



CITY OF CLEARWATER

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CLEARWATER POLICE REINFORCE HISPANIC OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH BASIC SPANISH COMMUNICATION TRAINING

Clearwater, Fla. – It's obvious that communication becomes difficult when there is a language barrier. Over the years, the Clearwater Police Department has attempted to bridge the gap with Clearwater's Spanish-speaking residents. The department's latest effort is basic communication training for officers with little or no knowledge of the Spanish language. Next week 25 officers will learn basics of the Spanish language and culture in order to more effectively communicate with Spanish residents who do not speak English.

Fast Facts:

- Hispanics are the fastest growing minority population in Clearwater with an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 residents or approximately 15 percent of the city's population.
- In 2001, Clearwater Police began a community policing program, Operation Apoyo Hispano, to reach out to the city's growing Hispanic population.
- The goals of Operation Apoyo Hispano are to reach out to our Hispanic residents, bridge the gap in communicating with our Spanish speaking population, seek ways to positively resolve law enforcement issues, and increase the number of bi-lingual police officers and staff.
- The class is called "Basic Officer Survival and Communication." It runs June 8 – 12, 2009. Course content includes Hispanic cultural information and basic phrases for ability to communicate and conduct interviews and other police work.

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