

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/budget-poor-community-rich-policing-in-our-new-economy>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

When we speak of the economy, the discussion often centers on the continued loss of resources. Budget cuts, foreclosures, unemployment, and underemployment are pervasive and have become the signature trends in the new U.S. economy. These affect not only everyday spending but also indispensable services, such as those that law enforcement provides and on which society relies. Regardless of the economic climate, we depend on law enforcement to protect and serve our communities. Fittingly, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) focused on this topic in the 2011 COPS Conference, [Advancing Public Safety in a New Economy](#).

In August I attended the conference and learned about effective police-community collaborations and innovative policing approaches. Although only one of the conference's workshop tracks was called Leveraging Resources, this theme repeated throughout the event. It made perfect sense. If we accept that there will always be economic challenges, we can concentrate on maximizing the use of existing resources. To this end, sessions focused on how to make the best use of an agency's volunteers, how to collaborate with the private sector, and how law enforcement can better engage youth and immigrant communities.

These resources are invaluable because they can provide law enforcement with administrative support through civilian or volunteer personnel, communications support through interpretation or translation services, crime detection assistance through leads from members of the community, and possibly even financial support for programs. Shrinking, strained budgets have led law enforcement to draw on these resources as they look for effective low-cost approaches to community policing. Agency by agency, this movement is taking hold and is reshaping the role of policing throughout the country.

You can find copies of presentations and videos from the conference on the [COPS website](#). This page describes and links to additional information about how law enforcement can leverage community resources. For information on working with immigrant communities, refer to Vera's reports [Bridging the Language Divide: Promising Practices for Law Enforcement](#) and [Policing in New Immigrant Communities](#).

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