

# Working with the community - a manual for building police-community partnerships

Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services - building police

One police force in a large U.S. city actively pursues strategies to improve community relations. Using various media such as local cable shows, TV advertising, newspaper advertisements, flyers and word of mouth, the majority of the city's various communities were aware of the police outreach and neighborhood initiatives.

The police department, however, was not sure that information was reaching all communities. It commissioned a survey and found that there was a community, where few spoke any English, where the rate of awareness regarding the department's outreach initiatives was particularly low. The department learned that, unlike in most of the city, most received their news via an ethnic radio station, not by watching television. When the police learned this, they started broadcasting ads and providing information on the radio station, enabling them to reach this community more effectively.

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Have you witnessed police exercise their discretion? As a result, officers investigating these calls were instructed to explain to the victim whether follow up was possible or not and why, so the victim would know what to expect. For example, through the surveys, it was revealed that there was dissatisfaction with the lack of police follow up on crimes reported by the victims. However some police officers, once they have gained a rapport with the community leader s , provide their personal cell phone number so that there is immediate communication if needed.

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This is especially important in communities where some members may not feel at ease to raise issues of concern publicly at regularly scheduled, formal meetings.

## Chapter 1: What Is Community Engagement?

This mantle of responsibility for fighting crime carries with it the obligation for the police to respect the rights of the community members, since the police can only accomplish their task with the cooperation and support of the community. Policies, tactics, and technology used by police officers may be a mystery to most members of the community.

## Developing Partnerships in the Community

The fact that an officer goes out of his or her way to participate in something that is important to a certain segment of the community shows that the officer really cares about the members of that community, not just about enforcing laws. Changes in Police Discretion C.

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