



THE COLLABORATION TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:



Effective Strategies to Partner with Law Enforcement

by Michael S. McCampbell



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Preface

The goal of this toolkit is to help community organizations accomplish the following objectives:

- ◆ Strengthen partnerships between the community and law enforcement.
- ◆ Further the community's role as a partner in crime reduction efforts.
- ◆ Identify and address social issues that diminish the quality of life and threaten public safety in communities.
- ◆ Link those in need to services and resources that currently exist in the community.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) has spent much time, resources, and effort in developing numerous publications to help law enforcement agencies work with their communities on addressing public safety issues. This toolkit is designed to help our communities initiate partnerships with their law enforcement agencies and collaborate on solving crime problems at the neighborhood level.

Acknowledgements

We have numerous people to thank for their help and guidance on this toolkit. First and foremost, we would like to thank our advisory team for their input and comments during the writing of the toolkit. The advisory board, which was made up of a very diverse group of practitioners, consisted of the following: Anna T. Laszlo, Circle Solutions, Inc.; Sergeant Eric Allen, Seattle (Washington) Police Department; Detective Kim Bogucki, Seattle (Washington) Police Department; Drew Diamond, Chief of Police (Retired), Tulsa (Oklahoma) Police Department; Officer Adrian Diaz, Seattle (Washington) Police Department; Lieutenant Chris Jones, Las Vegas (Nevada) Metropolitan Police Department; Charla Plaines, Deputy Director, Pennsylvania Weed and Seed; and School Resource Officer Moses Robinson, Rochester (New York) Police Department. Finally, we would like to thank our colleagues at COPS—Deputy Director Sandra Webb, Supervisory Policy Analyst Katherine McQuay, and Policy Analyst Tawana Waugh, who supported development of the toolkit, provided guidance during its development, and motivated us to complete a document that will be useful in helping the community to fully understand how to collaborate with law enforcement.

Letter from the Director

Dear colleagues,

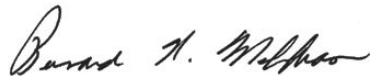
The importance of collaborating with the community cannot be underestimated. Through collaboration, the community becomes an invested partner in the effort to keep our neighborhoods safe and our streets livable.

The core of community policing is comprised of a double goal: building partnerships and solving problems. We can solve no crime or public safety problem without the hand of partnership extended to those who live in our cities, towns, and neighborhoods. Admittedly, this requires significant effort. Collaboration requires intense and committed effort from all parties involved—much more than a simple decision to work together. However, that hard work does not go unrewarded, as effective collaborations promote team building, a sense of ownership, enthusiasm, and mutual respect between law enforcement officers and the citizens they serve.

Throughout its existence, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) has been dedicated to developing resources to help law enforcement agencies work with their communities to address public safety issues. This toolkit is designed to give practical information to help everyday citizens understand the history and structure of American policing, initiate partnerships with their local police or sheriff's department, and plan and execute a successful collaboration.

It is our hope that *The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organizations: Effective Strategies to Partner with Law Enforcement* will demonstrate why law enforcement and the community should work together, as well as how they can set up a framework to do so. On behalf of the COPS Office, I encourage the readers of this publication to continue finding common ground, combining strengths and approaches, establishing trust, and advancing community policing in our neighborhoods across America.

Sincerely,



Bernard K. Melekian, Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Introduction

Sustainable, safe communities are characterized by community organizations that can work together effectively, develop and sustain strong relationships, solve problems, and collaborate effectively with their local law enforcement agency. Local law enforcement agencies understand that community-based organizations can be powerful partners. These groups often are composed of individuals who share certain interests and can include, as an example, victims' groups, service clubs, support groups, issue groups, advocacy groups, community development corporations, and the faith community.

In order to better accomplish the goal of working more effectively with the police, community-based organizations need to understand not only their local police agency's organization and policing philosophy but also the history of American policing.

History of American policing

Origins of modern American policing: England

Three names are generally associated with the development of the first modern police forces in England—Henry Fielding, Patrick Colquhoun, and Sir Robert Peel. Henry Fielding was a playwright and novelist who accepted a position as magistrate deputy of Bow Street Court in 1748. He organized a group of paid non-uniformed citizens who were responsible for investigating crimes and prosecuting offenders. This group, called the Bow Street Runners, was the first group paid through public funds that emphasized crime prevention in addition to crime investigation and apprehension of criminals.

Despite the Bow Street Runners' efforts, most English citizens were opposed to the development of a police force. Their opposition was based on two related factors: (1) the importance placed on individual liberties and (2) the English tradition of local government. To reconcile these issues with the development of a police force, a Scottish magistrate, Patrick Colquhoun, developed the science of policing in the late 1700s. Colquhoun suggested that police functions must include detection of crime, apprehension of offenders, and prevention of crime through their presence in public.



Sir Robert Peel established the first modern police force in England under the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829. This act created a single authority responsible for policing within the city limits of London. The force began with 1,000 officers divided into six divisions, headquartered at Scotland Yard. These officers (known as “Bobbies” for their founder) were uniformed and introduced new elements into policing that became the basis for modern police.

English police forces possessed three key elements particularly important for modern policing: (1) Their mission was crime prevention and control. The philosophy that it was better to prevent crime than simply respond to it greatly influenced the role of modern police officers. (2) Their strategy was to maintain a visible presence through preventive patrol. (3) They used a paramilitary organizational structure.

Peel borrowed the organizational structure of the London police from the military, including uniforms, rank designations, and the authoritarian system of command and discipline. These three elements of policing, developed in the early 1800s, had a significant impact on modern policing.

Policing in colonial America

The development of law enforcement in colonial America was similar to that of England during the same time period. As in England, the colonies established a system of night watch to guard cities against fire, crime, and disorder. In addition to night watch systems, there were sheriffs appointed by the governor and constables elected by the people. These individuals were responsible for maintaining order and providing other services. Common problems plaguing colonial cities that were considered the responsibility of police included the following:

- ◆ Maintaining order
- ◆ Regulating specialized functions such as selling in the market and delivering goods
- ◆ Maintaining health and sanitation
- ◆ Managing pests and other animals
- ◆ Ensuring the orderly use of streets by vehicles
- ◆ Controlling liquor, gambling, vice, and weapons
- ◆ Keeping watch for fires

English origins

1748: Henry Fielding’s Bow Street Runners, paid non-uniform citizens, investigate crimes and prosecute offenders.

1829: Sir Robert Peel heads up the first modern police department in London.

1839: Police forces are formed in other parts of England.

In the 1800s, American society and culture changed from primarily rural agrarian in nature to an urban industrial society, with concurrent changes in law enforcement. Citizens left rural areas and flocked to the cities in search of employment. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants came to reside in America. Unsanitary living conditions and poverty characterized American cities. The poor urban areas were plagued with increases in crime and disorder. As a direct result, a series of riots occurred throughout the 1830s in numerous American cities. Many of these riots were the result of poor living conditions, poverty, and conflicts between ethnic groups. These riots directly illustrated the need for larger and better-organized law enforcement.

Modern policing in America

The first modern police forces in America borrowed heavily from those established in England. In particular, American law enforcement agencies adopted the mission of crime prevention and control, the strategy of preventive patrol, and the paramilitary organizational design. The protection of individual liberties was highly emphasized in both England and America. Therefore, limits were placed on governmental and police authority.

Another feature borrowed from England was that of local control of police agencies. Although many other countries have one centralized, national law enforcement agency, the English and American systems do not. In the American system of law enforcement, police are controlled at the local, state, and federal level, although the majority of departments are local municipalities.

There were differences, however, between the British and American systems of law enforcement. First, American police officers carried guns. Second, they served under politically appointed local precinct captains. These differences set the stage for future problems in what has been called the political era of policing. While police administrators in England were protected from political influence, politics heavily influenced American police agencies. The first local modern police department established in the United States was the Boston Police Department in 1838, followed by the New York City Police Department in 1845.

The political era (1830s–1930s)

American policing in the late 19th century was plagued with political influence. Local politicians used positions on the police force to reward their supporters after elections. Therefore, the ethnic and religious composition of police forces often reflected the groups who had local political influence. There was little training given to officers, few recruitment standards to speak of, and no job security because officers could be hired or fired at will.

A (very) short history of American policing

Colonial era (1600s–1700s): Colonies form night watches. Sheriffs are appointed by governors and constables are elected by the people to maintain order and provide other public safety services. Boston forms first “Night Watch” in 1636.

Expansion era (1800s): Riots in several cities during the 1830s over poor living conditions illustrate the need for effective police agencies. First local “modern” police department established in Boston in 1838, followed by the New York City Police Department in 1845.

Political era (1830s–1930s): Policing is plagued by political influence, little training, and no job security for police. Police work is inefficient, with no effective communication system and little supervision.

Reform era (1930s–1970s): Wickersham Commission releases report “Lawlessness in Law Enforcement” that focuses on police misconduct in many cities. This leads to the modernizing of many police departments. Technology (two-way radios, police cars, and telephones) affects policing. Civil unrest and riots occur in the 1960s. Kerner Commission (1968) reports deep hostility and distrust between minorities and police.

Community policing, problem-solving era (1980s to present): Experts stress the importance of addressing quality of life issues as part of police work. Police are encouraged to work with community members to address neighborhood crime and disorder issues. Police utilize new tactics in responding to community needs, including foot patrol, problem solving, police substations, and, most importantly, collaboration with community groups. Philosophies of community policing and problem solving are encouraged and enhanced by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).

Police work during this time period has been described as inefficient, with no effective communication system and little direct supervision. Community members had difficulty contacting the police because the officers could not be located on their beats. However, police did provide a variety of social services to citizens, including feeding the hungry and housing the homeless. For example, during the 1800s, the Boston Police Department was responsible for a variety of public services, which included lodging the homeless, removing dirt and garbage, and checking every household daily for cases of cholera. Other urban departments also routinely looked after wayward youths.

It appears that officers during the political era spent little time handling major problems or serious incidents and rarely invoked the legal system.

The reform era (1930s–1970s)

Law enforcement in America changed dramatically during the 20th century. Three principal forces were underlying this change: the police professionalism movement, modern technologies, and the civil rights movement. During this era, there was a total restructuring of police departments and a redefinition of the role of police. Reformers sought to eliminate political influences, hire qualified leaders, and raise personnel standards.

The reform of police agencies during the first part of the 20th century was very slow to develop. Efforts to professionalize the police increased after the 1931 Wickersham Commission report on the first national study of the criminal justice system in America, which had a significant impact on the reform movement.

Technology also had a significant influence on policing in the early to mid-20th century, especially the two-way radio, the patrol car, and the telephone. With the advent of the two-way radio, officers could be notified about calls for service, and police supervisors could contact their officers directly. This change in technology had a significant impact on the provision of services to the public and the supervision of police personnel. Likewise, the use of patrol cars in the 1920s greatly enhanced the mobility of police officers and significantly reduced their response time to calls for service from the community. Finally, the use of the telephone allowed citizens to have direct contact with the police department. Community members were encouraged to call the police for any type of situation, and the police promised a rapid response.

These new technologies also had unintended consequences on policing, the effect of which was not fully understood until much later. For example, the patrol car served to isolate patrol officers from the community. Previously, when officers patrolled on foot, they had an opportunity to engage citizens in conversations and had a familiarity with the neighborhood that was lost once officers patrolled in cars. Encouraging community members to call the police for service and promising a rapid response dramatically increased the workload of officers. Citizens began to call police for minor problems, and the police continued to respond. In addition, police were called to handle private matters that they had not been responsible for in the past. The interactions between community members and police took on a more personal nature as police responded to homes rather than patrolling and engaging people on the street.

The police–citizen crisis of the 1960s

The 1960s was a period characterized by much civil unrest. Citizens were dissatisfied with the social and political conditions. In response, a series of presidential commissions were ordered to investigate these issues. The most famous, the Kerner Commission, investigated the causes of the nearly 200 disorders that had taken place in 1967. The Commission reported that there was deep hostility and distrust between minorities and the police. The report recommended the hiring of more minority officers and that police practices be changed significantly.

The community policing, problem-solving era (1980s to today)

The 1960s police-citizen crisis, coupled with research findings from the 1970s, questioned the core philosophies underlying policing in America. In a ground-breaking article on policing, two prominent criminologists, James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, proposed the “broken windows” thesis. They argued that a broken window in an abandoned building or car is a symbol that no one cares about the property, making it ripe for criminal activity. They stressed the importance of controlling minor crimes and disorders in an effort to curb more serious crime. This idea sparked the development of a number of different police strategies and tactics designed to improve police-community relations. Particular tactics included foot patrol, problem solving, police substations, and, most importantly, collaboration with community groups. These tactics stress improvements in communities’ safety through, among other things, improving quality of life. Activities such as removing junk and abandoned autos, replacing broken windows, removing drug dealers from street corners, removal of drug houses, implementing police-community athletic leagues, addressing code and zoning violations, and formation of community public safety groups are all examples of ways that local law enforcement agencies are taking a lead role in improving neighborhoods. Patrol officers at all levels are encouraged to be creative in their responses to problems and are given more discretion to advance their problem-solving efforts. From these efforts, it has become clear that problem solving is critical to the success of community policing efforts.

Community policing, problem solving, and collaboration

Community policing means different things to different people, but the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) defines community policing as follows:

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, that support the systemic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. (COPS Office 2014)

Local law enforcement officers have always solved problems, but community leaders and police officials recognize the need for a strong, well-articulated role for community members in solving neighborhood problems to make their communities safer. They know that the police alone cannot substantially affect crime, and they advocate for the community as a full partner in preventing and responding to problems.

Community involvement is an integral part of any long-term problem-solving strategy. At the most basic level, the community provides its police agency with invaluable information on both the problems of concern to them and the nature of those problems. Community involvement also helps ensure that the law enforcement agency concentrates on the appropriate issues in a manner that will create support. In addition, collaborative work involving police and community members provides the community with insight into the police perspective on specific crime and disorder problems. Traditionally, community involvement in crime prevention and reduction efforts has been limited to serving as the “eyes and ears” for police or helping implement responses. The collaborative problem-solving approach allows for much greater and more substantive roles for community members to determine the extent of the problem and also help design responses to the problem.

Want to learn more?

- ◆ Center for Problem Oriented Policing. “History of Problem-Oriented Policing.” Accessed August 20, 2014. <http://www.popcenter.org/about/?p=history>.
- ◆ Wadman, R. C., and W. T. Allison. 2004. *To Protect and Serve: A History of Police in America*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- ◆ Walker, S., and C. M. Katz. 2004. “Foundations: The history of the American police.” In *Police in America, 4th edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Your community organization should consider the following questions before entering a relationship with your local law enforcement agency:

- ◆ Why collaborate?
- ◆ What is collaboration?
- ◆ When should we collaborate?

The rest of this section will help you answer these questions.

Why collaborate?

Perhaps the most convincing arguments for developing partnerships among community organizations and their local law enforcement agencies are seen in the benefits attained by communities that have implemented these partnerships. For example, effective community-police collaborations can

- ◆ provide a more systematic, comprehensive approach to addressing community crime and disorder problems;
- ◆ accomplish what individuals alone cannot;
- ◆ prevent duplication of individual or organizational efforts;
- ◆ enhance the power of advocacy and resource development for the initiative;
- ◆ create more public recognition and visibility for the power of community-police cooperation.

A collaborative partnership between your law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations it serves is essential to finding answers to community problems. Today's law enforcement agencies recognize that police rarely can solve public safety problems alone and encourage interactive partnerships with community groups and other stakeholders. These partnerships can be used to accomplish the two interrelated goals of (1) developing solutions to problems through collaborative problem solving and (2) improving public trust.

What is collaboration?

Collaboration occurs when a number of community organizations, agencies, and individuals make a commitment to work together and contribute resources to achieve a common, long-term goal. For example, community organizations may collaborate with neighborhood watch groups, individual residents, faith-based organizations, and their local police department to address ongoing community safety and quality-of-life issues. Schools may collaborate with their local police, parents, and others to address safer schools and surrounding neighborhoods. Business organizations may collaborate with their local police to maintain order in the business district.

Collaboration is the most intense type of working relationship and is most frequently required when law enforcement agencies wish to become more effectively involved in addressing community issues. Building and sustaining an effective collaboration requires much more than a decision to merely work together. Effective collaborations promote team building, a sense of ownership, enthusiasm, and an environment that maximizes the chance of collaborative partnerships succeeding.

The components of an effective collaboration are as follows:

1. Stakeholders with a vested interest in the collaboration
2. Trusting relationships among the partners
3. A shared vision and common goals for the collaboration
4. Expertise
5. Teamwork strategies
6. Open communication
7. Motivated partners
8. Means to implement and sustain the collaborative effort
9. An action plan

By having these nine elements in place, the collaboration can avoid the disorder and discouragement that can affect many problem-solving and community policing partnerships.

The process of building and sustaining collaboration is ongoing and circular in nature. It begins with developing a shared vision and ends with developing, implementing, and assessing the action plan. However, throughout the life of the collaborative effort, the partnership will attract new expertise, decide on additional motivators, and identify and access new means and

Figure 1. The collaboration process



Source: Rinehart et al., *Collaboration Toolkit*.

resources. Trust is at the core of the relationship, with each of the other components acting as essential elements of the whole. Partners must continually reassess the collaboration and, if necessary, determine what actions should be taken to strengthen one or more elements. Routinely examining what’s working and what’s not working is essential to building, motivating, and sustaining a collaboration that can achieve results.

Figure 1 shows the circular nature of successful collaboration and how integral parts of the process are built around the core component of trust.

When should we collaborate?

The rule of thumb is that community organizations should engage in collaboration with their local law enforcement agency, other organizations, or individuals when stakeholders have a common, long-term goal, are committed to working together as a team, and cannot achieve the goal more efficiently as independent entities. Not all relationships must be collaborative, nor should they strive to be. Under some circumstances, it may be appropriate for community leaders just to establish good communications and rapport with local law enforcement personnel. Under other circumstances, cooperation between two individuals may be sufficient. Perhaps coordination between two agencies to avoid duplication of effort is all that is required. Collaboration is, however, critical for many public safety issues and endeavors.

The example (see sidebar *Example of an Effective Community-Police Collaboration*) outlines how individuals, representing organizations with similar interests, may progress from a relationship of communication to cooperation to coordination and culminate with the development of collaboration.

A conscious decision should be made as to whether communication, coordination, cooperation, or collaboration will achieve the desired result of the working relationship. Building collaboration takes time and intention. Learning to work in a collaborative partnership is a powerful tool to use today and an investment in collective action in the future.

Want to learn more?

- ◆ Cohen, D. 2001. *Problem-Solving Partnerships. Including the Community for a Change*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. <http://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p006-pub.pdf>.
- ◆ Rinehart, T.A., A.T. Laszlo, and G.O. Briscoe. 2001. *Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. <http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-CD019>.
- ◆ Schmerler, K., M. Perkins, S. Phillips, T. Rinehart, and M. Townsend. 2011. *Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. <http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P019>.

Example of an effective community-police collaboration

The Chesapeake Habitat for Humanity (CHH) partnered with the Baltimore (Maryland) Police Department (BPD) to improve public safety. The collaboration aimed to achieve five outcomes:

1. Increased community stabilization
2. Expanded education for CHH homeowners
3. Improved officer/community relations
4. Increased public safety awareness
5. Enhanced teamwork among district commanders and their officers

Laying the foundation for community stabilization

In April 2007, CHH partnered with the Southern District police force through a community safe zone in the Washington Village/Pigtown area of Baltimore, along with other area nonprofit entities, to provide access to services within the designated safe zone area. The police department presented a course at police headquarters during which CHH homebuyers were given constructive examples of how they could become actively engaged in the public safety of their neighborhoods, such as through Community Relations councils and Citizens on Patrol groups.

Families also learned about the Crime Watch program (which allows 911 calls to be made anonymously), visited the communications center where all 911 and 311 calls are answered, and toured the Intelligence Watch Center. In a presentation on Baltimore's city-wide Camera Project, they learned how police responded to events captured on camera and how the video evidence had been used in court.

Expanding their collective impact

To increase interaction among the police commanders, volunteers, and future CHH homebuyers; enhance department teamwork; and contribute to neighborhood stabilization objectives, CHH invited police commanders from each of Baltimore's nine districts to spend a day alongside CHH volunteers on a build site. During the joint build, a CHH staff member provided an overview, from the nonprofit perspective, of public safety issues surrounding vacant buildings. Furthermore, CHH was incorporated into the BPD's officer training program that spring. The program rotated a full shift off duty for 30 days, during which officers alternated between two weeks of firearms training and two weeks of communication training. During the latter two weeks, an entire shift of 35 officers volunteered on a CHH construction site.

Long-term vision

Through partnerships such as this one with the BPD, CHH has been able to fulfill its mission to work as a positive catalyst for change, not only in the lives of homeowner families but also in the communities where they live. This, ultimately, is part of the greater goal to build a better and safer city for all Baltimore residents. Together, the CHH and the BPD demonstrated how decent housing, community revitalization, and public safety are deeply interconnected and require strong community-police partnerships to create a safer city.

Summary

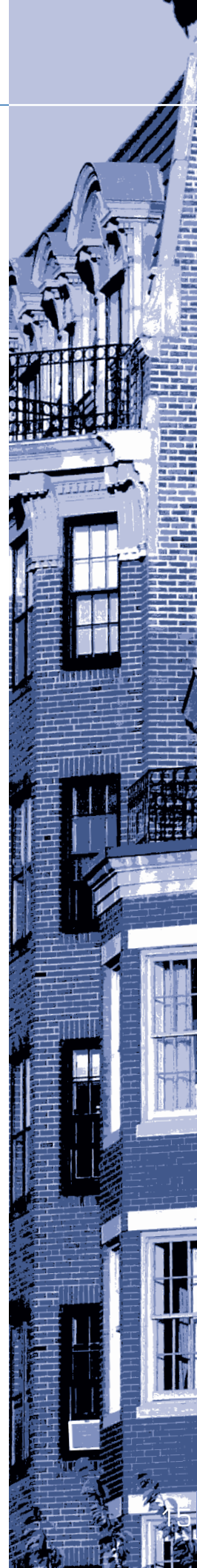
In this section, we have introduced some of the fundamental concepts that community-based organizations need to be familiar with in order to begin collaborating effectively with their local law enforcement agency. The basic idea is one of building relationships and partnerships with a view toward addressing some issue or problem that is of concern to the community and appropriate for the police to address.

Approaching your law enforcement agency

This is perhaps the most critical step in beginning collaboration with your local law enforcement agency. It will affect your future relationships and will serve as a positive stepping stone to collaboration. Your organization will need to approach its particular problem or issue in a calm, reasoned, and logical manner. While taking your issue “to the streets” and demanding action in the media may gain short-term cooperation from law enforcement, it will not result in positive collaboration. Indeed, it will probably cause long-term damage in your relationship with the police.

In terms of whom to call in the law enforcement agency, in most cases, your organization needs to start not at the top but somewhere further down the organizational chart.

It may seem confusing at first to figure out exactly whom you should call, and here is why: There are approximately 20,000 state and local police agencies in the United States. The majority of police agencies in the United States are only loosely connected to one another. Many have overlapping jurisdictions at multiple levels of government, including city or town, township, county, state, and federal agencies. The majority are general-purpose agencies with responsibility for patrolling a certain area, responding to calls from citizens, and investigating certain offenses. Most local police departments are small, with 81 percent employing fewer than 25 full-time sworn officers, 42 percent employing fewer than five full-time officers, and 7.5 percent relying only on part-time officers. Others are special-purpose agencies with responsibility for a specific territory (such as a park or an airport) or function (such as enforcing alcoholic beverage laws or wildlife regulations). Some agencies do not fall neatly within these categories. As discussed in the sidebar *Police or sheriffs: What's the difference?* on page 16, sheriffs' agencies in some states do not provide police patrol but do provide a variety of other related services: running jails; guarding courtrooms; or providing canine service, undercover deputies, or investigative assistance to local police agencies. These variations in the size, type, and function of American police agencies make it difficult to establish an ideal method of organization and management applicable to all agencies.



Police or sheriffs: What's the difference?

In most cases, if you live within the boundaries of a city, town, or township, or, in many cases, in an urban county, the chances are good that your primary law enforcement agency is a police department. If you live in an unincorporated area, especially a county, your primary law enforcement agency could be a sheriff's office.

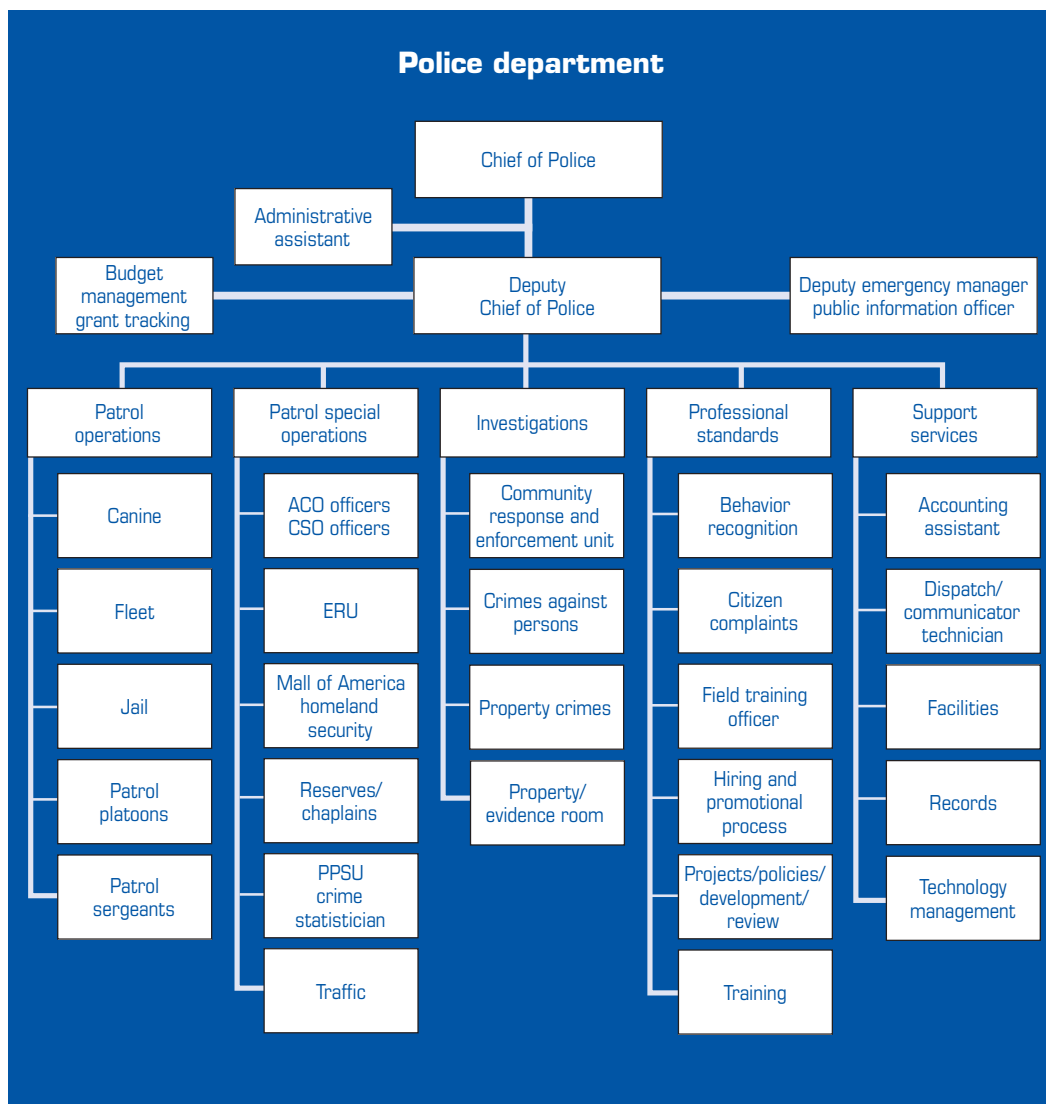
What is the difference? In the United States, the office of sheriff (which traces its roots to England, beginning more than 1,000 years ago) first came to the American colonies in 1634 in Virginia and actually predates American police departments by more than 100 years.

The major difference is that the office of sheriff is usually constitutional—that is, the office is designated by your state's constitution. The sheriff is an elected official and answers to the electorate within his or her county. In many cases, the sheriff's office performs the same law enforcement functions as those of a police department—patrol, criminal investigation, and traffic enforcement. In addition, the sheriff's office may be responsible for court security, operating the jail/prisoner transport, and civil process (serving civil papers such as liens and eviction notices).

The key is to know the name of your specific community's law enforcement agency, whether it is the police or the sheriff, and to be willing to work with them on a collaborative basis to solve common problems that affect everyone. In this toolkit, for the sake of clarity, the terms “police department” and “sheriff's office” or “sheriff's department” will be described as a police department or law enforcement agency.

Despite the differences, there is much that is similar within law enforcement organizations. Most police agencies are paramilitary organizations, with a top-down chain of command that flows from the chief executive down. In between, there are various levels of command (majors, captains, lieutenants, sergeants), which are usually divided by task, including patrol, criminal investigation, administration, juvenile services, traffic, gang enforcement, drugs and vice, and other specialized activities. Commanders and supervisors are responsible for ensuring the effective operation of each functional area within the agency. Larger agencies are further organized by area or location—for example, precincts, substations, and district stations. To a large extent, police agencies are similar in their structure and management process. Figure 2 shows a typical organization chart for a police agency.

Figure 2. Organization chart of a typical police department



Source: Bloomington (MN) Police Department 2014.

It can be fairly easy to find out how a local law enforcement agency is organized by using the city's or county's Internet web site. Identify who has responsibility for public safety in your community. Ask these questions:

- ◆ Is there a police station near my neighborhood? If so, who is in charge? What is his or her name and rank? What is the telephone number and address?
- ◆ If you live in a small town or a rural area and your law enforcement agency has only a single headquarters building, you need to know who is in charge of your particular community's area.

The reason for not starting at the top is simple—the agency head, whether it is the police chief or the sheriff, deals with broad policy issues, not the day-to-day nuts and bolts of solving specific community problems. Those tasks relating to your community will be more effectively addressed by someone who is not only more familiar with your neighborhood but also specifically responsible for its safety. In some cases, this might be the precinct commander or a supervisor directly involved in providing police services to the area. In other cases, especially in rural areas, it may ultimately be a sergeant or even a deputy.

Combining strengths: A value-added partnership

Before beginning the collaboration, it is important to have a common understanding of what each party brings to the table and to understand that, together, these strengths bring added value to the relationship that far exceed what each individual organization can accomplish by itself.

What the police bring

Power and influence. Law enforcement agencies are among the most important institutions in the community, because the police help maintain social order by controlling crime and protecting the public from harm. High-ranking law enforcement officials often sit on the boards of major community organizations, which allows them to influence public policy, especially as it relates to law enforcement and crime prevention.

Skills and tools to control crime. Law enforcement agencies have the tools and skills to identify, track, and apprehend criminals without exposing the public to undue risk. Because they understand how criminals operate, police can advise community members about the best ways to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from criminal activity.

Reliable crime data. Law enforcement agencies have the most accurate information about crime in the community. For example, one invaluable crime-tracking tool used by some police departments is Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a computerized crime tracking and analysis system. With GIS, police can map crime on a community-wide basis as well as by neighborhood or even by block. For example, they can tell community groups exactly where juvenile crime is occurring, the nature of the juvenile offenses, and the times during an average week when most juvenile crime is committed. With this level of precise information, community organizations, working in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, can develop specific strategies for addressing all kinds of crime and quality-of-life issues.

Explaining the organization: Ranks you need to know

Rank	Functions/activities
Patrol officer/ deputy	Of all of the ranks, patrol officers (sheriff's deputies in a sheriff's office) generally have the greatest amount of contact with the public. When a citizen calls for assistance, it is usually a patrol officer who initially responds to assist them. Officers are on the front lines handling accidents, burglaries, domestic disturbances, and other community problems. They also have the primary responsibility for enforcing traffic and criminal laws while on patrol.
Corporal/sergeant	This is the first-line supervisor in most law enforcement agencies. The corporal or sergeant is responsible for supervising a squad or group of patrol officers, usually assigned to a specific neighborhood, area, or shift. The first-line supervisor is also responsible for supporting and getting involved in community oriented policing programs and activities.
Lieutenant/ commander	In most cases, the lieutenant is a mid-manager, in that he or she supervises several corporals or sergeants and their patrol officers assigned to a specific precinct or area. The lieutenant may also be in charge of a specific shift (e.g., 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.) and is responsible for addressing all crime and/or neighborhood problems during that shift.
Captain	In larger law enforcement agencies, a captain is often the officer in charge of a precinct and is responsible for all police activity in that precinct. Captains are usually veterans with extensive experience. In some smaller U.S. police departments, a person holding the rank of captain may be in charge of a division (patrol division, detective division, etc.) within that department.
Major/colonel/ deputy chief	These are different titles for senior management officials who may be in charge of several precincts or functions (patrol, criminal investigations, administration, etc.).
Police chief/ superintendent	The chief executive of the agency. Responsible for overall operation of the law enforcement agency. Everyone in the agency reports to him or her, and he or she usually reports to a city or county manager or the mayor.

A growing capacity for collaboration. Most law enforcement agencies have embraced the principles of community policing and collaborative problem solving, and many have been trained in these principles through a variety of training initiatives. As a result, many law enforcement agencies are now experienced in working with community groups to jointly address crime prevention and related issues.

What community groups bring

Dominant community force. In many troubled communities, community organizations can function as the anchoring force. Community groups have a major impact on the day-to-day life of the neighborhood, providing a range of social and support services to residents.

Extensive understanding of social issues that underlie crime. Many community groups have the capacity to deal with the special needs of disadvantaged populations. They can lend another level of compassion and understanding. The police need their help in controlling crime, preventing disruptive behavior, and gaining the trust of law enforcement and government.

Established infrastructure for addressing human needs. Many community groups in rural and urban areas have already established an infrastructure for addressing some of the special needs of the community. Examples include the operation of food pantries and soup kitchens for families; child care, after-school programs, and tutoring and mentoring services for youth; and GED and employment training programs for unemployed or underemployed adults.

Solving problems together

Problem solving is a critical element in any law enforcement agency that is involved in community policing. This capability must exist at all levels of the law enforcement organization, including the patrol officer, to achieve long-term success. Putting this element in place, however, often involves a fundamental shift in thinking for many law enforcement agencies. As mentioned earlier, most police departments are organized in a paramilitary style with a very structured chain of command. Moreover, there are usually very structured procedures for responding to calls for service and community problems. However, agencies that are organized to enhance community policing (see Figure 2, organizational chart for community policing on page 17) allow patrol officers to respond creatively to problems and engage in problem-solving efforts directly with the community. The key to effective problem solving is the use of a structured process known as the SARA (scanning, analysis, response, and assessment) model.

Scanning:

- ◆ Identifying recurring problems of concern to the public and the police
- ◆ Identifying the consequences of the problem for the community and the police
- ◆ Prioritizing those problems
- ◆ Developing broad goals
- ◆ Confirming that the problems exist
- ◆ Determining how frequently the problem occurs and how long it has been taking place
- ◆ Selecting problems for closer examination

Analysis:

- ◆ Identifying and understanding the events and conditions that precede and accompany the problem
- ◆ Identifying relevant data to be collected
- ◆ Researching what is known about the problem type
- ◆ Taking inventory of how the problem is currently addressed and the strengths and limitations of the current response
- ◆ Narrowing the scope of the problem as specifically as possible
- ◆ Identifying a variety of resources that may be of assistance in developing a deeper understanding of the problem
- ◆ Developing a working hypothesis about why the problem is occurring

Response:

- ◆ Brainstorming for new interventions
- ◆ Searching for what other communities with similar problems have done
- ◆ Choosing among the alternative interventions
- ◆ Outlining a response plan and identifying responsible parties
- ◆ Stating the specific objectives for the response plan
- ◆ Carrying out the planned activities

Assessment:

- ◆ Determining whether the plan was implemented (a process evaluation)
- ◆ Collecting pre- and post-response qualitative and quantitative data
- ◆ Determining whether broad goals and specific objectives were attained
- ◆ Identifying any new strategies needed to augment the original plan
- ◆ Conducting ongoing assessment to ensure continued effectiveness

While not all law enforcement agencies use the SARA model for solving crime and quality-of-life problems, most will use a similar model. As a community organization in a collaboration with a law enforcement agency, it is important to try to use a structured process to collaborate and solve the community's specific problem. This will ensure that all parties are working on the same problem and bringing together their resources in a concerted effort.

Summary

One of the first (and most critical) steps in beginning to work collaboratively with your local law enforcement agency is determining who to call. A good place to start is by looking on the Internet for your city's or county's web site. The goal is to find the person (name, telephone number, address) in that law enforcement agency who is specifically responsible for providing police services in the community or neighborhood.

An understanding of the community group's and the police agency's strengths (and weaknesses) will allow you to use these tools to complement your collaborative effort and make it more effective. What each side brings to the collaboration table is very important. Know your organization's value in helping the police to work collaboratively with you.

Want to learn more?

- ◆ Gordon, M.B. 2003. *Making the Match: Law Enforcement, the Faith Community and the Value-Based Initiative*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. <http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P054>.
- ◆ National Institute of Justice. 2004. "What Does It Take to Make Collaboration Work? Lessons Learned Through the Criminal Justice System Project." *NIJ Journal* 251 (July): 8–13. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000251c.pdf>.

An example of SARA in action

The chief of police in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was faced with a large segment of older residents who feared for their safety. Their fear came on the heels of two unconnected homicides in which both victims were homebound older people. Even though both cases were quickly resolved with the arrests of suspects, the fear remained. A traditional police response might be a combination of telling older residents that the threat was over and that the police department would remain vigilant.

The chief, however, began to think in a more holistic way about both the safety and quality of life for the older people in his community. He engaged with other social service stakeholders dealing with health, mental health, and social justice issues. Taking a problem solving approach to the issue required first **SCANNING** the situation the older residents faced. This scanning resulted in identifying the problem for older residents not as one of potential crime victims, but as one of increasing isolation from the mainstream of their community.

The second step was to perform the **ANALYSIS** around the problem of the isolation of older residents. Working with both police data and social service data, a picture emerged of the lifestyle of many older people, particularly those that were homebound or somehow disabled. This picture showed that although there were good community services available and being delivered, the sense of isolation was real.

RESPONSE, the third problem-solving step, resulted in a problem-solving stakeholders team developing a multifaceted approach that engaged police officers, social workers, and neighbors in an effort to increase protection and inclusiveness for their older neighbors. A key to this effort was to provide emergency responders and social workers with a means to know where the most vulnerable residents resided and sufficient background information so they would be able to make appropriate response decisions and be proactive in protecting them. The police department entered this information into the police and fire 911 communications system. To accomplish this, the problem-solving team had to develop a simple form for older residents to fill out and a mechanism to distribute the form along with the technical aspects of data entry into the communication system. Thousands of older citizens voluntarily provided their personal information (contact, medical, residential living arrangements) for entry into this database. Concurrent with this effort, teams of beat patrol officers and social workers went door to door in those neighborhoods where data showed a high concentration of homebound older people (based on Meals on Wheels clients, nursing clients, and service providers' input).

This resulted in a higher level of awareness by the patrol officers and neighbors of older residents in their neighborhood that needed additional attention and support. It also became clear to potential predators that the interest of the police and neighbors in persons they might victimize had become more intense. The **ASSESSMENT** phase of this problem-solving effort during the first year of activity showed a reduction in fear by older people as well as in actual crimes against them.

Finding common ground

The close alliance forged between the community and the police should not be limited to an isolated incident, or series of incidents, or confined to a specific time frame. The partnership between the police and the community must be ongoing. The community organization and the police must be collaborators with a common goal of improving the community's quality of life.

It is important to understand that at first, your organization and the police will not always agree on which specific problems deserve attention. For example, the police may regard robberies as the biggest problem in the neighborhood, while you have identified homeless individuals, who sleep in doorways, break bottles on sidewalks, and pick through garbage cans, to be the number one problem. The key is to work together on solving both problems. Finding common ground requires clearly defining a shared vision. What are the shared goals of the law enforcement agency and the community? By taking the time to discuss and articulate “what we have in common/where we can agree,” both community organizations and the law enforcement agency may realize that they have more that binds them together (e.g., a safe community) than separates them. While recognizing that the approaches taken by each organization to address community-based problems may be different, it is important to acknowledge the common goals and vision.

As you and your law enforcement agency seek to find common ground, you may wish to consider the following checklist.

Tool: A checklist for sharing a common vision

Take the time to consider and discuss the following:

- ✓ What perceptions do we (community and law enforcement organization) have of each other?
- ✓ Where did these perceptions have their origin?
- ✓ Might some of these perceptions be inaccurate or founded on myths rather than facts?
- ✓ How do we approach solving community problems?
- ✓ What results/outcomes do we **BOTH** want for our community?
- ✓ What is in the best interest of **BOTH** of our organizations to achieve?
- ✓ What can we agree upon?
- ✓ What responsibility does each of our organizations have for solving community problems?



Any strained relations between the police and the community should gradually begin to dissipate as law enforcement officials, responding to the counsel of their community partners, adopt more socially and culturally sensitive policies.

Understanding and appreciating differing approaches

Police increasingly recognize the value of the heightened level of understanding that many community-based organizations possess about the nature and impact of crime in their communities. That's why law enforcement officials are willing to listen to their community partners and give them an increased role in making their neighborhoods safer places. Participants in the collaboration come to recognize that they have a stake in improving the quality of life in their community. Most will decide that the best way to do this is to work together to correct social problems that are so often linked to crime and violence.

Law enforcement agencies have specific mechanisms for solving problems and getting things done. Community groups, on the other hand, tend to be less systematic and often take a let's-talk-about-it approach to problem solving. To make a partnership work, both groups need to be flexible. For example, at a scheduled two-hour meeting on the topic of youth gangs, law enforcement officials may present well-documented information about the nature and extent of gang violence in a community. Many community leaders, on the other hand, may take an anecdotal approach, telling stories about how families they know have been devastated by gang violence. Because every community member at the meeting will likely have a story to share, the storytelling could easily extend well beyond the designated time for the meeting. Police can honor and learn from community groups' more emotional and conversational style of communication, because it goes to the root of their desire to participate in a collaboration to solve a specific community problem. Community groups want to make the community a better place for families to raise their children.

By the same token, community groups must be understanding of the time constraints of law enforcement officials, who are often rushing to the next call. Community group representatives can concentrate on communicating their ideas as concisely as possible. This might include assigning one or two leaders to serve as representatives on occasions when time for meetings is especially limited

In summary, remember these points for building common ground with law enforcement:

- ◆ Be sure to invite everyone who will be affected by your program to participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating your program.
- ◆ Remember that your organization and law enforcement have a common goal—to create and maintain a safe and caring community.

Tool: Facilitating effective meetings

Here are some tips for facilitating your meetings (especially the initial one):

- ◆ Invite participants to say their name, where they are from, and why they decided to come today.
- ◆ Invite someone in the group to read the guidelines below out loud and ask the group if they are willing to adopt these.
 - Be respectful.
 - Everyone gets a fair hearing.
 - Share “air time.”
 - One person speaks at a time. Speak for yourself, not for others.
 - If you are offended or upset, say so, and say why.
 - You can disagree, but do not make it personal. Stick to the issue.
 - Everyone helps the facilitator keep the meeting moving and on track.
- ◆ At the end of the meeting, summarize the points covered and list action items for future meetings.

Do not forget that you and your organization are a valuable resource for law enforcement.

- ◆ Explain to police officers how your program will make their job easier. Be specific.
- ◆ Respect the police department’s hierarchy and chain of command.
- ◆ Know that law enforcement officers are there to help you.

Establishing trust

Trust is central and fundamental to developing a collaborative working relationship between community groups and law enforcement agencies and other partners. Taking the time to build trusting relationships with partners will often spell the difference between success and failure. Trust must often be developed on a one-to-one basis between primary partners and then among all partners. Therefore, sufficient time must be allotted during the planning process to allow this trust to develop.

Law enforcement officials want to prevent crime, and community groups want to make life better for their constituents. These are not mutually exclusive goals. However, in troubled communities struggling with poverty, racism, or other social ills, community groups have not always sought out law enforcement as their ally. As a result, these two groups often start with a wide gulf separating them. Preconceived notions, as well as not taking the time to get to know each other, can result in mistaken perceptions. The best way to break down any covert or overt animosities—and begin building a bridge of trust—is to address issues of conflict head-on.

Building trust between the Boston Police Department and the Orchard Gardens community: Addressing the problem head-on

Due to increasing crime and disorder, the Orchard Gardens community organized a meeting with the Boston Police Department to seek ways to address the problems. Community members who attended the initial 2003 community meeting with the police aired a broad array of concerns. They said they were afraid of calling 911, because the police would show up at the caller's door, instead of where the incident was happening (making the caller a target for retaliation). Residents said that they had heard a lot of political promises in the past but that nothing was ever done. They felt that when the police did react to crimes, they would not react in a timely way.

The precinct commander recognized that people feared getting involved by calling 911 and that the department had trouble building relationships in Orchard Gardens because the precinct was the busiest in the city. By necessity, they fell into a reactionary mode of responding to crime instead of being able to uproot the conditions that gave rise to it.

Recognizing that the community clearly had come to distrust promises, community representatives who had set up the meeting were careful not to overreach in offering solutions. They only committed to form a new public safety committee composed of residents and community partners. It was decided that the group would meet monthly and would try to tackle projects that were tangible and doable. The committee would transform the existing public safety task force into a larger body that would incorporate more residents and partners. Members of the new committee began to schedule regular walk-throughs of the neighborhood with a police captain, providing residents a chance to discretely point out areas of crime and prostitution. The committee had 20–30 members scattered throughout Orchard Gardens. This geographical dispersion meant that there were eyes on the street throughout the community and not just in one part of it.

One of the first issues that the committee sought to tackle was the reluctance of the residents to call 911. The police shared with the community that their resources were ultimately allocated depending on the number of 911 calls from a particular area. Orchard Gardens was not generating as many 911 calls as it should for its level of crime. “You have to call 911 if you want us here,” a police officer told the committee.

To try to overcome the residents' fear of retaliation, the committee decided to establish a phone tree. When a member of the committee witnessed or was made aware of a crime, they would call other members of the committee, and several residents would call 911 at the same time. Alternatively, residents could call police officers directly or the building management office, which would then call 911. The tactic appeared to work. The committee received monthly police reports on the neighborhood. As many as twenty 911 calls were placed each month after the phone tree began, whereas before there had hardly been any.

The committee also established some ground rules for the meetings to ensure confidentiality and respect. If people did not want to raise a problem publicly, they could write it down and submit it unsigned at the end of the meeting. A member of the committee could then share the information anonymously with the rest of the members and with the police. One of the police officers assigned to the area decided to give out his cell phone number to the committee and to residents. He encouraged them to call him directly if they were hesitant to call 911. Other officers followed this lead, and these steps began to establish greater faith and cooperation between the community and the police. Improved trust between the police department and Orchard Gardens residents has, in turn, led to improved information sharing and crime solving.

Another way to build and establish trust is through community-police study circles. Study circles bring all kinds of people together to share different views and experiences. In the process, they begin to build stronger relationships and work together to find solutions. A study circle is a group of about 12 people from different backgrounds and viewpoints who come together and meet several times to talk about an issue. In a study circle, everyone has an equal voice, and people try to understand each other's views. They do not have to agree with each other, but the idea is to share concerns and look for ways to make things better. A facilitator, who is not an expert on the issue, helps the group focus on different views and makes sure the discussion goes well.

Study circles have been used effectively in many communities. Study circle programs on police-community relations have taken place in Cincinnati, Ohio; Louisville and Owensboro, Kentucky; five communities in Camden County, New Jersey; New Haven, Connecticut; Prince George's County, Maryland; Fayetteville, North Carolina; and Schenectady, New York.

Successful police-community study circles in Buffalo, New York

The Buffalo Police Department and the United Neighborhoods Center have involved at least 350 people in study circles, which have led to collaborative neighborhood-level action efforts. Each of the circles was neighborhood based, involving homeowners, renters, business people, church leaders, young people, and police officers who live or work locally. The Buffalo Study Circles on Community Policing project has reduced the level of local controversy over policing; led to new department policies; and fostered some intriguing new problem-solving partnerships between block clubs, community groups, and the police. The work in Buffalo has not changed the city overnight, but it has given citizens an unprecedented role in police decision making. It also goes beyond previous notions of community policing because it does not force police officers into roles for which they were never trained. Instead of asking officers to act like social workers, mediators, or youth counselors, the Buffalo approach helps the neighborhood and the police find the people who can do those jobs.

In one neighborhood with several halfway houses for the mentally ill, police officers and small business owners had complained about ongoing disturbances that police felt ill equipped to handle. Based on recommendations from a study circle—including a state legislator, the county director of mental health services, and several peer leaders who had successfully battled mental illness—a trained emergency response team is now on call for every neighborhood in the city.

In two other neighborhoods, residents and police officers shared their concerns about local businesses that were not doing their part to prevent crime. The business owners in those circles pledged to work with residents and police to beef up security, including improving lighting and hiring private guards.

Action steps to build and establish trust

Step 1: Make personal, one-on-one contact with stakeholders.

Initial contact with stakeholders is more effective if it is made personally, one on one. Contact with an individual may be made through a phone call or a personal visit to introduce the project and invite the individual's participation. The primary partner should share his or her interest and role in the project and ask the person contacted about his or her thoughts on the problem or issue that the collaboration is addressing.

Step 2: Be certain to listen and show respect for what the partner / stakeholder has to say.

Open and sensitive communication is critical for building trust. When a partner shares his or her perspective, do not judge what he or she is saying. Rather, process the information at face value and consider it with an open mind. Suspend judgment, listen, and work to understand a person's perspective rather than working to persuade him or her to agree with your ideas.

Step 3: Follow up.

Follow up with a letter, such as the one inviting the stakeholder to be a part of a meeting to create a shared vision. Communicating through a memo or newsletter may keep people informed, but it is not a substitute for personal contact. Do not leave partners' questions unanswered. A lack of openness can translate into a perception of deceptiveness.

Step 4: Do not rush.

Do not feel that time to build trust needs to be rushed so that the work of the project will move ahead. Since trust is only based in part on past behavior and is also based on an emotional feeling or intuition about individuals, it cannot be switched on like a light. Only genuine trust is effective; feigned trust will not produce an effective collaboration.

Step 5: Establish norms / ground rules that create a tone of collaboration and support good communication skills.

Regardless of the size of the partnership, ground rules and norms help to ensure that etiquette is observed and that all partners are encouraged to ask questions, offer opinions, and listen to the ideas and opinions of others. The variety of ideas can build stronger relationships and a better project. Ground rules and norms should be developed at the vision / common goals meeting and periodically revisited. The question to be asked, for two or two hundred partners, is, "What agreements can we make that will help us work together in an effective and efficient manner?"

Norms will be unique to each collaboration. However, collaborative norms will answer these questions at a minimum:

- ◆ How long can I expect a meeting to last?
- ◆ Will meetings start on time?
- ◆ If I disagree on certain issues, how will the disagreement be handled?
- ◆ Are all the partners equal, or do some groups have more power than others?
- ◆ How are decisions made?
- ◆ How do collaboration members treat each other?
- ◆ What behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable within the collaboration?

Norms will support positive collaborative functioning when they are

- ◆ posted and easily viewed at meetings;
- ◆ used as facilitative tools to confront disruptive behavior;
- ◆ used to orient new members to the collaborative partnership;
- ◆ revisited periodically and changed if necessary;
- ◆ followed and valued by the team.

Good communication and respectful interactions guided by group norms that have been developed, agreed upon, and adhered to by all partners will help to build trust.

Step 6: Be trustworthy.

Do not promise more than can be delivered. Be responsible, accountable, and loyal. Apologize when appropriate. In all interactions, act in a way that earns the trust needed for successful collaborative problem solving.

Step 7: Do not ignore troubles.

Ignoring brewing conflict leads to erosion of trust. Address issues through facilitated, one-on-one discussion or implement another means of conflict resolution.

Summary

Trust should deepen as the collaborative effort proceeds and partners prove themselves through their performance. Inherent to trusting relationships is respect for each other (including each other's differences), integrity, and open communication. Partners will, invariably, come to the project with life experiences and preconceptions that may make building trust challenging. However, without trust, partners may be hesitant to work as a team and reluctant to share the talents, time, and resources needed for the collaborative effort.

Want to learn more?

- ◆ MetLife Foundation. 2009. "Orchard Gardens/Commons Public Safety Committee, Boston, Massachusetts." In *2008 MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Awards for Neighborhood Revitalization*, 45–53. New York: Local Initiatives Support Corporation. http://www.lisc.org/files/17643_file_csi_metlife_casebook.pdf.
- ◆ Snelling Center for Government and Champlain College. 2008. *Building Community in a "Connected Age" (Facilitator Guide)*. Fulfilling our e-state potential. East Hartford, CT: Everyday Democracy. <http://www.everyday-democracy.org/resources/building-community-connected-age-facilitator-guide>.
- ◆ Study Circles Resource Center. 2000. *Protecting Communities: Serving the Public*. Pomfret, CT: Topsfield Foundation. <http://www.everyday-democracy.org/resources/protecting-communities-serving-public>.

Basic procedures for planning and implementing your collaboration partnership

Choose a steering committee

Develop a steering committee consisting of members of your organization, law enforcement officials, and representatives from faith-based organizations, social service organizations, and other community groups. Be sure to choose reliable partners who are in a position to make positive contributions. The steering committee should be the driving force in working with the police and other involved organizations to keep them focused on the goals and activities of the collaborative partnership. The steering committee should also be responsible for keeping the project's momentum going and maintaining relationships with the community. Some important attributes that steering committee members should bring to the partnership are as follows:

- ◆ Passion for solving community problems
- ◆ Commitment to serve the community's needs
- ◆ Vision for achieving results
- ◆ Knowledge and respect of the community
- ◆ Ability to keep the community focused on solving problems and managing the steps necessary to achieve the project's goals
- ◆ Communication with the community on a regular basis
- ◆ Ability to create additional opportunities for collaboration with partners

Lead the charge

The top executives of the participating partners must support the partnership, even if they are not personally involved in the activities of the group. Where others are the primary representatives, they should have ready access to the group leaders.

Someone needs to be responsible for facilitating, moderating, and managing the meeting and discussion. In the early stages of collaboration, it is important to have a committed person who will do the difficult work required to secure the cooperation of other partners. This work includes the following:

- ◆ Providing value-based dedicated leadership, which is essential for anything lasting, significant, and positive to be accomplished
- ◆ Being supportive, consistent, and dependable
- ◆ Setting high standards of excellence
- ◆ Cultivating leadership in others—true collaboration requires shared leadership
- ◆ Valuing an inclusive, collaborative, process

Identify and leverage stakeholders

When planning for collaboration with your local law enforcement agency, one of the first steps is networking with other organizations that may have an interest in solving problems similar to yours. For example, what other institutions, associations, and individual leaders are located in the community? What stake do they have in the success of your neighborhoods' specific crime reduction efforts? To facilitate this assessment, some community planners develop asset maps as part of identifying a community's strengths. Essentially, the asset mapping process encourages thinking about several types of resources or building blocks:

- ◆ Capacities within the community and under community control (individuals, local organizations, individual businesses)
- ◆ Resources located within the community but largely controlled by people outside the community (e.g., schools, hospitals, recreation centers, service agencies, vacant land and buildings)
- ◆ Potential building blocks not located in the community and controlled by people outside the community (e.g., business organizations, some government and service agencies, arts organizations, service clubs)

The next step is to determine where each one of these identified community organizations stands on addressing your particular problem. For example:

- ◆ Are these other community groups currently utilizing crime prevention and intervention efforts that relate specifically to your organization's issue? Perhaps they have been working with the police on similar problems and have found novel ways to address these issues.
- ◆ What are these groups' levels of knowledge about those efforts? Other organizations may be able to provide your group with a tremendous amount of information to present to the police.
- ◆ What is the status of needed services in the community? Are there long waiting lists for services? Are some programs underused? The police probably will not have this information. Therefore, it is in your best interest to check with local social service providers about these problems and why they may have a direct impact on your specific issue.
- ◆ Who are the official and informal leaders of these community groups? These are key individuals who will play an important role in helping support your cause.

When identifying potential stakeholders, consider the following six questions:

1. Who cares if the problem is solved or the issue is addressed?
2. Who is affected by the problem or issue?
3. Who can help solve the problem or address the issue?
4. Who brings knowledge or skills about the issue?
5. Who will benefit if the problem is solved or the issue is addressed?
6. Who would bring a diverse viewpoint to the collaboration?

Potential stakeholders may include the following:

- ◆ School administrators and other school personnel
- ◆ School board members
- ◆ Business leaders
- ◆ Elected officials
- ◆ Neighborhood watch / block clubs
- ◆ Youth organizations
- ◆ Community-based organizations
- ◆ Faith-based organizations
- ◆ Community activists
- ◆ Probation/parole/pretrial services
- ◆ District attorney / state attorney general

Remember, depending on the specifics of the problem or issue, the list of stakeholders will vary. Thus, it is important to consider who should represent each organization—whether individuals at the leadership / management level or staff level are appropriate. This decision may be based on the amount of time available, skills required for participation, knowledge of the problem, control of resources, or job responsibilities.

Early in the process, it can be helpful to avoid inviting individuals who may be particularly disruptive, unless there is an especially skillful facilitator. Later in the process, after the collaboration has been established, the same person who was considered disruptive may be able to provide a valuable different perspective on the issue and may actually help to strengthen the collaboration. Opposing points of view can create energy that can be productively harnessed. Sometimes a few naysayers can actually help the group to focus.

When partnering with a law enforcement agency, it is important that the active participants from the department include a line-level officer, deputy, or detective, with support from the sheriff or chief or other law enforcement executive. Line-level personnel (such as patrol officers) are most likely to have knowledge of the specific problem or issue and the neighborhood, community, or school in which the problem is located, and they will often have the time to be directly involved in solving the problem. The support of the sheriff or chief, however, is critical to being able to commit organizational resources to an initiative.

Ask the identified stakeholders to participate in an information and visioning meeting. As identified stakeholders agree to participate, ask them to review the stakeholder list and recommend others with a vested interest in the problem that may have been overlooked.

Stakeholders benefit on a number of levels by joining the collaboration. When recruiting stakeholders, it may be helpful to point out some of these benefits, which include the following:

- ◆ A sense of accomplishment from bettering the community
- ◆ Gaining recognition and respect
- ◆ Meeting other community members
- ◆ Learning new skills
- ◆ Fulfilling an obligation to contribute

Each individual and organization brings expectations to the collaboration. Before inviting stakeholders, think about the expectations and potential contributions each person and organization may bring and whether these are within the goals of the project. Once you invite the stakeholders to participate, discuss their individual and organizational expectations for the collaboration. Assess whether these expectations are reasonable and within your goals. Similarly, discuss the contributions and level of involvement that each stakeholder wants and is able to make to the collaborative effort. For example, in addition to their time, some organizational

stakeholders may be willing to contribute additional resources to the collaboration, such as meeting space to host regular meetings, or supplies and equipment to produce educational materials. Although others can only attend certain meetings or may only be interested in a specific activity / project of the collaboration, the collaboration can still work. To ensure a place in the process for all, it will be necessary to identify expectations and level of commitment to engage all stakeholders to achieve genuine lasting success.

Organize for success

Decide who will do what: who will run the program, who will pay for it, and what role various other community-based partners will play. Then put it in writing. Although an informal structure can work initially, a more formal structure will eventually be needed to ensure that the collaborative partnership does not disintegrate due to changes in personnel (e.g., if the facilitator leaves) or other unforeseen circumstances. Memoranda of agreement or understanding can help establish a formal structure and solidify the goals and commitments of the various partners.

Regardless of how clear the vision or how detailed the action plan, if partners do not collectively possess the expertise to complete required tasks of the collaborative effort, there will be doubts about the project's chances for success. It may be frustrating to know what should be done, but not have the talent or skills to accomplish the vision. Each community policing collaboration requires its own specific set of skills and expertise. One of the many positive aspects of collaboration is that because numerous individuals and organizations are involved in the project, no one person must possess all of the skills necessary for success.

With that in mind, there are some action steps that will help achieve success:

Step 1: Identify the knowledge and skills you will need to implement the collaboration.

Ensure the right organizations are at the table, as well as the right individuals within those organizations.

Step 2: Identify partners' knowledge and skills.

As part of the process of identifying stakeholders for the collaborative effort, also identify possible contributions that each of those stakeholders may bring to the collaborative effort. Ask each stakeholder to highlight the knowledge and the skills that he or she brings to project.

Step 3: Identify gaps in knowledge and skills and develop a strategy to fill those gaps.

Once you have assessed the existing range of knowledge and skills available to the collaboration, identify any gaps and develop strategies for how to bring needed skills to the collaboration. For example, partners may decide to identify new stakeholders who can fill knowledge/skills gaps, or partners may choose to implement training or education activities among the existing stakeholders to fill gaps in critical knowledge and skills. Only by carefully analyzing the knowledge/skills needs of the project and developing a realistic plan to access them will the team know that the necessary expertise exists to implement the community policing effort.

Step 4: Ensure that facilitation skills are present within the collaboration.

Facilitation skills are essential for project planning, sustaining stakeholder involvement, conducting effective meetings, resolving conflicts, and ensuring open communication. One or more of the partners may be a facilitator, be willing to learn the skill, or have access to a facilitator. Remember that facilitation is a skill; individuals can learn facilitation techniques, improving their skills with practice. Facilitators act as guides, rather than subject matter experts. The facilitator's responsibility is to ensure structured interaction, while creating an environment in which individuals are comfortable in expressing their views and concerns and engaging in brainstorming, planning, and problem resolution.

Facilitators generally do not participate in discussions—rather, they direct them. A facilitator should

- ◆ enforce the meeting ground rules;
- ◆ draw all persons into the conversation equally;
- ◆ reduce interruptions;
- ◆ explore a variety of alternatives within the discussion;
- ◆ avoid taking sides and instead mediate differences;
- ◆ keep the meeting moving, honoring time constraints;
- ◆ provide objective reporting of decisions.

Develop effective mission and vision statements

Create, maintain, and update simple and practical mission and vision statements and possibly a strategic plan.

- ◆ Be willing to update and change as the need arises.
- ◆ Keep the mission and vision statements in full view of all participants at every meeting (some organizations place their mission and vision statements at the top of each agenda).
- ◆ Stick with it, but
 - if it does not fit any more, change it;
 - do it by consensus (unless a specific and different level of authority has been clearly communicated);
 - consider creating by-laws—as long as the process isn't too time consuming and detailed, causing you to lose focus of the ultimate goal;
 - consider creating and displaying a value statement.

The partnership must have a clear purpose in order to motivate people to get involved. Moreover, the mission should be achievable, because if people think the goal is unrealistic, they may see little benefit in working towards it. A shared vision brings focus to the team. A lack of focus allows for conflicting agendas. As the initiative progresses, collaboration partners should reassess and modify the vision statement if the community's needs change, a problem is solved, or if collaboration membership changes significantly. However, because the vision is the foundation for the community policing collaboration, modifying the vision statement should not be considered lightly.

Gather data and define the problem

Every community has problems, and many neighborhoods have problems in common—drug markets, guns, prostitution, youth gangs, graffiti, and others. But no matter the specific problem, be armed with some facts that answer the following questions: who, what, when, where, and why. For example, if there is an open-air drug dealing in your community, here is some information to have available for the police when you meet:

Who: Do you know who the dealers are? The distributors? The runners and lookouts? The suppliers? The customers? Enablers such as businesses or property owners? Where do they all live?

What: What drugs are being sold? What tactics have the dealers used to conduct their business and protect their turf? To attract customers? To intimidate the community? To recruit workers? To maintain a steady supply of drugs? To evade law enforcement?

When: Most flagrant drug dealing takes place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Is this true in your neighborhood? When does dealing go on? When is it busiest?

Where: What is it about the drug market's location that affects viability? Where are the entrance ways and escape routes? Where are the legitimate enterprises that provide cover? Where are the drugs repackaged and bundled?

Why: Why is there chronic drug dealing at this location? What do you believe are the primary reasons that this particular drug market has been able to flourish?

Although it may be hard to have the answers to all of these questions, be assured that if you ask a few neighborhood residents these questions—even if the answers are incomplete—you will have enough information to take to the police and compare notes

Set realistic goals and objectives

Goals are where you want to go. Objectives are how you are going to get there. Goals should be measurable and observable. They should have specific achievable steps (objectives) with built-in accountability for accomplishment.

- ◆ Goals should be built upon a consensus and be able to develop and adapt as the process matures.
- ◆ Some goals should be met quickly and easily, others should stretch you and the organization.
- ◆ Celebrate and advertise success.
- ◆ Emphasize both process and product.
- ◆ Document baselines to which you can compare.
- ◆ Evaluate how your results compare with the results of others working on similar goals. Be willing to learn from the success of others.
- ◆ Always strive for improvement, evaluate, solicit feedback, and adjust your course as needed.

Again, be as specific as possible. Also, make sure your goals are realistic. Include the following four elements:

1. **Who?** (the target group for change)
2. **What?** (the action or change you expect)
3. **How much?** (the extent of change you expect)
4. **When?** (the timeframe for change)

It is also a good idea to create a system for tracking desired outcomes, in order to effectively measure success.

Evaluate your collaboration

Evaluate your collaboration not only in terms of crime rates but also by using common sense measures that tap into how ordinary people live. Could a person walk through this neighborhood to work a midnight shift? Would parents feel safe with their children playing in a park? Have property values increased? In fact, expect reports of some crimes and disturbances to rise after the project begins. That's because residents will have more trust in their police and be more willing to report incidents.

Ensure sustainability

It is relatively simple for collaboration partners to remain committed as long as their particular issue remains a hot topic. Interest remains high in the short term as partners are engaged and resources are focused. However, after the problem is solved, interest in sustaining the collaboration may wane or disappear altogether. But why waste an effective collaboration? Why not ensure the partnership continues, to address other issues affecting the community? The following key elements will help you do this.

Finding resources

Partnerships need resources to support group activities and to ensure good communication among the partners. Possible funding sources include corporate sponsorship and donations from member businesses and police agencies. Not surprisingly, a lack of funding and resources, particularly in the form of support staff, can make it difficult to keep a collaboration going for very long. However, sustainability does not necessarily require funding. Many long-lasting programs and projects have used little or no funding but have been sustained entirely by volunteers and in-kind contributions.

Here are some action steps to help in finding resources:

Step 1: Leverage power and influence.

A collaborative initiative will often reach a point when additional financial resources, publicity, or support from a certain constituency would make a significant difference in the project's success. This is the time to canvas partners for assistance in identifying elected officials, media personalities, business executives, or respected community leaders who could leverage their resources and influence to assist the collaboration. Too often, collaborations hesitate to ask for assistance, perhaps assuming that powerful or influential community leaders may be overextended and will not commit to yet another effort. However, supporting a well-planned collaborative partnership may be of great interest and benefit for these persons, resulting in a valuable win-win situation.

Step 2: Seek in-kind contributions.

Although not difficult for organizations or individuals to donate, in-kind contributions can be an invaluable resource for the collaboration. Utilizing in-kind contributions (e.g., meeting space, postage, supplies, copying, telephone, food) will help maximize the collaboration's financial resources.

Step 3: Identify the collaboration's financial needs, and develop and implement strategies to secure those resources.

The financial resources needed to implement collaborative projects will depend on the size and scope of the initiative. However, collaborations should identify sources of funding, both short- and long-term. Developing a shared vision and collaborating with a diverse group of partners can open a substantial network of potential financial support. While each community is unique, there tend to be several options that are most likely to help financial problem-solving and other community policing initiatives. These options include private foundations, local and regional corporate support, small business sponsorship, city and county budget allocations for law enforcement and school programs, fundraisers, and local and regional service organizations (e.g., Junior League, Lions Clubs, Rotary, Kiwanis).

Step 4: Develop realistic estimates of how much time partners will need to contribute, and obtain commitments from every partner.

Time is a scarce resource to be used wisely. Collaborative efforts invariably require significant time from the partners (both law enforcement and the community). Whether volunteered or paid for, time is the collaboration's most valuable resource. Consequently, partnerships must

- ◆ clearly define expectations of all partners;
- ◆ develop a timeline of milestones for each task in the action plan;
- ◆ develop mechanisms for using meeting time wisely;
- ◆ carefully allocate tasks among all partners to utilize available human resources most effectively and equitably;
- ◆ respect each individual's time and personal circumstances.

Producing tangible results

Progress towards achieving the goals of the collaboration will become evident when you move beyond mere organizational activities and begin producing tangible results. In the long run, of course, determining what constitutes success is up to your organization; success can, however, be measured using a variety of more objective performance indicators. Remember: if collaborative partners are repeatedly subjected to boring meetings, or if it seems as though nothing is being accomplished, interest will diminish and members may disengage.

Generating goodwill

Maintaining positive relationships among partners can be complicated by a variety of issues, such as competing interests or concerns about confidentiality. Educating your partners about the operation and realities of your organization can build respect and trust. For example, police who are frustrated by the reluctance of business owners to aid in the prosecution of employee thieves or shoplifters, might benefit from knowing that this reluctance stems from the fact that aiding in criminal prosecutions often costs businesses more than doing nothing at all. It is also important to address issues that concern many or most partnership members. If problems are defined by part of the group (e.g., by the police only) rather than the group as a whole, there will be little incentive for the businesses to continue their involvement. Balancing the competing agendas of the various partners is essential to the long-term viability of the partnership.

Taking advantage of early successes

Positive early results will generate excitement and increase the likelihood of continued member involvement. Remember to give credit for success to everyone involved with that success. Take responsibility for mistakes and, when they occur, failures. Find and take opportunities to compliment and celebrate the success of others. As your partnership matures, both responsibility and success will be more evenly shared. In addition, publicizing these successes can cause other potential partners to support or to join the group. Conversely, if partnerships are to carry on past early successes, it is important to have more distant goals to work toward.

Achieve sustainability and a successful collaboration by

- ◆ defining member roles and responsibilities (who will do what);
- ◆ acknowledging and reward team members;
- ◆ involving all partners in project activities, meetings, and discussions;
- ◆ seeking commitment from partners.

In addition to the guidelines discussed above, consider following these simple steps to ensure sustainability:

- ◆ Continually locate and engage resources.
- ◆ Bring in people from outside the collaboration who can provide new information / training / services.
- ◆ Have the members of the collaboration participate in meetings. Presentations should be made by many different individuals within the collaboration including as many of the members as possible.
- ◆ Continue to be open to change. Over time, success may require a change of direction, emphasis, or focus.
- ◆ New goals need to be continuously set and achieved. Evaluate outcomes. Celebrate success! Advertise success! Let the community know about your accomplishments.
- ◆ New people often provide new energy. Commit resources to leadership development.

Remember...

- ◆ Without stakeholder involvement, there is no chance for collaborative problem solving or other community policing initiatives.
- ◆ Without trust, there will be hesitancy to work together as a team. People will hold back and be reluctant to share talents, time, and resources.
- ◆ Without a shared vision, there will be disorder. A shared vision brings focus to the team. A lack of agreed-upon focus allows team members to pursue conflicting agendas.
- ◆ Without expertise, there will be apprehension. It is frustrating to know what should be done but not have the talent within the team to accomplish the goal.
- ◆ Without teamwork (i.e., joint decision making, joint responsibility, and shared power), there will be fragmented action.
- ◆ Without open communication, there will be disorganized and uninformed partners. Information must be freely and regularly shared for a team to function collaboratively.
- ◆ Without motivators, there will be slow progress toward the goal. Motivators prevent apathy, keep the partners interested, and sustain involvement.
- ◆ Without sufficient means, there will be discouraged team members. If the project is larger than the resources available, it is easy for partners to fall into a “what’s the use?” frame of mind.
- ◆ Without an action plan, there will be a lack of focus. An action plan is necessary to guide the team and serves as a means of accountability.

Want to learn more?

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About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concentrates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement. The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- ◆ Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.
- ◆ To date, the COPS Office has funded approximately 125,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.
- ◆ Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- ◆ To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than 8.57 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

COPS Office resources, covering a wide breadth of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—are available, at no cost, through its online Resource Center at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This easy-to-navigate website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

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