Camden's Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress

A guide for law enforcement and community screenings

by Sonia Tsuruoka

Partners in stopping hate

NOT IN OUR TOWN
STOP HATE. TOGETHER.

COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Photo credit: Not In Our Town

Camden County officers line up for roll call.

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Contents

Acknowledgments . . . . . **v**

Introduction **1**

Getting Started: Key Ideas and Definitions **3**

Defining community-oriented policing 3

Elements of community-oriented policing 4

Preparation for Facilitators **9**

Preview the film 9

Know the audience 9

Invite diverse community members 9

Review the goals and objectives 9

Plan the program 9

Set ground rules 10

Law Enforcement Screenings and Discussion Questions **11**

Overview of basic concepts 11

Application of basic concepts 12

Next steps 12

Community Screenings and Discussion Questions **13**

Overview of basic concepts 14

Next steps 14

Takeaways and Next Steps **15**

Establish public trust as a metric of success 15

Build partnerships with community organizations 15

Design a supportive internal framework 15

Resources **17**

Films 17

Online resources 18

Publications 18

About the COPS Office **21**

Photo credit: Not In Our Town

Sergeant Ralph Thornton

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Photo credit: Not In Our Town

A Camden County officer engages a youth at a community event.

Introduction

The film *Camden's Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress*, which runs for 28 minutes, details Chief J. Scott Thomson's efforts to reverse the longstanding notoriety of Camden, New Jersey, as the most dangerous city in the United States. As the sixth leader in five years to preside over the Camden Police Department, Thomson was determined to provide a solution, rather than a temporary fix, to the broken status quo. However, following a period of economic downturn, the Camden Police Department—confronted with skyrocketing rates of violent crime, the proliferation of open-air drug markets, and swiftly deteriorating community relationships—was disbanded in 2013 in favor of a county-wide police department.

Chief Thomson, emboldened by community support and his appetite for reform, was sworn in as police chief of the new Camden County Police Department, which evolved into a national model for community-oriented policing. Central to Thomson's approach was his advocacy for the slow but seismic shift from a warrior to a guardian mentality, a fundamental departure from the traditional metrics of success that defined policing for decades. The Camden County Police Department has increasingly embodied, both in statement and in practice, a newfound departmental culture of engagement, rather than enforcement, grounded in building relationships between law enforcement and the marginalized communities the department is sworn to serve. Today, its forward-thinking strategies—including updated training in de-escalation and reinvestment in foot patrols—continue to positively impact public safety outcomes in Camden.

> *"Hold a conversation, or take a stroll with a pedestrian. Once you do that, you slowly but surely gain the trust of the community."*
>
> — ***Nioshjah***
> *Camden community youth*

The film *Camden's Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress* provides a narrative for change, particularly given heightened attention to the fraught and frequently explosive relationship between law enforcement and communities of color. Chief Thompson demonstrates not only the possibility but also the unmistakable necessity of practicing the core elements of community-oriented policing: community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving. Given the impact of this paradigmatic shift on public safety outcomes, including reduced violence and use of force complaints, Camden County Police Department and its continuing successes underscore that "the solution to our problems in our most challenged communities does not lie in a pistol or a pair of handcuffs," as Thomson states in the film.

Law enforcement agencies are invited to incorporate a screening of *Camden's Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress* into training sessions and community events to

- establish internal and external best practices that help construct an agency-wide framework for community-oriented policing;
- develop strong community-based partnerships in the interest of violence reduction and other improvements in public safety outcomes;
- cultivate knowledge of de-escalation techniques and related training imperatives to reduce excessive use of force complaints;
- promote an agency-wide culture of accountability and professionalism, from executive leadership to rank-and-file officers.

Both community groups and law enforcement agencies are invited to host public screenings of the film. These community events could include government agencies, community organizations, and other relevant stakeholders with the goal of initiating conversations about community-oriented policing and the benefits of building collaborative public safety partnerships.

The film and this accompanying screening guide are a part of a project titled The Guardians: Stories of 21st Century Policing, a collaboration between Not In Our Town (NIOT) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office). To access all available film resources and tools, visit NIOT's online hub at www.NIOT.org/COPS.

The Guardians: Stories of 21st Century Policing

As views of law enforcement and the communities it serves become increasingly polarized around the country, NIOT is collaborating with the COPS Office to share real-life examples of police-community partnerships that build public trust, reduce crime, and increase safety for residents and officers alike.

Based on recommendations from The Task Force on 21st Century Policing, which President Obama appointed in 2014, resources from The Guardians: Stories of 21st Century Policing initiative include an online hub at www.NIOT.org/COPS, a series of new films and guidebooks highlighting successful practices, and a network of law enforcement leaders committed to spreading community policing strategies that promote safety and inclusion for all.

The films (1) capture the nuance and difficulty of real police work, (2) provide realistic and meaningful examples of how community-oriented policing works and why it is effective, and (3) serve as tools to spark discussion and action through officer trainings and community screenings. *Camden's Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress* is the first film released through the project.

Getting Started: Key Ideas and Definitions

Defining community-oriented policing

Community-oriented policing, as both an abstract concept and real-world practice, has evolved over the past three decades, though its historical origins can be said to date as far back as the creation of the London Metropolitan Police District in 1829 under Sir Robert Peel.[1] The COPS Office, which is responsible for advancing the practice of community policing, provides the following modern definition:

> 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.[2]

While criminal justice practitioners, community advocates, and academic experts have regularly engaged in semantic disputes over the definition of community-oriented policing, their continuing discussions have, nevertheless, broadened comprehension of the subject in this field. Community-oriented policing—which encompasses philosophical, strategic, tactical, and organizational dimensions—reflects a fundamental re-imagination of the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the communities they are sworn to serve. This philosophy encourages officers to transition from a warrior to a guardian mentality, prioritizing the cultivation of collaborative rather than adversarial relationships with the public.

> *"When are we going to change the metrics of success as a police department?"*
>
> — ***J. Scott Thomson***
> *Chief of Police, Camden County Police Department*

Perhaps most significantly, this approach is grounded in the recognition that public trust, particularly among marginalized communities, remains essential to public safety. For example, decades of research demonstrate that public trust and, by extension, perceptions of police legitimacy contribute to (1) greater public deference when the police have personal interactions

1. Gayle Fisher-Stewart, *Community Policing Explained: A Guide for Local Governments* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2007), https://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P136.
2. *Community Policing Defined* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014), 1, https://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P157.

with members of the community,[3] (2) increased compliance with the law,[4] (3) higher levels of cooperation with police efforts to manage crime,[5] and (4) stronger institutional support for law enforcement agencies.[6]

In addition, community-oriented policing identifies the co-production of public safety strategies by law enforcement and the communities they serve as a foundational principle. This relationship-based mode of decision-making, which broadens the range of non-punitive options available to law enforcement, not only fosters community satisfaction, clears up perceptions of disorder, and supports police legitimacy[7] but also leverages critical resources to support existing policing strategies.[8]

For example, in the film, after the Camden County Police Department discovered that one-third of the city's violence was juvenile-related, Deputy Chief Joseph Wysocki established Project Guardian in 2015, drawing together representatives from law enforcement, religious, and social service groups to support at-risk teens.[9] Wysocki also reached out to Mark Lee, a formerly incarcerated but now reformed Camden resident, to intervene and discourage teens from gang involvement. As a speaker for Project Guardian, Lee said he can reach places the police department can't, leveraging himself as a resource within the community. He praises Project Guardian, as well as the Camden County Police Department's larger investment in community-oriented policing, observing that "when they changed the police force, order returned. . . . You start seeing the cop's presence, the cop walking the beat."

Elements of community-oriented policing

According to the COPS Office, community-oriented policing in the 21st century comprises three key components: community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving.[10]

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3. Tom R. Tyler and Yuen J. Huo, *Trust in the Law: Encouraging Public Cooperation with the Police and Courts* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002).
4. Tom R. Tyler, "Procedural Justice, Legitimacy, and Compliance," in *Why People Obey the Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 3–7.
5. Tom R. Tyler and Jeffrey Fagan, "Legitimacy and Cooperation: Why Do People Help the Police Fight Crime in their Communities?" *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 6, no. 231 (2008): 231–275, http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/students/groups/osjcl/files/2012/05/Tyler-Fagan-PDF.pdf.
6. Jason Sunshine and Tom R. Tyler, "The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing," *Law and Society Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 555–548.
7. Charlotte Gill et al., "Community-Oriented Policing to Reduce Crime, Disorder and Fear and Increase Satisfaction and Legitimacy among Citizens: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 10, no. 4 (2014): 399–428.
8. Anthony A. Braga, "Crime and Policing Revisited," *New Perspectives in Policing* (September 2015): 17–19, https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/248888.pdf.
9. Michelle Caffrey, "'They Have a Choice': How Camden Police are Guarding Teens from Gang Violence," NJ.com, May 24, 2015, http://www.nj.com/camden/index.ssf/2015/05/they_have_a_choice_how_camden_police_are_guarding.html.
10. *Community Policing Defined*, 1 (see note 2).

Community Policing's Three Key Components

1. **Community partnerships:** Collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police
2. **Organizational transformation:** The alignment of organizational management, structure, personnel, and information systems to support community partnerships and proactive problem solving
3. **Problem solving:** The process of engaging in the proactive and systematic examination of identified problems to develop and evaluate effective responses

Source: *Community Policing Defined* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014), 1, https://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p157-pub.pdf.

Community partnerships

More than a century of research has well-established that law enforcement agencies cannot ensure through their activities alone the safety of the communities they serve; in fact, informal social control, compared to formal punishment, remains the most powerful, evidence-based mechanism for the prevention and reduction of crime within communities.[11] Consequently, community-oriented policing requires law enforcement agencies and their personnel to build positive relationships with members of the public and partnerships with community organizations, government agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to improve problem solving around public safety.

Central to community-oriented policing is the fundamental conviction that communities are entitled to a collaborative role in public safety solutions. Whereas traditional policing embraces a unilateral approach to law enforcement, community-oriented policing embraces a multilateral approach in which communities themselves inform departmental priorities, policies, and practices within the criminal justice system. This agency-wide shift in prioritizing engagement over enforcement addresses the lack of confidence marginalized communities have in local, state, and federal law enforcement.

> *"Generally, the only time we ever knocked on somebody's door . . . was either a moment of crisis or a moment of enforcement."*
>
> — ***J. Scott Thomson***
> *Chief of Police, Camden County Police Department*

11. President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), 43, https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf.

The Nine Components of an Effective Community Partnership

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

Source: Michael S. McCampbell, *The Collaboration Toolkit for Law Enforcement: Effective Strategies to Partner with the Community* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2011), 10, https://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P221.

Organizational transformation

To be effective, community-oriented policing and its underlying core principles must be entrenched in agency-wide structures, policies, and practices, extending from the highest echelons of executive leadership to rank-and-file officers on the frontlines of service. During his testimony before the Task Force on 21st Century Policing on February 13, 2015, Chief Thomson emphasized the following:

> Community policing cannot be a program, unit, strategy or tactic. It must be the core principle that lies at the foundation of a police department's culture. The only way to significantly reduce fear, crime, and disorder and then sustain these gains is to leverage the greatest force multiplier: the people of the community.[12]

12. J. Scott Thomson (oral testimony at "Listening Session on Community Policing and Crime Reduction: Using Community Policing to Reduce Crime" for the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, Phoenix, AZ, February 13, 2015), as quoted in President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*, 43 (see note 11).

If law enforcement agencies hope to transform the organizational culture, it is essential that agencies construct and reinforce a departmental framework that affirms community-oriented policing as its highest organizing principle, and agencies should demonstrate this commitment through changes in organizational management, strategic planning, and decision-making; personnel hiring, training, evaluation, and promotion; and information systems. From training in de-escalation techniques to tactical reinvestment in foot patrols, the agency's surrounding ethos should support community partnerships and collaborative problem solving.

> *"If you're looking to change a culture from within, you have to first teach officers the way that you want them to act. And then you have to sustain that training over time."*
>
> — ***Kevin Lutz***
> *Lieutenant, Camden County Police Department*

Problem solving

Collaborative problem solving synchronizes the efforts of law enforcement agencies, social service providers, and community networks to mobilize the most suitable resources to resolve problems.[13] This approach is predicated upon the fundamental conviction that law enforcement should engage in not only responsive but also preventive policing. For example, officers are encouraged to identify and address underlying quality-of-life conditions, which is a departure from traditional metrics of success—such as incidents, citations, arrests, and clearance rates—that have defined policing for decades.

> *"We're only as good as our community allows us to be. Without them making the phone call, without them talking to the walking beat officer, we can't be an effective police department."*
>
> — ***Ralph Thornton***
> *Sergeant, Camden County Police Department*

13. Michael S. McCampbell, *The Collaboration Toolkit for Law Enforcement: Effective Strategies to Partner with the Community* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2011), https://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P221.

Photo credit: Not In Our Town

Chief of Police J. Scott Thomson and Russel Farmer talk inside Mr. Farmer's tonsorial parlor.

Preparation for Facilitators

The event facilitator, who may be with a law enforcement agency or a community group, plays an important role in leading the audience through the process of viewing the film, understanding the lessons, and taking action in their community. Whoever facilitates the screening or moderates the discussion must emphasize that the event or training provides a safe space for all attendees to interact and share their thoughts. The following ideas can help event facilitators prepare for organizing and leading the discussion:

Preview the film

The facilitator should watch the film in advance of the screening and discussion and allow time to process his or her response to the film. What are the key messages? Why is this film relevant to the audience and the issues they are facing?

Know the audience

Think about who will be in attendance, and develop ways to reach a broad range of community members and different levels of law enforcement personnel. The facilitator should also be aware of the issues that currently exist in the community, its history of division or tension, and some of the positive work being done to address these issues.

Invite diverse community members

For community screenings, work with the event planners to invite diverse community members. Reach out to local faith-based organizations, civil and human rights groups, schools, and other law enforcement agencies as appropriate. It is important to ensure that every audience member has equal time to participate. Also, understand that there may be tensions between different community groups or between groups and law enforcement. Setting ground rules (see page 10) could help alleviate potential issues that arise.

Review the goals and objectives

Discuss with the organizers their goals for the screening and their objectives for accomplishing those goals. The facilitator should be mindful of these objectives and ensure the goals are met. Being attentive to time management and staying on task with the agenda are critical to facilitating a productive dialogue. However, flexibility is needed to allow for issues to arise organically and for people to be able to express their ideas and share their stories.

Plan the program

If working with a co-facilitator, review this guide, and discuss roles and responsibilities, including how to support each other and how to manage time. Facilitators and sponsors should discuss who might perform other key roles such as additional speakers, hosts, greeters, or note takers.

Set ground rules

For all discussions, state ground rules to ensure respectful conversations. Posting these ground rules around the room can be helpful. Develop and adapt the rules for every unique context, depending on age, region, and other relevant factors; however, the following common ground rules can serve as a starting point:

- Listen actively. Respect others when they are talking.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing. (For example, say *I* instead of *they*, *we*, and *you*.)
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks. Focus on ideas.
- Participate to the fullest extent of your ability. Community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- Instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.
- The goal is not to agree but to gain a deeper understanding.
- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses. These can be as disrespectful as words.

Law Enforcement Screenings and Discussion Questions

The film *Camden's Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress* can be used in an internal training seminar to initiate and sustain conversations around community-oriented policing and its key components: community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving.

These film screenings should be accompanied by on-the-ground changes based on feedback from law enforcement personnel. While the philosophy of community-oriented policing encompasses a number of defined components (see the "Getting Started" chapter on page 3), the real-world practice of community-oriented policing does not and cannot prescribe a one-size-fits-all solution for every local context. For example, agency-wide commitment to community-oriented policing could involve an investment in implicit bias, procedural justice, or de-escalation training curriculum; changes in policy and practice to provide infrastructural support for community engagement; and the creation of neighborhood-based collaborative partnerships with community organizations.

To establish organizational commitment, consider organizing a series of film screenings throughout the agency, beginning with members of command staff who can impress the importance of the film's message before screenings among rank-and-file officers. The film can also be incorporated, wherever appropriate, into the curriculum delivered to new recruits at local and regional law enforcement academies.

Suggested discussion questions also depend on respective audiences; for example, members of command staff may be better positioned to address questions about high-level departmental priorities, policies, and practices, whereas rank-and-file officers may be better positioned to identify specific public safety concerns within communities.

Discussion questions should initially focus on the basic concepts presented in the film, followed by further discussion on the application of those concepts, and conclude with questions about possible next steps the audience can take:

Overview of basic concepts

- How is community-oriented policing defined in the film? In your opinion, what motivated the police department to embrace community-oriented policing?
- What kind of challenges did the department face in the film? How did the department address these challenges under community-oriented policing?
- What kind of challenges did the community face in the film? How did the community address these challenges under community-oriented policing?

- How did the department demonstrate its commitment to community-oriented policing? What were some examples of policies or practices that supported this commitment?
- What were some examples of community partnerships in the film? In your opinion, what were the immediate and long-term benefits of these community partnerships?

Application of basic concepts

- How would you define community-oriented policing for your law enforcement agency? What are the ways in which your agency could benefit from community-oriented policing?
- What are the ways in which you measure success as a law enforcement agency? Going forward, do you think your agency should measure success differently?
- What do you think it means to shift from a warrior to a guardian mentality? What do you think this shift would look like, both on an agency-wide and individual level?
- Does your agency have de-escalation or implicit bias training? If it does, have there been positive results? If it doesn't, do you think training could be beneficial?
- In your opinion, what is the role of sergeants in implementing community-oriented policing strategies? What is the role of rank-and-file officers?
- How would you describe your and your agency's relationship with the communities you serve? How could this relationship be improved to increase public trust?

Next steps

- How can your agency implement community-oriented policing reforms? What are the obstacles to implementing these reforms? How can these obstacles be overcome?
- What is your agency already doing that constitutes community-oriented policing? In your opinion, what is working? What continues to be a challenge?
- What are some examples of changes in policies, practices, and training that could support community-oriented policing in your agency?
- How can your agency work with your officer association or union to implement community-oriented policing reforms?
- What are some community organizations or government agencies that could serve as partners? What infrastructural support is needed to support these partnerships?

Community Screenings and Discussion Questions

Community groups and law enforcement agencies can host public screenings of the film *Camden's Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress* for a variety of audiences—such as government agencies, community organizations, and other relevant stakeholders—to initiate conversations on community-oriented policing and the benefits of building collaborative public safety partnerships.

Consider organizing participants into small breakout groups for part of the discussion. Especially with large audiences, difficult or open-ended questions might make some people feel uncomfortable or shy about speaking out; these individuals might share more openly in a smaller group. One person from each group can be responsible for reporting to the larger audience about the experiences, perceived challenges, proposed strategies, or other issues raised in the breakout session.

> *"If somebody would have talked to me at that age, I would have spun around and said, 'Look, I got to give myself a chance.'"*
>
> — ***Mark Lee***
> *Camden ex-convict and reformed community member*

In a theater setting where breakout sessions are logistically difficult, ask a discussion question and then encourage attendees to hold a five-minute conversation with the person in the next seat. Consider concluding the segment by asking three or four pairs to share their findings with the larger audience. Taking about 10–15 minutes on this exercise may serve as a useful warm up for those who are reluctant to speak in groups.

Community members should have adequate time to speak about their experiences. Honest criticism can be a very important and constructive part of the discussion; however, verbal attacks should be discouraged. An experienced facilitator, particularly someone who has credibility with the community at large, can be a great benefit, especially with larger groups or in groups where tensions are known. Keep in mind that the goal is participatory conversation, and the opportunity for people to engage can be as important as anything in particular that might be said.

Discussion questions should focus on the experience of the community members as much as possible. The questions should initially focus on the basic concepts presented in the film and conclude with questions about possible next steps the audience can take:

Overview of basic concepts

- How is community-oriented policing defined in the film? In your opinion, what motivated the police department to embrace community-oriented policing?
- What kind of challenges did the department face in the film? How did the department address these challenges under community-oriented policing?
- What kind of challenges did the community face in the film? How did the community address these challenges under community-oriented policing?
- How did the department demonstrate its commitment to community-oriented policing? What were some examples of policies or practices that supported this commitment?
- What were some examples of community partnerships in the film? In your opinion, what were the immediate and long-term benefits of these community partnerships?

Next steps

- How would you define community-oriented policing? What are the ways in which your law enforcement agency could benefit from community-oriented policing?
- Do you think communities should play a role in public safety solutions? What role would you like to play, in partnership with law enforcement, to prevent or reduce crime?
- What are some examples of specific, public safety issues in your community? What can you do, in partnership with law enforcement, to address these specific issues?
- How would you describe your current relationship with your law enforcement agency? What are the ways in which this relationship could potentially be improved?
- How did the police department demonstrate its commitment to community-oriented policing in the film? What actions would you like to see your law enforcement agency take?
- What specific partnerships or programs would you like to see implemented in your community in partnership with your law enforcement agency?

Takeaways and Next Steps

Establish public trust as a metric of success

Law enforcement agencies should establish public trust as a metric of success in organizational management, strategic planning, and decision-making; personnel hiring, training, evaluation, and promotion; and information systems. For example, supervisors could consider community-oriented policing activities and relationship building in performance evaluations, thereby reinforcing an organizational culture grounded in engagement as opposed to enforcement.

Given that public trust, particularly among marginalized communities, remains essential to public safety, law enforcement agencies should also create mechanisms to measure and analyze perceptions of police legitimacy within the communities they serve. As a matter of practice, law enforcement agencies should proactively solicit public feedback through various means, including neighborhood-based listening sessions and annual community surveys.

Build partnerships with community organizations

Law enforcement agencies should begin building partnerships by creating list of reliable community organizations, social service providers, and other stakeholders with the resources to participate in collaborative problem solving. This list should also include organizations that provide diversion-oriented approaches and alternatives to incarceration for at-risk youth who already experience disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system.

Police-community partnerships should establish a larger infrastructure for the co-production of public safety. For example, the partnership could create a formal committee that meets monthly to synchronize the efforts of government agencies, community organizations, and social service providers to ensure community members can receive the most helpful resources for their specific situations.

Design a supportive internal framework

Law enforcement agencies should design a supportive organizational framework to affirm community-oriented policing as its highest principle. This commitment will most likely necessitate a review of agency priorities, policies, and practices to ensure they support community engagement and collaborative problem-solving: for example, the agency may discover it needs to renew its investment in implicit bias, procedural justice, or de-escalation training.

However, as Chief Thomson emphasized in the film, any requisite infrastructural changes should not preclude the cultivation of a culture of community-oriented policing. Indeed, the creation of new cultural norms requires consistent messaging from executive leadership, command staff, and other supervisors with respect to rank-and-file officers serving on the front lines of policing.

Photo credit: Not In Our Town

Officer Michael Shirk reads to a student at a local elementary school.

Resources

Films

Beyond the Badge: Profile of School Resource Officer

https://www.niot.org/cops/beyondthebadge

This short film follows Officer Ronald Cockrell, an SRO in St. Louis County, Missouri, during a school day at Central Middle School in the Riverview Gardens School District, six months after a police shooting and protests left North St. Louis County reeling. The story focuses on Cockrell's efforts to build relationships, listen to students at a school town hall address their fear of the police, mentor young people on how to deal with conflicts, and work with his colleagues to support a student whose father is murdered.

Moses Robinson: School Guardian (Film)

https://www.niot.org/cops/moses-robinson-school-guardian

School Resource Officer Moses Robinson works to bridge the gap between students and police officers in Rochester, New York. This story focuses on Robinson's efforts to build relationships, listen to and mentor students, and work with his colleagues to promote positive youth development by creating a culture based on understanding and mutual respect.

Not In Our Town: On the Ground with Law Enforcement

https://www.niot.org/cops/not-our-town-ground-law-enforcement

This film highlights local Not In Our Town groups collaborating with their law enforcement agencies to build safe and inclusive communities. The NIOT group in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, organized an event to revitalize the community's efforts to stand up to hate. In Davis, California, a mother brings the community and law enforcement together after her son was brutally beaten because of his sexual orientation. And in Marshalltown, Iowa, a coalition of law enforcement, school, faith, and business leaders launched a campaign to prevent bullying and hate.

Waking in Oak Creek

https://www.niot.org/cops/wakinginoakcreek

This short film reveals the powerful and inspiring community response to intolerance after deadly hate crime shootings at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin. In the year following the attack, the mayor, police department, and community members are awakened and transformed by the Sikh Spirit of Chardi Kala, or relentless optimism.

Online resources

Building Relationships with the Muslim Community

https://www.niot.org/cops/resources/webinar-building-relationships-muslim-community

This hour-long webinar features three law enforcement professionals from around the country who discuss their agency's outreach efforts to the Muslim community, local elected officials, and diverse community members to de-escalate tensions and to foster safety and inclusion.

Publications

Coffee with a Cop

https://www.niot.org/cops/casestudies/coffee-cop-0

This article, centered around National Coffee with a Cop Day, highlights efforts around the country to break down barriers and build trust between law enforcement officers and the community members they serve. Both parties, amidst rising tensions at a national level, get to know each other—over coffee—and discover mutual goals for the communities they live in and serve.

The Collaboration Toolkit for Law Enforcement: Effective Strategies to Partner with the Community

http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P221

Community leaders, researchers, and police officials know the police cannot substantially impact crime by themselves. Community involvement and collaboration is an integral part of any long-term, problem-solving strategy. At the most basic level, the community provides law enforcement agencies with invaluable information on both the problems that concern them and the nature of those problems. This toolkit helps law enforcement initiate partnerships within their communities to collaborate on solving crime problems at the neighborhood level.

Doing it Right: Proactive Community Engagement in Redlands, California

https://www.niot.org/cops/casestudies/doing-it-right-proactive-community-engagement-redlands-california

This article, originally published in the March 2014 Community Policing Dispatch from the COPS Office, highlights the Redlands Police Department and its mission to build and maintain strong ties with the community.

Engaging the Community in the Absence of a Crisis

https://www.niot.org/cops/casestudies/engaging-community-absence-crisis

This article, originally published in the July 2013 Community Policing Dispatch from the COPS Office, highlights the experiences of retired Long Beach (California) Police Commander Josef Levy, who served in the city's diverse, sometimes challenging, West Division.

Preventing and Addressing Bullying and Intolerance

https://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p334-pub.pdf

This guide is a primary resource for law enforcement officers who play a large role in helping to educate children and adults about (1) problems resulting from bullying, (2) ways to prevent and intervene in bullying incidents, and (3) ways to transform student behavior. It includes key definitions of bullying and intolerance; strategies for law enforcement to partner with school leaders; and ideas for law enforcement officers, school and community leaders, and students to collaborate and take action together.

Photo credit: Not In Our Town

Chief of Police J. Scott Thomson

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, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

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. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 130,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- 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 eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, www.cops.usdoj.gov. This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

This guide is designed as a tool for law enforcement and community stakeholders to facilitate screenings and discussions of the 28-minute Not In Our Town film *Camden's Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress*. Produced in collaboration with the COPS Office, the film discusses how the entire Camden (New Jersey) Police Department was laid off in 2013 after years of mistrust, violent crime, high arrest rates, and devastating poverty in the city, and the Camden County Police Department took over policing in the city. Moreover, the film examines how the new department's implementation of community policing reforms has helped the once crime-ridden city to turn around.

This guide provides discussion questions and tips for organizing internal law enforcement agency and community screenings, information about community-oriented policing, and supplemental resources. Used together, the film and guide can help agencies and community groups work together to initiate conversations around community-oriented policing, to improve law enforcement–community relations, to help build collaborative public safety partnerships, and to synchronize city-wide resources to better support community members' specific needs.

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
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To obtain details on COPS Office programs,
call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at **www.cops.usdoj.gov**.

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