



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	Who: Faith-based organizations with youth programming and young faith leaders.
	Programming: Hold events that are reconciliation-focused, such as crucial conversations or peace, justice and unity marches.
	Support: Ensure strong social media alongside programming.
Seeking to build relationships with specific demographics	Who: Faith-based organizations that serve the targeted demographics.
	Programming: Begin with an event that is social in nature, such as a community BBQ.
	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.
Build on existing strong relationships	Who: Chaplains, existing faith-based connections, or faith-based organizations attended by members of the force.
	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.
	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.



STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS:
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, trifold, 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.



The types of events below are based on the four tenets of Intergroup Contact Theory (see *Guide to Programming* page 4) 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.