

HUMAN SERVICES POLICE HISTORY

The need for police at Department of Human Services facilities was recognized by the legislature in the 1890's when it enacted N.J.S. 30:4-14 authorizing the commissioner to appoint "Special Policemen" to keep the peace at the facilities. There were Human Services Police Officers more than 30 years before the New Jersey State Police was created and they have been serving the public for over 100 years. In those days, an officer was employed by a specific institution and the duties of the officer varied widely from facility to facility. The officers reported to the administration of the particular institution and there was no centralized control of the department.

In 1984, Commissioner George Albanese recognized the need for a centralized police service. He issued Administrative Order 1:50 that created the Human Services Police. On December 8, 1995, Governor Christine Todd Whitman signed into law Bill A-2177. This legislation gave Human Services Police Officers full statewide police powers. The Human Services Police is structured with three institutional-based districts, three child protective services units, a detective unit and a HazMat Response Team. Today, the current strength is approximately 160 sworn personnel supported by a staff of about 20 civilian personnel.

Human Services Police Officers perform the same basic functions as a police officer in a municipality. However, the Human Services Police Officer is a unique position. They are charged with protecting some of New Jersey's most vulnerable residents.

The Human Services Police continue to expand in areas where the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children and Families see the need for police involvement.