



## Successful Practices & Strategies

Vol. 4 | No. 2

# Niagara Falls Police Department

Niagara Falls, New York

<http://www.nfpolice.com>

### Community policing element

---

Community partnerships

### Problem/issue

---

Lack of attendance at public meetings

### Problem description

---

Even though we publicized our monthly meetings in the local newspaper and via social media, we were unable to get good attendance.

### Community policing strategies implemented

---

We created a program called "Kickin' It With the Cops" where we invite the community to come out and meet with police officials to discuss issues in a safe and nonthreatening environment. We hold a meeting once a month during the summer and cook hot dogs and have a bounce house for children to play in while their parents talk to members of the police department. It has been successful thus far. The location changes each time to a part of the city where there is normally a lot of both foot and vehicle traffic.

### Change and/or impact as a result of these community policing efforts

---

Each successive session that we held over the summer was more successful than the one before. At one of the meetings we also invited an antique car club to come out and display vintage automobiles for kids and adults to view and ask questions about.

The Niagara Falls Police Department saw an increase in community trust and willingness to communicate during and after the events. Many of the people that attended had never had a positive interaction with law enforcement before either as an adult or a child. The children present also got a sense of positive police interaction and a sense of being able to trust the police.



Believe it or not, the majority of the issues we heard from citizens at the events were positive in nature. They described of a good interaction with an officer or how they were happy with services rendered. Other things we heard were quality-of-life issues such as a new garbage tote program the city had recently rolled out and road or paving problems. By answering their questions and concerns honestly and with concern, we believe we were able to build some trust and rapport with people who normally would not have come forward.

### Lessons learned through program implementation

---

We learned that attendance and interest were higher if we were proactive and “went to the citizens” rather than asking them to come to us. It showed that we had a genuine interest and care for their opinions and complaints.

---

The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

The Internet references cited in this document were valid as of the date of publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author(s) nor the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services can vouch for their current validity.

Published 2017