Chief Robert Butler

Candidate for IACP 4th Vice President



Robert Butler has served as Chief of Police in Independence, Ohio, since October 2021. He is a forward-thinking municipal police executive whose leadership focuses on practical innovation, officer wellness, responsible technology, professional standards, and strong partnerships across the law enforcement profession.

Chief Butler is the Past President of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police and serves as Ohio's representative to the IACP State Associations of Chiefs of Police (SACOP). He is also a member of the IACP Patrol and Tactical Operations Committee and the IACP Smaller Department Section, Vice President of the Cuyahoga County Chiefs of Police Association, and a member of the OACP Legislative Committee. His legislative advocacy includes helping advance Ohio's Halo Bill while working with the FOP, NOBLE, HPOA, prosecutors, fire chiefs, and state leaders to build support for practical public safety legislation. These roles have allowed him to work with chiefs from agencies of every size and to advocate for solutions that reflect the realities of local policing.

Under his leadership, the Independence Police Department achieved state accreditation, expanded regional collaboration, and earned national recognition for officer wellness in two consecutive years through the Destination Zero program. Chief Butler has also advanced responsible uses of technology, including automated license plate readers and a regional Drone as First Responder program. His approach emphasizes clear policy, accountability, public communication, and measurable operational value.

Before becoming chief, Butler served with the Cleveland Heights and Cleveland Metroparks police departments. His experience includes patrol, investigations, internal affairs, recruiting, K9 handler, SWAT, drug recognition expert, and oversight of specialized units and major events. A police academy instructor since 2010, his training focus includes subject control. Drawing on more than 40 years of martial arts experience, including jiu-jitsu, he promotes realistic, consistent training and hosts regional open mat sessions that bring officers together to improve their skills and build relationships across agencies. He also teaches standardized field sobriety testing, legal topics, and other core law enforcement subjects.

Chief Butler is a graduate of FBI National Academy Session 287. He holds a Master of Public Administration from Cleveland State University and a bachelor's degree in political science from The Ohio State University. His recognitions include the IACP 40 Under 40 Award and the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police Michael J. Kelly Excellence and Innovation in Policing Award.

As a candidate for IACP 4th Vice President, Butler is focused on communication, collaboration, and connection. He believes IACP must respond quickly when national issues affect local chiefs, strengthen its partnerships with state and county associations, and make it easier for every chief to receive timely information, contribute ideas, and have a meaningful voice, whether or not they can regularly attend meetings or serve on a committee.