



## City of Bloomington Police Department

### NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 23, 2026

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### **Bloomington Police Department Launches Blue Envelope Program to Support Drivers with Autism**

The Bloomington Police Department (BPD) is excited to announce a new initiative to assist those drivers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with communication during interactions involving law enforcement officers and other first responders. The Blue Envelope Program is modeled after a program in Porter County and is designed to provide a safety and communication tool for drivers with ASD.

“Programs like the Blue Envelope help officers quickly recognize when a driver may communicate differently and adjust their approach,” said Captain Ryan Pedigo of the Bloomington Police Department. “Our goal is to make interactions safer, calmer, and more predictable for everyone involved.”

The objectives of this program are:

- **Enhanced Understanding.** By providing officers with immediate, accessible information about ASD, the Blue Envelope Program aims to promote empathy and patience, leading to more positive interactions.

- **Reducing Anxiety.** Traffic stops can be particularly stressful for individuals with autism. The Blue Envelope serves as a visual cue that helps officers adjust their communication style, thereby reducing anxiety for the driver.
- **Streamlined Communication.** The guidelines on the envelope offer practical tips for officers, making it easier for them to communicate effectively with individuals with autism, even in high-stress situations like traffic stops.
- **Encouraging Preparedness.** For individuals with ASD and their families, the Blue Envelope is a tool that encourages preparedness. By keeping their important documents in the envelope and understanding how to present it during a traffic stop, drivers can feel more confident and secure.

During a traffic stop or other interaction with law enforcement, such as a vehicle crash, a driver with ASD can simply hand the officer the blue envelope. The envelope has important information for both the driver and the officer printed on its exterior. Inside the envelope will be the driver's license, the vehicle registration, insurance information, and a contact card. The contact card will provide the name and telephone number for a trusted individual that the driver wishes to be contacted if further information is needed. Because the program centers on driver identification and vehicle documents, it is not intended for passengers.

Those participating in the program will also be provided with a small Blue Envelope Program window cling. If the participant desires, they can place this window cling on their vehicle to alert officers and other first responders that they are a part of the Blue Envelope Program and on the autism spectrum before any contact is even made with the driver.

Residents of Bloomington and Monroe County can obtain Blue Envelope Program materials at the following locations:

- Bloomington Police Department, 220 E Third Street, Bloomington, Indiana
- Bloomington City Hall (front desk), 401 N Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana

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