

# [Regional policing](https://assignbuster.com/regional-policing/)

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Regional Policing. The term “ regional policing” refers to a structure and style of policing which combines the efficiency of centralized policing systems with the adaptability of community policing. In the United States a variety of different models have been tried, resulting in a very mixed picture nationwide. Federal policing covers national interests, while different municipalities tend to have their own much smaller units which define their own priorities and systems in the light of local preferences.
The state of Pennsylvania has been recently consolidating its policing services due to the increasing cost of maintaining its 1, 100 separate municipal police departments. A recent manual promoting regional policing cites seven advantages of regional policing as compared to the previous system of devolved units: i) Improvement in the Uniformity and Consistency of Police Enforcement, ii) Improvements in the Coordination of Law Enforcement Services, iii) Improvement in the Distribution and Deployment of Police Personnel, iv) Improvement in Training and Personnel Efficiency, v) Improved Police Management and Supervision, vi) Reduced Costs and vii) Improved Career Enhancement Opportunities for Police Officers. (Regional Police Services, 2011, pp. 3-4). There are also some accepted disadvantages and these are a) Loss of Local Non-enforcement Services, b) Loss of Local Control and c) Loss of Citizen Contact.
A close analysis of the advantages reveals that the main beneficiaries of regional policing are the government departments, and of course the taxpayers who fund them, because regional policing reduces costs and makes efficiency gains. It could also be argued that more uniformity and consistency, along with better management and supervision of personnel results in a fairer and more effective police force, which again benefits the taxpayer. The creation of bigger units of service delivery also benefits police personnel, because there is a greater potential to move sideways to try different roles and gain more experience, and to apply for promotion.
The downside of emphasizing regional policing over local or community policing, is that some traditional practices, such as the use of police for particular local non-law enforcement functions, such as those related to parking and permits, may no longer involve police. This removes the reassurance of police presence from the public space, and results in lower visibility and perhaps also a reduced linkage between the local people and their police force. In a way regional policing refocuses attention on the core law enforcement duties. If a region contains widely differing locations, such as a large metropolitan area combined with a neighboring rural area with few inhabitants, there may be a new conflict between different client groups who previously would not have had to come to agreement about priorities. Regional policing necessitates this kind of compromise, but on the other hand it allows greater co-ordination of activities and information over a larger area. Since crime does not respect local boundaries, this may well make investigations easier and faster, resulting in better conviction rates. The unit which liaises with federal police becomes greater in regional policing, again streamlining reporting systems and resulting in greater efficiency overall. In short, regional policing is a method of consolidation and standardization of service which brings benefits both to the taxpayer and police employees.
Reference.
Regional Police Services in Pennsylvania: A Manual for Local Government Officials (Tenth Edn.) Harrisburg, PA: Department of Community and Economic Development, 2011. Available online at: http://www. newpa. com/webfm\_send/1724