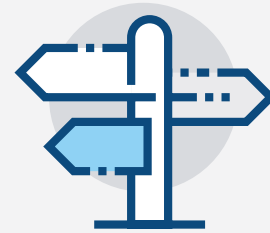




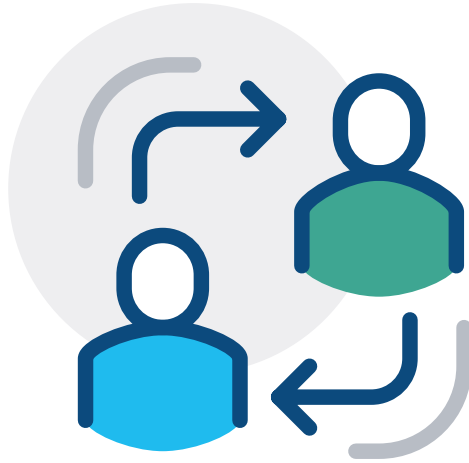
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH FAITH-BASED PARTNERS
GUIDEBOOK

Guide to Community Engagement with Faith-Based Partners



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Introduction

Faith-based partners offer the largest resource of community members in the nation. There are 350,000 houses of worship across the country, with 65 million people attending a weekly program at their respective church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or other faith-based locale. These houses of worship engage our country's diverse neighborhoods in the smallest town and the largest city. If your agency is looking to engage with any part of your public, faith-based organizations offer entry. Moreover, faith leaders are respected and trusted voices; in times of tension, they can advocate for your agency and provide a safe space for needed dialogue. Law enforcement and faith-based organizations are pillars of justice within a community.

Successful community engagement changes how officers and residents get to know each other by moving from a mode of enforcement to one of connection. Describing the need to re-think community and police interactions, one community member told the writers of this guide, ***“Far too often, the first time someone meets a cop is when they’ve done something wrong or when they have been accused of doing something wrong. Rather than the first experience being when you go to a police department and learn how to put in a car seat.”***

A law enforcement officer sought to put a positive spin on first interactions that are enforcement-related, saying, ***“Every time we have a chance to engage with our community, we’re making small deposits. And if there’s ever a situation where we need support from the community, that’s where those small deposits will pay off. I hope that we never have to cash that check. But no situation is ever too big for me to engage our community.”*** In other words, officers are always performing community engagement, even when they are doing enforcement. Nonetheless, it is still important to conduct focused and direct community engagement.

The guide was written by MovementForward, Inc., an Atlanta-based national nonprofit that works on reconciliation and is the convener of National Faith & Blue Weekend (Faith & Blue - faithandblue.org), the nation's largest collaborative community-police initiative. In addition, this guide was informed by the thousands of agencies that participate in Faith & Blue each year, as well as from detailed conversations with residents, faith partners, and law enforcement in Brookhaven, Georgia (Brookhaven Police Department), New Brighton, Minnesota (New Brighton Police Department), and Baltimore County, Maryland (Baltimore County Police Department). The quotes that appear throughout this guide are from those detailed conversations. The writing and distribution of this guide was funded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in the Department of Justice.

Getting Started



There is no better time to start than the present. Be proactive rather than reactive, because community outreach works; it reduces tensions, facilitates collaboration on solving crime, improves safety for everyone, and builds a sense of belonging. This guide will provide you with the information you need, using the strategy that community engagement is building a bridge that goes in both directions, enabling officers and residents to get to know and to learn from each other.

To help in your planning, below is a worksheet of the components for instituting a faith-based outreach program for year one. These tasks should be sequential, commencing with setting your overall goals. More information can be found throughout this guide. It is hoped that this template will help jump-start your organization's efforts in creating faith-based partnerships in your community.

Lead and Support Staff (See Administration section below)

Lead:	
Support:	
Support:	

Particular Goals for Outreach (See Strategy section below)

Goal 1:	
Goal 2:	
Goal 3:	

Timeline

Month 1:	
Months 2-3:	
Months 4-6:	
Months 7-9:	
Months 10-11:	
Month 12:	

Target Demographics and Geographies (See Strategy section below)

Target 1:	
Target 2:	
Target 3:	

Three Faith-Based Leaders (See Programming section below)

Leader	House of Worship	Who to Connect With

Important Do's and Do Not's (See Strategy section below)

Do	Do Not

Four Quarterly Events (See Programming section below)

QUARTER:	One	Two	Three	Four
When				
Partner				
Location				
Type				

Ongoing Interaction (See Programming section below)

Method 1:	
Method 2:	
Method 3:	

Evaluation Method (See Programming section below)

Type:	
How Collected:	
When Collected:	

Administrative Considerations



Staffing

Strong community engagement begins with the right people in the right places. There are advantages and disadvantages to staffing community engagement programs with sworn or non-sworn officers. Ideally, you have both, but if that is infeasible, there are advantages to each approach. Sworn officers represent all members of your agency, and by having uniformed members participate in non-enforcement activities, they can imprint a positive image of your agency to the public. Sworn members can also directly recommend community safety strategies as they engage the public in a non-enforcement capacity. Alternatively, non-sworn personnel can be hired specifically for related experience in community engagement and can focus their time designing outreach activities. Non-sworn department members may in certain circumstances seem more accessible to community members as there is no overlap with enforcement activities. There are diverse considerations to both roles, including hiring differences and shifts, so be sure to evaluate the different considerations with your respective personnel management.

Whoever you put in the role(s), the most important consideration is that community engagement staff must want to do this type of work; it cannot be unilaterally assigned. You want people with the right personality; this does not mean they have to be extroverted, but they should demonstrate a soft touch, be strong listeners, and genuinely value spending time in a non-directed way with members of the public. Because promotion is a reality of life on the force, especially if you have sworn officers in the role, more than one person conducting this work is essential, such as a co-liaison, so that there's continuity.



When organizing activities that require the participation of other officers, they should be opt-in rather than mandated. Ideally, however, all officers in your agency should be focused on community engagement. In fact, recruits should be asked what community policing is to them to ensure they understand the importance of non-enforcement engagement. This attitude starts at the top with active buy-in from your agency executive and command staff; it can be demonstrated by attending community engagement initiatives (and sticking around - not just making a quick appearance), speaking about it regularly to agency members, doing social media and traditional media outreach, and providing support including staffing and financial resources. Executives can also help create paths for engagement by reaching out to senior faith leaders, but they should do so for the purpose of facilitating collaboration with dedicated community engagement staff in your organization. For example, the sustained ties should not be Chief to Senior Faith Leader, but ideally Community Engagement Officer to Junior Pastor.



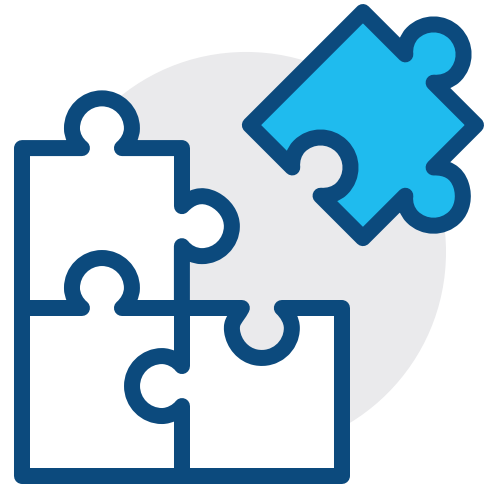
Supplemental Support

Administrative support is also essential – this can mean helping with logistics for events, designing materials, writing internal reports, and providing social media support. Finally, elected officials and other municipal staff should be cognizant of your work. In many ways law enforcement is the tip of the iceberg of community involvement for local government; in fact, law enforcement officers are often the most common, and frequently the only, government staff that residents engage. Consequently, it is essential that community engagement be supported by elected officials, including in their social media and in-person presence. Elected officials should be invited to participate in almost all community engagement events and have speaking roles when possible.

Community engagement with faith-based organizations should be considered different from chaplaincy programming. Chaplaincy is intended primarily for the spiritual care and support for officers; it is an inwardly focused program. Community engagement faces the community. That said, if your agency has chaplains, they should be involved in faith-based outreach. They can facilitate the participation of their home house of worship, provide guidance, and offer spiritual care for the staff engaged in this important but challenging work. Community engagement is also different from officers who volunteer or do paid detail by local houses of worship. This engagement can be valuable (although paid work is usually subject to municipal regulations) as it enables officers to be in the community and it should be recognized internally within the law enforcement agency by encouraging other officers to conduct this work, if they so choose and with respect for the fact that many officers do not practice a faith or do not wish to engage faith in the discharge of their duties. Regardless, officers should always be aware that they may be perceived as representatives of their agency, even if members of the house of worship encounter them in a paid or volunteer capacity and consequently interact with them differently than they would formally.

Identifying houses of worship to engage is discussed in the Strategy section below, but contact information can be found via houses of worship where you have connections, your chaplains, Google, and databases maintained by MovementForward, Inc. and national denominations. Ideally, you will want to maintain records of community engagement in a spreadsheet or database, updating it regularly with the point of contact and records of engagements. Regular reports should be provided to command staff and featured in public materials, including social and traditional media. A Public Information Officer (PIO) should be assigned to support community engagement along with their other responsibilities, provided the capacity exists. In some cases, particularly small agencies, a PIO might actually do the work of community outreach. This is fine but it is essential to understand that true community engagement goes beyond communications and must involve regular interaction.

Building Understanding



In doing this work, there are essential considerations in working with faith-based organizations as discussed below.

Understanding Presence:

When law enforcement professionals enter a house of worship, there will be widely different responses to the presence of law enforcement. In some cases, people will be comfortable and approach officers; in other cases there may be hesitation or actual fear. Some houses of worship have membership from a country where law enforcement is abusive or corrupt. Or they might think officers are there to enforce immigration law. It is essential that law enforcement be present all the same because their positive presence helps. Officers should still be prepared for a variety of responses that need to be treated with generosity. Remember that law enforcement is the most visible form of government.

➤ *“If officers are taking their lunch break with their car sitting in our parking lot people would come over to me and say, what’s wrong? Why are the police here?”*

Numbers and Uniform:

Be thoughtful about who officers are meeting with and in what capacity when determining type of clothing and numbers. If officers are meeting with children or participating in an informal gathering, wear uniforms (but if possible, consider not bringing firearms) so that the public can get comfortable being around officers. If it is a discussion on a difficult topic, consider polo shirts and bringing fewer officers so that it’s not overwhelming.

Train:

Every officer should receive at least one in-house community engagement training beyond what has been taught in the academy before participating in a community engagement activity. Moreover, new officers should be paired with officers who have already done community engagement.

No One Size Fits All:

Houses of worship are all different; even though an officer has visited, for example, a Catholic church on East Main Street, the Catholic church you visit on West Main Street might have an entirely different dynamic. Treat each faith-based organization as unique.



Cultural Sensitivity:

When entering a house of worship, notice details of the congregants. Are women and men seated separately; do people take their shoes or hats off; are people waiting to eat; is their behavior formal or informal; are most wearing a religious garment, etc. Follow their lead. Even better, before showing up, ask how to be culturally sensitive in what officers wear, bring, and in how they behave. Ask if officers should participate in rituals if they are comfortable, or respectfully observe congregants engaging in ritual. Then, most importantly, ensure that these lessons are shared with other officers. Also note that ritual, behavior, and expectations can change, depending on the day of the week and even the time of the engagement.



➤ *“Have it on the right day. Don’t have the event on Shabbat (weekly Jewish day of observance).”*

After a Controversial Incident:

Start with a lot of listening and approach faith-based organizations gingerly. Ask the faith leader how to best engage the members of their congregation. Make sure you are demonstrating that your agency is going the extra mile to listen and reach out. When possible, and when a careful reflection deems it helpful, wear polos shirts instead of uniforms and do not wear firearms when meeting with the community at such a time.

➤ *“We did vigils and protests. And the police were right there. Some of them took knees with us. I didn’t see them as the enemy, I saw them as the solution.”*

Politics:

Every group has politics – and faith-based organizations are no exception. There might be multiple faith leaders within an institution, and they might have different perspectives; moreover, across organizations there might be different friendships and even rivalries. Never talk poorly about any one faith leader to another, and if they speak poorly about each other, be polite but do not agree. Understand that your agency might get a commitment from one faith leader while another leader in the same organization might be unaware. Determine who the decision makers are within and across organizations and be sure to get their buy-in first and foremost. Be aware that a faith leader might have a different – either more positive or negative – attitude toward law enforcement than the majority of his or her congregation.

Faith-Based Organizations Have Their Own Needs:

In the same way that engaging with the faith community provides value to the agency, engaging with law enforcement provides value to the faith partner. A faith-based organization, for example, may be facing attrition in losing members, and law enforcement presence is a way of showing the larger community that the faith leader has relevancy. Ask how to help the faith leader in the discharge of their duties, understand that it’s possible that an event they organize might have few attendees, and aspire toward relevancy. Also be aware that many faith-based organizations hire their own security that might not be sworn officers. Having a good relationship with this external security can be very important for trust, which requires treating them with respect.

➤ *“We have what I would call genetic memory. The fact that my grandfather or my father or my uncles may have had harsh experiences with law enforcement, which may not pertain to these individual officers, but that’s passed down to us, particularly as men. So therefore, we start as black men on the defensive posture, you have to earn our trust.”*

Be Patient:

In the words of a community engagement officer that helped develop this guide: ***“You can’t force relationships and you can’t force trust. You have to be patient. This is not about feel-good publicity, and that means it takes time to build deep relationships.”***

One way to start with outreach is to ask the faith leaders to undergo a simulation training or a ride-along. That is often an eye-opening experience and can help set the stage for true bridging work - with both parties better understanding the other. Another important consideration is to be a listener at times, instead of a talker. It can be okay to have awkward moments, or to sit back and allow residents to drive the discussion in whatever way they see as important.

Be Ready To Discuss Diversity:

Particularly when meeting with communities of color, be ready to discuss how the agency is already engaged in diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. Be open to feedback about what can be improved, know what statistics the agency tracks, and offer to share this information. Also remember that young people are more likely to be direct and raise challenging questions. While topics of diversity might be part of the academy, consider ongoing discussions within the agency if they are not regularly occurring so officers can engage the topic more fluently externally.

 ***“We start off as Black men on the defensive posture. You have to earn our trust. You have to keep calling.”***

Do Not Be Defensive:

In the words of a faith leader: ***“Because I’m a mother, every time my son leaves the house, I’m praying, Lord, cover him and protect him.”*** For some people, this fear is a part of their life and they might have stories to share of how they were mistreated by officers. Instead of saying, “we would never do that,” just listen. Let people share their experiences and respond empathetically. Law enforcement professionals should be ready to hear some negativity and show it’s welcome.

 ***“Getting on the defensive and defending bad cops shouldn’t be your job.”***

Use Humor Smartly:

Jokes can be a valuable way to create connections and to relieve tension. But they can also not land well if they engage sensitive topics. Use non-critical humor, never joke about identities, and utilize cultural competency.

Different Parts of Your Community:

The community you serve is not one size fits all. Literally one street over from another might have different needs and residents with a different perspective on law enforcement. For locales where there are tensions, start with a more reconciliatory approach such as a dialogue or holding a series of public conversations with the faith leader.

Be Ready to Ask for Help:

Share the challenges that you’re dealing with and do not be afraid to ask for help. Is the agency struggling to engage youth, or are there particular areas where crime is high? Let the faith-based organization know and offer ways they can be a partner.

 ***“Too often, the first time anyone needs a cop is when they’ve done something wrong.”***



Creating and Implementing a Strategy

Building strong faith-based partnerships is not a one-off but an ongoing initiative. To steer that program, set a few top-level goals for outreach that can inform the type of strategy pursued. The following are the top five common strategies, with corresponding considerations, all of which can be combined.

STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS:
Working to resolve tensions with the community	<p>Who: Faith-based organizations with youth programming and young faith leaders.</p> <p>Programming: Hold events that are reconciliation-focused, such as crucial conversations or peace, justice and unity marches.</p> <p>Support: Ensure strong social media alongside programming.</p>
Seeking to build relationships with specific demographics	<p>Who: Faith-based organizations that serve the targeted demographics.</p> <p>Programming: Begin with an event that is social in nature, such as a community BBQ.</p> <p>Support: Speak to the faith-based leader or trusted representative of that community about cultural considerations – what to do/say and not to do/say.</p>
Build on existing strong relationships	<p>Who: Chaplains, existing faith-based connections, or faith-based organizations attended by members of the force.</p> <p>Programming: Hold an event that reaches out from the existing connections to new faith-based organizations, such as a community picnic, with a focus in getting beyond the existing engagement.</p> <p>Support: Work with the PIO to secure media coverage, particularly local news. Provide the opportunity for faith-based leaders and members of the community to be interviewed on camera to “share the wealth.” Also consider recruiting new chaplains from the existing relationships.</p>
Boost recruitment	<p>Who: If the agency has (community) colleges in your jurisdiction, or even nearby, reach out to faith-based organizations that serve this constituency. If not, or in addition, engage faith-based organizations that have a younger demographic.</p> <p>Programming: Hold an open-house or simulation training that demonstrated equipment and procedures, and enables casual conversations between officers and potential recruits.</p> <p>Support: Collaborate with the college criminal justice program if it exists, along with asking high school athletic coaches and social studies teachers to invite students to participate in the programming. Also work with the youth programs and chaplains of the faith-based co-hosts of your event.</p>
Help increase morale among your officers	<p>Who: The faith-based organizations of your chaplains or faith-based organizations attended by your officers.</p> <p>Programming: Consider an event that is more focused on inspiration, such as a Blue Mass or a service project like a neighborhood cleanup.</p> <p>Support: Pair officers and faith-based leaders to do ride-alongs, attend services, and provide mutual support.</p>

A strategy should make use of the following communication components:



Social Media

Work across multiple channels. The fact is that different audiences prefer different technology. Older audiences tend to prefer email and Facebook, while younger audiences are much more likely to be on TikTok and Instagram. Moreover, younger audiences value memes (viral graphics that make an in-joke) and images/videos, while older audiences prefer more text. Some key considerations:

- Create a page on the agency website that discusses your engagement with the faith-based community
- Create social media posts that encourage shares and likes
- Create and use hashtags about engagement with the faith-based community
- Work with the social media leads of the faith-based organizations you are partnering with to share each other's messages, including a potential shared graphic



Media

Media is both proactive and reactive. Proactive media generates coverage by holding events or making the Sheriff, Chief of Police, or other executive available to a local radio station to discuss the campaign. Related materials include press releases and media advisories, along with op-eds and letters to the editors from residents. Reactive media involves providing commentary on real-time developments. This can include controversial events, a natural disaster or crisis, new research or polling, or news stories such as a major court ruling.

Media enables the agency to reach the public beyond those who attend outreach programming; it also provides the opportunity to be of service to faith-based leaders. Work closely with the Public Information Officer to secure coverage for outreach, and if the faith-based partners have a communications lead, work in partnership with them. Provide equal opportunity for faith-based leaders to get time in front of the camera or quotes in the newspaper. The agency executive or community outreach lead can also co-write an op-ed with a faith-based leader about their collaboration.



Videos and PSAs

Video and public service announcements (PSAs) are effective tools to create community support visually and emotionally. PSAs are a type of video or commercial with one subject/message designed to raise awareness and/or change behavior. They usually run for free on TV or other third-party social media, whereas a video can be of an event or a speech or a livestream of an event/speech that is available to be played later. A PSA is scripted and edited more than a video recorded at an event or of a person giving a testimonial. Such videos are more likely to be posted immediately with minimal editing. Make sure to record footage during outreach programming that can be distributed among the constituencies of the faith community and the broader public.



Materials

Flyers, trifolds, and signs are important for communicating with the public and reinforcing commitment. Lawn signs are utilized by political candidates not just because they get the word out and enable neighbors to influence each other, but because they demonstrate the commitment of whoever is displaying the sign (“If I put it on my lawn, it must mean I care about it and will take the needed action.”). Along with the above, postcards, buttons, pens, fans, etc., enable residents to bring something home. The agency logo should be present in all materials, with a URL for your agency's website.

Programming



Components

▶ ***“The police need to come to our events, that’s how you build relationships...If you’re going to have self-defense class, have it at the church, have it at the mosque, have it at the temple, have it someplace where people feel more comfortable going.” - Participant in Focus Group***

The following are examples of several types of programming that can be held, but agencies can of course design their own types of events. The events below are based on Intergroup Contact Theory, the core tenets of which are recommended for any programming you design.

Intergroup Contact Theory was pioneered in the 1940s as interracial contact of armed forces during World War II was observed to reduce tensions. In 1954, Gordon Allport, Ph.D., published the seminal work *The Nature of Prejudice* that demonstrated that strong bonds are built between two groups when there are the four key legs:

1. Equal status between the groups (one group cannot be in charge)
2. Common goals (both groups want the same outcome)
3. Intergroup cooperation (doing something together)
4. The support of authorities, law, or customs (endorsed by authority figures)

Over the next 50 years, hundreds of studies were performed on ICT, culminating in a meta-analysis of 515 distinct studies with over 250,000 participants from 38 countries. This meta-analysis of these four strategies “conclusively show[ed] that intergroup contact can promote reductions in intergroup prejudice.”¹

1. (PDF) “A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory.” https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7046266_A_Meta-Analytic_Test_of_Intergroup_Contact_Theory.

Tactics

The types of events below are based on these four tenets of Intergroup Contact Theory and should utilize the following five opening tactics:

1. Initial Contact:

Begin with the contacts already in place through chaplains, existing partners, or faith-based organizations attended by members of the agency. If they are the desired constituency, meet with them to discuss your interest in enhancing your collaboration with the faith-based community. If the agency is seeking new contacts, ask existing ones to provide the means of introduction. Members of the business community might also help. Approach first conversations with humility and explain why the agency is seeking to work with the faith-community and that it will be a two-way street. Be flexible with timing and goals, and let the faith-based leaders be co-pilots in determining the way forward.

2. Ride Along and Mock Training:

Invite not only professional faith leaders to get to know what life is like on the force, but lay leadership and even informal influencers of the faith-based organization (ask faith leaders to help identify these people). Have them participate in a ride-along (assign officers who are particularly social) and have a discussion afterward. Also consider holding a mock training for members from multiple faith-based organizations to meet each other, build mutual commitment to your programming, and to learn more about what it is like to make the decisions that officers face every day.

3. Attend Service:

Members of the agency, including whomever is leading this effort, should attend services informally in a polo shirt (no firearm if possible) over a period of time to demonstrate visibility. Ask the faith leader if officers could deliver brief words of greeting. This greeting can be delivered by the executive or a member of the command staff of the agency. Many services are now held virtually, so this can be a lighter lift to participate (make sure to have an appropriate backdrop, such as the logo of the agency or from the precinct). Other faith-based organizations might have a podcast where members of the agency can speak to congregants.

4. Speak with Members of the Faith-Based Organization:

Beyond attending a service, members of the agency should attend social programming at the faith-based organization, in polo shirts, and speak informally with members of the community. These are opportunities designed solely by the faith-based organization and inviting you in. Visibility at this stage is key.

5. Speak with Members of Your Agency:

Let members of the agency know about plans to build partnership with the faith community. Share the overall strategy and why this is important. Members will likely have new and innovative ideas and leads for contacts. Many will also volunteer to participate in programming. Do not just engage officers who already do community engagement. While of course working with the Public Information Officer and social media memes of the agency, engage other units and ask them to participate in the programming. Explain how applying intergroup contact theory in law enforcement has demonstrated results in reducing tension, increasing morale, promoting collaboration in crime solving, and enhancing safety for all.



Event Planning Template

At this stage, the agency can move into organizing its first event. Below are five sample events or a new one can be designed. All events can benefit from the following template.

Core Elements

Type of Activity:	
Short Overview of the Event:	
Time (Start and Finish) and Date (with Rain Date):	
Faith-Based Partner(s)	
Location (or Virtual Platform):	
Materials Needed:	
Food and Drink (if any):	
Budget and Source of Funds (for the First Event, Ensure You Are Covering the Full Cost):	
Outreach Strategy:	

Checklist

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Event posted on social media
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Responsibilities assigned to volunteers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Create a timeline/event agenda
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photographer assigned
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Food and drink ordered (if any)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Outreach strategy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(Post) Thank yous to faith leaders and any business that donated services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(Post) Photographs compiled and shared

Sample Events

Each of the five sample events detailed in this guidebook have different advantages. Some can more easily be held indoors or involve relatively less preparation time, and some might be a better selection if there has recently been a controversial incident locally or nationally. The matrix chart below can help in evaluating these factors when selecting your event, but it does not mean that other events cannot also work well with these considerations. For example, a community dialogue can be held that is child-friendly or an open house can create the space to discuss important local issues.

EVENT TYPE:	Issue Engagement	Child Friendly	Indoor Option	In Response to Controversy	Less Preparation Time	Virtual Option
Community Dialogue	✓		✓	✓		✓
Crucial Conversation	✓		✓	✓		✓
Picnic/BBQ		✓			✓	
Open House		✓	✓		✓	✓
Community Service Project		✓	✓			✓

Community Dialogue

This event focuses on a conversation on public safety and how law enforcement, community/business members, and faith leaders can work together to ensure safe neighborhoods and protect individual rights. The conversation will involve a small panel, with representatives from the law enforcement agency, a hosting community or faith-based organization, a resident with some expertise in criminal justice such as a local professor or prominent attorney, and a faith leader.



Role for Law Enforcement Agency

To designate a member of office/department leadership to speak, to encourage members from the agency to attend as audience members. As a note for all event examples, field officers should know well in advance so they can invite the community members they see on a daily basis to attend. It is important that officers not be told last minute and lose the opportunity to spread the word.

Role for Faith-Based Organization

To designate a member of leadership to speak, to encourage members/parishioners to attend, to provide a meeting space.

How to Create Connections

Through the use of breakout sessions that divide the audience into smaller groups to discuss particular challenges and opportunities in public safety.

Crucial Conversation

This activity provides the opportunity for law enforcement and community to engage in tough, but important, topics on policing. The conversation occurs as a roundtable rather than a formal panel (although a panel can be utilized); at a minimum it should include local law enforcement officers, ideally including a sheriff or a police chief, community advocates, and faith leaders.

Topics engaged may include law officer-involved incidents, use of force, questions of bias, and officer safety. The goal of this event is to raise important issues in policing so that they can be discussed in the open and in such a way as to create greater understanding between the community and law enforcement. We recommend you choose a specific topic that has impacted or created concerns in your local community to find common ground or the first steps to common ground. This activity is in contrast to the Community Dialogue, which is a panel-based overview of how the community, law enforcement and houses of worship can work together to create safe and inclusive neighborhoods. The Crucial Conversation event is more about sharing important sentiments than establishing specific next steps.



Role for Law Enforcement Agency

Designate a member of the office/department leadership to provide opening remarks and then participate in the discussion, encourage members of the force to participate, and to be available to answer questions and mingle at the end of the event.

Role for Faith-Based Organization

Designate a member of leadership to provide opening remarks and then participate in the discussion, encourage members to participate, and to provide a meeting space.

How to Create Connections

Create groups to discuss particular challenges and opportunities in public safety. Encourage attendees to remain for 30 minutes after the conclusion of the discussion for informal follow-up conversations with roundtable participants.

Picnic/Barbeque

This is an open-air activity with an indoor backup option. The picnic is a chance for law enforcement, members of partner organizations, and the broader community to meet in an informal setting. The activity will include time for attendees to eat and mingle and a chance for the delivery of remarks by law enforcement, representatives of community organizations, and local influencers.



Role for Law Enforcement Agency

To send members from the local agency to the activity, to designate one or two members of leadership to deliver remarks, to designate members of the force to serve as volunteers for event setup, food distribution, and wrap-up.

Role for Faith-Based Organization

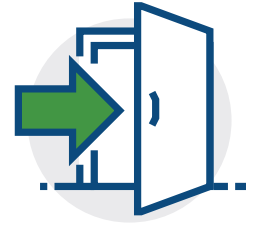
To reach out to members to attend, coordinate volunteers, organize the food, and manage the logistics of hosting the event.

How to Create Connections

The heart of this activity is the informal conversation and social gathering opportunity between law enforcement officers and residents; however, many people may be unsure about how to start the exchange/conversation. Therefore, we suggest you encourage dialogue by asking that each community member and officer speak to three people they don't know, set up a receiving line, or create a game with prizes, such as a \$25 local restaurant gift card for those who discover three fun facts they learned from a law enforcement officer.

Open House

Officers will bring their equipment and cruisers to the parking lot of a community-based organization or residents can come directly to the station. Children, teenagers, and adults will have the opportunity to look at, and if possible, interact with equipment such as turning on and off the lights of a cruiser. Adults can also have a meaningful conversation with officers to better understand how and why equipment is utilized. Demonstrations can also be held on safety equipment, such as bomb devices or police dogs (this is a favorite). It's also a great opportunity to put up posters that spotlight officers from the station, such as who they are, how long they have been an officer, their connections to the community, and hobbies, etc.



Role for Law Enforcement Agency

To send officers and equipment to the activity.

Role for Faith-Based Organization

To host the event and invite their membership.

How to Create Connections

Informal connections will be created between officers and residents. Interactions can be encouraged by creating a game with swag rewards for every child who shares three facts they learned from their visit that day. You can also create scorecards with checkboxes or bingo cards with squares that require attendees to learn about different types of equipment. To add an additional level of depth, law enforcement officers can have a question-and-answer about the equipment, how they decide when to use the item(s) and what goes into their decision making.

Community Service Project

This activity involves collaborating with a local community service organization to provide volunteer staffing in support of a service project. Examples can include helping with a Habitat for Humanity build, organizing food at a food bank, or participating in a river clean-up.



Role for Law Enforcement Agency

To recruit members from the law enforcement agency to participate in the activity. To have a leader offer welcoming and closing remarks for the event.

Role for Faith-Based Organization

To recruit members to participate in the activity and to offer welcoming and closing remarks.

How to Create Connections

Participants should be a mixed group of community members, faith-based leaders and law enforcement members to ensure all are working side by side. The heart of this activity is the informal conversations between officers and residents that occur during the service. To encourage dialogue between participants, the event organizer could ask each community member and officer to speak to three people they don't know, set up a receiving line, or create a game with prizes, such as a \$25 local restaurant gift card for those who discover three fun facts they learned about another participant.

100 Other Event Ideas

- 5K Fun Run/Walk
- Adopt a Precinct
- Art Festival
- Ask an Officer
- Avoiding Scams Workshop
- Athletic Event
- Award Ceremony
- Bike Ride
- Blessing for First Responders
- Blessing of the Animals
- Block Party / Community Fair
- Blood Drive
- Book Discussion
- Bowling for Peace
- Car Show
- Car Wash
- Chess Event
- Child Car Seat Check
- Chili Cook-Off
- Citizens' Academy
- Coffee with a Cop
- Comedy Night
- Community Clean Up
- Community Dialogue
- Community Garden
- Community Gathering
- Community Meal
- Community Outreach
- Community Policing Project
- Community Resource Fair
- Community Tag Sale
- Community Unity Day
- Cones with a Cop
- Cornhole Tournament
- Dance Contest
- Dedication of Memorial
- Drive-Through Fall Festival
- Essay Contest
- Farmers Market
- Feeding Law Enforcement
- Fitness Classes
- Food and Art Hour
- Food Distribution
- Food Tasting



- Food Trucks
- Football Tailgate
- Game Night
- Habitat for Humanity Build
- Health Awareness
- Hearing Testing Clinic
- Homeless Outreach
- Ice Cream Social
- Interfaith Prayer Experience
- Item Distribution – Coats
- Item Distribution – Food
- Item Distribution – Toys
- Item Drive – School Supplies
- Job Fair
- Law Enforcement Appreciation
- Law Enforcement Open House/ Touch a Truck
- Leadership Roundtable
- Meet & Greet
- Meet Service Dogs
- Memorial for Victims of Violence
- Mental Health Information
- Message Board
- Motorcycle Ride
- Movie Night
- Mural Creation
- Music Concert/Festival
- Painting Event
- Pancake Breakfast
- Park Event
- Pastries with Police
- Peace, Justice, and Unity March
- Picnic / Barbecue
- Prayer Service/Worship
- Prayer Vigil
- Pre-School Parade
- Presentation to Schools and Community Organizations
- Prescription Drug Take Back
- Pumpkin Decorating Event
- Pumpkin Patch
- Purple Lights on Tower at City Center
- Radio Broadcast
- Recognition of Officers
- Ride-Alongs
- Safety Outreach/ Educational Session
- School Presentation
- Shop with a Cop
- Shredding Service
- Sip & Paint (non-alcoholic)
- Social Media Posting
- Tree Planting
- Trunk or Treat
- Vaccine Clinic
- Vigil for Understanding
- Visit Our Seniors
- Yard Work
- Youth Festival
- Youth Outreach

Ongoing Interaction

Events provide bookmarks for engagement, pulling together the different components of the law enforcement agency and the faith-based organization to work together on an initiative and have broad participation. This type of interaction, however, is insufficient on its own. While having an event every quarter, culminating in a series of events for National Faith & Blue Weekend, is a good aspiration, ongoing interaction is just as, if not more, important.

The keystone of ongoing interaction is pairing two members (for redundancy) of the agency with each faith-based organization partner. At least once a quarter, the officers/staff should attend a service or other event hosted by the faith-based organization to see and be seen. Similarly, the officers/staff and their paired staff at the faith-based organization should meet for a check-in at least twice a year to discuss future plans and what is working/needs to be corrected. Because faith leaders and officers have frequent promotions and changes in responsibilities, these semiannual meetings enable a transfer of relationship. If the agency is maintaining relationships with a significant number of faith-based organizations, rather than individual pairings, all programming can be consolidated into a coalition where everyone works together. This coalition can either be directed by your agency, or if there is significant buy-in, co-led or even led by the faith-based organizations. Leadership by the community is the gold standard, not only reducing time required by your agency but ensuring participation by the community and that efforts are fully responsive to needs of the public.

A communication cadence and calendar should also be utilized. Look to issue at least biweekly general messages on community engagement through the agency's channels, including social and traditional media. Select dates, such as MLK Day, July 4th, Black History Month, etc., can be identified in advance to issue messaging that relates to the theme of the day/month. The content can be scheduled in advance to run on those dates. The materials utilized at the events should be co-created when possible with faith-based organization partners.

To provide regular interaction and communication, consider forming a faith-based committee that meets monthly or bimonthly to share feedback, develop ideas, and provide the opportunity for faith-based organizations to see each other engaging with law enforcement.

Evaluation

Assessment is an equally important tool in collaboration with faith-based organizations. At the start of this programming, establish benchmarks - for example, growth in social media followers or likes, the number of partner organizations or attendees at events, or traditional media coverage. In addition, consider establishing baseline sentiments of officers and residents through a short form distributed at the start of events or on social media sites. At the conclusion of events or periodically, ask those questions again and gauge movements in sentiments. This type of quantitative evaluation can be supplemented with roundtables and informal discussions. These discussions should not just be with faith leaders but should strive to engage members of the congregations and even the broader population to identify how your programming is changing perceptions in the community.

Below are two corresponding survey examples for officers and for residents that can be handed out at events to evaluate impact or reworked to establish baseline sentiments.



EVENT SURVEY – COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Please take a few minutes to complete this short survey to help us make events like this even better in the future.

Check the box for the answer choice that best represents your response to the item.

For each, please respond to this question:

Events like today's...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
...make me more confident that law enforcement will conduct their job effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...help me relate to law enforcement as people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make me feel safer in my community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make me more confident I can collaborate with law enforcement to address local concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...enable officers to better understand my perspective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make me feel more positive toward my overall community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

(Feel free to use the reverse.)

EVENT SURVEY – LAW ENFORCEMENT

Please take a few minutes to complete this short survey to help us make events like this even better in the future.

Check the box for the answer choice that best represents your response to the item.

For each, please respond to this question:

Events like today's...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
...make me more effective in conducting my responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...help me understand the needs of the people I serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make me feel safer doing my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make me more confident I can collaborate with community members to address local concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...enable members of the public to better understand my perspective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make me feel more positive toward my overall community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

(Feel free to use the reverse.)

Case Study



Agency

New Brighton
Department of
Public Safety



Municipality

City of New Brighton,
Minnesota



Size of Force

33 Sworn Officers

Select Faith-Based Partners

The New Brighton Police-Faith Community Partnership initially identified 20 individual faith communities operating in the city. Clergy and senior leadership were invited to an inaugural gathering of the department's Police-Faith Community Partnership initiative in January 2016 to meet with law enforcement administrators about developing relationships between police and churches in New Brighton. From that first meeting, attendees expanded to include outreach directors, maintenance workers, other administrative staff and congregants.

Community Engagement Staffing Structure (Command, Number of Officers with Brief)

The police chief and the department's faith community liaison serve as the primary points of contact for its faith partners. Community engagement staffing structure within the department also includes a community outreach, education and intervention sergeant and a community engagement officer. To provide internal spiritual support to public safety staff, a priest from a local Catholic church serves as a "community chaplain" for the department.

Training Offered to Officers in Community Engagement

Officers have attended training provided by a retired FBI agent on safeguarding houses of worship and training by the Islamic Resource Group to understand more about Muslims in the community. Officers have also received training and continued a partnership with the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to provide security resources for houses of worship.

Short History of Faith-Based Partnerships with the Agency

The New Brighton Police-Faith Community Partnership began in January 2016. From that first gathering, the group has continued meeting on a near quarterly basis, including virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. Positive working relationships have been established between law enforcement and faith communities, and also among the churches themselves as they have been brought together in common service for the betterment of New Brighton through cooperative volunteer outreach efforts and shared ministries.

Special Programming with Faith-Based Organizations

In October 2018, the Chief and the department's Faith Community Liaison Officer were invited to speak at a Baptist church conference about safeguarding houses of worship. With attendees representing hundreds of churches in the Upper Midwest, the presentation included suggestions for how clergy and lay leaders could engage their local law enforcement with developing such a relationship between police and faith communities.

The last two years, congregations in the faith community partnership have sponsored a free health care clinic for residents of New Brighton, offering medical and dental services without charge. These clinics have provided tens of thousands of dollars' worth of medical, dental and eye care, along with a variety of other social services. The group is currently in talks to sponsor a third clinic in June 2023.

Ongoing Efforts with Faith-Based Organizations

The New Brighton Police-Faith Community Partnership (FCP) continues to meet in person on a quarterly basis and additionally throughout the year as needed to discuss specific needs, ideas or special projects. Recently, the New Brighton City Council appointed one of the original FCP participants to serve as a civilian oversight member on the city's Public Safety Commission to help guide decision making of the department. The FCP intends to host its 3rd Annual Compassion Connect free health clinic in June 2023 and participate in National Faith & Blue Weekend in October 2023.

Three Key Lessons:

1. **Relationships built on trust take time.** Members of the FCP initially gathered with a common belief that by working together, we could better serve the citizens of New Brighton. Over the years, as members have gotten to know each other and observe consistency of action toward a shared goal, the partnership has strengthened. It takes patience early on to get to that point.
2. **Support from city officials, law enforcement leadership and faith leadership is essential for success.** Buy-in and support from the top shows the initiative is valued and supported and empowers members to do the work and innovate in the field.
3. **Continuous communication.** A level of balance needs to be achieved between too much and too little communication. The FCP found meeting quarterly was often enough to keep topics relevant and the group engaged, but not too often where it interrupted the regular work schedules of members.



More information:

<https://www.newbrightonmn.gov/318/Police-Division>

Other Notes

The FCP has advanced the legitimacy of local law enforcement with elected officials, as they recognize the value of these positive and proactive relationships between officers and churches. Since the inception of the FCP, elected officials regularly request information regarding a variety of city initiatives be shared with the faith leaders. Elected officials recognize that faith leaders in the city have strong relationships with many residents and can help the city convey messaging on important projects.

Case Study



Agency

Baltimore County
Police Department



Municipality

Baltimore County,
Maryland



Size of Force

1,947 sworn
members
authorized; 326
professional staff
authorized

Community Engagement Staffing Structure (Command, Number of Officers with Brief)

The Baltimore County Police Department utilizes agency-wide and precinct-based community engagement personnel. The Youth and Community Services Unit (YCSU) is a department-wide resource for community engagement that consists of 21 sworn members and 11 professional staff members. The YCSU provides resources for officers and the public in the areas of crime prevention, gang awareness, juvenile criminal diversion programs, Citizens Academy, bias incident coordination, elder abuse investigation coordination, multicultural resources and relationship building, countywide coordination with faith-based organizations, and coordination of the School Resource Officer Program. Each of the ten precincts also has a dedicated Community Outreach Team (COT) whose purpose is to serve as a liaison between the individual precinct and the communities within those precincts. There are currently 55 sworn members assigned agency-wide to COTs. The COT provides proactive resources for identifying, stabilizing, and resolving community fear, develops and executes crime prevention strategies, coordinates with local youth programs, and coordinates with local faith-based organizations.

Training Offered to Officers in Community Engagement

The Baltimore County Police Department requires training for community engagement efforts during the Police Academy as recruits and continuing education during the In-Service Training program.

Short History of Faith-Based Partnerships with the Agency

The Baltimore County Police Department's Faith-Based Initiative was established in 2015 following incidents in other jurisdictions including the death of Freddie Gray and subsequent unrest. The intent of the initiative was to establish better relationships with the community by working with the community leaders they trust. The organization has also held different types of workshops on topics such as domestic violence, public safety, and what to do when stopped by police in order for the community and police to have a better understanding of each other and to bridge the gap.

Special Programming with Faith-Based Organizations

In recent years, the Baltimore County Police Department has enhanced its partnerships with faith-based organizations. The largest agency-wide program is the Faith and Blue Program. Faith and Blue is coordinated by the YCSU with each precinct organizing their own events.

Ongoing Efforts with Faith-Based Organizations

The Baltimore County Police Department strives for continual engagement with our faith-based organizations. Some of the ongoing activities used to build relationships include participating in local health fairs, Trunk or Treat, backpack giveaways near the start of the school year, participating in youth roundtables, assistance at food pantries, movie nights, and community safety presentations.

Three Key Lessons:

1. Continual engagement with faith-based organizations is essential to maintaining the relationship between the police department and the organization.
2. Baltimore County has congregations from nearly every major faith. It is important to have an understanding of the individual religions. It isn't essential to fully understand each individual faith, but understanding there are differences and being willing to learn about the religions will help build the relationship.
3. Using a major event is an excellent way to start the relationship, but engagement must continue beyond that event. If the engagement with the faith-based organizations consists of only a yearly event, you won't build a relationship. This could lead to the faith-based organizations feeling it is being used by the police and the relationship that was there degrading.



More information:
www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/police/

Case Study



Agency
Brookhaven
Police Department



Municipality
City of Brookhaven



Size of Force
86 Sworn Officers

Select Faith-Based Partners

- Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church
- Atlanta Vineyard Church
- China Grove First Baptist Church
- Saint Martin in the Fields Episcopal Church
- Brookhaven United Methodist Church
- Skyland United Methodist Church

Community Engagement Staffing Structure (Command, Number of Officers with Brief)

One sergeant and two officers. The officers are tasked with the majority of the community engagement work and the supervisors assist with all large events and engagement with church and business leaders.

Training Offered to Officers in Community Engagement

Programming provided:

- Various crime prevention through environmental design courses
- Social media and outreach
- Women's self-defense instructor
- Civilian active shooter response instructor

Short History of Faith-Based Partnerships with the Agency

The Brookhaven Police Department's relationship with faith-based organizations was initially established through the partnership with Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church. Through this partnership, Brookhaven PD was able to meet other faith-based leaders at functions and build additional relationships.

Special Programming with Faith-Based Organizations

Local churches are asked to participate in our Shop with a Badge event. Churches help to identify various children who can participate and shop with a police officer to receive \$200 worth of presents.

Faith-based organizations will reach out to Brookhaven PD to participate in their events, which have included a Blessing of the Animals with the police K9 unit, 100 year anniversary celebration, and Hanukkah Bazaars.

Brookhaven PD is also a member of the Brookhaven Minister's Group, which attempts to meet monthly and discuss upcoming events and hardships facing the community.

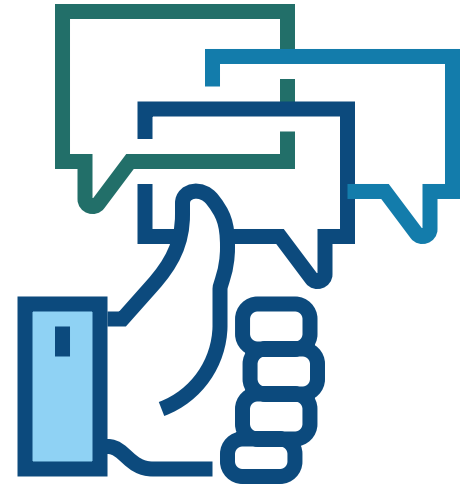
Three Key Lessons:

1. **Open-mindedness.** Law enforcement and faith leaders serve a similar purpose of bettering the local community, but through different methods.
2. **Communication and follow-up.** Many leaders of small faith-based organizations have other jobs and may often be hard to get in touch with. Police should continually seek to establish an open line of communication with faith-based leaders.
3. **Sincerity and expertise.** Establishing a connection for the sole purpose of political gains will not create a lasting or meaningful relationship. Sincerity in achieving a unifying goal will help create a strong relationship, while expertise in the field of law enforcement will help maintain that relationship.



More information:
www.brookhavenga.gov/police

Why Community Engagement Works



Research shows that community engagement works and is part of a successful investment in law enforcement. It reduces crime, changes attitudes toward collaboration while reducing biases, and generates economic returns. It is well documented that safety and justice require a foundation of strong connections between law enforcement and residents. Below are some statistics to help make the case.



Hundreds of studies have been performed on Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT), including a meta-analysis of 515 studies with over 250,000 participants from 38 countries in 2016. The studies ***“conclusively show[ed] that intergroup contact can promote reductions in intergroup prejudice.”***¹



According to the Review of Economics and Statistics, a 10% decrease in police presence in an area generates a 7% increase in crime.²



The Los Angeles Police Department placed officers in some of the most dangerous housing projects in the city to interact with residents while reducing arrests. The result was a 70% decrease in violent crime even as arrests went down 50%.³



A meta-analysis of 163 studies in Campbell Systematic Reviews found that building trust among residents and law enforcement enhances sentiments of legitimacy, reduces re-offenses, and increases resident satisfaction, confidence, compliance, and cooperation with police.⁴



In the Journal of Experimental Criminology, which looked at 37 studies, the researchers noted: ***“Our findings suggest that community-oriented policing strategies have positive effects on citizen satisfaction, perceptions of disorder, and police legitimacy.”***⁵



Every dollar spent on policing generates \$1.60 in reduced victimization costs.⁶

1. Hopper, Elizabeth. 2019. “What Is the Contact Hypothesis in Psychology?” ThoughtCo, <https://www.thoughtco.com/contact-hypothesis-4772161>.

2. Paluck, Elizabeth Levy, et al. 2018. “The Contact Hypothesis Re-Evaluated: Behavioural Public Policy.” Cambridge Core, Cambridge University Press, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/behavioural-public-policy/article/contact-hypothesis-reevaluated/142C913E7FA9E121277B29E994124EC5>.

3. (PDF) “A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory.” https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7046266_A_Meta-Analytic_Test_of_Intergroup_Contact_Theory.

4. Weisburd, Sarit. 2021. “Police Presence, Rapid Response Rates, and Crime Prevention.” MIT Press, Oxford University Press, <https://direct.mit.edu/rest/article-abstract/103/2/280/97658/Police-Presence-Rapid-Response-Rates-and-Crime>.

5. “Reading Los Angeles: Black Communities: Overpoliced for Petty Crimes, Ignored for Major Ones.” 2015. Los Angeles Times, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/bookclub/la-reading-los-angeles-kennedy-ghettoside-20150404-story.html>.

6. (PDF) “Legitimacy in Policing: A Systematic Review.” https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267337904_Legitimacy_in_Policing_A_Systematic_Review.



Wrap Up and Additional Opportunities

National Faith & Blue Weekend (faithandblue.org) commenced in October 2020 with 1,000 events in 43 states and quickly expanded to over 3,000 events in all 50 states by its third year – with exponential growth projected each year. This initiative has demonstrated, beyond any doubt, that the faith community is uniquely valuable for law enforcement to engage the public. It is not just the sheer scale of the faith community that makes them so exceptional for collaboration, but their unique positioning in addressing every demographic through an incredibly diverse array of paths. Moreover, they are ready and interested in partnering with law enforcement as one of the pillars that hold up strong communities.

In creating this guide, MFI and the COPS Office, along with the working group and focus sites that informed it, sought to provide an inclusive kick-start guide that would enable community engagement practitioners of all kinds to build faith-based partnerships drawn from best practices and deep experiences that are already in place. Feedback is always welcome – as are testimonials and photographs of your own initiatives – to info@movementforward.org, and future revisions of this guide will be made available at <https://www.movementforward.org>.

As additional steps, the annual **Professionalizing Law Enforcement–Community Engagement Training Conference (PLECET)** is a great resource for receiving additional training on community engagement alongside other practitioners. Information can be found at <http://www.plecet.org>. Additionally, consider joining the ongoing network of community-engagement practitioners in the law enforcement field called the **Law Enforcement Community Engagement Network (LECEN)**. This network provides best practice sharing, networking, exchanges, research, and other key information. You can find out about the network at <https://www.lecen.info>.

Strong partnerships are based on continuity and openness. Faith-based organizations provide both – they are there day in and out for the community, and can engage with humility and depth. May your work with them be transformative in co-building inclusive and safe communities.



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