

Community Safety Units

2025 Annual Report



TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 02 2025 Highlights**
- 03 Mission and Objectives**
- 04 Columbia Heights Community Safety Unit – By the Numbers**
- 05 Columbia Heights CSU – Empathy Connections**
- 06 Columbia Heights CSU – De-escalations**
- 07 Langely Park Community Safety Unit – By the Numbers**
- 08 Langely Park CSU- Empathy Connections**
- 09 Langely Park CSU – De-escalations**

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Rising UCP Requests

In 2025, requests for Unarmed Civilian Protection support rose sharply. In addition to our two weekly farmers' markets, UCP members were deployed to 42 special events, up from just 9 in 2024.

Fewer De-escalations

Since 2021, the number of de-escalations at Columbia Heights Plaza has steadily declined, from 145 in the first year and a half to just 14 this year across 87 shifts, reflecting a notable reduction in destructive conflict over time.

Building Relationships

In 2025, relationship building was a major focus. At Columbia Heights Plaza, multiple community members sought out CSU members to express their appreciation and share how they've noticed the positive impact of CSU presence.

At the new Langley Park location, CSU members intentionally introduced themselves to vendors, learned their names, checked in regularly, and engaged in extended conversations, laying the groundwork for mutual trust. Early signs indicate a growing mutual trust between the community and CSU members.

MISSION

The purpose of the Community Safety Unit projects is to offer alternative community protection mechanisms in light of existing tensions and potential for ongoing conflict.

OBJECTIVES

01

Improve community relations and imagination around public safety

02

Prevent violence and destructive conflict through nonviolent responses

03

Enhance access to needed resources for those in the Plaza and Langley Park

04

Contribute to the Plaza and Langley Park becoming more accessible and enjoyable places for all community members



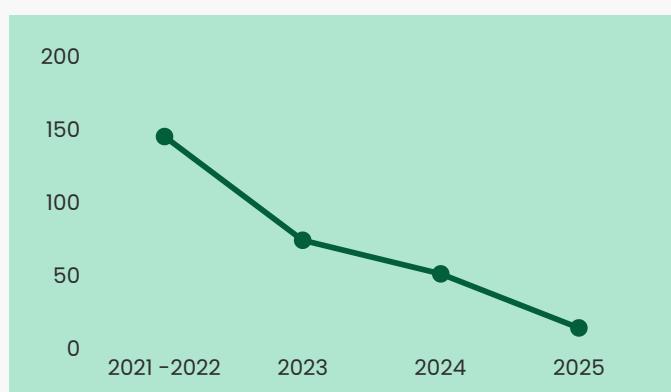
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS: BY THE NUMBERS

	2025	Total (since Aug 2021)
Empathy Connections	1577	6352*
De-Escalations	14	284
People Transforming	61	103
Hours Deployed	550**	3614
Active CSU Members	17	-

*Began reporting in May 2022

** This year we counted hours by shift, not by number of people working each shift, so totals are lower than in past years.

Number of De-escalations by Year





Columbia Heights Civic Plaza **EMPATHY CONNECTIONS**

One key data point UCP members track is empathy connections, defined as checking in with people to see how they are doing (beyond saying hello), spending time with them, or conversations with key stakeholders to build trust and a protective web such as vendors, persons looking for assistance, or others who seem disconnected. Below are some examples from our UCP members.

Support & Accompaniment

"Saw Community member A again. Asked [CSU Member] to give him one of the breakfasts. He appreciated it. I told him I had his back. [He gave me] a nice big old smile."

"Community Member B has been sober for some weeks. He has been making serious efforts to stay away from some of his friends at the Plaza. He appreciates our support."

"Community Member C's funeral was today also. We went and saw her. Saw some community members there also and talked."

"Spoke to two other residents about their landlord and banking issues. We spoke about possible groups that can help, and both have previously been connected with District Bridges."

Building Community Trust

"[We] met a community member who thanked us for the work we do and the impact it has on the community."

"Chatted with several community members about activism and community organizing in the DMV."

"Two community members approached us (at separate times) and asked about the work we do, conveying their support."

Columbia Heights Civic Plaza DE-ESCALATION EXAMPLES



"[CSU Members helped with] a de-escalation between a young man who had surface injuries on his forearm and a delivery driver. There was some shouting and the delivery driver started towards the injured man, [CSU member] interposed, the delivery driver immediately backed off and left soon after. Fresh Farm staff, the man at the compost station, and [CSU Member] helped bandage the young man's arm...injury likely took place outside of Fresh Farm area."

"A woman was yelling, threatening and nearly coming to blows with another woman. CSU Member interposed herself between the women and tried to lead [one woman] away. Other CSU Member positioned in front of the other woman and [her companion], attempting to engage and distract them.

The two women repeatedly started coming around us to go after each other again, yelling and threatening each other. Despite repeatedly threatening each other with violence, no punches were thrown.

Eventually CSU Member led [one woman] into the plaza on the 14th street side and talked to her for awhile. [Other CSU Member] talked to the others in front of the Giant. Eventually the second woman left the scene.

"[Man X] got mad at [Man Y] and started trying to push him. I distracted [Man X] and walked [Man Y] away from the situation, in which we had a conversation. He said he wanted to stab the other guy and had a knife with him which he showed me. I convinced him not to go back and walked him to the end of the block and he went home. I checked on [X] who also decided to go home and he ended up walking in the other direction."

LANGLEY PARK: BY THE NUMBERS

After our successful partnership with Columbia Heights Plaza Farmer's Market since 2021, DC Peace Team was asked to expand our Unarmed Civilian Protection deployments to the Wednesday Farmer's Market at Langley Park. Our first season at this location successfully focused on building relationships with vendors and community members.

2025	
Empathy Connections	233
De-Escalations	3
Hours Deployed	80
Active CSU Members	5



One key data point UCP members track is empathy connections, defined as checking in with people to see how they are doing (beyond saying hello), spending time with them, or conversations with key stakeholders to build trust and a protective web such as vendors, persons looking for assistance, or others who seem disconnected. Below are some examples from our UCP members.

Support & Accompaniment

"I spent some time with X. He told me he'd been stabbed three times last Saturday. I rebandaged the wound on his arm, as it was deep and he was leaving it open."

"Shared some food with the guys on the other side of the wall. They were fun and dancing to music to keep warm and stave off boredom."

Building Community Trust

"I'm starting to get more deeply connected to all the vendors at the market. Big smiles and joy when [we] went around greeting everyone at the beginning of our shift. I feel welcomed into their community."

"One of the vendors gave [UCP member] and I a full meal... I can tell how appreciated we are by them."

Preparing & Protecting Community

"I pulled my phone out to take pictures of the plates... I told [Vendor Leader] and he said it was probably ICE. Tense moment."

"A vendor let us know that a customer tends to harass her. We told her that next time it happens to let us know so that we can direct the woman elsewhere."

Langley Park DE-ESCALATIONS



"A formerly disruptive community member returned to the site, apparently intoxicated, picked up a couple of chairs and began to walk away. One of the vendors took the chairs away and the community member complained and pushed the vendor and the vendor pushed back.

I asked the community member to sit down and talk with me. The only thing I caught from his speech was "Tengo hambre", so asked a vendor who was closing up if they had anything left. They handed me a cup of watermelon, which I shared with him.

After eating, and mumbling incomprehensibly to me for 20 minutes, he laid down on the grass and went to sleep, breathing comfortably."

"There are a few community members who plant themselves on the grassy side of the market and get visibly drunk. [The Vendor Leader] had called the cops on them to disperse.

They did that, but they eventually came back after the cops left. When they came back I was able to convince them to come back after the market was over."