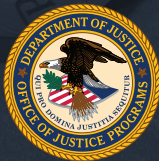


COLLABORATE TO CONNECT

Law Enforcement Toolkit to Build Support
through Messaging and Partnership



BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

COLLABORATE TO CONNECT

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This project was supported by Grant No. 2018-DP-BX-K002 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

COLLABORATE TO CONNECT

A Message from the Bureau of Justice Assistance

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) at the U.S. Department of Justice offers its heartfelt gratitude for your dedication and service. The mission of our agency is to provide leadership and services that support state, local, and tribal justice strategies to achieve safer communities. We spend each day in service to this charge by providing you with important and actionable resources that translate directly into public safety.

One essential asset for law enforcement is the support of the community. There is a clear relationship between close engagement of law enforcement and residents and the reduction of crime, the enhancement of deputy and officer safety, and productive sentiments of inclusion and collaboration among the community. As dedicated public servants, law enforcement officers may feel that they bear the burden of public safety alone. This can be the case even though every deputy and officer knows that safety requires a strong partnership with the residents they protect and serve.

While vital to law enforcement, public support can be difficult to secure. This challenge has led to the creation of the Supporting the Blue Public Awareness and Education Campaign, funded by the BJA. Working closely with our partners at the National Sheriffs' Association, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, and MovementForward, Inc., we are pleased to have compiled a comprehensive, turn-key set of resources that facilitate deep community engagement, which leads directly to public support.

These resources include a flyer, a toolkit to plan and implement a publicity campaign, event examples, sample talking points, press material samples, and printable posters. You can use them on an as-needed basis or for a sustained campaign. They were created to give the public a window into what it is like behind the badge; we believe it is transformative for residents to see the challenges you confront each day, the risks you take, and the commitment you show to your neighbors.

We strongly encourage you to use *Collaborate to Connect: A Law Enforcement Toolkit to Build Community Support through Messaging and Partnership* to help your community understand, on a practical and emotional level, the duties and sacrifices that are the unique responsibilities of a law enforcement officer.

Thank you from all of us at the Bureau of Justice Assistance for your selfless and brave decision each day to wear the badge.



COLLABORATE TO CONNECT

Dear Members of Law Enforcement,

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) has been dedicated to serving the Office of the Sheriff across this great nation for over 80 years. In addition to representing the more than 3,000 sheriffs nationwide, NSA provides all law enforcement, deputies, chiefs of police, and other public safety professionals with training, technical assistance, and other valuable resources in fulfillment of its mission to support the professionalism of those whose job it is to serve and protect.

Law enforcement deputies and officers recognize the importance of trust from the communities they serve, especially in light of recent events. This has prompted nationwide dialogue about how to come together to strengthen relations. In the mass of polarizing stories, the countless sacrifices that law enforcement makes each day are being overlooked, or worse, lost. This can lead to a loss of morale in the very deputies and officers that communities rely on to stay safe.

As the lead organization in the development of *Collaborate to Connect: A Law Enforcement Toolkit to Build Community Support through Messaging and Partnership*, NSA has created a set of resources to assist with engaging local communities to generate a collaborative, unified approach that goes beyond law enforcement.

NSA intends for the *Collaborate to Connect* toolkit to provide all that's needed to facilitate the support and understanding of those served by law enforcement, and in so doing, change the narrative for the benefit of us all.

In Service,

Jonathan Thompson
Executive Director and CEO
National Sheriffs' Association



COLLABORATE TO CONNECT

Dear Colleagues,

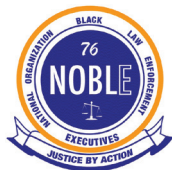
It is an honor to be part of the team that has produced *Collaborate to Connect*. The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives believes deeply that crime cannot be resolved through policing action alone; it requires engaging the community. The reality is that residents do not always understand that justice is the guiding light we follow each day we put on the uniform. When this isn't well communicated, there can be a concerning divide between the public and law enforcement. Fortunately, simple strategic steps can lead to bridging divides that increases appreciation of law enforcement by residents. We believe this set of resources will enable you to take these steps and encourage you to utilize them to their maximum impact.

In Solidarity,

Dwayne Crawford

Executive Director

National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives



COLLABORATE TO CONNECT

Dear Friends,

I believe deeply in the creed that when we get to know each other, we turn from adversaries to allies and from allies to friends. The key is to create those connections – to facilitate an opening where people can understand each other on a human level. Everything follows that revelation of shared humanity. The civil rights leaders were guided by this understanding, and it led me to found MovementForward, Inc. as a mission-driven human and civil rights organization that takes a solution-oriented approach with an emphasis on reconciliation. This perspective also undergirds *Collaborate to Connect* – every resource that we have developed enables residents to connect with, empathize, and befriend law enforcement officers. The result, and I have seen this firsthand, is changed minds and hearts among public servant and resident alike that helps law enforcement discharge their sacred duties. I am pleased to share these resources to realize this supportive environment in your community.

Regards,

Reverend Markel Hutchins
CEO
MovementForward, Inc.



HELP YOUR COMMUNITY UNDERSTAND WHAT LIFE IS LIKE BEHIND THE BADGE

COLLABORATE TO CONNECT

A Law Enforcement Toolkit to Build Support Through Partnership

Help Your Community Understand What Life is Like Behind the Badge

- Toolkit for Creating a Campaign and Organizing Engagements
- Talking Points for Communicating to Diverse Audiences and the Media
- Press Release and Media Advisory Templates
- Shareable Video
- Printable Poster



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**MOVEMENT
FORWARD**



www.sheriffs.org/stb

MAKING THE CASE

What We've Learned

The Supporting the Blue Public Awareness and Education Campaign (“STB”) is the result of multiple years of programming by a consortium featuring the National Sheriffs’ Association, MovementForward, Inc., and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. Initiated and funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, STB employs the strategy of facilitating effective law enforcement through community support. While there is usually a substantial degree of quiet support within a community, demonstrated support is transformative and highly valuable. It enables officers to feel more connected and representative of the people they protect and serve, and it emboldens residents to feel justified in reaching out to, and collaborating with, law enforcement.

The strategy underpinning STB includes a study by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS)¹ that found community engagement has a lasting effect on trust among residents, and a University of North Carolina (UNC)² report finding that community engagement leads to more positive attitudes toward communities by law enforcement officers (LEOs). For the NAS study, improvements in resident perceptions of law enforcement performance and legitimacy, along with cooperation and willingness to collaborate were “substantially large.” For the UNC study, improvements due to increased engagement with the community were noted in more positive interactions, safety protection, and improved LEO attitudes “toward the local community.” This is particularly important because the perception of LEOs can be lost in the discourse around policing. 86% of LEOs say their job is harder in the wake of controversies and 93% say they are now more concerned about their safety.³

To evaluate this strategy, the STB partners organized activities throughout the country that facilitated non-enforcement connections between law enforcement and the community, which was publicized to a broader audience via news media and social media messaging. This programming included active shooter seminars, community gatherings, and mock training exercises, all held with a combination of community leaders and residents. In particular, this programming was intended to give residents a view into the life of an officer.

The Supporting the Blue campaign demonstrated positive findings in the impact of engagement not only on participants but in the broader community. Programming was held in Portland, OR, Athens, GA and Indianapolis, IN with participant sentiment gauged in Athens. Prior to the programming, resident positivity toward interaction with law enforcement was noted as a 2.4 on a 4.0 scale. After participating in the programming, resident perception of local law enforcement was 4.8/5, and 4.5/5 of law enforcement in general. These sentiments were reflected in the broader community where the public perception of the relationship between residents and law enforcement increased from being 60% viewed as positive to 72%.

To replicate this approach, the consortium developed *Collaborate to Connect: A Law Enforcement Toolkit to Build Community Support through Messaging and Partnership (Collaborate to Connect)* to shine a light on the contributions of law enforcement professionals and to educate the public on the challenges these brave men and women face every day. With a standardized set of resources, *Collaborate to Connect* provides the means to drive community involvement and awareness.

Taken as a whole, this approach will strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the community, as residents see law enforcement officers as neighbors with shared values who are doing very difficult jobs. Promoting a collaborative approach has never been more important. In a climate of rising crime rates across the nation, this resource has been developed to create a foundation of trust and support that leads to enhanced public safety.

1. <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/40/19894>

2. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/169113NCJRS.pdf>

3. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2017/01/11/police-fatal-encounters-and-ensuing-protests/>.

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

A community-building campaign is a time-bound, strategic initiative aimed at increasing public visibility, awareness, and support. For comparison's sake, consider a political election. These elections are usually preceded by a campaign consisting of stages and outreach to different constituencies that will lead to a supportive action from the broad public: votes. For *Collaborate to Connect*, the result will be an increase in positive community sentiment and understanding of the experiences and challenges of law enforcement.

At the heart of a campaign is the creation of a consortium of stakeholders who will work together on its implementation. These stakeholders can include representatives from faith-based organizations, community groups, the Chamber of Commerce, neighborhood associations, other government agencies, and a cross-section of law enforcement agencies. Representatives of the agencies should include command and line level staff. The consortium should serve as a de facto working group but should not become overly bureaucratized as that will take energy away from the initiative. Initial coordination should start in advance of the campaign, and the group should meet in person at least three times – once to plan, once to check-in on progress, and once for a wrap-up. An agenda should be provided in advance of each meeting, with action points shared after the meeting has concluded. Zoom or another web-conferencing platform should be utilized to enable people to meet alternatively to in-person, and a co-coordinator might be sought to share the responsibilities and demonstrate more organizational buy-in. Between those meetings, members of the working group should implement the actual work. A Google Group is a good way to keep everyone in contact, and the campaign should be considered to take a year in sum – three months of planning, eight months of activities, and one month of wrap-up/evaluation. This does not mean that the campaign must be a year – it can be a smaller time frame, but there should be a healthy emphasis on planning and wrap-up, alongside the active part of the campaign.

These 10 components go into almost any campaign and should be used when creating your *Collaborate to Connect* campaign:

1. Announcement:

This is the point at which public awareness is raised about the initiation of a campaign. To garner support for your agency and law enforcement officers, an announcement can be made jointly with community-based organizations by inviting the news media and speaking to the importance of residents' improved understanding of life behind the badge while emphasizing the need for law enforcement officers to better understand community perspectives. The announcement should not be made in response to a recent controversy, nor near other large scale media events, such as an election, a holiday, or a major sporting event. It should include opening remarks by the Sheriff or Chief of Police, and representatives of three community and/or faith-based organizations, with members in attendance to show support. Too many spokespersons and the announcement can meander and lose attention. The Sheriff or Chief of Police should lay out the goals of the campaign and why it is important – i.e., increasing support and collaboration of the community.

2. Message:

This is a simplified set of messages that will be delivered throughout the year. It should include a theme (“Any County Safety: Together”) and a few key talking points (Refer to “Making the Case”).

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

3. Constituency:

This is the audience you are seeking to reach with your campaign. While you want to engage the public broadly, there are likely demographics that you want to reach more than others. A good campaign might address both strong supporters, such as businesses and families of law enforcement, and those who might be more on the fence, such as recent immigrants who may not understand the differences between law enforcement in the United States and their countries of origin.

4. Ongoing Communication:

A communication cadence and calendar should be designed in advance to gradually build familiarity and support of the campaign. Commercial marketing campaigns require multiple touchpoints to secure a customer, and your campaign should be thought of as requiring similar repetition. Look to issue at least a weekly general message through your channels, including social and traditional media. You should also identify dates, such as MLK Day, July 4th, Black History Month, etc., to issue messaging that relates to the theme of the day/month. The content can be scheduled in advance to run on those dates.

5. Marquee Events:

Returning to the idea of an election campaign, there are touchpoints throughout the year that can reach a larger audience; think about debates, conventions, primaries, and endorsements. For your *Collaborate to Connect* campaign, you should organize four marquee events spaced throughout the year to create a sense of movement and progress. Please see the events in the toolkit for guidance and suggestions.

6. Local Events:

These are the smaller scale events held throughout the year. They should be focused on your target constituencies, although not exclusively. Examples include “Meet and Greets” or item drives as low lifts that get your law enforcement officers in front of the public and create positive media stories. Please see the “Other Events” list for suggestions.

7. Materials:

Flyers, trifolds, and signs are important for communicating with the public and reinforcing commitment. Lawn signs are not just utilized by political candidates 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., all enable residents to encounter your campaign and an opportunity to bring something home and buy-in. Your theme should be present in all your materials, with a URL for your agency’s website. Consider a simplified URL like [anycountytogether.us](#) that forwards to your website and is displayed in all backdrops when command staff speak to the public and media.

8. Media:

Media is both proactive and reactive. Proactive media generates coverage such as by holding events or by making available your Sheriff or Chief of Police 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 even major news stories such as a major court ruling.

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

9. Spokespeople:

This is the equivalent of your candidate(s) – the embodiments of your campaign messaging. It should include your highest executive and at least one, if not two, local supporters such as a community group leader or business leader. It is important that they be trusted voices and non-controversial. They should be diligent in using the talking points and present at almost all, if not all, campaign events. The race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other diversities of your spokespeople should be a consideration.

10. Goals:

While you may not be seeking to win an election with your campaign, you do want specific goals that can be evaluated for achievement. As a result, put forward numeric goals that might include how many people you want to reach, the number of news stories, a survey of community attitudes (conducted jointly with a local university or through sentiment surveys at your events), or an evaluation of the openness of media coverage at the end of the campaign as compared to the beginning. The ultimate goal is to increase awareness, understanding and relationships within your communities, and you need concrete ways to measure that growth and visibility. For example, if 20 people show up one time, does it increase the next time? If there is no media at the first event, do they attend future events?

As a result, consider the following for goals:

Supporter growth, measured by one or more specific metrics:

- Reach; or the number of impressions your campaign receives on social media
- Subscribers or followers gained
- The number of new supporters you secure by events (evaluated by short surveys distributed at the events)
- The number of Google searches for your agency's name or cause

Engagement rates, measured with metrics:

- The number of clicks, shares, or likes your social media receives
- Event attendance and engagement at events
- Discussion between community residents – for example, retweets and comments on social media
- Traffic volume on your campaign's web page

The intended goal(s) for a *Collaborate to Connect* campaign should be discussed early in the planning process. When you know where you are aiming, it's much easier to craft a strategy that will get you there.

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

Campaign Components

Social Media Components

For awareness and event attendance during your campaign, multichannel reach is helpful. The fact is that different audiences utilize different technology. Older audiences tend to prefer emails 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. Spread your campaign across multiple channels to reach more supporters and drive engagement to your social assets, which can include:

- A dedicated webpage about your campaign
- Social media posts that encourage shares and likes
- Emails targeted to your collaborators and supporters
- Hashtags

For social media, consider using frequent photos and video of officers engaged with the public in a compelling and visually appealing way. Connect with holidays throughout the year, from Mother's Day to Halloween, that can be tied to your message. As noted, since video is so important for reaching a younger audience, you might want to have a member of your staff or working group who is familiar with the newest, most popular platforms such as TikTok, provide support in releasing regular informal and accessible videos. They can also help spot and capture memes.

Media

Media sources are a great way to get the word out about your campaign's message and the event(s) you will be creating to support it. Consider reaching out to local media outlets and creating a media advisory. The National Sheriffs' Association has a PSA for download that can be used by any law enforcement agency. Visit sheriffs.org/stb to learn more. A sample media advisory is provided within this toolkit. News media includes:

- TV
- Newspaper
- Radio

For media, make available positive stories such as public interest stories that feature law enforcement officers actively engaging with the community. You can share facts and figures about the force and crime trends, particularly those that show positive movement in the community, or highlight other positive attributes of your force. Provide available statistics about new recruits and make the recruits available to speak with the media once they have received message training. It is important to respectfully help people understand that officers face a dangerous job – for example, 458 law enforcement officers died in the line of duty in 2021. Helping your audience understand what that means locally – both in terms of losses faced in your community and also the spirit and courage of new recruits, such as the number of recruits, diversity, age, education, can all help tell a powerful story. Also look to provide exclusives – making your spokespeople available for a single station or submit an op-ed to a single news outlet.

You should also maintain a list of media outlets, as extensive as possible, and outlets that serve your targeted audience. It should be paired with designated influencers that will be important to reach, such as the opinion editor of your local paper.

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

Videos and PSAs

Video and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are effective tools to create support both visually and emotionally. PSAs are a type of video or commercial. It has one subject/message designed to raise awareness and/or change behavior. They usually run for free on TV or other 3rd party social media; whereas a video can be of an event or a speech or a live streaming of an event/speech that is available to be played later. A PSA is scripted and edited more than a typical video shot at an event or of a person giving a testimonial that is more likely to be posted immediately after recording with nothing added. The National Sheriffs' Association has a PSA for download that can be used by any law enforcement agency. Visit sheriffs.org/stb to learn more. Insivia, a global marketing and consultancy agency, claims 95% of a message is retained when viewed via video compared to 10% when read.¹ Good video tells a story and should not be put together without deliberation; it takes thought to come up with a story worth telling to your intended audience.

To ensure you have the best quality in your productions, it is wise to create a budget for videography assistance and storyboarding, or for equipment and skills that can provide you with a polished product for a successful campaign.

Events

An event will help you capitalize on the energy of attendees to keep them engaged and encouraged once your campaign is underway. Remember, building campaigns are all about creating long-term relationships with existing supporters and attracting new supporters, which will help build relationships and trust over time. Finally, with the rise of virtual events in 2020, there is the additional option of virtual forums and discussions. At the same time, repeat virtual events can cause fatigue and do not have the same connective impact as in-person, so should not be over-relied upon. They can provide an option for those who cannot attend in person, or a way to mix things up, but as long as safety is not an issue, should not be used in place of in-person events.

1. <https://www.insivia.com/50-must-know-stats-about-video-animation-marketing-2013>

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

Campaign Design Template

What follows is a recipe that can be used to establish the key elements of your campaign. It should be distributed and completed during a planning session or two. It is not an exact prescription. Rather, it provides guidance, and can be supplemented and adjusted for what best fits your community and your stakeholders.

Working Group Members

(indicate facilitators)

Organization and Representative(s):	
Organization and Representative(s):	
Organization and Representative(s):	
Organization and Representative(s):	
Organization and Representative(s):	

Campaign Name

Thoughtful effort should be used to give your campaign an appropriate name. Keep in mind that it should resonate well in all forms of communication and platforms – written, verbal, electronic, print, video, etc.

Name:	
-------	--

Announcement

Location:	
Date:	
Speakers:	

Message

Theme:	
Talking Point One:	
Talking Point Two:	
Talking Point Three:	

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

Audience Being Addressed

Strong Supporters (1):	
Strong Supporters (2):	
Fence Sitters (1):	
Fence Sitters (2):	

Communication Calendar

Date for Posting	Platforms to Use	Message	Creator

Marquee Events

EVENTS:	One	Two	Three	Four
Date:				
Type:				
Lead Community Group:				

Ongoing Events

Brainstorm low level engagements, like meet and greets, that will occur throughout the year

1.	7.
2.	8.
3.	9.
4.	10.
5.	11.
6.	12.

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

Materials

Type One:	
Type Two:	
Type Three:	
Type Four:	
Type Five:	

Media

Lead spokesperson:	
Target influencer:	
Expected dates/event for outreach:	

Spokespeople

Law Enforcement Executive(s):	
Community Leader One (name, organization, and contact information):	
Community/Business Leader Two (name, organization, and contact information):	

Partner Collaboration

There are two types of partners that you will work with on this campaign. The first are those who are part of your steering committee/working group/consortium (whatever you wish to call it). These are going to be the organizations, with representatives, that take the lead in planning and implementing your programming. The second group of partners are those who will amplify the programming. They might provide volunteers, donate staff time, offer a location, etc. Inherent in creating community support is reaching as broad a base of residents as possible, and local organizations serve as that point of connection and as carriers for your messaging direct to audiences that you could not reach as effectively on your own.

- **Community Organizations:** This should involve locally-focused organizations that work on a grassroots basis with residents, including youth, the elderly, at-risk populations, and others. It might include service organizations, charities, YMCAs, advocacy groups, and more.

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

- **Faith-Based Organizations:** Ideally, it is best to partner with faith-based organizations that have membership within your target constituency. An initial place to look for these partners is with a faith-based organization that is already connected to your office or department through a chaplain or is attended by a member of your agency.
- **Schools:** School partnerships are a great way to focus events or engagements centered on youth involvement and participation. It will also allow you to focus your campaign event on a specific audience when planning. Consider engaging with local PTAs and the school board of education.
- **Other Law Enforcement Agencies:** Your agency does not need to be alone in creating a campaign or a single event. Other law enforcement agencies can take specific roles in planning, assist with promotion, and provide volunteers. Ensure that these other law enforcement agencies get substantial billing in media, and coordinate with their PIO and public-facing law enforcement officers on promotion and in managing media inquiries and outreach.
- **Public Safety Organizations:** Fire departments, ambulance corps, and other public safety organizations can also assist directly in your campaign. Work with them in similar ways as law enforcement agencies.
- **Governmental Representatives:** Other partners can include elected officials, administrators including city managers, recreation departments, and other sections of your local government.
- **Supporters:** It is important to know where and how your supporters want to engage with your agency before you even launch your campaign. Ensure the type of campaigns you create are those that are most impactful for your community and well attended. Social media or media can assist to draw more interest. Schedule and create more content with frequent social media posts, paired with outreach to local news sources (i.e., television, newspaper, radio). Establish that your supporters are led back to a central location, preferably your agency's web page, where they can take next steps upon attending a specific event.

Coordination – A Final Note

It is important to stress that a successful campaign can only be conducted in coordination with a broad base of partners; both those who plan and those who support roll-out. These partners provide more resources and cast a larger supporter draw, and should be utilized not just as implementers, but as consultative voices who provide the benefit of their perspective.

Finally, remember to celebrate at the end of your campaign! Consider holding a gathering, with remarks by organizational representatives and substantial attendance from your partners and key supporters. Invite the media as well. The campaign at no point should be considered something that is happening in a hidden manner. This is being undertaken to provide for safer, more inclusive communities, and the initiative of your agency and its partners should be public knowledge. At the end of the campaign, make sure that you have planned a form of transition – perhaps a twice a year check-in or a way to continue to amplify your partners' messaging. Don't let the connections and good work fade away; come up with a plan to maintain the momentum even if it's not conducted at the same pace as the formal campaign.

HOLDING AN EVENT

A *Collaborate to Connect* campaign creates meaningful connections between law enforcement and the public. The best way to facilitate that engagement is through events that bring people together face-to-face, either in-person or virtually. Personal interaction helps the public understand the perspective of law enforcement officers, and to in turn, become supporters.

Please note: events can be held as one-offs and do not require a campaign, although they are recommended as part of a larger initiative. In this way, the events build on each other and create a narrative of ongoing engagement. Either way, five sample events are put forward in this toolkit that can be used as standalones or as part of a campaign. These events are strong candidates for the “marquee events” listed in the “Creating a Campaign” section. Feel free to create your own events for that purpose or to utilize one of the 100 other event ideas listed in this toolkit.

Finally, it is recommended that, to the degree you are comfortable, your events acknowledge and explore the important conversations that are currently occurring around law enforcement, justice, and community relations. We encourage you to be brave, open, and kind as you design and implement your activities.

To help in your planning, below is a checklist of everything needed to begin organizing an activity. We have provided the format in a way that you can fill in the different sections, but you might want to use this template to create your own planning document if you find you have more areas or information that you need to track.

Event Top-Level Considerations

Type of activity:	
Purpose:	
How it will be used to facilitate community engagement:	

Responsibilities

Lead Law Enforcement Agency:	
Role of Law Enforcement Agency:	
Lead Community Organization:	
Other Community Organizations:	
Role of Community Organization(s):	
Location (or virtual platform):	
Materials Needed:	
Food and Drink (if any):	
Short Overview of the Event:	
Budget and Method of Payment:	
Time (Start and Finish) and Date (with Rain Date):	

HOLDING AN EVENT

Checklist

IN ADVANCE	
Event posted on social media (SM) / other online assets:	
Media advisory sent one week in advance:	
Responsibilities assigned to volunteers:	
Create a timeline/event agenda:	
Photographer assigned:	
Food and drink ordered (if any):	
Creation of talking points:	
Identify / invite attendees via email / mail:	
Virtual platform or event location confirmed:	
Identify someone to handle follow up requests:	
AFTERWARDS	
Thank Yous sent to the community / business leaders / VIPs and other partners who made the event possible:	
Photographs compiled and sent to partner organizations:	
Thank Yous to speakers/participants, vendors, volunteers, donors, and attendees (via SM or from sign-up sheet):	
Post photographs on social media with the hashtag you created for the campaign or event, like #anycountysafe:	
Conduct any necessary follow up generated from event :	

HOLDING AN EVENT

Choosing an Event

This toolkit provides five sample events, along with a list of 100 alternative events. While it might seem that identifying the event is a big decision, in reality, almost any event can be selected or designed from scratch. What matters most is creating a platform for law enforcement officers and the residents to get to know each other and one that can be witnessed by the broader community via social and traditional media.

Each of the five sample events detailed in this toolkit 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.

To help in planning these events, the following pages offer both an overview of how they can function and detailed instructions for their advanced preparation and day of implementation, along with virtual options for four of the activities.

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



HOLDING AN EVENT

EVENT ONE EXAMPLE: Community Dialogue

Introduction

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 protecting 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 representative of a second community organization.

Materials Needed:

Table cards to identify the names/titles of the panel, microphones and audio equipment, and name tags for attendees, along with chairs. Water for the panel.

Location Needed:

The setting can be outdoors or indoors. Community gyms or a fellowship hall will serve well.

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 Community 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.

Planning Timeline

(Minimum 21 days lead time)

- **Step 1:** Reach out to at least one lead community group, particularly one with a reputation for community engagement and a significant-sized membership who would be the ideal partner to turn out a good-sized crowd. Additional community groups can also be sought.
- **Step 2:** Designate a safety-related topic and identify speakers from both the community group and your law enforcement agency, 1-2 additional speakers, and a moderator. Identify facilitators for breakout sessions if you feel the crowd will be large and smaller groups better for discussion.



HOLDING AN EVENT

- **Step 3:** Identify and confirm the venue.
- **Step 4:** Form a small promotion committee that will take steps including: (1) working with the community group to send an email and post on social media to members about the event; (2) having the organization leader announce it to their constituency; and (3) posting promotional materials on bulletin boards.
- **Step 5:** Confirm speakers, gather bios, and create event agenda with topic, high-level talking points, and speaker bios.
- **Step 6:** Create show flow guiding document for the day of the event, including roles and responsibilities and timetables for set up, etc. Be sure to have a note-taker to identify ideas that are raised, connections made, and possibilities for follow-up. This is important to ensure the event leads to direct action.
- **Step 7:** Within 7 days, have a quick run-through – whether the event is onsite or via Zoom – with representatives of the community group, speakers, moderator, facilitators, sponsors, photographer, and anyone else who needs to understand the setup and event order for planning purposes to allow for changes and updates.
- **Step 8:** Finalize show flow document.
- **Step 9:** Hold event (see Day of Steps below).
- **Step 10:** Compile contact information from attendees and send thank you notes to attendees, speakers, vendors, and anyone else involved. Consider holding a de-briefing session for planning partners.

Day of Steps

- **Step 1:** Panelists should arrive 30 minutes before the forum starts and, along with the moderator, have an initial discussion and get wired if using microphones; ensure photographers are in place to take photos.
- **Step 2:** At the start of the event, a welcome should be given by the host of the physical space (3 minutes).
- **Step 3:** The moderator will then allow each of the panelists to give a three-minute introduction (12 minutes).
- **Step 4:** Pre-selected questions to each of the panelists, directed by the moderator (20 minutes).
- **Step 5:** Spontaneous questions from the audience will be handed to volunteers and given to the moderator, who will select, or may choose to summarize if a common theme is noted, and ask three questions (10 minutes).
- **Step 6:** (Optional) Breakout groups (encourage people to join groups with those they do not know) to discuss ways to collaborate to create inclusive and effective public safety (15 minutes).
- **Step 7:** Report outs from each of the groups (1 minute per group).
- **Step 8:** Closing remarks from the panel (10 minutes).
- **Step 9:** Closing remarks from the moderator to summarize the dialogue and to thank everyone for coming (3 minutes). The moderator should also, in coordination with the note-taker and break-out group facilitators if used, identify a series of points raised along with suggested follow-up, and identify who in the agency will be tasked with managing follow-up (this person should be identified in advance).
- **Step 10:** Break down.
- **Step 11:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations, faith-based groups, partnering law enforcement agency liaison, and any local sponsors.
- **Step 12:** Pursue follow-up steps noted during step nine.
- **Step 13:** Follow after-steps including thank you notes, photograph distribution, and other efforts noted in “Holding and Choosing an Event.”



HOLDING AN EVENT

Virtual Programming

Hold an online community forum where community members can ask questions and answers can be shared with a broad audience. Most of the steps should follow what are put forward for the in-person event, but additional descriptions for virtual events are provided below.

- **Step 1:** Secure Zoom or other online video conferencing tool. Make sure all speakers have access to, and are familiar with, the software you choose. You may want to sign in with each panelist for a brief run-through and to also do a practice-run in advance with all involved. On the day of the program, have the speakers sign in 15 minutes before the start of the panel to ensure technology is working and to give time for rebooting or any other corrective action needed.
- **Step 2:** Gather questions in advance.
- **Step 3:** Bring together panelists at an assigned time.
- **Step 4:** Have a moderator lead the discussion with the questions submitted in advance.
- **Step 5:** Allow audience members to submit questions to the moderator in real time. Zoom also allows for breakout rooms if you would like to divide the group into small discussions. If using breakout sessions, identify a facilitator for each group. For information on how to do breakouts, go to <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313>.
- **Step 6:** Have the moderator identify the follow-up steps, in coordination with a note-taker and possibly facilitators, and ensure they are assigned to a particular lead contact determined in advance.
- **Step 7:** Pursue follow-up steps during the event.
- **Step 8:** Follow after-steps including thank you notes, photograph distribution, and other efforts noted in “Holding and Choosing an Event.”

After Action

- **Step 1:** Hold a debrief with planning partners to evaluate success and challenges; have a notetaker transcribe best practices and improvements needed.
- **Step 2:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations and any local sponsors.
- **Step 3:** Send thank you notes to the host site and volunteers
- **Step 4:** Within three months, reach out to partners to discuss holding a new event and to gauge long-term feedback.



HOLDING AN EVENT

EVENT TWO EXAMPLE: Crucial Conversation

Introduction

This activity provides the opportunity for law enforcement and community to engage in tough, but important, topics on policing. The conversation occurs as a round-table 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 organization 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 (Event 1), which is a panel-based overview of how the community, law enforcement, houses of worship, and other organizations can work together to create safe and inclusive neighborhoods. The Crucial Conversation event is more about sharing important sentiments than establishing specific next steps.

Materials Needed:

Water and chairs that can be gathered in a circle. If possible, a camera that can be set up to record and livestream the event.

Location Needed:

The setting can be outdoors or indoors. A community gym or a fellowship hall will serve well.

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 Community 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. The lead community organization or law enforcement agency should provide a note-taker.

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 round-table participants.



HOLDING AN EVENT

Planning Timeline

(Minimum 14 days lead time)

- **Step 1:** Reach out to a lead community group and supporting community groups. An organization with a reputation for community engagement and/or a significant-sized congregation would be the ideal partner to work with law enforcement to turn out a good-sized group.
- **Step 2:** Designate a topic focus and identify invitees from (a) your law enforcement agency, (b) the lead community group, (c) 1-2 additional participants, ideally from community organizations that engage on issues of policing or racial justice, and (d) a facilitator who is comfortable with sensitive topics. Confirm two people to provide introductory remarks, ideally leaders from the lead law enforcement agency and community group.
- **Step 3:** Identify and confirm the venue.
- **Step 4:** Form a small promotion committee that will take steps including: (1) working with the community group to send an email and post on social media to members about the event, (2) having the group leader announce it to their membership, (3) posting promotional materials on bulletin boards, (4) identifying event photographers, etc.
- **Step 5:** Select a note-taker and coordinate how the note-taker will identify challenges, concerns, opportunities, and suggestions for follow-up and provide it to the facilitator for summation at the end.
- **Step 6:** Have the facilitator create initial questions that can open up the topic for discussion.
- **Step 7:** Hold event (see Day of Steps below).
- **Step 8:** Compile contact information from attendees and send thank you notes to attendees, vendors, and others participating and/or supporting the event. Pursue follow-up steps identified during the event.

Day of Steps

- **Step 1:** Participants should arrive 15 minutes before the discussion starts.
- **Step 2:** At the start of the event, a welcome should be given by the host of the physical space and then introductory remarks should be given by someone from law enforcement and the lead community organization. (5 - 10 minutes).
- **Step 3:** The facilitator will then allow each of the participants to give a 30-second introduction (12 minutes). (If doing a panel, allow for longer introductions.)
- **Step 4:** The facilitator will describe the topic for discussion and establish ground rules for the discussion.
- **Step 5:** The first question/topic for discussion will be provided, and a conversation will commence.
- **Step 6:** Closing remarks from the facilitator (can utilize information from note-taker) to summarize the dialogue and to thank everyone for coming (5 minutes).
- **Step 7:** Break down.
- **Step 8:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations and any local sponsors.
- **Step 9:** Pursue follow-up steps identified during the event.



HOLDING AN EVENT

Virtual Programming

This activity can be organized as a Zoom discussion.

- **Step 1:** Zoom or another video conferencing platform should be selected. Make sure all participants have access to, and are familiar with, the platform you choose. You may want to schedule a trial run-through if you are doing a panel. Have the speakers sign in 15 minutes before the start of the discussion.
- **Step 2:** Starting two weeks in advance, the event should be promoted heavily through the existing channels of the organizations sending participants. A media advisory should also be used to reach the public that lists an email for RSVPs.
- **Step 3:** The format should follow the same order as the in-person activity. Those not speaking should be muted.
- **Step 4:** The event should be recorded and made available on the webpages of the participating community organizations, as well as the law enforcement agency website or Facebook page.
- **Step 5:** Have the facilitator identify the follow-up steps, in coordination with the note-taker, and ensure they are assigned to a particular lead contact determined in advance.
- **Step 6:** Pursue follow-up steps identified during the event.

After Action

- **Step 1:** The facilitator should, in coordination with the lead law enforcement agency and the note-taker, identify a series of points raised and identify who in the agency will be tasked with any suggested follow-up activities and communication.
- **Step 2:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations and any local sponsors.
- **Step 3:** Send thank you notes to the host site, invited speakers and discussion participants, and any volunteers.



HOLDING AN EVENT

EVENT THREE EXAMPLE: Picnic/Barbeque

Introduction

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.

Materials Needed:

Tables, chairs, tablecloths, plates, napkins, food warming (or cooling) stations, cutlery, and cups for food and beverages. Ideally a microphone and speaker will be used for the delivery of remarks; there are portable amplifiers that can be utilized. A megaphone can be a backup, but should be noted that it can create a different feel to the environment and might not be as easily heard. Food can be sought through donations from local businesses or as a potluck – but should not be directly collected by a law enforcement agency, but rather by a partner organization. Alternatively, a budget can be funded by the partner organizations and utilized for food. Name tags and markers.

Location Needed:

A local park or the grounds of a community organization. A fellowship hall or gym can be used as a rain backup.

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 set up, food distribution, and wrap up.

Role for Community 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.



HOLDING AN EVENT

Planning Timeline

(Minimum 21 days lead time)

- **Step 1:** Reach out to a lead community organization and other supporting community groups.
- **Step 2:** Identify and secure a location (and backup location and/or date in case of bad weather).
- **Step 3:** Reach out to local vendors to see if they will donate food (or as noted, utilize partner-funded budget); create alternate plans for a potluck.
- **Step 4:** Form a small promotion committee that will take steps including: (1) working with the community organization to send an email and post on social media to members about the event, (2) having the community organization leader announce it to membership, (3) posting promotional materials on bulletin boards, (4) identifying event photographers, etc.
- **Step 5:** Confirm speakers from the law enforcement agency and lead community organization and then create an agenda.
- **Step 6:** Recruit volunteers / law enforcement officers to manage site set up and break down and to attend the event.
- **Step 7:** Within seven days, have a quick run through with representatives of the law enforcement agency, community groups, volunteer lead, sponsors, photographer, and anyone else who needs to understand the setup and event order for planning purposes to allow for changes and updates.
- **Step 8:** Hold event (see Day of Steps below).
- **Step 9:** Compile contact information from attendees and send thank you notes to attendees, speakers, vendors, volunteers, and anyone else involved.

Day of Steps

- **Step 1:** Set up committee to arrive early; food and drinks should arrive 30 minutes in advance.
- **Step 2:** After most attendees arrive, spokespersons from community organization and law enforcement agency provide welcoming remarks, usually within 30-60 minutes of official start time and at least by the halfway point of the event.
- **Step 3:** Organize activity (such as talking to three people you don't know).
- **Step 4:** Ensure photographers are in place to take photos.
- **Step 5:** Have a closing speaker to summarize the event's goals and to thank everyone for coming.
- **Step 6:** Break down.

After Action

- **Step 1:** Hold a debrief with planning partners to evaluate success and challenges; have a notetaker transcribe best practices and improvements needed.
- **Step 2:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations and any local sponsors.
- **Step 3:** Send thank you notes to the host site and volunteers.
- **Step 4:** Within three months, reach out to partners to discuss holding a new event and to gauge long-term feedback.



HOLDING AN EVENT

EVENT FOUR EXAMPLE: Open House

Introduction

This is an informal family-oriented activity. Officers will bring their (safe) equipment and cruisers to the parking lot of a community-based organization or residents can come directly to the station. Children 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.

Materials Needed:

Light food, coffee, and drinks. Often can be secured through donations by a local supermarket or restaurant, which can be given to the community partner directly.

Location Needed:

A parking lot at a community organization or at a law enforcement station. The location can depend on the likely participants – if there is a strong relationship with law enforcement, they are more likely to come to a public safety facility. If the relationship is less strong, it might be advisable to come to the community and hold the event off premises.

Length of Activity:

Two hours

Role for Community Organization:

To host the event and invite their membership.

Role for Law Enforcement Agency:

To send officers and equipment to the activity.

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 kids 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 and how they decide when to use the item(s) and what goes into their decision making.



HOLDING AN EVENT

Planning Timeline

(Minimum 14 days lead time)

- **Step 1:** Reach out to a lead community organization and supporting community groups.
- **Step 2:** Identify and secure location (and backup location and/or date in case of bad weather). Notify nearby neighbors that there will be sirens being pressed during the time of the event and invite them to attend.
- **Step 3:** Form a small promotion committee that will take steps including: (1) working with community organizations and the law enforcement agency to send an email and post on social media to members about the event, (2) having the organization leader announce the event to the membership, (3) posting promotional materials on bulletin boards, and (4) identifying the event location.
- **Step 4:** Confirm speakers from the community- or faith-based organization(s) and law enforcement agency and create event agenda.
- **Step 5:** Recruit volunteers to manage site set up, staffing the activity, and break down. Create show flow guiding document for the day of the event, including roles and responsibilities and timetables for set up, etc. Be sure to have a note-taker to identify ideas that are raised, connections made, and possibilities for follow-up. This is important to ensure the event leads to direct action.
- **Step 6:** Organize an activity (such as talking to three people you don't know, three fun facts you learned today, or a Bingo card/checklist to show you visited each station) for the event and offer certificates and/or small prizes for those who complete the task.
- **Step 7:** Hold event (see Day of Steps below).
- **Step 8:** Compile contact information from attendees and send thank you notes to attendees, speakers, vendors, and anyone else involved.

Day of Steps

- **Step 1:** Law enforcement arrives 30 minutes early to the location and sets up stations for visitation (should have markers, stamps, or hole punches to mark off gamecards, if using); members of the co-host organizations arrive early to volunteer.
- **Step 2:** Ensure photographers are in place to take photos.
- **Step 3:** After most attendees arrive, have spokespersons provide welcoming remarks, usually within 30-60 minutes of official start time, and at least by the halfway point of the event.
- **Step 4:** Tour/meet and greet occurs.
- **Step 5:** Have a closing speaker to summarize the event's goals and to thank everyone for coming.
- **Step 6:** Break down.
- **Step 7:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations and any local sponsors.



HOLDING AN EVENT

Virtual Programming

Law enforcement officers can create a video tour of their office and walk through the different equipment that they utilize.

- **Step 1:** A welcoming video is taped by both the main community organization partner and a leader from the law enforcement agency on a Facebook page created for the event.
- **Step 2:** Law enforcement officers create and post small videos on the different equipment in their office.
- **Step 3:** Children who participate in the event post comments, asking questions about the different equipment.

After Action

- **Step 1:** Hold a debrief with planning partners to evaluate success and challenges; have a notetaker transcribe best practices and improvements needed.
- **Step 2:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations and any local sponsors.
- **Step 3:** Send thank you notes to the host site and volunteers.
- **Step 4:** Within three months, reach out to partners to discuss holding a new event and to gauge long-term feedback.



HOLDING AN EVENT

EVENT FIVE EXAMPLE: Community Service Project

Introduction

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.

Materials Needed:

The materials will usually be provided by the volunteer organization.

Location Needed:

The location will be provided by the volunteer organization.

Length of Activity:

Can vary based on the type of event. Usually it will be about two hours.

Role for Community Organization:

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

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.

How to Create Connections:

Participants should be mixed to ensure that law enforcement officers and members of the community are working side by side. The heart of this activity is the informal conversation 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.



HOLDING AN EVENT

Planning Timeline

(Minimum 14 days lead time)

- **Step 1:** Identify a nonprofit/volunteer organization that has opportunities for groups of 20 or more participants.
- **Step 2:** Reach out to a lead community group and supporting community groups to solicit their participation.
- **Step 3:** Identify and secure activity and volunteer details.
- **Step 4:** Form a small promotion committee that will take steps including: (1) working with the community organizations to send an email and post on social media to their constituencies about the event, (2) having the community group leader announce it to their membership, (3) posting promotional materials on bulletin boards, (4) identifying event photographers, etc.
- **Step 5:** Create an agenda and/or timeline of events for participants that includes information on the nonprofit/volunteer organization with which you will be working. Create show flow guiding document for the day of the event, including roles and responsibilities and timetables for set up, etc. Be sure to have a note-taker to identify ideas that are raised, connections made, and possibilities for follow-up. This is important to ensure the event leads to direct action.
- **Step 6:** Recruit volunteers within the agency. This can be discussed at roll call and put up on flyers and bulletin boards. It's important for agency leadership to participate in order to demonstrate buy-in for residents and also to encourage beat-level officers to participate.
- **Step 7:** Hold event (see Day of Steps below).
- **Step 8:** Compile contact information from attendees and send thank you notes to attendees, nonprofit organization, and anyone else involved.

Day of Steps

- **Step 1:** Set up a check-in table 30 minutes early or have 2-4 volunteers with clipboards checking in attendees, especially if they will have differing assignments; hand out T-shirts or other attire (safety vests) if appropriate.
- **Step 2:** Ensure photographers are in place to take photos.
- **Step 3:** Have opening remarks in the first 30 minutes delivered by a faith leader and leader of the law enforcement agency.
- **Step 4:** Participate in activity, taking photographs.
- **Step 5:** Have closing remarks delivered by a faith leader and representative of the law enforcement agency with a summary of the event's success and a thank you to the nonprofit host organization and all attendees.
- **Step 6:** Pose for group photo.
- **Step 7:** Break down (if necessary).
- **Step 8:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations, law enforcement agency liaisons, and any local sponsors.



HOLDING AN EVENT

Virtual Programming

A food drive can be established where members of a community or faith-based organization and a law enforcement agency collect and then drop off food at a local food bank. The food can be dropped off at a specific time, and the volunteers can be photographed together or a compilation of photos of each drop can be created.

- **Step 1:** Identify and reach out to a local food bank.
- **Step 2:** Establish a time by which the food will be collected and a location to gather the food.
- **Step 3:** Have participants drop off food at the local law enforcement agency or community- or faith-based organization.
- **Step 4:** On an arranged day, have participants together collect the food, organize a car caravan, and drop off the food at the food bank. Remember to take and post photos on social media!

After Action

- **Step 1:** Hold a debrief with planning partners to evaluate success and challenges; have a notetaker transcribe best practices and improvements needed.
- **Step 2:** Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations and any local sponsors.
- **Step 3:** Send thank you notes to the host site and volunteers.
- **Step 4:** Within three months, reach out to partners to discuss holding a new event and to gauge long-term feedback.

HOLDING AN EVENT

100 Other Event Ideas

You are not bound to the five suggested events! Please use your creativity to design your own event, or if you'd like, we've listed 100 sample activities below for you to mix, match, revise, and undertake in a way that works well for your community.

- 5K Fun Run/Walk
- Adopt A Precinct
- Art Festival
- Ask an Officer
- Avoiding Scam 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 Contes
- 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



HOLDING AN EVENT

Using Virtual Events and Social Media

Not all events need to be in person or solely in-person. While there is no replacement for person-to-person interaction, having a virtual component allows more people to attend than might otherwise. Most discussions, gatherings, and even performances can be organized via Zoom, which also allows for breakout rooms. When possible, all in-person events should be livestreamed so residents and officers can participate, even if not onsite.

Social media is a key asset to both enabling more participation in your programming, and to enable others to share in a viral manner to reach people where they are. From the beginning of your campaign or event development, integrate social media into planning. Think about how you can use not only your own agency platforms, but also the platforms of local businesses, media, community organizations, and faith-based institutions. Consider how it can be streamed, the ways that short videos can be encouraged, posted and shared (TikTok has become particularly popular for younger people), and what hashtag you prefer. Try to engage all social media platforms, but identify one above others that you'll use for each event to concentrate your outreach. If you have a member of your agency who is particularly adept in social media, get them involved. You may also want to have them coordinate with the social media managers of your partners.



HOLDING AN EVENT

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is it important to build community support?

Research has consistently shown that morale, job satisfaction, effectiveness, and safety of law enforcement officers are linked to positive and collaborative community engagement. It is also important for the public you protect and serve to understand and relate to your officers, and from that, to become partners and supporters.

Are these the only events we can do?

Of course not! You understand your community and officers best, and what type of programming will be most effective. Use your creativity and design an event that you think will provide the best groundwork to enable residents and officers to understand each other, and particularly for residents to appreciate and show their appreciation for officers.

What are the core components of an event?

All events should be open to the public, involve officer participation, create interaction rather than being one-sided, and be promoted through social and traditional media methods.

Do we have to do a full campaign or can we just do a single event?

Of course you can organize – or start – with a single event. If you find it helpful, you can then expand it to a campaign, which will help reinforce the ties made in your first event and support it with a broader publicity campaign and theme.

How can I be sure our campaign/event is as impactful as possible?

The key is interaction, interaction, interaction. Residents and officers need to hear from each other, and while formal interaction like a dialogue is helpful to raise issues, nothing takes the place of the informal, person-to-person conversation. So please leave time and help encourage participants to talk to each other in a less structured manner at your event(s). Also, you need to promote your event and campaign so that the broader public is aware. Photographers should attend all events; you should use social media; and the press should be personally invited to attend. For a campaign, you would ideally hold events at least once a quarter, and communicate at least monthly.



TALKING POINTS

The following are sample talking points to help you get started - rather than use all fifteen, select the ones that have the most resonance for your community; maintaining and centralizing a set of talking points allows for consistent and thoughtful messaging when discussing community support with the media and with local leaders and influencers:

1. We believe public safety is a partnership between the community and law enforcement and requires open lines of communication, understanding, and mutual dedication and support.
2. We are committed to always doing better in engaging with the concerns and ideas of the community and have implemented numerous programs to do so. <list your programs>
3. Community leaders have a crucial role in expressing the interests of their constituencies and in engaging them directly in efforts to get to know law enforcement better.
4. Law enforcement officers are people too. They have children, coach teams, volunteer locally, and have hobbies and interests. They are a part of the community.
5. Law enforcement officers have dedicated their careers to public service and public safety and want to hear from the community about how they can help address concerns. Our agency can receive comments and engage in dialogue by contacting {CONTACT INFORMATION}.
6. Law enforcement officers put their lives at risk when they put on the badge. Roughly every other day a deputy/officer loses his or her life in the line of duty.
7. A law enforcement officer never stops learning. They have regular CLE requirements, receive lectures and education from the agency, and are always learning about new and evidence-based public safety practices.
8. The connection between community engagement and improved public safety is well-researched, including studies by the National Academy of Sciences and the University of North Carolina.
9. There is more that connects us than divides us, and it is crucial to speak to what we share even when acknowledging how we are different.
10. The majority of the public strongly supports law enforcement. Gallup found that 86% of all Americans want the same or more law enforcement presence.¹
11. Crime is a public health emergency that officers are on the first line of addressing. Violent crime not only leads directly to loss of life, but to learning, health, and economic disparities among those exposed to violence.
12. 61% of Americans think that violent crime is a significant problem. There is widespread community interest in addressing challenges in public safety.²
13. Every dollar spent on policing generates \$1.60 in reduced victimization costs. Law enforcement is one of the smartest investments a community can make.³
14. Becoming a law enforcement officer is a calling – it is the result of a deeply personal motivation to serve the community and put one’s life at risk.
15. Showing support for law enforcement officers makes a difference; officers need cooperation and engagement with the public. It not only directly impacts morale, but it leads to collaboration that creates safer, more just neighborhoods.

1. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/316571/black-americans-police-retain-local-presence.aspx>

2. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/10/26/growing-share-of-americans-say-they-want-more-spending-on-police-in-their-area/>

3. https://eml.berkeley.edu/~jmccrary/chalfin_mccrary2012.pdf



SAMPLES & TEMPLATES

The following pages contain samples for press releases, media advisories, and collateral to promote *Collaborate to Connect* events.

Press Release Sample

(Note: All Names are Fictitious.)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information

Any County Sheriff's Office
Jane Smith
444-222-1234
janesmith@anytownso.gov

Release Date

July 1, 2022

ANY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND ANYTOWN CHURCH HOST COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Anytown, California: The Any County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) and Anytown Church announced today that they will be hosting a community dialogue on Saturday, July 23rd at 1:00pm. ACSO and Anytown Church came together out of a shared interest in providing an opportunity for residents and officers to get to know each other individually and to also address important issues around law enforcement, violence, safety, and community concerns.

This dialogue is part of the ACSO's 2022 campaign called "Know the Blue" that involves a series of engagements throughout the year to help residents know what life is like behind the badge and for officers to better understand the diverse perspectives of the people they serve.

"Law enforcement can only be effective when it is working hand in hand with residents," said ACSO Sheriff John Gutierrez. "We are excited to hold this dialogue to understand how we can hear directly from the public about what we can specifically put in place to provide safety and justice."

The community dialogue is being held at Anytown Church and will feature opening remarks by Sheriff Gutierrez, Reverend Calvin Thomas, Chamber of Commerce President Susan Wang, and Anytown Grassroots Organizer Lauren Brown. It will then shift to a guided discussion with residents and beat level officers about their feelings on community-law enforcement engagement, safety concerns, the challenges officers face daily, and how to create greater collaboration.

"We are honored to host this community roundtable at Anytown Church," said Reverend Calvin Thomas. "We need community members, particularly our young people, to get to know officers on a personal level and be able to raise questions and concerns."

The community roundtable is open to all residents of Anytown and to the press and will feature significant outreach and



SAMPLES & TEMPLATES

engagement to young people. The event will be held in the worship hall of Anytown Church and will be followed by a reception and an opportunity for informal discussions and networking.

Event Details

Community Dialogue

Anytown Church (Worship Hall)

124 Main Street

Anytown, California, 90210

Saturday, July 23rd, 2022, 1:00pm–3:00pm

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SAMPLES & TEMPLATES

Media Advisory Sample

(Note: All names are fictitious.)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2022

Contact:

Jane Smith

444-222-1234

janesmith@anycountyso.gov

TITLE: Any County Sheriff's Office and Anytown Church Host Community Dialogue

Who: Any County Sheriff's Office and Anytown Church

Where: Anytown Church (Worship Hall); 124 Main Street, Anytown, CA 90210

When: 1:00pm–3:00pm; Saturday, July 23, 2022

The Any County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) and Anytown Church announced today that they will be hosting a community dialogue on Saturday, July 22nd at 1:00pm. ACSO and Anytown Church came together out of a shared interest in providing an opportunity for residents and officers to get to know each other individually and to also address important issues around law enforcement, violence, safety, and community issues. Along with a guided community dialogue, the event will also feature remarks by ACSO Sheriff Gutierrez, Reverend Calvin Thomas, Chamber of Commerce President Susan Wang, and Anytown Grassroots Organizer Lauren Brown.

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SAMPLES & TEMPLATES

Event Poster

(Note: All information is fictitious. Sample follows.)

The following is the basic format for a poster. A member of your agency with graphic design experience, even using a basic tool like Canva, can create a visually appealing poster; alternatively, you can work with a local designer or a local art school. The poster itself should be designed to attract attention, communicate quickly the “what/when/where”, and call out the action requested of the viewer.

Poster Content:

Get Involved!

{Law Enforcement Agency} and **{Community Organization}**

Invite You To

{Event Title}

To Help Facilitate Connections and Create Collaboration

{When and Where}

{Logo 1} {Logo 2}

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY!

Anycounty Sheriff's Office and
Anytown Neighborhood Association
invite you to:

Forum on Recent Increases in Car Break-Ins

Increases in Car Break-Ins Requires an Informed Community. Please attend the forum to learn about trends, how you can protect your property, and help Anycounty prevent and solve theft

Anytown Community Center
123 Main Street
Anytown, Any State, 12345



COLLABORATE TO CONNECT