



Ministry of Education Department of International and Cross-Strait Education Director Nicole Lee, third left, poses with members of the Houston Police Department in Taipei in an undated photograph.

## Ministry lauds Houston's Mandarin-speaking cops

Ministry of Education officials on Saturday lauded the success of an ongoing Mandarin training program, as it welcomed a delegation from the Houston Police Department (HPD), who also visited the Ministry of Justice and other government agencies, and attended the Double Ten National Day celebrations on Oct. 10.

The “Survival Mandarin” program started in 2018 through a three-year cooperation agreement between the ministry and the HPD, with the ministry providing instructors, teaching materials and learning resources for police officers in Houston, the largest city in Texas. Classes were suspended for a year-and-a-half during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, but in July 2021, the ministry signed a memorandum of understanding with the HPD to continue the program for another three years.

The program resumed on Aug. 4, 2021, with 28 HPD officers participating in the 13-week training program at the HPD Southwest Substation, the ministry said in a news release.

Instruction is provided by Taiwanese teachers at the University of Saint Thomas' (UST) Mandarin Center in Houston.

The program “is designed to improve communication and community safety by providing HPD officers language and cultural training which will help them better connect with Houston's ever-growing Mandarin-speaking population,” the ministry said, adding that it can enhance protection for Taiwanese studying in Houston and other cities in Texas.

Part of the ministry's efforts to expand Mandarin-language learning around the world, the Houston program was the first that was implemented in the US to promote diversity and harmony by helping people get along in a multicultural society through a better understanding of each other, said Lin Hsiao-ying (林曉瑩), section head at the ministry's Department of International and Cross-strait Education.

“It has been quite successful, inspiring Houston's neighboring Harris County to launch a similar Mandarin-learning program for its law-enforcement officers,” Lin said.

The HPD has also started a lion dance club, the second one among US police departments, Lin said.

“This program has helped to foster the growth of a Mandarin-speaking community and their culture around Houston. We hope to build on this foundation to boost cooperation and reciprocal visits between the HPD and Taiwan,” she added.

# 文藻外語大學公共關係室剪報表格

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“The education ministry would like to thank Houston police chief Troy Finner for his firm support. The program’s success has given a big boost to Taiwan’s Mandarin Centers across the US. It comes at a pivotal time as [Taiwan] seeks to upgrade US-Taiwan education advocacy programs, and promote exchanges and reciprocal visits between the public and private sectors of Taiwan and the US,” said Nicole Lee (李彥儀), director of the ministry’s Department of International and Cross-strait Education.

To date, 60 HPD officers had completed the Survival Mandarin program, with the staff of qualified teachers expanding after UST launched a Mandarin Center in cooperation with Kaohsiung-based Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages in 2021, Lee said.

The teachers come from Taiwan, but the Mandarin courses must still be reviewed and approved by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, she said, adding that police officers who complete the course receive a professional training certificate.

After a hiatus of four years, program participants had a chance to visit Taiwan again this month, with HPD deputy chief Ban Tien leading four officers currently enrolled in the program, including police captain Nhatthien Nguyen, ministry officials said.

The delegation had attended the National Day celebrations, visited the offices of the education ministry, the Ministry of Justice, the Kaohsiung Police Department and the Central Police University in Taoyuan, the nation’s main police training academy, Lee said.

Some officers who finished the Survival Mandarin training course were awarded advanced training scholarships to undergo a one-week internship in Taiwan, which includes visiting government agencies and local places and markets to further improve their Mandarin skills, the education ministry said.

Additional reporting by Jason Pan