Police Commission to help the Chief and to assist with any necessary administrative matters, along with any financial matters such as payroll, accounts, budget management and so forth. Potentially, one of the municipalities could be contracted and compensated by the regional budget to provide such financial assistance, if required.

**Recommended Police Vehicles**  
**Total = 7**

IACP Recommended Ratio = 1.5 to 2.0 Officers per Vehicle

Proposed Combined Ratio (13 Officers / 7 Vehicles) = 1.86 Officers per Vehicle

<b>Recommended Police Vehicles</b>	
<b>Number of FTE Officers</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Marked Patrol SUV's</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Unmarked Patrol SUV's</b>	<b>2</b>

*Figure 5. Recommended Police Vehicles*

**NOTE** – Six of the seven current police vehicles being recommended for retention and use by the new Regional Police Department are listed as being in “Good” condition by both departments at this time. The other vehicle was listed as “New”. No funds were budgeted for any new vehicle replacements in 2025. However, several state grant sources have been available to both new and existing regional departments for the purchase of new vehicles, if required later in 2025 or in subsequent years of operation. Also, to maximize the visibility of the new Regional PD and its officers during their coverage in these municipalities, at least five of these police vehicles are recommended to be maintained as “marked” vehicles in the selected new design of the regional PD. Because of the amount of equipment required, the many heavily wooded areas, and the weather conditions in that area over the winter months, only 4WD SUV type police vehicles would be recommended for use by this new department.

## Proposed Operating Budget

To establish an actual cost for the regional police department that is being staffed and structured with 13 FTE officers, the proposed budget has been prepared for the Regional Police Department. This budget, detailed later in this report, is based on estimated costs for all 13 FTE officers using their current police contracts and current police budgets as the basis for the projected costs.

The proposed budget, for the 13 FTE officers, calls for an amount of \$1,680,000 beginning later in 2025, or in the first full year of operation. With 12 FTE officers covering the municipalities (not including the School Officer) the municipalities would receive a total of 22,750 on-duty hours, including 1,300 hours of expected overtime, from the 12 “department” officers. **This would equate to approximately 438 on-duty hours (55 eight-hour shifts) each week.** That amount would provide a **minimum** of two officer coverage at all times, with three officers on duty for approximately 57% (12 of 21) of all weekly shifts.

The amount budgeted equates to an hourly cost of approximately \$73.85 to provide all these police services to the residents, schools, churches, businesses, visitors, and other persons in the three municipalities. **The net annual “cost per officer” would be \$129,230.** That is the annual amount needed to pay, equip, train, manage, supervise, and provide any clerical support for each officer in the department. If any regional police grants would be received from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), or any other sources, the amount of any such grant awards would reduce the regional budget by the amount received.

The salary figures used in the budget are consistent with the 2024 and 2025 amounts paid to the officers and listed in the current police department’s budgets and contracts. They also anticipate any increases and/or adjustments that would be made in any new labor agreement between the Regional Police Commission and the regional police officers. The proposed budget prepared by DCED used the current highest contractual rates for each officer’s category (e.g., Chief, Sergeant, Patrol Officer, etc.) and those projected for 2025 and later, as the foundation for the remainder of the proposed regional budget including all other related operating costs.

In comparing a regional police budget with that of a typical township or borough, you must be careful to compare actual line-item inclusions and costs. Often, items that appear in a regional police budget are not in the budget of a municipality's police agency but are instead only listed in the administrative budget of the township or borough. Some of these unlisted or “hidden” costs include:

- Liability Insurance
- Workmen's Compensation Insurance
- Vehicle and Property Insurance
- Medical, Dental, and Life Insurance
- Legal Fees & Services
- Accounting, Auditing and Financial Services
- Building & Maintenance Costs (Construction or Renovations)
- Utility Costs
- Conversion Costs (Uniforms, reports, computers, firearms, etc.)
- Administrative/Operational Costs

These costs are taken out of the respective municipal budgets when a regional police department is formed. Therefore, when comparing budgets, it is important that the actual cost of police services be determined by allocating them correctly. All such costs have, in fact, been transferred from the municipal budgets and have been allocated to the regional police department in this study's analysis and future budget projections.

The following proposed budget includes the aforementioned salaries and benefits, as well as some start-up costs, and other changes or improvements that may be required. The proposed budget has been prepared using the following five (5) general categories as guidelines:

### **Personnel (Salaries & Benefits) – 87% of the Budget**

This category contains the salaries and related contractual benefits for all 13 FTE officers. **The estimated total costs for this category is \$1,460,000 with \$1,025,000 for salaries (61%) and \$435,000 (26%) for benefits.** With the national average for police personnel costs being between 85% and 90% of any police department budget, these costs are precisely within that range and represent an accurate estimation of what should be required. Those numbers are fully defined and described in the proposed budget in Figure 6.

At 87% of the proposed budget, these costs provide for all contractual requirements pertaining to future salaries and benefits. These numbers also provide a competitive salary and benefit package (including longevity, holiday pay, and other items) which will help the regional department recruit and retain quality police officers in the highly competitive police officer market.

### **Supplies – 3% of the Budget**

Supplies include minor uniform maintenance items, printing, office materials, postage, and general equipment repair or replacement. These are routine operating expenses and do not include a complete uniform changeover or weapons change that may be desirable for the regional police department. **The estimated total costs for this category is \$50,000 (3%) of the proposed budget.**

### **Support Services – 2% of the Budget**

This category includes professional services such as legal counsel by a new Regional Police Solicitor and auditing expenses, as well as training, communications, computer services, and related expenses. All computer software and radio technical expenses, including any county radio fees, are also included in this category. **The estimated total costs for this category is \$35,000 (2%) of the proposed budget.**

### **Vehicle Expenses – 5% of the Budget**

This category includes purchasing, outfitting, fueling, maintenance, and insurance for the department's police vehicle fleet. The budget provides for using the eight current vehicles from both municipalities, with no additional funds to purchase any new vehicles in 2025. In reviewing these police vehicles, six were listed in good condition with one in "new" condition. No vehicles would need to be either added or reduced at this time.

After this, and by implementing a systematic replacement program of approximately one to two vehicles per year, the regional police department should then maintain this fleet at a satisfactory

level for many years to come. The acceptable ratio of officers per vehicle is 1.5 to 2.0, and the IACP's **recommended** replacement rate is 25% to 30% of a police fleet each year. If the department is staffed at the proposed number of 13 FTE officers, the number of vehicles is recommended to be maintained at seven (7) to maintain a ratio of between 1.5 and 2.0 officers per vehicle and within the IACP's recommended range. **The estimated total costs for this category, including all required changeovers, maintenance, and fuel, is \$80,000 (5%) of the proposed budget.**

### **Headquarters Expenses – 3% of the Budget**

This category includes all costs associated with the use of the Ridgway Borough police building as the regional headquarters and also the use of the Johnsonburg Borough building as a sub-station. If some additional items of furniture and related equipment are required, some money has also been allocated in the budget along with some recommendations for various state or local grants. However, for now **the estimated total costs for this category, using the current Ridgway facility as the regional headquarters, along with providing for the other related expenses, is projected to be \$55,000 (3%) of the proposed budget as shown in Figure 7.**

**Proposed Regional Police Department Budget**  
Personnel Costs For 13 FTE Officers

Salary of Police Chief	<b>\$86,000</b>
Salary of Lieutenant	<b>\$82,000</b>
Salary of Sergeants (2 @ \$77,000 each)	<b>\$154,000</b>
Salary of Full-Time Officers (7 @ \$74,000 Average Base Salary)	<b>\$518,000</b>
Salary of School Officer (1 Fully Reimbursed by the School District)	-----
Salary of Part-Time Officers (2 @ 2,200 Hours x \$27 per Hour)	<b>\$60,000</b>
Salary of Clerical Staff (1 Admin Assistant / Secretary @ \$55,000)	<b>\$55,000</b>
Overtime (1,300 Total Overtime Hours @ \$54 per Hour Average)	<b>\$70,000</b>
<b>SALARIES</b>	<b>\$1,025,000</b>
<b>BENEFITS</b> (Includes all below items for 12 FT Officers @ \$36,250 average)	<b>\$435,000</b>
Medical / Dental / Vision Insurance	Included
Social Security / Medicare	Included
Life Insurance / Liability Insurance	Included
Contractual Payments (OIC Shifts, Educational Bonus, Uniform Cleaning, etc.)	Included
Workers Comp / Unemployment Insurance	Included
Municipal Pension (Municipality MMO Contributions)	Included
<b>PERSONNEL COST TOTAL (87% of the Proposed Budget)</b>	<b>\$1,460,000</b>

Figure 6. Proposed Regional Police Department Budget – Personnel Costs

## Proposed Regional Police Department Budget

### Non-Personnel Costs For 13 FTE Officers

Uniforms & Related Equipment (12 FT Officers @ \$1,000 each; 2 PT Officers @ \$750 each)	13,500
Office Supplies & Minor Equipment	5,000
Computers & Related Equipment (Software Licenses, Updated RMS, Data Transfer, etc.)	10,000
Police Equipment (New Purchases, Maintenance and Repairs)	10,000
Miscellaneous Equipment (First Aid Supplies, Ammo, Other Supplies, etc.)	8,500
Traffic Enforcement Equipment & Maintenance	63,000
<b>EQUIPMENT &amp; SUPPLIES SUB-SOTAL (3%)</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
Education & Training (13 FTE Officers)	4,000
Dues, Memberships & On-Line Legal and Policy Publications/Subscriptions	500
Legal Services (Regional Police Commission Solicitor & First Year Legal Expenses)	20,000
Accounting, Financial, & Software Services (Payroll, Accounts, Purchases, Pension Admin, etc.)	10,000
Crime Prevention & Public Relations Programs	500
<b>SUPPORT SERVICES SUB-TOTAL (2%)</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs (7 Vehicles @ \$2,500 average)	17,500
Vehicle Gas & Oil (7 Vehicles @ \$4,400 average)	31,000
Updated Vehicle Painting, Decaling & New Equipment (7 Retained Vehicles @ \$2,500 average)	17,500
Additional Vehicle Equipment & Insurance	14,000
<b>VEHICLES SUB-TOTAL (5%)</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>
Headquarters / Sub-Station General Expenses	20,000
Annual Utilities, Furniture, Minor Building Expenses, New Regional Police Signs for HQ/SS, etc.	20,000
Telephones, Cameras & Related Communications Expenses (Includes Internet, Wi-Fi, Postage)	10,000
Property Insurance and Miscellaneous Headquarters Expenses	5,000
<b>HEADQUARTERS SUB-TOTAL (3%)</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>
<b>NON-PERSONNEL COST TOTAL (13% of the Proposed Budget)</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>

Figure 7. Proposed Regional Police Department Budget – Non-Personnel Costs

# Proposed Regional Police Department Budget Breakdown by Category

\$129,230 "Cost Per Officer" for 13 FTE Officers

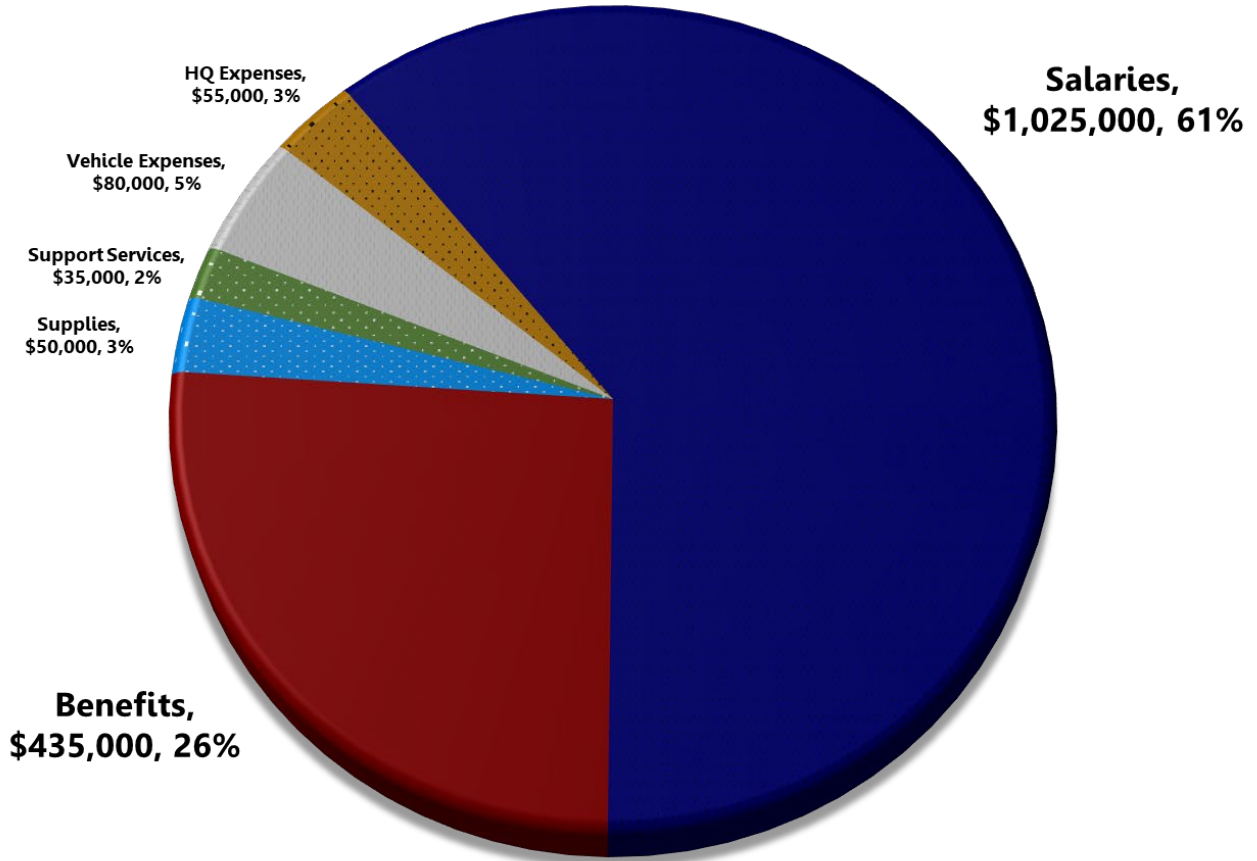


Figure 8. Budget Breakdown by Category

## Proposed Cost Distribution Methods

There are several methods for the distribution of cost once a budget has been established for a regional police department. Most often in regional departments where the municipalities are similar, the costs are divided equally according to either the percentage of the total population, or per capita (per person) based on the proposed required staffing and service levels. Some other alternative cost distribution methods are described later in this report. Other factors relating to revenue or use may be incorporated into a formula to achieve costs that are shared in the most equitable manner. Some of these other factors that are sometimes considered are assessed market valuation of real estate, road mileage, square mileage, and total taxes collected. Other formulas, some that have been used by other regional departments, include looking at the average of certain verifiable categories including population, population density, square miles, road miles, total reported incidents, and total reported crimes. The municipalities in this study are dissimilar in population density, type and square mileage. **Based on this, it would seem that a totally equal Per Capita cost distribution method would not be the most appropriate.** However, to provide that method, plus show an alternative cost method, DCED has proposed the following two options on how to most equitably distribute the costs between the three municipalities.

**With the first option, the total proposed budget of \$1,680,000 would be divided equally among the 7,959 residents of the three municipalities.** This would result in a Per Capita cost of \$211.08 per person to fund the 13 FTE officer department. These costs are about the same when compared to per capita costs for some other state and area police departments. The average Per Capita cost for all 41 Regional Police Departments in Pennsylvania is currently \$210. The Per Capita costs for St. Marys City is \$184. Refer to Figure 9 and Figure 10 on the next pages for both the current and proposed costs for each municipality under the two proposed Per Capita cost distribution methods.

**With the second option, the total proposed budget of \$1,680,000 would be divided on a modified Per Capita basis.** Because of their higher populations and population densities, along with an estimated higher incident / call volume, Ridgway and Johnsonburg boroughs would pay a 10% higher per capita rate of \$232.75. Consequently, because of its **very low population density** (11 persons per square mile), and a low incident / call volume for the regional PD (estimated at 2 calls per day using the IACP formula), **Jones Township would then pay a reduced per capita rate of \$118.75 - or 51% of the full rate to be paid by Ridgway and Johnsonburg boroughs.** Refer to the charts in Figures 9 and 10 for a total of these proposed per capita options.

In addition to the proposed cost distribution methods, proposed and described above, the Regional Police Commission will also be required to establish a "Regional Police Pension Plan" in accordance with PA Act 600 of 1955. This Act, which governs all police pensions, requires the following: Section 1. (a) (1) "Each borough, town and township of this Commonwealth maintaining a police force of three or more full-time members **and each regional police department shall**, and all other boroughs, towns or townships may, establish, by ordinance or resolution, a police pension fund or pension annuity to be maintained by a charge against each member of the police force, by annual appropriations made by the borough, town, township or regional police department, by payments made by the State Treasurer to the municipal treasurer from the moneys received from taxes paid upon premiums by foreign casualty insurance companies for purposes of pension retirement for policemen, and by gifts, grants, devises or bequests granted to the pension fund pursuant to Section two of this act." Upon completion of an actuary study, any existing pension or retirement funds would be combined into a new regional pension plan to cover all full-time personnel in the new regional department.

Proposed **EQUAL** Per Capita  
Cost Distribution By Municipality

Total Proposed Budget For 13 FTE Officers

**\$1,680,000**

(**\$211.08 Cost Per Capita**)

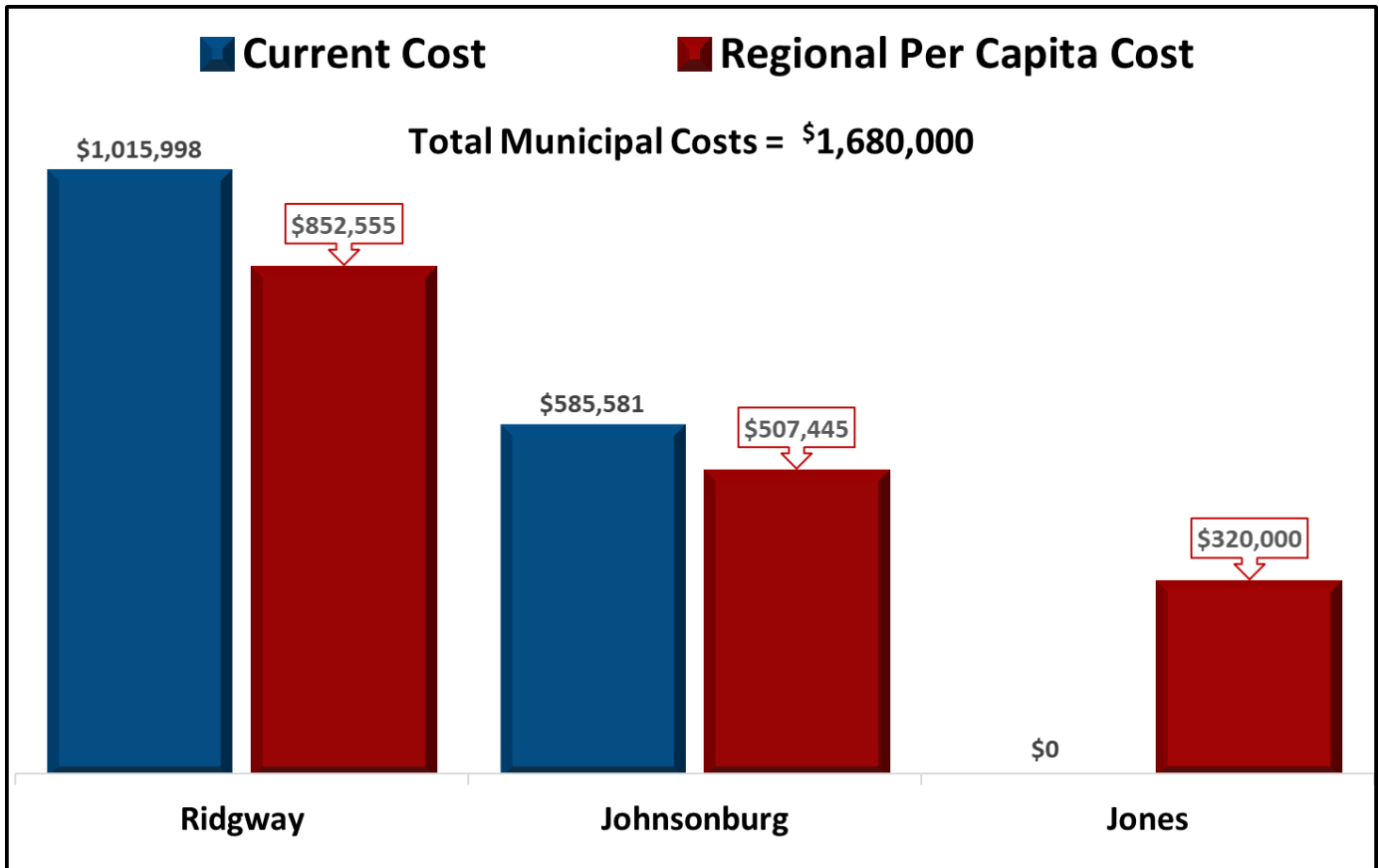


Figure 9. Proposed Equal Per Capita Cost Distribution by Municipality, 13 FTE Officers

**NOTE** – At \$852,555 Ridgway Borough will have a **16% decrease** in their police costs. Johnsonburg Borough at \$507,445 will have a **13.3% decrease** in their costs as well. However, having no police department or police budget at this time, Jones Township’s total costs would increase from zero to \$320,000.

Proposed **MODIFIED** Per Capita  
Cost Distribution By Municipality

Total Proposed Budget For 13 FTE Officers

**\$1,680,000**

(\$232.75 or \$118.75 Cost Per Capita)

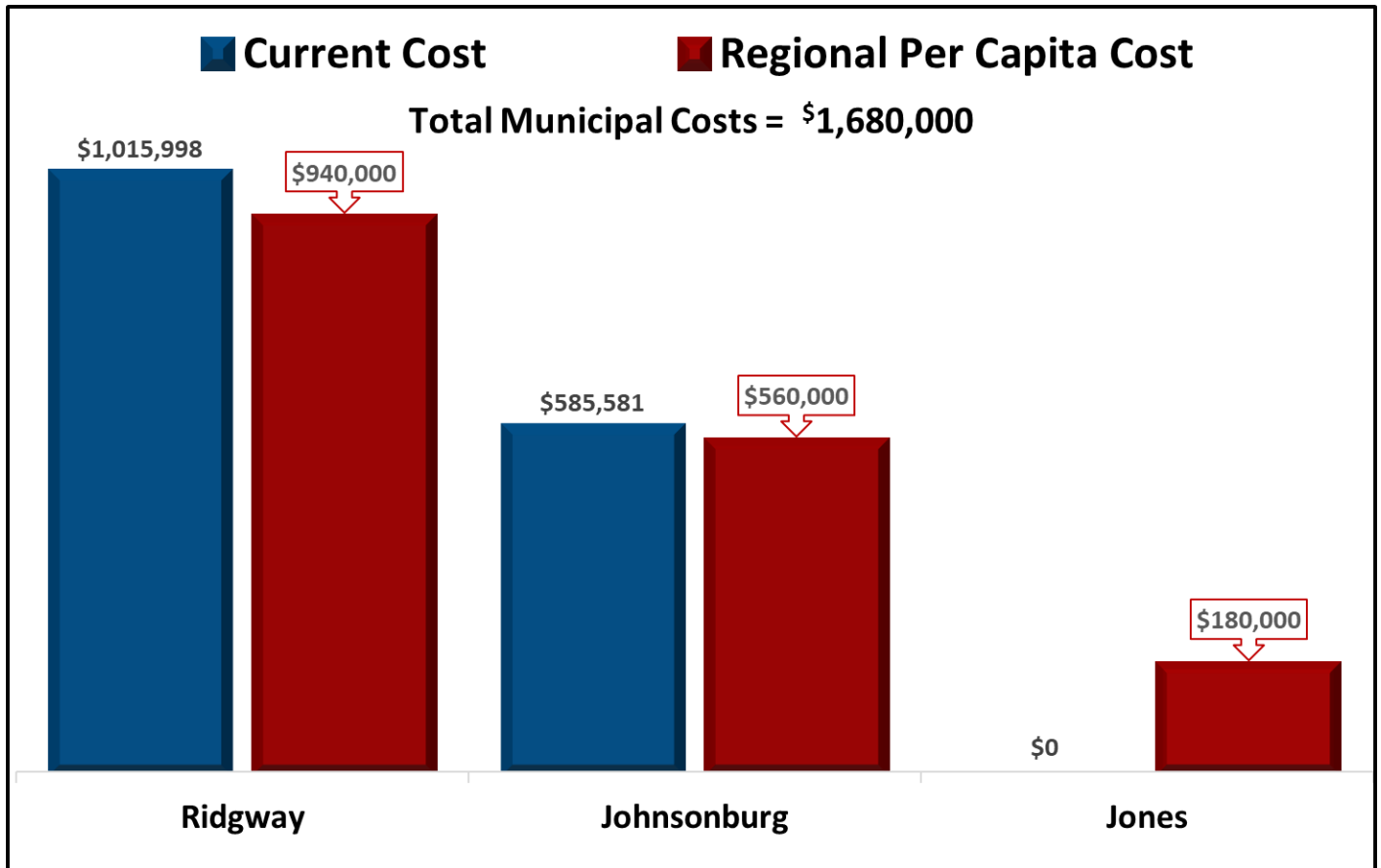


Figure 10. Proposed Modified Per Capita (PC) Cost Distribution by Municipality, 13 FTE Officers

**NOTE** – At \$940,000 with this **modified** option (\$232.75 PC), Ridgway Borough will have a **7.5% decrease** in their police costs. Johnsonburg Borough at \$560,000 (\$232.75 PC) will have a **4.4% decrease** in theirs as well. Jones Township’s per capita costs (\$118.75) will be reduced to 51% of the full amount being paid by Ridgway and Johnsonburg and will result in a modified cost of \$180,000 for them.

# Alternative Cost Distribution Methods

As previously discussed, the immediate concern after a budget has been developed is the method of determining how much of the total cost will be paid by each municipality. Some of the more common factors which have been used in developing cost distribution programs for other regional departments are listed below:

## 1. Population

Population is often used as the sole factor for cost distribution. The primary responsibility of any police department is to protect the public and render service. Population is a very reliable factor, especially if the U.S. census figures are current and used. It is important that the source for population figures used to determine cost distribution be reliable.

## 2. Density and Mileage

Population, when combined with land area and/or road mileage, adds another dimension to the impact of people on police services and law enforcement. The distribution of population over an area (density factor) can directly affect the policing needs of that area. The miles of road, state or local, that must be patrolled or traveled to serve the residents, also directly impacts upon the department.

## 3. Property Value

Assessed valuation of real property can be used in conjunction with population as a formula for cost distribution. The combination links two components that are any police agency's primary goal: to protect life and property. Assessed market value is determined at the local level through county assessment records.

## 4. Revenue and Taxes Collected

The percentage of distribution of total municipal revenues and taxes collected reflect the wealth of a community. Method "D" on Figure 13 of the cost distribution analysis adds the factor of "total taxes collected" which is very similar to the Assessed Market Valuation Factor.

## 5. Police Protection Unit

The Northern York County Regional Police Department uses a "police protection unit" concept in determining cost shares for each municipality. A police protection unit consists of ten hours of service each week or one quarter of the amount of time available from one officer. Each community purchases the number of units it desires, and therefore, has direct control over the amount and cost of police services it receives. Each municipality determines, in advance of the budget year, how many units of ten-hours-a-week it desires in the coming year. A separation of administrative costs from direct service costs occurs in the Northern York Regional Police cost assessment method. Each community pays a percentage share equal to the proportional share of the total units purchased.

With all the above methods of cost distribution, the main point that must be kept in mind is that the levels of service are commensurate to the share of percent of budget being paid by each municipality. In other words, a regional police department with a complement of 21 sworn

officers could ostensibly provide 1,702 hours of police service per officer or 35,742 hours annually (21 officers x 1,702 hours = 35,742).

If community “X” pays 10% of the regional police budget, it would be entitled to receive 10% of the department’s services, or 3,574 hours of service annually.

If community “Y” pays 50% of the regional police budget, that community will be paying five times the amount as community “X”, and therefore, it is entitled to five times the hours of service, or 17,871 hours of annual service.

Community “Y” with 17,871 hours of service would have an officer in their community at all times, while community “X” with 3,574 hours of police service for their year would not. Each community should receive the amount of service for which it pays. Please refer to the chart on the next page for the graphics for the previously mentioned methods of cost distribution.

## 6. Police Incidents or “Calls for Service”

Another excellent way to determine how much an individual municipality should pay toward the regional police operation is to examine the annual reported incidents or “calls for service” annually responded to in each municipality. However, DCED has found that there are **many** differences between police departments as to exactly what is considered to be an “incident” and what is therefore documented via a police report and/or given an incident number between many police departments. Therefore, this method is generally not used for any **initial** determinations of cost sharing by DCED for initial regional police studies with multiple departments. It should, however, be added to and used for such determinations in future years, once the regional department has been fully formed and has begun using a **standardized reporting system** based on the new records management system that will be selected.

## 7. “Five Category” Cost Sharing Method

Another popular method used by many regional police departments to determine how much an individual municipality should pay toward the regional police operation is to examine the average of the five most relevant categories and then base the cost shares on the average determined for each municipality. The five categories normally used in this method include:

- **% of Population**
- **% of Square Miles**
- **% of Road Miles**
- **% of Total Crimes**
- **% of Total Calls for Service**

## Additional Cost Distribution Methods

Method A	Method B
<b>POPULATION 100%</b>	<b>POPULATION 50%</b>
	<b>ASSESSED MARKET VALUE 50%</b>

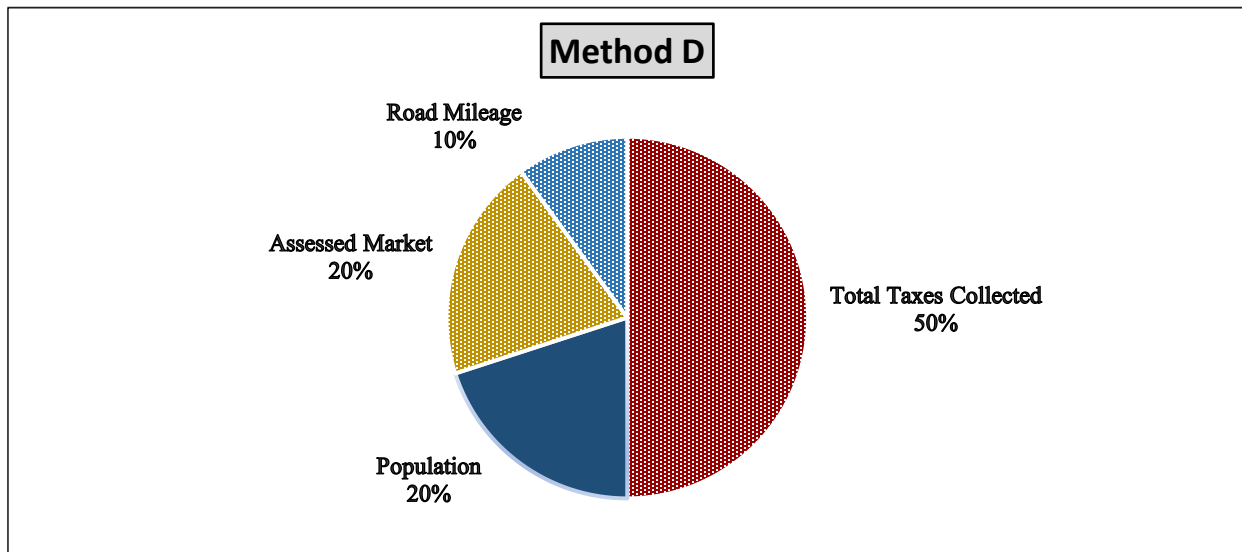
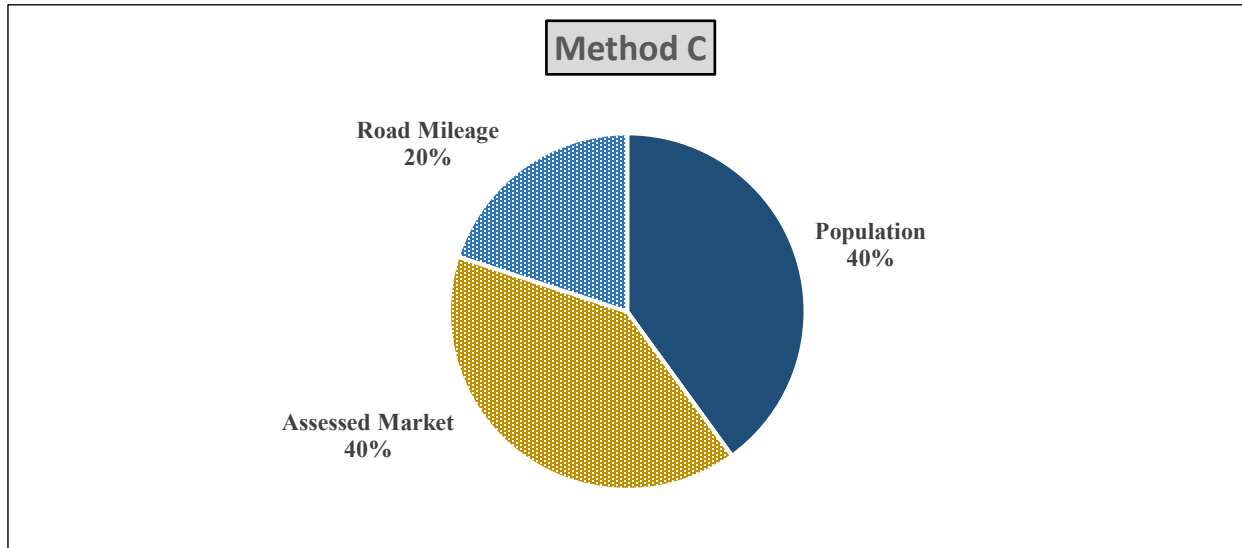


Figure 11. Additional Cost Distribution Methods

Ridgway – Johnsonburg – Jones Township  
Elk County  
Regional Police Department

Proposed Organizational Chart (13 FTE Officers)

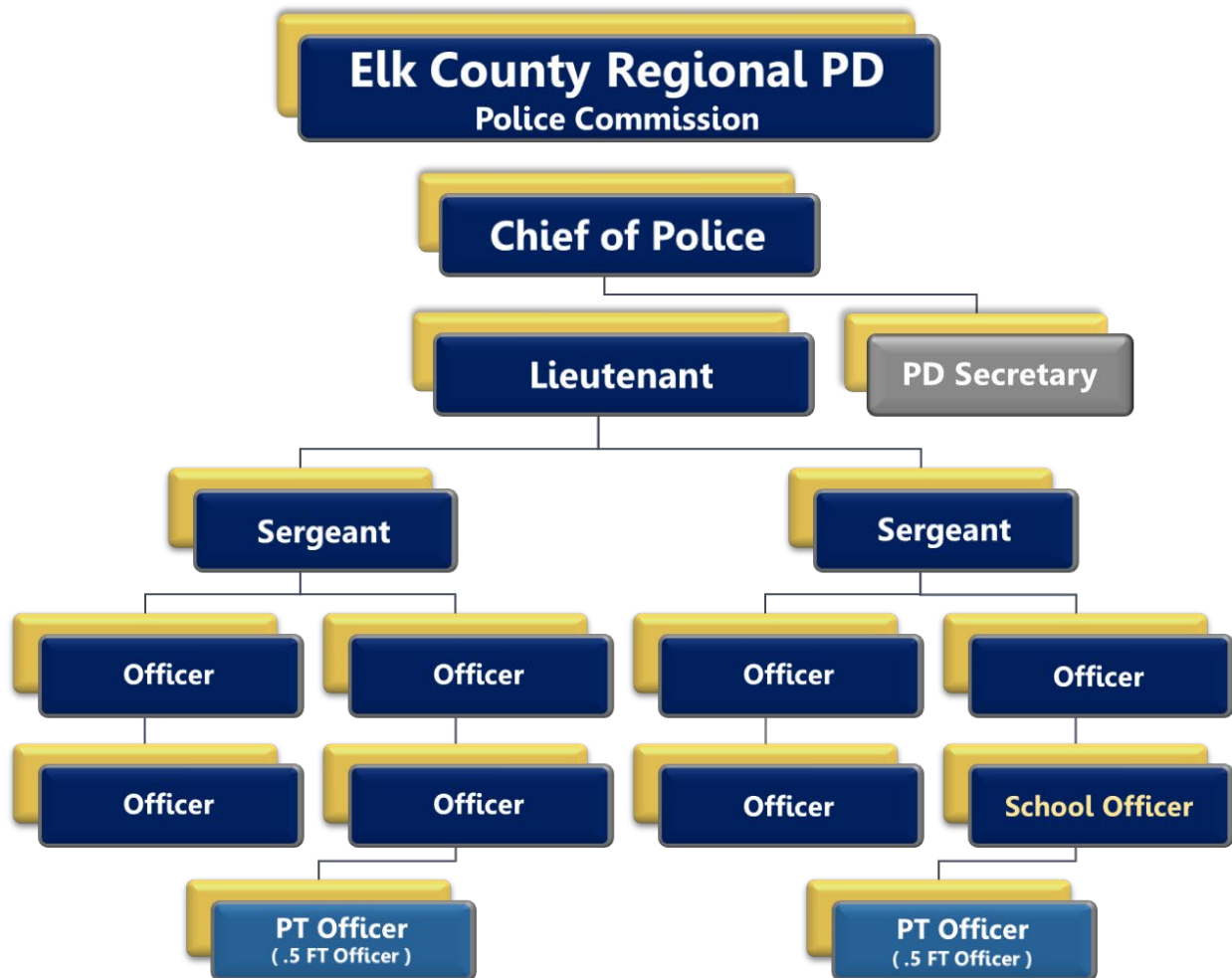
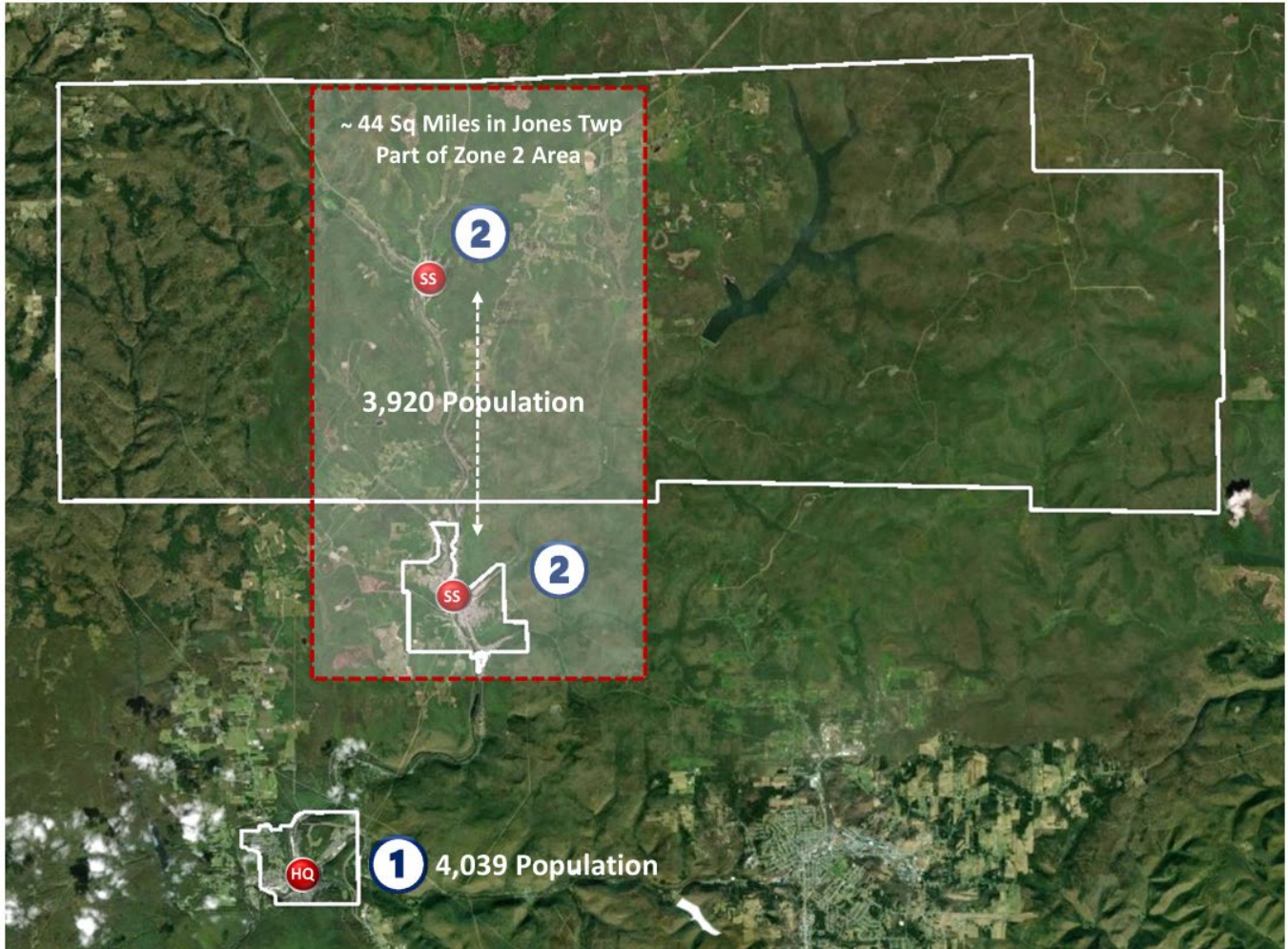


Figure 12. Proposed Organizational Chart – 13 FTE Officers

## Proposed Patrol Zones 1 and 2



**Patrol Zone # 1: +/- 4,039 Total Population (50.7%)**

**Patrol Zone # 2: +/- 3,920 Total Population (49.3%)**

**Plus “Roving” Car between Zones 1 & 2 (Day/Middle Shifts)**

*Figure 13. Map of Two Proposed Patrol Zones*

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Our analysis of the data and information obtained throughout this study ***strongly*** supports our recommendation that the three municipalities, Ridgway Borough, Johnsonburg Borough, and Jones Township, should combine their operational and financial resources and create a new regional police department as described in this study. The consolidation of the police services for these three, along with any future additional police contracts or mergers, will result in the following ***significant improvements*** in the delivery of all future police services in a more cost-effective regional basis:

- The ability to establish uniform and consistent police enforcement programs throughout this entire region, which includes only the three municipalities at this time.
- The ability to utilize police personnel more effectively by staffing and deploying officers based upon population, geography, workload, calls for service times, crime trends, etc.
- The ability to provide more efficient and effective police services for all citizens by eliminating the duplication or differences in any services or items of equipment that may currently exist between the current area police departments.

The following facts regarding the general consolidation of police departments reinforces our recommendation for the consolidation of these municipalities.

- The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals notes in Standard 5.2 that every state and local government and every police agency should provide police services by the most effective and efficient organizational means available to it. **It also notes that, at a minimum, police agencies that employ fewer than ten sworn employees should consolidate for improved efficiency and effectiveness.**
- Pennsylvania adopted in its “Pennsylvania Police Standards for the Improvement of Police Services” standard 6.4 which notes that, where appropriate to do so, police departments should consolidate to improve efficiency and effectiveness but in no case should an arbitrary limit or agency size be imposed, and in no case should individual agency members lose salary or status because of such consolidation.
- Pennsylvania currently has 887 municipal police departments and 41 regional police departments serving a population of approximately 13 million persons. There are another 149 County Detective and County Sheriff’s departments, and the State Police in Pennsylvania as well. The entire State of Texas, which is almost six times larger in size than Pennsylvania, has only 641 municipal or local police departments and for a total population of approximately 29.5 million persons.

- **In Pennsylvania, approximately 537 of the 928 combined municipal and regional police departments (58%) have less than ten officers, with many of those actually having less than five officers.** Smaller agencies normally lack the resources to provide adequate patrols, training, or to offer a full range of police services. **A regional police department eliminates much duplication, better utilizes limited resources, provides better training and supervision, and is generally better able to respond to any region-wide problems or crime trends as they arise.**

We would like to commend the elected officials from the three municipalities for looking into the possibility of consolidation of police services. We know that intergovernmental cooperation in municipal policing is probably more difficult to achieve than any other municipal service. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement Administration of Justice Task Force Report on Police states:

**"The political and social pressures linked to the desire for local self-government offers the most significant barrier to the coordination and consolidation of police services."**

Similar internal opposition has occurred with nearly every major change in policing since the turn of the century. Today, testing and selection policies, police academy training, and modern telecommunication systems which dispatch police departments for entire counties are taken for granted as indispensable to a modern police force. However, all those developments were accepted only after long political and economic disputes. If the municipalities continue to be interested in a regional police department after reviewing this study, then we recommend that public meetings be set up to explain the proposal to all residents and police officers. This report does not cover all the issues regarding the implementation of a regional police department but emphasizes that the municipalities can remain in contact with the Governors Center for Local Government Services to further assist them through this process.

The municipalities will have to address other issues such as the final selection of a police chief, development of the articles of agreement, future police pension matters, the final facility location and/or any needed improvements, and the negotiation of a new police labor contract. However, in our view, enough important information has been developed, and provided in this report, to allow the interested municipalities to make an informed decision on whether or not to continue with this vital undertaking.

## Recommendations for Future Police Services

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made for each municipality regarding their continuing need to provide quality police services to their residents and communities.

**Establish a new regional police department, between the three municipalities, as per the general recommendations of this study *including* ...**

- **13 FTE officers, including seven Full-Time Patrol Officers, two Part-Time Patrol Officers, one School Officer, two Patrol Sergeants, one Lieutenant, the Chief of Police, and one Administrative Assistant.**
- **The regional police headquarters to be housed at the Ridgway Borough Municipal Building (current police section). A smaller substation should also be housed at the Johnsonburg Borough Municipal Building. A third sub-station could potentially be located at the Jones Township Municipal Building, if required.**
- **Operation of the regional PD with seven (7) current and retained police vehicles.**
- **After formation and some initial years of successful operation, consider expanding the regional police department by combining with other area municipalities, with or without existing local police departments, *or*...**
- **Provide coverage to any smaller area municipalities without full-time police department on a contractual, fee for service, or expanded regional basis, *or* ...**
- **Just remain in operation as, at the present time, with each municipality continuing to operate its own separate police department, by contracting services from another police department, or by continuing to utilize the coverage and services provided by the Pennsylvania State Police.**

# Regional Police Implementation Flow Chart

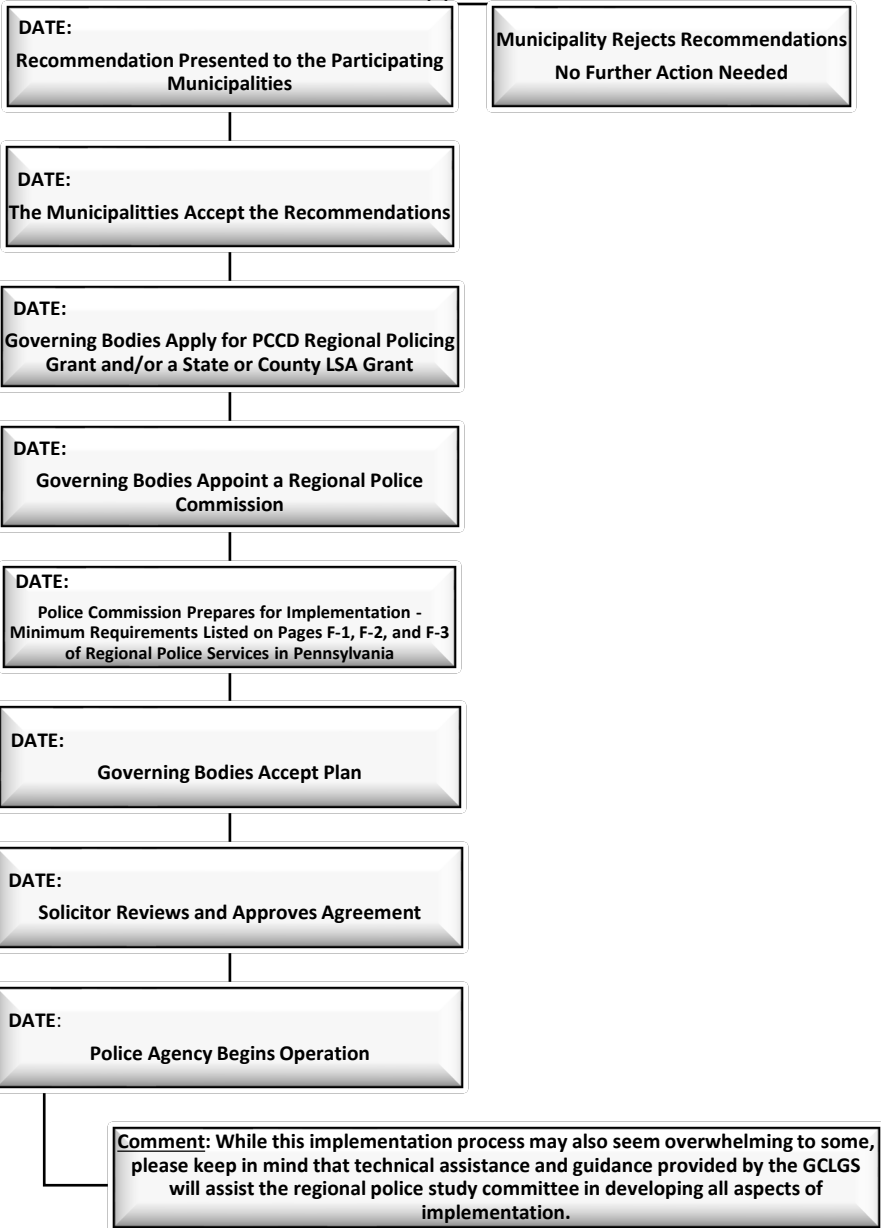


Figure 14. Regional Police Implementation Flow Chart

## APPENDIX A

### Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency Regional Police Assistance Grant Program

There are potential sources of grant funding administered by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The purpose of these grant programs is to improve the delivery of public safety services, through intergovernmental cooperation, by facilitating the formation of full-time, full-service, regional police departments. These programs will provide financial aid for various regional police “start-up” costs, including a portion of the salary and benefits for the regional Chief of Police and also for police equipment.

For availability of current PCCD grant opportunities, please visit:

<https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Funding/Pages/Active-Funding-Announcements.aspx>.

To receive email notifications about PCCD grant opportunities as they become available:



<https://www.pccdegrants.pa.gov/Egrants/Public/Subscribe.aspx>.

# APPENDIX B

## DCED Municipal Assistance Program

### MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP)

Helping Communities Thrive



#### GOVERNOR'S CENTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The mission of the Governor's Center for Local Government Services is to provide a full range of vital programs, training, and services to resolve problems at the local level.

#### MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services offers the Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) to provide funding to assist local governments to plan for and efficiently implement a variety of services and improvements, and soundly manage development with an emphasis on intergovernmental approaches.

Through MAP, municipalities and counties may apply for grant funding to cover up to 50 percent of eligible costs related to:

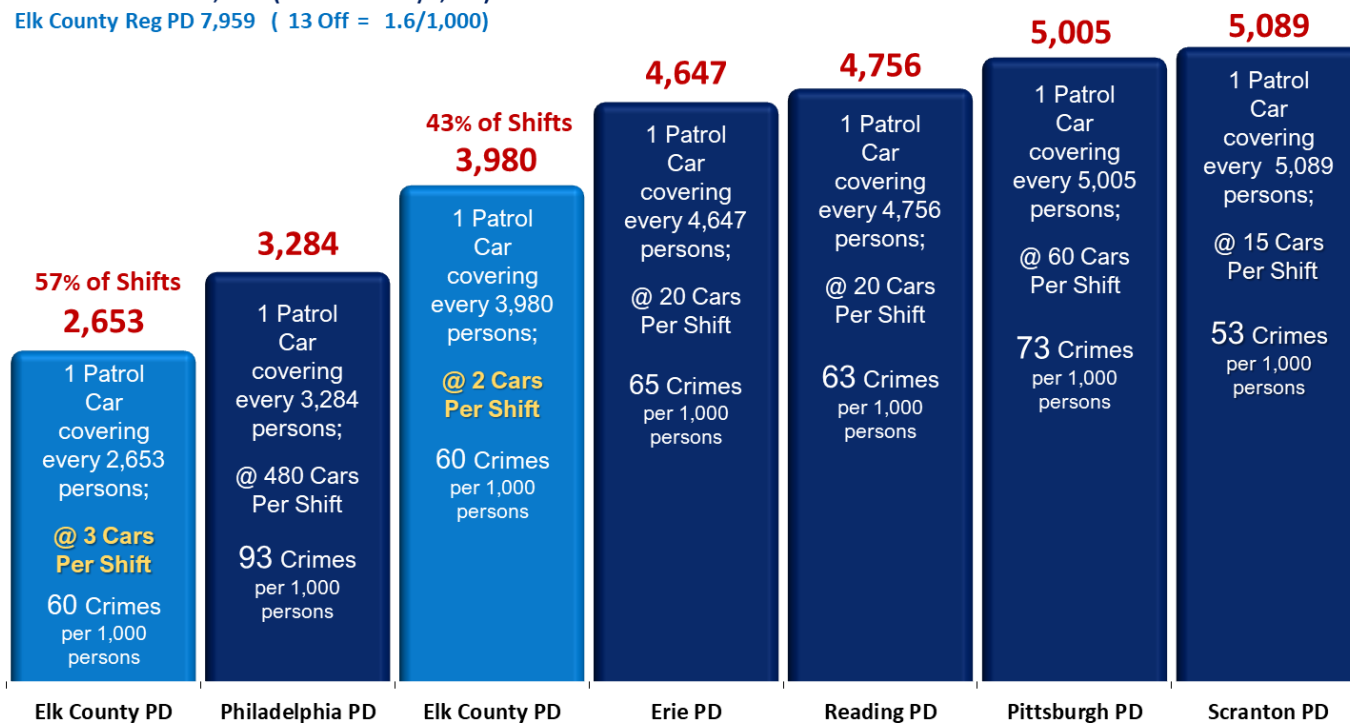
- **Community Planning:** Planning activities to support community and economic development, including, but not limited to, the development of:
  - comprehensive community plans
  - land use ordinances
  - Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) studies
- **Shared Services:** Intergovernmental cooperation initiatives including, but not limited to:
  - regional police and fire services
  - shared personnel agreements
  - boundary change studies

To learn more about the Municipal Assistance Program, visit [dced.pa.gov/MAP](https://dced.pa.gov/MAP).

# APPENDIX C

## Residents Per Officer / Patrol Car Comparison

Philadelphia	1,576,251	(6360 Off = 4.0/1,000)
Pittsburgh	300,286	(998 Off = 3.3/1,000)
Reading	95,112	(162 Off = 1.7/1,000)
Erie	92,957	(194 Off = 2.1/1,000)
Scranton	76,328	(144 Off = 1.9/1,000)
Elk County Reg PD	7,959	( 13 Off = 1.6/1,000)



**NOTE** – The above chart shows the number of residents that will be covered by each officer/patrol car by the proposed new “Elk County Regional Police Department” when two officers are on duty (7,959 / 2 = 3,980). When three officers are on duty (57% of all shifts) the ratio will be one officer/patrol car for every 2,653 persons (7,959 / 3 = 2,653). This is the **LOWEST (BEST)** coverage ratio when compared to the five other much larger city police departments shown, including the City of Philadelphia, which is currently the 4<sup>th</sup> largest police department in the country.

# APPENDIX D

## Pennsylvania Police Jurisdictions

### Pennsylvania Police Jurisdictions

Sources: Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD) & DCED Updated 9/18/24; 2,560 Total Municipalities



Municipal	887
Regional	140
Contractual	226
State Police Only	1,307

## APPENDIX E

### Proposed Regional Police Headquarters at the Ridgway Borough Municipal Building



# APPENDIX F

## Proposed Regional Police Sub-Station at the Johnsonburg Borough Municipal Building



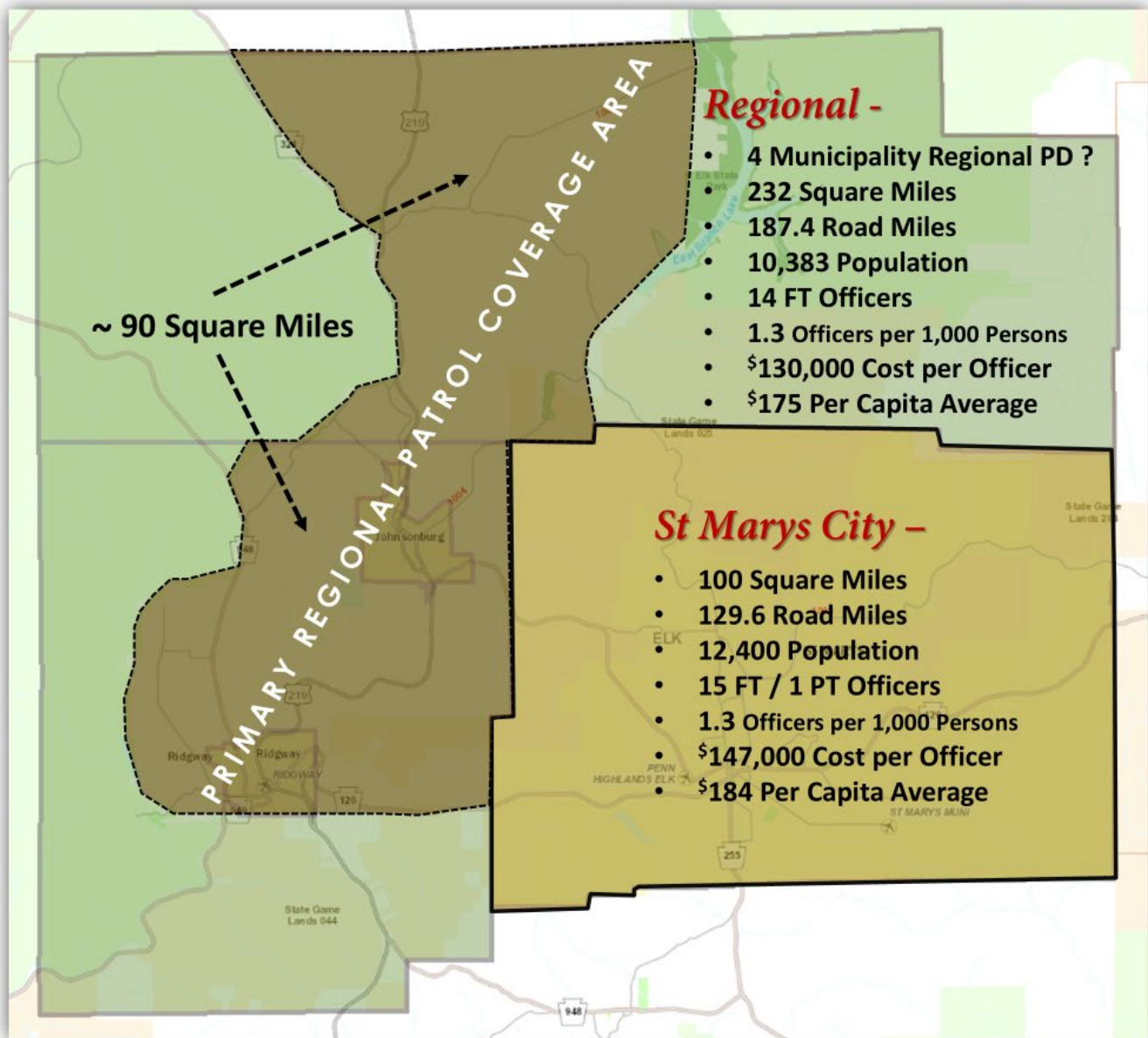
## APPENDIX G

### Area Police Department Cost Comparisons

Police Department (2025 Budget)	Population	# FTE Officers	Officers per 1,000 Persons	Cost per Officer	Cost per Capita
Lycoming Reg PD \$2,925,656	16,844	20	1.2	\$146,283	\$174
Clearfield Reg PD \$3,774,728	13,738	23.5	1.7	\$160,626	\$275
St. Marys City PD \$2,278,000	12,400	15.5	1.3	\$146,967	\$184
Warren City PD \$2,062,675	9,404	15	1.6	\$137,512	\$219
Bradford City PD \$1,662,940	7,849	19.5	2.5	\$85,279	\$212
<b>Average (Above 5) \$2,540,800</b>	<b>12,047</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>\$135,333</b>	<b>\$213</b>
<b>Elk County Proposed Reg PD \$1,680,000</b>	<b>7,959</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>\$129,230</b>	<b>\$211</b>

## APPENDIX H

**Potential** Four Municipality Regional Police Department  
Ridgway Borough & Johnsonburg Borough  
Jones Township & Ridgway Township  
Map and Statistics



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# Notes