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POLICE PERSPECTIVES

BUILDING TRUST IN  
A DIVERSE NATION

No.2

# How to Serve Diverse Communities



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

**VERA**  
INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

POLICE PERSPECTIVES

BUILDING TRUST IN A DIVERSE NATION | NO. 2

# How to Serve Diverse Communities

Edited by Caitlin Gokey and Susan Shah



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# Letter from the Director of the COPS Office

Dear colleagues,

As law enforcement agencies work hard nationwide to improve trust with their communities, policing in a diverse community can still be very challenging. Recent incidents have highlighted community concerns, and conversations about public safety priorities are often strained.

Recognizing the vital importance of trust to community cooperation, public safety, and national security, the Vera Institute of Justice worked with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to research and write *Police Perspectives: Building Trust in a Diverse Nation*. A three-part series dedicated to providing practical, real-life strategies for building relationships of mutual trust between law enforcement agencies and diverse communities, it highlights strategies that are consistent with the report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, which used building community trust as its foundation.

*How to Serve Diverse Communities*, the second publication in the series, opens a window into the lives and struggles of new immigrants, teenagers, and transgender people by presenting myth-busting facts and other important information.

In addition to a new level of understanding, readers will find practical guidance for everyday concerns such as overcoming language and cultural barriers, developing anti-gang strategies, and understanding the safety concerns of the transgender community. Through the real-life experiences of diverse law enforcement professionals combined with the expert advice of other professionals, they will also find implementable ideas that reflect the realities of the field.

I commend the Vera Institute of Justice for the effort and dedication they devoted to developing what is sure to become an important tool for agencies seeking to build productive relationships with all members of their communities.

And I thank the many police officers, organizations, and experts who contributed to this guide. The lessons to be learned from their experiences can be of great value not only to law enforcement, but to social services, health, education and other caring professional organizations – as well as to communities throughout the country.

We are at a pivotal time in American law enforcement, when relationships between minority populations and police can be transformed. It will take commitment, perseverance and time, but it can be done. The future of law enforcement and all Americans depends on it, and this guide can be of great help as we work toward that goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Davis', written in a cursive style.

Ronald L. Davis  
Director  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



# Letter from the President of the Vera Institute of Justice

Dear colleagues,

The face of America is changing as our nation’s population grows more diverse by the day and racial and ethnic minority groups spread beyond traditional urban settings into the surrounding suburbs and small communities beyond. And while this diversity contributes to the rich tapestry of American culture, we have seen that tragedies can result when law enforcement agencies and diverse communities see one another as adversaries.

A police agency’s commitment to community policing—building relationships with community members to foster an environment of trust between officers and the people they serve—can help officers meaningfully engage with diverse communities. In many law enforcement agencies, however, there has been little guidance on how to operationalize community policing initiatives.

Negotiating the cultural, religious, and language barriers that can exist between communities and law enforcement officers can yield significant benefits. Through regular meetings with residents, community-informed crime prevention strategies and programs, local partnerships, and an honest assessment of departmental strengths and weaknesses, police can gain a greater understanding of a community’s public safety concerns. Not only does this approach allow police to tailor their services and enforcement efforts to meet local needs, but it also fosters a sense of shared responsibility for public safety in the community.

The Vera Institute of Justice has a long history of developing and encouraging innovative ways to strengthen the ties between police and the community. We are pleased to have produced this guidebook series with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and are especially proud to have worked hand in hand with some of our nation’s finest. Law enforcement response to our initial solicitation was incredible, and we are proud to have worked so closely with so many talented officers, justice experts, and high-ranking police leaders. Each author eagerly offered lessons and strategies for cultivating community trust borne of their own experiences—both successful and otherwise. Through the essays, tips, case studies, and one-on-one interviews contained in this guide, their words reflect on the past, provide guidance for the present, and offer hope for the future of police-community relations in an increasingly diverse America.



Nicholas Turner, President, Vera Institute of Justice

# Letter from the National President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

*“Policing is one of America’s most noble professions. The actions of any police officer, in an instant, can impact an individual for life and even a community for generations. Given this realization, every police officer must be centered on what is important. Service, justice, fundamental fairness—these are the foundational principles in which every police action must be grounded.”*

— Dr. Stephen R. Covey

Over the year 2015, there have been several instances where a life was lost during seemingly routine police encounters—encounters that called into question the character of policing. As a result of these events, a palpable divide was created between law enforcement and the communities that we serve. And for some who reside in our more diverse communities, this divide was arguably expanded. All of these encounters, whether they occurred in a large urban city or in a small suburban town, had one thing in common—they all caused our country and government officials to reexamine and rethink the way that police engage with our communities.

The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) is proud to have played a central role in our nation’s efforts to improve the level of respect between police and citizens, by serving as a key member of President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and by working closely with the United States Department of Justice and its Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. NOBLE has sought to be a part of the discourse bringing a fresh look to how police can professionally engage with the communities they serve and how communities can respectfully engage with the police that serve them.

This commitment continues with our contribution to this important, timely work by the Vera Institute of Justice. As the policing profession goes through a much needed “organizational introspection,” this guidebook series, *Police Perspectives: Building Trust in a Diverse Nation*, will provide industry professionals with a critical addition to the ever-expanding portfolio of promising practices they can referenced in their efforts to “get it right” when engaging with and building trust within our nation’s diverse communities.

I’ve worked in the law enforcement and public safety professions for more than 30 years, and have often had the opportunity to work with the leadership and research staff from the Vera Institute of Justice. It is no surprise to me that they had the foresight to develop and compile this important work before the events of 2015, events that many believe will serve as seminal moments in the policing profession.

As an organization that prides itself on being the “Conscience of Law Enforcement,” NOBLE would like to acknowledge the men and women of law enforcement who contributed to the development of this guidebook series, many of whom are members of our organization. Their tireless efforts, combined with the wisdom and foresight of the Vera Institute of Justice, have created a one-of-a-kind training vehicle that provides promise for the hope of police officials reconnecting with and establishing strong ties within our nation’s many diverse communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory A. Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Gregory A. Thomas  
National President  
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

# Letter from the Founder of the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association

Dear colleagues,

The New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association is honored to have contributed to the Vera Institute's series of guides focused on building trust with diverse communities. The association's participation was robust, with several members contributing to the effort, including Laila Cristobal, sergeant, Passaic Police Department; Dennis Lam, retired lieutenant, Madison Police Department; Joseph Luistro, officer, Edison Police Department; Robert May, retired detective, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department; Samantha Oh, investigator, Bergen County Sheriff's Office; and TJ Patel, detective, Piscataway Police Department.

The publication of these guides is timely and necessary, as the events of 2014 and 2015 necessitate a fresh look at the relationship between the law enforcement community and the public. These publications do just that. The association wishes to acknowledge the Vera Institute's efforts to seek out such a wide range of law enforcement professionals for this publication, including professional law enforcement personnel who happen to be of Asian-American background.

Sincerely,

Robert May  
President Emeritus and Founder  
New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association

# Acknowledgments

The editors would like to thank the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services for providing us with the opportunity to document current promising and field-tested practices for working with diverse communities. In particular, we would like to thank our Program Manager, Toni Morgan-Wheeler, for her consistent support throughout this project. We hope that this resource, developed for police, by police, will serve as a practical, operational tool for officers seeking to improve relations with the communities they serve.

Throughout the course of this project, a number of individuals contributed to crafting this guidebook series. We would like to thank the following people: Chris Munzing, Patricia Connelly, Mary Crowley, and Michael Mehler for their communications support; Jasmine Eshkar for her help identifying project partners and coordinating outreach; Jim Isenberg and Charlane Brown-Wyands for their guidance and advisement; the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Relations Service, the National Latino Peace Officers Association (NLPOA), the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA), and the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association (NJAALEOA) for helping us identify potential contributors; retired Detective Robert May of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department for his help organizing a focus group with NJAALEO members; and the International Association for Chiefs of Police (IACP) for hosting two focus groups with sergeants and executives on building trust with communities of color.

We wish to acknowledge the following experts and practitioners who actively participated in the peer review of the guidebook series:

- Charlane Brown-Wyands – Associate Chairman, Criminal Justice, Berkeley College; Retired Deputy Inspector, New York City Police Department
- Maurice Classen – Program Officer, MacArthur Foundation
- Dwayne Crawford – Executive Director, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- Alison Edwards – Deputy Director, Orange County Human Relations
- Jim Isenberg – Executive Director, North American Family Institute – New York
- Ray Kianes – Senior Police Officer, Austin (Texas) Police Department
- Anne Kringen – Assistant Professor of Criminology, University of New Haven
- Darrell Lowe – Lieutenant, Santa Monica (California) Police Department
- Robert May – President Emeritus and Founder, New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association
- Pradine Saint-Fort – Agency Attorney, New York City Police Department

Finally, we thank all of the police officials and other experts who contributed articles to this guidebook series. The lessons learned and best practices they share in this series are incredibly valuable, and our hope is that officers throughout the country can use this content to strengthen their work in connecting with diverse communities and communities of color. We are humbled by their dedication and passion for serving all members of their communities.

# Introduction

As first responders, law enforcement officers must be able to fairly and effectively engage with all communities in their jurisdiction. According to the 2010 Census, 37 percent of the U.S. population reported their race and ethnicity as something other than “non-Hispanic White alone.”<sup>1</sup> This group, commonly referred to as *people of color*, increased by almost 30 percent between 2000 and 2010.<sup>2</sup> In about one-tenth of all counties in the United States, people of color constitute 50 percent or more of the total population. The Census Bureau estimates that the population of people of color will continue to grow and by 2060 will be nearly 60 percent of the country. Therefore, in most areas across the United States, ensuring public safety for all requires that officers cultivate trust and collaboration with communities that may have different cultures and languages. Law enforcement officers must be equipped to use any encounter with the community as an opportunity to build trust and cooperation.

Since 2014, there has been a national focus on how police respond to contentious encounters, how and when they use force, and the disparate impact of policing on people of color. As part of the nation’s interest in fair and effective policing, the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing developed a national blueprint for improved community policing for cities and towns seeking to build trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.<sup>3</sup>

There is a need to bridge the gap between the policy recommendations and practices on the ground. Likewise, there is a need for informing law enforcement practice in a way that focuses not only on what law enforcement is doing wrong but also on what it is doing right. Police officers typically have a spectrum of encounters with people of color that range from extremely positive to highly contentious, and there is a need for a policing guide that accounts for this reality and fosters progress. There is an equivalent need to recognize that some members of policing agencies identify as individuals of color, have deep connections with communities of color in their jurisdiction, or both. These police personnel can serve as in-house resources who might understand the unique public safety needs and concerns of various communities.

This three-part series seeks to fill the knowledge and practice gap in effectively policing diverse communities by highlighting practical, field-informed approaches for building trust with various segments of our multiracial, multiethnic population. The majority of the contributions in this series are from law enforcement officers of color who, because of their personal and professional experiences, often have an especially nuanced and intimate understanding of the nature of community mistrust among communities of color, as well as what is needed to overcome it. Although the practices and strategies featured in this series may focus on building relationships between police agencies and specific communities, the majority of these insights are dynamic enough to be applied with multiple racial and ethnic groups.

The descriptions of programs and practices, together with multiple tips detailed in this guidebook series, are intended to be a resource for officers of all levels—from the patrol officer interacting with a specific racial or ethnic community to the police chief seeking to transform his or her agency into one that embodies community policing and facilitates community trust building at all levels.

This *Police Perspectives* series is divided into three companion guides, each of which covers multiple topics, agency practices, and recommendations for improving community trust in law enforcement on many fronts. Each guide also includes biographies for all contributing authors, as well as a user guide intended to help police officers of all ranks identify the articles that may be most relevant to their work. The three guides cover

- how to increase cultural understanding;
- how to serve diverse communities;
- how to support trust building in your agency.

This second guide in the series, *How to Serve Diverse Communities*, offers specialized approaches that can be helpful in reaching groups that have unique public safety needs, are highly vulnerable, or have historically been harmed by law enforcement. This guide details tips and information about how to reach many of these populations, including youth, immigrants and refugees, and transgender individuals.

## **Defining terms**

This series uses the term “people of color” to refer to any and all peoples of African, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, Asian, or Pacific Island descent, and its intent is to be inclusive. The terms “communities of color” and “diverse communities” are used interchangeably, depending upon the preference of the individual contributor(s). Finally, this guide also addresses effective policing practices with other groups that, like communities of color, have historically had their public safety and justice needs ignored or poorly served, such as youth, immigrants, and transgender people.

## **Editorial methodology**

Vera identified potential authors for this guide by issuing a solicitation through its law enforcement networks and contacts, as well as to the NLPOA, NOBLE, the HAPCOA, and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Relations Service. Additional authors were referred to Vera by representatives of these entities.



Vera asked interested respondents to share their topic ideas for an article on building trust with communities of color and in limited instances directly approached people to write articles on particular subjects. Vera also invited respondents to submit excerpts of previously published work. Vera then grouped accepted articles into three topic categories (i.e., how to increase cultural understanding, how to serve diverse communities, and how to support trust building in your agency).

Vera edited each submitted article collaboratively with the author, who then responded to editors' feedback and signed off on the final version of his or her article. When multiple authors covered similar topics, Vera's editors paraphrased and combined their articles into a single piece. Each contributor to a combined article reviewed and approved the content and received credit.

# Immigrant and Refugee Communities

*Contributions by Laila Cristobal, Sergeant, Passaic (New Jersey) Police Department; Timothy Emerick, PhD; Dennis Lam, Retired Lieutenant, Madison (New Jersey) Police Department; Joseph Luistro, Officer, Edison (New Jersey) Police Department; Robert May; Samantha Oh, Investigator, Bergen (New Jersey) County Sheriff's Office; TJ Patel, Detective, Piscataway (New Jersey) Police Department; Edwin Ramirez, Officer, Mount Kisco (New York) Police Department; Michael Schirling; and Alice White, Officer, Minneapolis (Minnesota) Police Department*

According to the 2010 Census, approximately 40 million foreign-born people now live in the United States, making up roughly 13 percent of the total U.S. population.<sup>4</sup> Of these foreign-born nationals, nearly seven million of them have arrived since 2000, and more than two-thirds of U.S. states saw their foreign-born populations increase by at least 30 percent over that time. A significant proportion of the growth is not happening in cities but in suburbs, rural communities, and small towns.

Fostering positive police-immigrant relations has never been more important to the success of community policing. Yet law enforcement faces many challenges in reaching new immigrant communities.<sup>5</sup> Some of these barriers include the following:

- **Language barriers.** Language barriers can prevent immigrants and the police from understanding one another and make it difficult for police to assess and respond to calls for assistance and other situations effectively.
- **Fear.** Many immigrants and refugees fear police and are often reluctant to report crime because they come from places where law enforcement agencies are corrupt and abusive; criminals also target immigrants because their reluctance to report crime is well known.<sup>6</sup>
- **Federal immigration enforcement's effect on local trust-building.** Immigrants may not be able to distinguish among local, state, and federal law enforcement officers and may attribute immigration raids or other federal immigrant enforcement activities to local police and therefore mistrust community policing efforts.
- **Lack of awareness of cultural differences.** Members of immigrant communities may misunderstand how to interact with police, while police may be unfamiliar with immigrant cultural traditions and practices.
- **Negative experiences with individual officers.** When individual officers do not treat immigrants respectfully, the entire department's relationship with immigrant communities may suffer.

While law enforcement jurisdictions in which immigrant groups reside vary widely in number of personnel, geography, resources, and populations served, a number of practical and creative strategies have emerged in recent years that highlight tangible ways for police to connect with different groups within immigrant communities. This chapter focuses on strategies for working with immigrant and refugee communities, including

- Latino immigrant communities;
- Asian-American communities;
- Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian communities.

### Latino communities

Police engagement with immigrant Latino communities has been challenging for decades, in large part because of immigration policies and the fear of law enforcement officials present throughout these communities. As a result, members of Latino communities often become victims of crimes commonly experienced among immigrant populations, including robbery of day workers (who are often carrying a day's or even a week's worth of wages), exploitation by employers taking advantage of an individual's immigration status by withholding wages or violating U.S. labor laws, and domestic violence perpetrated by an abuser who knows that his or her victim will not approach police for assistance.



Michael Cabezas

**Oxnard (California) Police Chief Jeri Williams meets with Alicia Llinas of Radio Lazer and Alma Mendoza of Radio Formula, local Spanish-language radio hosts, in 2011**

Research has shown that undocumented immigrants are less likely to report crime for fear of deportation<sup>7</sup> and are less likely to call 911, access emergency care in life-threatening situations, or approach police as victims or witnesses of crime, for the same reasons.<sup>8</sup> As a result, law enforcement agencies often have to make concerted efforts to engage and build trust with this vulnerable community.

In Mount Kisco, New York, a community of more than 11,000 people—35 percent of whom are Latinos, primarily from Guatemala, Ecuador, and Colombia—the Mount Kisco Police and Community Together (PACT) program was created to strengthen the relationship between police and the immigrant Latino population, many of whom may be unfamiliar with local laws and police procedures. In order to address the common barriers to reaching immigrant communities and promote effective communication, PACT's strategies include

- organizing community meetings at local houses of worship;
- providing cultural competency training for police officers;
- recruiting volunteer community liaisons.

### *Community meetings*

Community meetings are held at local houses of worship to provide a safe and public environment for police and Latino immigrants to meet, communicate, and learn from one another. The meetings, held in English and Spanish, have helped build trust and rapport between police and immigrant Latinos, providing a venue to address concerns and questions and share information that directly affects the immigrant population. Topics to be addressed at Latino community meetings can include any of the following:

- Predominant community safety concerns
- Common landlord/tenant disputes and rights
- Workers' rights
- Available after-school programs and child care services
- How to access alcohol and drug abuse prevention services
- How to access domestic violence services
- How to access medical services
- Eligibility information for local food pantries and shelters

### *Cultural competency training*

Cultural competency training exposes officers to potential cultural differences and language barriers they may encounter when interacting with immigrant Latino populations. Developing this knowledge is essential for officers seeking to foster trust and effectively respond to the community's public safety needs.

The material covered in this training includes

- misconceptions of police and immigrant populations;
- current statistical data and trends relevant to working in immigrant communities;
- open group discussions on past experiences, lessons learned, and best practices for working with immigrant populations.

### *Volunteer community liaisons*

Volunteer community liaisons can be a valuable resource for police when working to connect with immigrant communities, as they may be seen as more approachable than a police official. Community volunteers act as liaisons between the police and the immigrant communities to enhance communication and promote the reporting of crime and suspicious activity. Duties of a volunteer committee member include the following:

- If bilingual, provide translation services, including translating documents related to emergency services, important community fliers, and police informational pamphlets.
- Assist police with follow-up interviews of victims after an incident to help answer questions, address concerns, and share information regarding available resources and assistance.
- Assist with community meetings by setting up chairs, making PowerPoint presentations, and providing refreshments.

### *Special considerations for working with Latino child victims of sexual abuse and their families*

Investigating child abuse cases among immigrant communities often poses unique challenges and requires specialized knowledge and strategies. When working with Latino immigrant communities, it is important to be aware of how various factors impact the community's understanding of child sexual abuse. These factors include the following:

- Cultural values and orientations
- Gender role socialization
- Family structures
- Immigration enforcement efforts of the local police

The following includes common questions and answers for child abuse investigators to consider when interacting with Latino communities.

#### **What do police need to know regarding Latino cultural values and orientations?**

Reporting sexual abuse is highly stigmatized in Latino families, especially for men, who fear that their masculinity may be called into question. Women are also discouraged from reporting sexual abuse, as perpetrators are often members of their primary or extended families. It is estimated that Latinas are three times more likely to be abused than Latino men and boys.<sup>9</sup>

### **What do police need to know regarding gender role socialization among Latinos?**

Factors such as machismo and an unequal gender balance may be more prominent in immigrant Latino families. Social culture and religious values shape family roles and gender socialization, and immigrant Latino families are often discouraged from sharing anything negative about themselves or their family dynamics with outsiders, making police investigations of any kind very difficult.

### **What do police need to know regarding Latino family structures?**

Like many families, Latino families can be paternalistic, which can make it difficult for law enforcement and child protective agencies to investigate allegations of child abuse. Among Latinos, there is often a high value on the collective nature of “la familia,” and issues that may affect family dignity or reputation are often kept secret in an effort to protect the family unit.

### **What do police need to know about the impact of immigration enforcement on Latino trust in police and crime reporting?**

The legal status of undocumented Latino immigrants in the United States causes anxiety and extreme caution when these individuals encounter law enforcement authorities. Any perceived cooperation and information sharing between police departments and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to enforce immigration law will likely prevent victims or witnesses, many of whom may be undocumented, from approaching the police for assistance.

#### **Tips from the Field: Increasing Trust and Collaboration of Latino Victims of Crime**

*Timothy Emerick, PhD, Colorado State University*

The following tips can be used by officers when working to build trust with Latino victims of crime:

- Curtail the use of local police departments as agents for immigration enforcement. Police agencies should refrain from questioning the legal status of immigrants whom they encounter to maintain trust with this vulnerable community.
- Use Spanish-speaking officers when engaging the Latino immigrant community or telephonic interpreters when Spanish-speaking officers are unavailable.
- Enlist the support of community and faith-based organizations serving the local Latino community, as these organizations can serve as a bridge between law enforcement and community members.

## Asian-American communities

There are nearly 15 million Asian Americans in the United States, according to the 2010 Census, which is approximately 5 percent of the total U.S. population.<sup>10</sup> Asian Americans trace their roots to dozens of countries in the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. Six groups—listed here from highest population to the lowest—make up the vast majority (about 80 percent) of the Asian-American population in the U.S.: Chinese (about four million), Filipino, Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese (about 1.3 million).<sup>11</sup>

### The basics: America’s Asian communities by nationality

*There are three large subgroups of Asian Americans that often get confused or misnamed. They include East Asians, Southeast Asians, and South Asians. The nationalities that compose each of these subgroups are listed here:*

#### *East Asian Americans*

*Includes Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Mongolian Americans, Tibetan Americans, and Taiwanese Americans.*

#### *Southeast Asian Americans*

*Includes Burmese Americans, Cambodian Americans, Filipino Americans, Hmong Americans, Indonesian Americans, Laotian Americans, Malaysian Americans, Mien Americans, Singaporean Americans, Thai Americans, and Vietnamese Americans.*

#### *South Asian Americans*

*Includes Bangladeshi Americans, Bhutanese Americans, Indian Americans, Nepali Americans, Pakistani Americans, and Sri Lankan Americans.*

While the nation’s more than 20 Asian-American communities vary in their cultural practices, beliefs, languages, and lifestyles, many members of these groups share common barriers as immigrant communities when it comes to interactions with law enforcement. The following lists some common questions that arise in law enforcement interactions with Asian-American individuals and advice on how to resolve them:

### **Why are Asian Americans fearful of law enforcement?**

In addition to any historical or “imported” experiences with law enforcement in their countries of origin, where law enforcement may have been corrupt and abusive, Asian-American children are often taught to fear police. Threats of calling the police can be used to control misbehaving children to force them into submission.

### **How do language barriers negatively affect police interactions with Asian Americans?**

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, about half of the documented Asian-American population speaks English “less than very well” or is limited English proficient.<sup>12</sup> Language barriers can pose significant challenges for Asian American-police interactions. Similar to the experiences of other immigrant and refugee groups, language barriers often prevent Asian Americans from reporting crime.

### **How do language barriers affect routine patrol activities?**

Traffic stops can be a challenge when the driver does not speak English. In these situations, officers cannot explain the process that follows getting a ticket or summons. Even in situations where Asian Americans are proficient in English, they may prefer to speak their native language because of the seriousness of the situation.

Officers have also reported that when responding to domestic incidents, they frequently meet with victims who do not speak English and therefore cannot share what happened to them. The challenge can become amplified when the alleged perpetrator does speak English and can control the conversation.

### **Tips from the Field: Overcoming Cultural Differences with Asian Communities**

Members of the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association share the following tips for overcoming cultural barriers when working with Asian communities:

- Identify informal community leaders, including community elders or religious leaders, to make inroads into a community to build trust. A lack of support from a particular community leader can unintentionally hamper an investigation.
- Know which holidays are the most important for local Asian-American communities; this can help officers understand when and why there are large crowds gathered in religious and cultural settings. These holidays may include Lunar New Year, Ramadan, and Diwali, among others. If interested, police officers should join in these celebrations and recognize them as an opportunity to connect with and learn from these community members.
- Communicate the benefits and expectations of the law enforcement profession when recruiting Asian-American officers. Recruitment messages need to highlight the job security, pension, and other benefits that may be unknown to this population.



## Tips from the Field: Using a Misdial as an Opportunity

Officers working with Indian-American communities can use a frequent misdial as an opportunity to start a police-community dialogue.

To make international calls to India from the U.S., one must dial 91, India's country code (011-91+ the local number). This similarity to 9-1-1 leads many Indian Americans who are trying to call home to inadvertently call 9-1-1, which requires a mandatory call for service and leads to a number of nonemergency interactions between police and Indian-American community members. This unintended encounter could be converted into a police-community trust-building opportunity.

## Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities

Since September 11, 2001 and in response to an increasingly diverse population and greater responsibilities in securing the country, policing in the United States has changed profoundly. Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities were largely unknown to law enforcement before 2001 but have since become increasingly visible as suspects of terrorism as well as victims of hate crimes and ethnic and religious profiling.<sup>13</sup>

While the laws and policies enacted in the wake of 9/11 to prevent Americans from experiencing a similar tragedy may have helped to thwart terrorist attacks and save lives, their implementation has impinged upon certain groups' civil liberties and complicated their relations with law enforcement. In particular, researchers and advocates have found that post-9/11 reforms and law enforcement actions, including the surveillance and "mapping" of Muslim, Arab, and South Asian student groups, mosques, community organizations, and athletic leagues, disproportionately targeted AMEMSA communities.

## The basics: AMEMSA communities

*AMEMSA communities are among the fastest growing ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic groups in the United States. Here are some key terms officers should know:*<sup>14</sup>

### *Arab*

*Arab is a cultural and linguistic term. Arabs are identified as speaking a common language, Arabic, though there are many different dialects. A shared cultural history defines Arabs—they are not a race—and they practice a variety of religions, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and others. While several countries designate Arabic as a national language, Arab identity is often a personal decision. The Arab-American population was estimated to be nearly two million by the 2010 U.S. Census, but other organizations estimate the population to be closer to four million.*

<i>Middle Eastern</i>	<i>Middle Eastern refers to people who were born in or have ancestry from the geographic region known as the Middle East. The boundaries of the Middle East can vary depending on individual perspective and can change over time. While there are Middle Eastern countries where Arabic is the official language, individuals may choose whether to identify as Middle Eastern, as Arab, or as neither.</i>
<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Muslims are followers of the religion of Islam. Muslims can vary in their religious practices, political views, cultures, races, and languages spoken. While many Muslims read and understand Quranic Arabic (also known as Classical Arabic, the language often used in Islamic religious texts), not all Muslims speak Arabic. The Muslim-American population is estimated to be 2.5 million, with members who are, from greatest to least proportion, African American, White, Asian American, and “other.”</i>
<i>South Asian</i>	<i>South Asian refers to people whose origins are from the geographic region that includes the countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives. This diverse population has a large diaspora worldwide. South Asians practice a variety of religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and others. The South Asian-American population is estimated to be more than 3.4 million.</i>

While these definitions present these groups as being cohesive, AMEMSA groups are just as likely as other communities to have multiple subgroups and identities.

Effective community policing is essential to protecting the public from crime, victimization, and acts of terrorism, yet relations between local police and AMEMSA communities are often not well developed. Following is a summary of the barriers to community policing and tactics for improving the trust and collaboration between local law enforcement. As with all policing tactics, it is critical to implement them as part of a larger agency-wide orientation to community policing.

## **Checklist: Barriers to Effective Community Policing within AMEMSA Communities**

Police officers should keep in mind the potential barriers they may encounter when implementing community policing components with AMEMSA communities as well as some tactics they can employ to overcome those barriers.\*

**Community partnerships**—Tactics to overcome the lack of a liaison in the community include the following:

- Create a police-community liaison position.
- Partner with AMEMSA faith leaders.
- Set up community advisory councils or working groups.

**Problem solving**—Tactics to overcome underreporting of crime include the following:

- Educate AMEMSA communities about local laws and the roles of police.
- Investigate every incident that might be a bias crime or hate crime and publicize this effort.
- Provide and promote law enforcement language services to AMEMSA communities.

**Organizational transformation**—Tactics to overcome underdeveloped organizational capacity include the following:

- Seek out information about agency personnel’s cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds.
- Equip all officers with community policing information and resources.
- Task terrorism liaison officers with an “all crimes” focus.

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\* Pradine Saint-Fort and Susan Shah, *Uniting Communities Post-911: Tactics for Cultivating Community Policing Partnerships with Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian Communities* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), <http://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p310-pub.pdf>.

## Refugee groups

Minneapolis's Cedar-Riverside, also known as Little Mogadishu, includes the country's largest concentration of Somalis and other East African communities. To respond to this demographic composition, the Minneapolis Police Department's community liaison officers have been working to engage the East African community, including people from Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia. Similarly, the community in Burlington, Vermont, is composed of a significant refugee population, with 56 languages spoken in the high school alone. Prominent ethnicities represented in the population include Vietnamese, Nepalese, Bosnian and other Eastern European origins, and Somali, Somali Bantu, and other African origins.

Minneapolis and Burlington police officials' tactics to reach refugee communities include

- tailoring outreach events to refugee women, who can then encourage their family's community engagement;
- seizing opportunities to learn about cultural practices and community structures to inform community outreach;
- engaging in community-organized events.



**Officer Alice White of the Minneapolis Police Department and community members representing the Oromo Community hold the Oromo flag at the Cedar Riverside block party, 2015**

### *Tailoring outreach events*

Outreach to immigrant communities is often focused on reaching out to the men because they are often seen as being more receptive than women to interactions with government officials and more likely to participate in public initiatives. However, community liaison officers in Minneapolis have found that, contrary to common beliefs, in many East African communities, women run the households. Women are responsible for managing household finances and raising the children and can often serve as influential partners in community policing efforts. In Minneapolis, community liaison officers organized a monthly meeting series called Somali Women and Women in Law Enforcement. Each month, a topic of interest—such as U.S. laws and rights, issues related to domestic violence, or local laws related to curfew or noise ordinances—is selected for discussion. In these discussions, issues or questions about sources of conflict with law enforcement tend to surface and are discussed openly in a safe space.

One current topic that has surfaced since the mobilization of ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) and al-Shabbab and their recruitment of American and British youth is how to prevent youth recruitment into terrorist groups. Recognizing the sensitivity of countering violent extremism (CVE) activities and the potential dangers of ethnic or religious profiling, community liaison officers in Minneapolis have been working to open community dialogues around this issue. The previously established relationships between liaison officers and the community's East African refugee women have allowed for candid conversations about the threat of extremist recruitment among young people in their community and increased awareness around the need to report any suspicion that their child has been approached by a terrorist organization.

### *Learning about cultural practices*

Learning about cultural practices and refugee community structures can also help strengthen police-community ties. In Burlington, the police department has invested time and resources in learning about how to best approach and engage a specific refugee community. Through this investment, the agency has learned that in some refugee communities it is necessary to meet with the “elders” of the community before speaking to others individually. Similarly, in some refugee communities, it may be more appropriate for men to speak with male officers and women to speak with female officers. Understanding and adhering to these cultural preferences prior to approaching a particular community can prevent setbacks in community policing work.



Alice White

**Officer Alice White of the Minneapolis Police Department, a community member, 5th precinct Inspector Todd Loining, CPS Jennifer, and Rabbi Michael Adam Latz at a “Conversations with Cops in Coffee Shops” event, 2015**

### *Participating in community-organized events*

When police officers attend community events, they demonstrate that they are committed to learning more about a particular community and building trust with those they serve. When working to build trust in refugee communities, police officials in Burlington have found it advantageous to approach elders and community leaders during nonemergency situations such as school events. In Minneapolis, meaningfully engaging the refugee community has required police participation in community-based cultural events and visits to local mosques. Community liaison officers have been successful in partnering with local mosques to host law enforcement presentations or regular meetings with the community. These types of interactions in a familiar location foster open dialogue and knowledge sharing, allowing community members to engage with police officials and giving police officials an opportunity to ask questions and learn about the various cultures within their community.

### **Conclusion**

As the country continues to diversify, police agencies are tasked with working in increasingly diverse communities. Rapidly changing demographics make building trust and improving relations between police and immigrant communities essential to preventing crime and protecting public safety.

# Youth

*Contributions by Denise “Cookie” Bouldin, Detective, Seattle (Washington) Police Department; Mo Canady; Darlene J. Conley, PhD; John F. Hayes, Jr., Captain, Seattle Police Department; Rafael Kianes, Officer, Austin (Texas) Police Department; Jay Paris; Bob Stewart; Lisa Thurau; Al Valdez; Taber White, Officer, Austin Police Department; and Robbie Williams, Sergeant, Hawthorne (California) Police Department*

The officer-involved shootings of Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Ohio, and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, have highlighted the complex, and sometimes tragic, relationship between law enforcement and youth, particularly youth of color. Negative perceptions of police, sometimes due to aggressive law enforcement in communities of color, have been linked to a number of impacts (short of death) on youth of color, including a willingness to break the law, a mistrust of police, a refusal to cooperate with officers, and alienation in other respects.<sup>15</sup>

Enhancing the quantity and quality of positive contacts between youth of color—particularly African-American youth—and the police is necessary to foster trust, cooperation, and community engagement. A number of police agencies across the country have developed various school-based and extracurricular initiatives to engage youth and increase positive, nonpunitive interactions between law enforcement and young people.

This chapter outlines a number of these initiatives, designed to

- promote dialogue through teen/police dialogue workshops;
- build youth skills through youth mentorship programs;
- develop partnerships by launching local anti-gang coordinating committees;
- develop community policing resources by fortifying school resource officers.

## **Teen/Police dialogue workshops**

The Hawthorne (California) Police Department’s Teen/Police Dialogue Workshops aim to provide a tangible, positive engagement opportunity between African-American teens and police officers. These workshops provide an opportunity for youth to discuss common questions they have about police procedures, as well as their own rights.

In the program, youth are able to first express their questions and concerns about law enforcement by discussing these questions. This forms a foundation for subsequent collaboration.

## The basics: Teen/Police dialogue workshop

*The following includes information on what a teen/police dialogue workshop entails, who should be invited, and the process for organizing such a workshop.*

<i>What</i>	<i>This workshop provides a safe forum for youth to engage constructively with local police officials.</i>
<i>Who</i>	<i>The participants should include teenagers and patrol officers. Parents and family members can be invited to observe. The organizers of this program should include both student group leaders and police personnel.</i>
<i>Where</i>	<i>Any location that is considered “safe” for youth participants. This can include a local teen community center or school-based site. This program should not take place at the police department.</i>
<i>Preparation</i>	<p><i>Preparation for these workshops should include some variation of the following steps:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. Student group leaders solicit and compile questions the youth have about law enforcement, which may include the following:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• Why do police officers stop teenagers for small stuff?</i></li><li><i>• What do I do if I am stopped by the police?</i></li><li><i>• How do I file a complaint?</i></li><li><i>• Do officers have to make a certain amount of arrests just to keep their jobs?</i></li></ul></li><li><i>2. Student group leaders may also add other “provocative” questions that the youth may be too shy to ask about policing practices and bias, such as the following:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• Do cops racially profile?</i></li><li><i>• What does “driving while black” mean?</i></li><li><i>• What does the agency do with racist cops?</i></li></ul></li><li><i>3. Workshop organizers should identify a moderator to help facilitate and guide the workshop and encourage dialogue among all of the participants in an open and nonthreatening environment.</i></li></ol>
<i>Agenda</i>	<i>An agenda outlining the main components of the workshop should be provided to all participants. Sharing this information with participants prior to the workshop will allow them to prepare accordingly and will prevent anyone from feeling blindsided by any particular activity or discussion point.</i>



*Components* Teen/police dialogue workshops may include the following components:

- **Introductions.** All workshop attendees introduce themselves and say why this dialogue is important to them. (This information will help the moderator better understand the attendees and direct the discussion toward desired learning outcomes of the participants.)
- **Small groups.** Depending on the number of student and police participants, the participants should be divided into several small groups. Each group should have at least one police officer.
- **Question and answer rounds.** Prior to the workshop, each teen will be asked to anonymously write down one question they have for law enforcement. These questions will be collected prior to the workshop and redistributed to participants, so each teen has one question written by an anonymous participant. During the Q&A round, each teen will read aloud his or her question card. In response to each question, the officer should provide an answer that covers relevant information about community safety, laws, and law enforcement procedures. Also, where appropriate, the officer should disclose shortcomings and hardships he or she faced as a teen and talk about what gave them the ability to overcome those pressures and circumstances.

*After all of the questions have been asked and answered, the youth rotate to another officer and select a new question card. A benefit of this format is that the youth have the opportunity to interact with multiple officers and hear from varied experience levels and backgrounds.*

- **Closeout.** After the Q&A rounds are completed, the moderator should emphasize the importance of ongoing dialogue and how these face-to-face conversations can lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation for one another. The workshop closes with revisiting the goals and inviting the participants (both the teens and officers) to share what they learned.

### **Tips from the Field: What Makes a Good Moderator?**

*Robbie Williams, Sergeant, Hawthorne Police Department*

An effective moderator should

- be recognized as a leader in either the teen group or the police department;
- have a general understanding of the nature of any conflicts or disconnects that may exist between police and youth;
- be perceived as a trusted and fair individual;
- have strong communication and facilitation skills.

## Spotlight On: Seattle’s Urban Youth Chess Club

While many police departments use sports or other physical activities to provide positive outlets for youth, the Seattle Police Department’s Urban Youth Chess Club challenges traditional stereotypes about the interests and capabilities of youth of color who live in urban environments. Since 2005, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) has been engaging elementary school-aged youth with an after-school and weekend chess activity that works to simultaneously develop critical thinking skills in the children and promote positive relationships with law enforcement. This club currently meets twice a week at either a local library or community center.

SPD Detective Denise “Cookie” Bouldin created this club after attending a First Move program training by the American Foundation for Chess (AF4C).<sup>\*</sup> The AF4C engages young minds and teaches critical and creative thinking skills through the game of chess. This program teaches the kids how to apply chess-playing strategies to real-life situations where young people are faced with difficult choices, negative influences, and peer pressure. Detective Bouldin (known in the club as Detective Cookie) uses the chess boards to teach antiviolence behaviors and demonstrate smart decision-making skills.

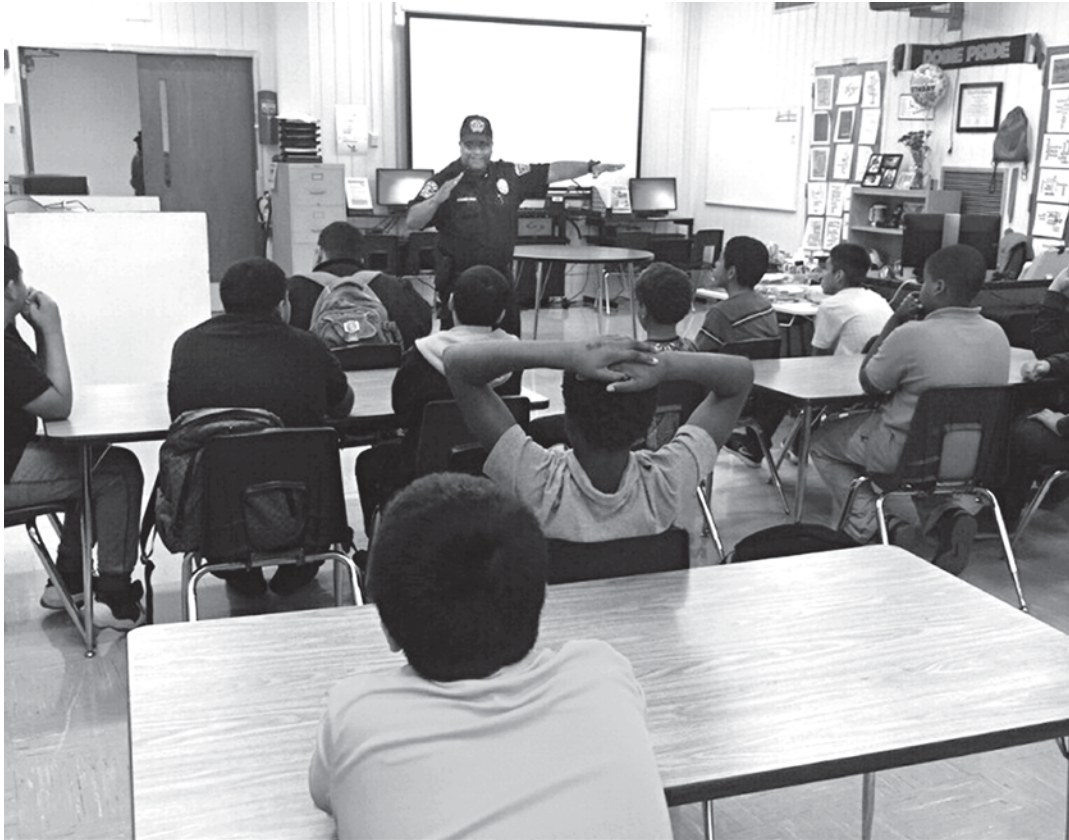
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<sup>\*</sup> For additional information about the First Move program, see “Overview,” FirstMove, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://af4c.org>.



Denise Bouldin

**Detective Denise “Cookie” Bouldin and the Seattle Police Department’s Urban Chess Club**



Rafael Kianes

**Officer Rafael Kianes teaches a leadership class to middle school students in an after-school program targeting at-risk youth**

### **Youth mentorship program**

The Austin (Texas) Police Department partners with the Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, and other local youth programs to run a youth mentorship program aimed at engaging young people who live in neighborhoods with the highest incidences of crime. The goal is to improve the youth's perceptions of police, academic performance, and leadership skills at a young age so that they will be better equipped to make healthy life decisions as they get older. The mentorships include teaching leadership and school study skills and building the youth's appreciation for volunteerism and community building. Program participants have reported improved grade point averages and school attendance after engaging with this mentorship program.

## The basics: Youth mentorship programs

The following provides guidelines for mentorship programs for youth of various ages:

	<i>Elementary school youth</i>	<i>Middle school youth</i>	<i>High school youth</i>
<i>Type of mentoring</i>	<i>Receive one-on-one mentoring by an officer. Each officer works with the same student for one year, at minimum.</i>	<i>After-school programs or a leadership class that covers topics such as leadership, public speaking, debate, conflict resolution, and team building.</i>	<i>Participate in a program at a local youth center (e.g., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club) that invites officers to speak with teens about police interactions and play games to improve youth and police relationships.</i>
<i>Focus</i>	<i>Offer a sense of safety and stability to children who may have witnessed crime in their neighborhoods.</i>	<i>Teach youth to think before they act and that actions have consequences.</i>	<i>Teach youth how to have positive interactions with police.</i>
<i>Length of program</i>	<i>One year at first, with the possibility of continuing mentorship in subsequent years.</i>	<i>Twice a year, or seasonally, with groups of youth divided up by program topic.</i>	<i>Officers coordinate with ongoing programs at youth centers to determine how frequently to meet.</i>
<i>Police resources required</i>	<i>One hour per week, usually during lunch hours.</i>	<i>Two hours per week for the leadership class and some additional time to prepare for each class.</i>	<i>Two to four hours, once a week.</i>

### Spotlight On: Mentoring Elementary Students as Junior Cadets in Anaheim

The Anaheim (California) Police Department’s Junior Cadet Program is a weekly after-school program that enables students who are interested in a career in criminal justice or fire safety to learn more about the field, build relationships with current officers, and set career goals. Participation in the program has been shown to boost students’ academic achievement, decrease disciplinary problems at school, and foster positive relationships with local police. In Anaheim, the program is managed by the police department’s community service officers.

## Local anti-gang coordinating committees

Effective anti-gang efforts begin when law enforcement partners with parents, schools, religious institutions, community organizations, businesses, and youth to improve their communities. Local anti-gang coordinating committees bring together a number of criminal justice and community stakeholders to focus on the three components of an anti-gang strategy: prevention, intervention, and suppression.

### The basics: Local anti-gang coordinating committees

*The following provides tips for organizing an anti-gang coordinating committee, including whom to engage and when and what activities to cover:*

*Who*      *Anti-gang committee members may include police, prosecutors, probation staff, school personnel, community-based service providers, parks and recreation personnel, religious leaders, local business owners, neighborhood watch groups, parent groups, student groups, and the media. Parental and community input is critical to making community-based collaborations like this successful.*

*What*      *The objectives of a local anti-gang coordinating committee should be to develop a comprehensive response that includes the following:*

- **Identify** the nature and location of the problem and factors that may contribute to young people joining gangs. Community members can discuss with law enforcement any knowledge they have of current gang activity.
- **Develop** strategies to address the problem and reduce or eliminate the contributing factors. Community input can help define and customize a solution that will be the most beneficial and attractive to the youth in your community.
- **Determine** the resources necessary to implement gang prevention strategies. Locate available resources at the local, state, and federal levels and maintain a list of these resources to share with parents, teachers, and community residents.
- **Implement** activities in coordination with other agencies in an effort to deter young people from joining gangs. Collaborative community involvement is key to making this possible.
- **Evaluate** the results of activities and revise strategies as needed.
- **Establish** a telephone hotline for citizens to call in tips on possible gang activity. Emphasize that the appropriate agency will follow up even on anonymous tips.

*When*      *These committees should meet on a regular basis to exchange information, coordinate activities, and plan a comprehensive community response.*

## School resource officer programs

Collaboration between law enforcement agencies and schools and parents is critical to ensuring the safety of youth. School resource officer (SRO) programs have become an important way for law enforcement to fulfill its duty to protect children on campus and contribute to safer learning environments. Local law enforcement officers' specialized knowledge of the law, local and national crime trends, and information about public safety threats make them essential contributors to any school's environmental safety planning, facilities management, and emergency response preparedness.

### *Skills and qualifications of an effective SRO*

Selecting the right officer for the SRO position is paramount to the program's success and to demonstrating a positive image of law enforcement for school-aged youth. Officers must have a genuine interest in working with students and should possess the following attributes:

- **Law enforcement background.** SROs are sworn police officers trained to serve and protect the community and schools within their jurisdiction as part of a total community policing strategy. Officers should have at least three years' experience with the police agency, including experience working with young people in a law enforcement role, prior to being designated as an SRO.
- **Engagement skills.** While an SRO's primary responsibility is safety, an SRO should also take opportunities to present information on public safety topics, such as emergency preparedness, to their school communities. In imparting knowledge to students and staff, an SRO can build a foundation for positive relationships.
- **Informal counseling abilities.** Like other caring adults, an SRO can guide youth in making good choices, avoiding destructive behaviors, and navigating life's circumstances, challenges, and opportunities. SROs should also recognize that they are role models for children and should work to maintain a positive and professional public reputation.



Michael Schirling

Burlington (Vermont) Police Department school resource officers Corporals DiFranco (left) and Beck accept a thank-you from school members at the Christ the King School Community Appreciation Day, 2015



Glenn Sylvester

Children pet a horse at the San Francisco Police Department's community Easter egg hunt, 2015

## *Training for an effective SRO*

Once the right officer has been selected, he or she must be properly trained on the special nature of school campuses, varying school safety needs for primary and secondary schools, and the overall goals and objectives of the SRO role. This training enables SROs to protect the community and the campus while supporting the educational mission. Trainings should cover the following topics, among others:

- **Effective use of interagency partners.** Sharing information with other agencies can help SROs identify risk and protective factors for students, coordinate nurturing intervention and prevention efforts, and designate first and primary responders to incidents and threats to school safety.
- **Safe school crisis response.** Planning and implementing procedures that train and drill all campus personnel to respond to crisis events. This response includes controlling access to the school during the school day and closing or partially closing the campus after students arrive.
- **Purposeful use of technology.** The integration of metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and other devices to cover and document real-time activities. This practice lawfully enhances supervision of events occurring in parking lots, hallways, classrooms, auditoriums, and open areas that do not involve reasonable expectations of privacy.

In addition to these three training topics, there are a variety of other trainings available that cover a range of skills related to interviewing students, working with special education programs, using social media, and other topics.<sup>16</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Weak relations between police and youth threaten the ability of police to ensure public safety for an entire community. A person's interaction with the police, whether positive or negative, has a lasting impact that can influence the way he or she views police for years to come. In order to build stronger and safer communities, police agencies must work to increase the number of positive contacts with young people, particularly young people of color.



# Transgender Communities

*Contributions by Wayne Maines, PhD; Noel C. March, United States Marshal; and Harper Jean Tobin*

There is significant distrust and fear of law enforcement among transgender (often abbreviated “trans”) people because of a history of perceived and actual bias, profiling, and abuse. It is not uncommon for transgender people to fear police; as a result of their own or their community’s experiences of victimization or discrimination at the hands of law enforcement, transgender people are often reluctant to seek police assistance and report crimes.

The breakdown of relations between law enforcement and the transgender community has no doubt contributed to increased crime within and victimization experienced by this vulnerable group. Recognizing the critical need to repair these relationships, law enforcement agencies from around the country have been working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights groups and local policymakers to design and implement police policies and patrol guides aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of transgender and gender nonconforming people.<sup>17</sup>

This chapter provides basic information about the transgender community, the unique public safety issues faced by transgender people, and a discussion of why engaging with this community should be a priority for police agencies.<sup>18</sup>

## **Why should law enforcement care?**

A national survey conducted with nearly 6,500 transgender and gender nonconforming individuals revealed that transgender people—particularly transgender people of color—experienced high rates of harassment and assault when interacting with or seeking police services.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, this survey revealed the following:

- Nearly half of survey respondents (46 percent) reported being reluctant to seek police assistance.<sup>20</sup>
- One-fifth (22 percent) of respondents who have interacted with police reported harassment by police with substantially higher rates (29 to 38 percent) reported by respondents of color.<sup>21</sup>
- Six percent of respondents reported physical attack or assault by a police officer, while 2 percent reported sexual assault by police officers.<sup>22</sup>

At the same time, this survey revealed that trans people are disproportionately victims of crime:

- Eight percent of respondents reported being physically attacked or assaulted in places of public accommodation, such as restaurants, hotels, or emergency services. African-American respondents reported much higher rates of physical assault (22 percent) than their non-Black peers.<sup>23</sup>
- Nearly one in five transgender people (19 percent) reported having experienced domestic violence based at least in part on their transgender status, with American Indian (45 percent), Asian (36 percent), Black (35 percent) and Latino/a (35 percent) respondents—as well as undocumented noncitizens (39 percent)—reporting higher rates of domestic violence.<sup>24</sup>
- Individuals who identified as transgender and gender nonconforming in grades K–12 reported significantly high rates of harassment (78 percent), physical assault (35 percent), and sexual violence (12 percent).<sup>25</sup>

Providing training for law enforcement on how to work with transgender people is critical, as it helps officers to

- build trust and rapport with the community and crime victims and witnesses;
- improve mutual respect and understanding, which leads to safer and better interactions;
- respond properly to victimization and hate crimes in particular;
- develop a network of reliable resources to support community policing efforts.

### The basics: Key terminology

*Gender identity is an innate part of personal identity. For most people, gender is straightforward—their inner sense of identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth. For some people, this inner identity does not fit the way they were born and raised. An estimated 700,000 adults in the United States, as well as many children and adolescents, are transgender.<sup>26</sup> Following are six terms that are relevant to understanding the experience of transgender individuals.*

<i>Assigned sex</i>	<i>The biological and physiological characteristics that define an individual as male or female at birth.</i>
<i>Gender expression</i>	<i>How a person represents or communicates their gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voices, mannerisms, or physical characteristics.</i>
<i>Gender identity</i>	<i>A person’s internal sense of gender, which may be different from one’s assigned sex.</i>
<i>Gender nonconforming</i>	<i>A term for an individual whose gender expression, gender characteristics, or gender identity (or all of these) do not conform to gender stereotypes.</i>

*Sexual orientation* A person’s physical, romantic, or emotional attraction to members of the same or a different gender. This operates separately from gender identity.

*Transgender* An umbrella term that describes individuals whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth. This includes

- trans women, who were assigned as males at birth but have a female gender identity and live as women (i.e., transition from male to female, or MTF);
- trans men, who were assigned as females at birth but have a male gender identity and live as men (i.e., transition from female to male, or FTM).

*While this terminology, and the shorter “trans,” are considered acceptable terms for non-transgender individuals to use, some individuals may prefer to be recognized simply as a woman or a man.*

### **Top Three Public Safety Challenges Faced by Transgender People**

1. **Discrimination.** Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of transgender people have experienced at least one major life-changing event of discrimination, such as losing a job, being evicted from their home, being forced to drop out of school, being denied health care, or suffering violence because they are transgender.\*
2. **Access to identification.** Because of widely varying policies, many transgender people are not able to update identification cards to reflect the correct name and gender. Many report experiencing harassment, discrimination, or violence as a result of presenting incongruent ID.†
3. **Economic barriers.** Transgender people experience higher rates of unemployment, poverty, and homelessness, in large part because of discrimination, stigma, and in some cases family and community rejection.

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\* Jamie M. Grant, Lisa L. Mottet, and Justin Tanis, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011): 158, [http://endtransdiscrimination.org/PDFs/NTDS\\_Report.pdf](http://endtransdiscrimination.org/PDFs/NTDS_Report.pdf).

† Ibid., 153.

## Tips from the Field: How to Build Trust with Transgender People

Police officers working to build trust with transgender people can consider the tips described here.

- Understand basic concepts and terms related to transgender people.
- Use respectful language.
- Respect a person's identity and description. If existing identification displays a gender that is different than that presented by the individual, officers should ask the individual how they prefer to be addressed.
- Have clearly identified policies and procedures that address the needs and safety of the transgender community. For example, a best practice when same-gender searches are required is to ask transgender individuals whether they prefer a male or female officer to conduct the search. Searches solely to determine the physical anatomy of the person are never appropriate.
- Make no assumptions about a person's gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Be prepared to help schools support transgender youth.

## The basics: The myths and facts about transgender people

- **MYTH:** *If you are transgender or gender nonconforming, then you are also gay, lesbian, or bisexual.*
- **FACT:** *Gender identity and sexual orientation are separate and distinct aspects of who you are. Transgender people can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or asexual.*
- **MYTH:** *Every transgender person wants, and gender transition is only completed by, sex reassignment surgery.*
- **FACT:** *Gender transition is the process and experience in which a transgender person goes from living and identifying as one's assigned sex to living and identifying as the sex consistent with one's gender identity. This may include changes in dress, appearance, name, or official documents, and for some, medical treatments. Every person's medical needs, options, and choices are different. Not every person needs, wants, or can afford surgery, but all individuals should be treated with respect for their gender identity.*

- **MYTH:** *Transgender people are at fault for putting themselves in harm's way by choosing to go against society and revealing their gender identity to others.*
- **FACT:** *In fact, transgender people are simply being true to themselves. Law enforcement, court officials, counselors, and others should not blame victims for being targeted for a crime or revictimize them through disrespect for their identity or other mistreatment.*

## Conclusion

Research has shown that while transgender individuals experience crime at disproportionate levels, these same individuals are less likely to seek police assistance for fear of discrimination or further victimization, as noted earlier. The transgender community faces unique public safety challenges, and police agencies must equip themselves with the information and resources necessary to protect this vulnerable community.

### Tips from the Field: How to Build Relationships with the Transgender Community

Police officers working to build relationships with the transgender community can consider the tips described here.

- Identify transgender organizations, leaders, and other groups with strong knowledge of and connection to the local trans community. Reach out to discuss community concerns.
- Understand that transgender people are part of the diversity of the community and are themselves diverse in race, age, faith, sexual orientation, and life experience. Variations in gender expression should not be viewed as deviant or criminal.
- Be aware of misconceptions and stereotypes you might have regarding transgender and gender nonconforming individuals.
- Develop and conduct training together with community members, including mutual cross-cultural training presentations. Invite participation on advisory boards and area hate crimes joint task forces.
- With the support of community members, attend transgender community events such as the Transgender Day of Remembrance in November—preferably in uniform. Make an effort to talk to participants and foster understanding.

# Final Thoughts

Immigrant, refugee, youth, and transgender communities are just some of the various communities that have historically been underrepresented in—and, as a result, misunderstood by—law enforcement. The disconnect between these communities and law enforcement has contributed to further marginalization and often victimization of these already vulnerable groups. Policing in the 21st century means preparing police agencies to serve increasingly diverse multicultural populations and equipping police officers with the tools and resources necessary to serve all members of their communities.

# Contributors' Biographies

*Contributors' titles may have changed since this series was prepared.*

**Denise “Cookie” Bouldin** is a detective with the Seattle (Washington) Police Department, where she has served for 35 years. Bouldin currently works as a Youth Outreach and Community Relations Detective. As part of her duties, she runs a Saturday and Tuesday Chess Club out of the Rainier Beach Community Center and Rainier Beach Library, as well as an anti-violence workshop academy at the Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club. She previously held roles with Community Police Team and as a patrol officer in Seattle’s North, West, East, South West, and South Precincts.

**Mo Canady** is the Executive Director for the National Association of School Resource Officers. He has testified on the matter of school safety before the United States House Committee on Education and the Workforce. He is also a co-author of the national report *To Protect and Educate – The School Resource Officer and the Prevention of Violence in Schools*.

**Darlene J. Conley, PhD**, is an adjunct professor in sociology and criminal justice at Seattle University and St. Martins University and Vice President of Research at JDA, Inc. and JDA Security Alliance in Seattle, Washington. She has a PhD in sociology from Northwestern University and has conducted and published numerous studies on criminal justice and policing issues in communities of color in the United States, the Caribbean, and South Africa. She is a co-editor of *Race, Class and Gender and Justice in the United States: A Text Reader* (2001).

**Laila Cristobal** is a sergeant with the Passaic (New Jersey) Police Department’s Juvenile Bureau, where she has served since 2000. Between 2003 and 2009, Cristobal worked in Passaic’s Major Crimes Unit as a Detective for Adult Cases. She graduated in 1996 with a bachelor’s degree in business.

**Timothy Emerick, PhD**, is a faculty member in Colorado State University-Global Campus’ Department of Criminal Justice. He has a PhD from Saybrook University in Psychology and has taught for the past 25 years in psychology and criminology. He was previously a child abuse investigator and deputy probation officer with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and is considered an expert on post-traumatic stress disorder. He is certified as a Narcotic Specialist and a Forensic Interview Specialist. His experience and training covers risk management, criminal behavioral profiling, grief counseling for children, dealing with confrontation and conflict, domestic violence, counseling of sex abusers of children, investigative procedures of child sexual abuse, and rape investigation.

**John F. Hayes, Jr.** is a captain with the Seattle Police Department and has been working in law enforcement for 33 years. Hayes has trained officers and school administrators across the United States on topics including problem solving, critical incidents on high school and college campuses, and strategies for being an effective school resource officer. Hayes is highly respected for his community outreach work in Seattle.

**Rafael “Ray” Kianes** serves in the Austin (Texas) Police Department’s patrol unit. Kianes earned a bachelor’s degree in history from State University of New York College at Brockport, where he was enrolled in the Reserve Officers Training Program. Following college, Kianes was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the United States Army and deployed in several engagements during his eight years’ service. He was awarded the Bronze Star during Operation Iraqi Freedom and was honorably discharged as a captain in 2005.

**Dennis Lam** retired from the Madison (New Jersey) Police Department in November 2014 after 24 years of service. During his time with the Madison Police Department, he rose through the ranks as patrolman, detective, sergeant, detective sergeant, lieutenant, and detective lieutenant. Lam has attended various leadership schools, including the New Jersey State Chiefs of Police West Point Leadership and Command School, and is a Certified Public Manager

**Joseph Luistro** is a patrol officer with the Edison (New Jersey) Police Department and president of the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association. Luistro has more than 22 years of law enforcement experience, starting his career with the Rutgers University Police Department-New Brunswick Division in 1993 and joining the Edison Police Department in 1999. Luistro previously served as Vice President of the National Asian Peace Officers Association and is an active member of Public Safety United.

**Wayne Maines** serves as Executive Director of Safety, Health Services, Transportation and Security for the University of Maine and is a nationally known speaker in the field of safety management, leadership, and emergency management. In recent years, Maines has become an expert in the field of transgender children.

**Noel C. March** is the 39th U.S. Marshal for the District of Maine, nominated by President Barack Obama in 2009 and unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2010. As U.S. Marshal, March is responsible for the protection of U.S. federal courts and judges, the investigation and apprehension of federal fugitives, the investigation of registered sex offenders, seizure and liquidation of criminal assets, and support of the witness protection program. March previously served as Director of Public Safety for the University of Maine. He is a subject matter expert on the topic of hate crime prevention and is a graduate of the 170th session of the FBI National Academy.

**Robert May** retired as a detective with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department after 31 years of service. May has been recognized by the New Jersey State Legislature, American Red Cross, and various municipalities for his community engagement work within New Jersey and New York. He is the founder and president emeritus of the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association and remains actively involved with police-community engagement initiatives in his community.



**Samantha Oh** is an investigator with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation's Detective Bureau for the Bergen (New Jersey) County Sheriff's Office, where she has worked since 2012. Oh graduated from the Atlantic County Police Academy as an Alternate Route Candidate in 2010 and began her career with the Bergen County Sheriff's Office in the courts, followed by the Homeland Security Unit. Oh holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Boston College and is currently the first and only Korean-American female officer in Bergen County.

**Jay Paris** is the Director of Prevention Services for the Boston-based North American Family Institute, where he co-developed the "Youth and Police Initiative" that has been used in 25 American cities and towns to build trust between teens and local police officers.

**TJ Patel** serves as a detective with the Piscataway (New Jersey) Police Department, where he has served since 2011. In this role, Patel conducts criminal investigations in narcotics, prostitution, and illegal gun activity. Patel has been an active member of the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association since 2011.

**Edwin Ramirez** is a patrol and community liaison officer for the Mount Kisco (New York) Police Department. Previously, Ramirez served as Deputy Sheriff for the Dutchess County (New York) Sheriff's Office. Ramirez began his career in law enforcement in 2002 as a correctional officer for the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office (Jail Division), where he also served as a member of the Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT).

**Michael Schirling** recently retired as Chief of the Burlington (Vermont) Police Department, a position he held since February 2008. Prior to serving as chief, Schirling served as a patrol officer, detective, and investigator. He co-founded and led the Vermont Internet Crimes against Children Task Force and has served as an instructor on topics including sexual assault investigation, interviewing, computer and internet investigations, computer forensics, and criminal law. Schirling has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in education.

**Bob Stewart** is serving on the team monitoring a federal consent decree in the U.S. Virgin Islands. He began his law enforcement career in the Washington (D.C.) Metropolitan Police Department, retiring in 1991. From 1997 to 2001, Stewart was the Executive Director of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). Prior to his experience at NOBLE, he was the Chief of the Ormond Beach (Florida) Police Department for nearly five years. A graduate of Howard University and the FBI National Academy, Stewart has served as the training director for the Louisville Metro Police Department, the interim public safety director at Rutgers-Newark University, and the interim police director in Camden, New Jersey.

**Harper Jean Tobin** serves as Director of Policy for the National Center for Transgender Equality, where she works with federal agencies and Congress on policies that affect transgender people and their loved ones. She also works to provide information for community members about their rights, and her writing on gender and related topics has been published in many periodicals and legal journals.

**Lisa Thurau** is the founder of Strategies for Youth, a national policy and training organization dedicated to improving police/youth interactions and reducing disproportionate minority contact. Prior to her work with Strategies for Youth, Lisa served first as public policy specialist and then as Managing Director of the Juvenile Justice Center at Suffolk University Law School. Lisa received her bachelor's and master's degrees in anthropology respectively from Barnard College and Columbia University and holds a law degree from Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law of Yeshiva University.

**Al Valdez, PhD**, is a professor at the University of California, Irvine School of Sociology. Valdez has authored numerous books and articles about the history, sociology, and practices of street and prison gangs. He is a consultant for county law enforcement agencies around the country on topics related to community wellness and strengthening police-community relations.

**Alice White** is a community engagement and East African liaison officer with the Minneapolis Police Department, where she has served since January 2004. Her duties include working closely with the Somali-American community in Minneapolis, as well as with local, national, and international law enforcement agencies. White has previously served as a patrol officer, beat officer, and program manager for the police activities league.

**Taber White** is a police officer with the Austin Police Department, where he has served for more than five years. White has worked in several sectors within the city, including Northeast Austin, Central East Austin, and the Region 2 District Representatives office. He previously had a career in the technology sector.

**Robbie Williams** is a sergeant and community affairs supervisor with the Hawthorne (California) Police Department, where he has served for more than 19 years. Williams has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in marriage and family therapy. Williams has a strong passion for community-based policing and is an active advocate for crime prevention and intervention workshops that empower community members with information and strategies.

# User Guide

Chapter	Page number	Patrol	Patrol supervision	Juvenile operations	Crime prevention and community involvement	Recruitment	Victim/witness assistance	Policy development (specific policy implications) and enforcement	Agency leadership	Public information and media relations
Immigrant and Refugee Communities	4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Youth	17	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Transgender Communities	29	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

# Endnotes

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12 Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be described as limited English proficient or “LEP.” These individuals are often entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type or service, benefit, or encounter.

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16 NASRO is a not-for-profit organization for school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, and school security/safety professionals working as partners to protect students, school faculty, and staff and the schools they attend. NASRO is located in Hoover, Alabama, and was established in 1991. For additional information, see "The National Association of School Resource Officers," National Association of School Resource Officers, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.nasro.org>.

17 Transgender-specific policies have been drafted by the New York Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department, Chicago Police Department, Boston Police Department, Washington (D.C.) Metropolitan Police Department, New Orleans Police Department, Philadelphia Police Department, Miami Beach Police Department, San Francisco Police Department, and Denver Sheriff's Department, among others.

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20 Ibid., 158.

21 Ibid., 158.

22 Ibid., 129.

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23 Ibid., 124.

24 Ibid., 100.

25 Ibid., 33.

26 Although this terminology, and the shorter “trans,” are considered acceptable terms for non-transgender individuals to use, some individuals may prefer to be recognized simply as a woman or a man.

# About Vera

The **Vera Institute of Justice (Vera)** is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit center for justice policy and practice with offices in New York City; Washington, D.C.; New Orleans; and Los Angeles. Vera’s research, projects, and reform initiatives, typically conducted in partnership with local, state, or national officials, are located across the United States. For additional information, visit [www.vera.org](http://www.vera.org).

# 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 police 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.

Another source of COPS Office assistance is the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance (CRI-TA). Developed to advance community policing and ensure constitutional practices, CRI-TA is an independent, objective process for organizational transformation. It provides recommendations based on expert analysis of policies, practices, training, tactics, and accountability methods related to issues of concern.

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 the hiring of approximately 127,000 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.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

The COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—can be downloaded at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov). This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.



Recognizing the vital importance of trust to community cooperation, public safety, and national security, the Vera Institute worked with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to research and write this three-part series, which provides practical, field-informed guidance for creating positive, productive relations with all members of our multi-racial, multi-ethnic American population. Law enforcement faces many challenges in building relationships with new immigrants, teenagers, and transgender communities. This guide provides practical guidance for overcoming language and cultural barriers, promoting dialogue with teens, developing anti-gang strategies, establishing youth mentorship programs, and understanding the safety concerns of the transgender community.



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