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# THE CHALLENGE AND PROMISE OF USING COMMUNITY POLICING STRATEGIES TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

A Call for Community Partnerships with  
Law Enforcement to Enhance Public Safety

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**M**ore than four years ago, the White House issued a national strategy calling for the development of partnerships between police and communities to counter violent extremism. This report contains the results of a comprehensive assessment of the challenges and promise of this strategic approach to preventing violent extremism. It is based on a nationwide survey of law enforcement agencies and hundreds of hours of interviews and site visits with police departments and community members around the country.

Based on this research, we reached two fundamental conclusions. First, policing agencies face multiple obstacles to creating community partnerships focused on preventing acts of violent extremism. But, second, some policing agencies are following a set of promising practices which, if applied effectively, can result in increasing trust between the police and the communities they serve. These trusting relationships can serve as a platform for addressing many public safety threats, including, but not limited to, violent extremism.

## The Challenge

Policing agencies are unlikely to be successful in creating partnerships to address violent extremism until they establish trusting relationships with the communities they serve.

This is especially true with respect to Muslim American communities, which have experienced significant trauma since 9/11 and have deep concerns about how they are treated by the government. Police outreach and engagement efforts are viewed with some suspicion by Muslim Americans for a number of reasons.

First, Muslim Americans perceive they are being unfairly assigned a collective responsibility to attempt to curb violent extremism inspired by al Qaeda, ISIS, and other likeminded groups, but other communities are not being asked to address anti-government, racist, and other forms of extremism. Our research confirmed that while many policing agencies have robust efforts to conduct outreach with Muslim Americans, they do not have organized, overt efforts to reach out to non-Muslim communities that may be targeted for recruitment by anti-government, racist, or other extremist movements.

Second, some Muslim Americans believe that policing outreach and engagement initiatives may be linked with efforts to conduct surveillance on Muslim American individuals and organizations.

Third, even though most Muslim Americans have favorable impressions of local law enforcement, they see outreach and engagement efforts as part of a federal counter-terrorism program. Their unpleasant experiences with federal agencies, especially with respect to airport security and immigration control, taint their support for partnerships with policing agencies.

We also found that willingness to develop partnerships with the police depends on how effectively the police address other, non-terrorism related, public safety concerns of the community. Some Muslim American communities believe that their public safety concerns are not being fully addressed by the police and therefore are not interested in engaging on other issues.

Finally, developing effective community outreach and engagement programs is also difficult for the police because the programs absorb significant resources and may detract from other police priorities. Community policing programs require staffing, specialized training, and interpreters or intensive language classes for officers – all at a time when many police departments around the country are experiencing budgetary stress. Furthermore, we found that preventing violent extremism, while a pressing national issue, is not a top priority for local police that must address violent crime, drugs, gangs, and a host of other public safety concerns.

## The Promise

Despite these and other obstacles, many policing agencies have made progress in establishing strong, trusting relationships with their Muslim American communities that the police believe have advanced public safety. Widespread adoption of these “promising practices” would provide a firm foundation for police relations with Muslim American communities as well as other communities that have been targeted for recruitment by violent extremists. These relationships can be a platform for honoring and respecting the human rights of Muslim American citizens while at the same time advancing the community and national interest of preventing terrorism.

These promising practices include deep leadership commitment to community engagement, broad based engagement efforts that span multiple communities, ensuring that police forces are trained in outreach techniques and cultural competency, hiring a diverse police force, using outreach to address the core needs of the community, and finding ways to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system when possible by providing them the resources and assistance they need.

In light of these findings, we make the following recommendations:

## Recommendations for Local Policing Agencies

- **Establish outreach and engagement units within departments to the greatest extent budgets can support.**
- **Do not use the phrase “Countering Violent Extremism” or “CVE” to describe the activities of these units. We suggest COMPLETE Public Safety (COMMunity Partnerships with Law Enforcement To Enhance Public Safety) instead.**
- **Prioritize addressing public safety and other concerns of the community.** Doing so will help build trust and enable police and communities to address more sensitive issues – such as building resiliency to violent extremism – in the future.
- **Conduct outreach and engagement with all communities and sub-communities in a jurisdiction.** Do not focus outreach and engagement activities exclusively on Muslim American communities. Apply outreach and engagement strategies to all forms of violent extremism that impact your community – not only extremism inspired by al Qaeda, ISIS and like-minded groups. Develop methods for engaging with community members who may be targeted for recruitment by anti-government, racist, or sovereign citizen violent extremist groups.

- **Separate outreach and engagement units from intelligence collection and criminal investigatory units.** Departments should develop clear policies regarding when and how information provided to outreach officers should be transmitted to intelligence or criminal investigatory units. These policies should be transparent and shared with the community. Outreach officers should not be involved in any criminal investigations arising from information they obtain.
- **Recruit and hire a workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and religious composition of a community.** These hiring practices should extend to Muslim Americans, especially if the department has an outreach and engagement unit that interacts with the Muslim American community.
- **Mandate that officers receive cultural awareness training with respect to all major ethnic and religious communities within a jurisdiction.** Use community members to provide this training. Ensure that officers are not exposed to anti-Islamic training materials or bigoted presenters that market themselves as “counterterrorism experts.” Vet materials or programs with knowledgeable authorities and community members.
- **Provide basic language training to outreach officers that interact with immigrant communities.**
- **Work with communities to determine the best way to educate officers and communities about the threat of violent extremism and identify behaviors that should be brought to the attention of the police.** Ensure that officers are taught that behavior such as wearing religious symbols or attire is not an indicator of extremism. Consider joint training exercises with police and community members to promote discussion about the types of activities or behaviors that should be brought to the attention of the police.
- **Conduct a wide variety of outreach and engagement activities with community leaders and community members to familiarize them with the police, show them that police are there to serve the community, and build trust.** Work hard to develop relationships deeply into communities. Do not limit outreach and engagement activities to only organizations and individuals that welcome contact with law enforcement. Do not focus solely on male community members – establish outreach initiatives with women. Develop creative ways to engage with young people as well.
- **Educate community members about police policies and practices, including commitments to protect individual civil rights and civil liberties, as a means of demystifying police work and undermining sources of mistrust.**
- **Integrate local government agencies into community outreach and engagement programs.** Encourage schools, public health officials, mental health officials, and other social services agencies to participate.
- **Facilitate interactions between communities and federal government agencies.** Such interactions can help to address community concerns with federal issues such as immigration, discrimination, and surveillance policy.
- **Work with communities to develop non-criminal intervention programs for individuals attracted to violent extremism.** Community members should participate in creation and delivery of such programs. They should also be involved in developing guidance for determining when referrals to such programs are appropriate.

## **Recommendations for Muslim American Communities:**

- **Engage with police departments to address public safety and other core concerns of the community.** Explain to police the terms on which communities, organizations, or individuals are willing to engage. Be active citizens; do not categorically reject all offers of engagement on an assumption that they are discriminatory or will be used to conduct surveillance.



- Explain community concerns about equal treatment, unfair profiling and stereotyping, surveillance, and any other issues pertaining to police conduct or policies. Work with policing agencies to address these issues. Give them an opportunity to demonstrate that the police will protect and provide services to all community members on a non-discriminatory basis.
- Work with the police to develop sensible, non-discriminatory ways to inform community members about behaviors that indicate potential criminal conduct that should be reported to policing agencies.

## **Recommendations for the Federal Government:**

- Provide long-term funding directly to police departments to support outreach and engagement personnel.
- Ensure that all federal research and training programs on practices and techniques for law enforcement engagement with communities address all forms of violent extremism, including anti-government, racist, sovereign citizen, and environmental violent extremism.
- Fund technical assistance and training to assist policing agencies in conducting outreach and engagement with all communities whose members may be at risk of recruitment to violent extremism in the United States.
- Stop using the phrase “Countering Violent Extremism” or “CVE” to describe community outreach and engagement activities by the police and other government agencies. We suggest use of the phrase COMPLETE Public Safety (COMmunity Partnerships with Law Enforcement To Enhance Public Safety) instead.
- Recognize that many of the factors breeding distrust between communities and local law enforcement arise from activities of the federal government. Redouble efforts to prevent discriminatory treatment, profiling, and harassment of law-abiding citizens at airports and immigration checkpoints. Require all FBI field offices to engage with community groups to explain their policies regarding surveillance, use of informants, and preventing entrapment.

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# INTRODUCTION

**T**his report is about how policing agencies can work with Muslim Americans and other communities to enhance public safety in the post-9/11 world.

It comes at a difficult time for Muslim Americans, the police, and our country.

For Muslim Americans, the attacks by extremists on civilians in Paris and San Bernardino have deeply compounded the many problems Muslim Americans have been experiencing since the September 11 attacks: religious-based hate crimes and harassment, overt and subtle forms of societal and governmental discrimination, and negative portrayals of Muslims and Islam in the media. Public discourse now routinely includes conversations that once would have been considered unthinkable, in which public officials and candidates for high office advocate immigration and surveillance policies that would treat Muslims differently than followers of other religions.

For police, controversial shootings and excessive force incidents have resulted in widespread protests that have highlighted tense relationships between the police and minority communities in many urban areas around the country. Policing tactics and techniques are being examined at the highest level of the U.S. government and police departments across the country are thinking about way to build stronger bonds with the communities they serve.<sup>1</sup>

For our country, violent incidents inspired by al Qaeda and ISIS's ideologies, as well as incidents inspired by racist, anti-government, and anti-abortion extremism, have pushed public concerns about terrorism to their highest level since 9/11.<sup>2</sup> The list of communities in the United States impacted in 2015 – San Bernardino, Colorado Springs, Chattanooga, Charleston, and others – is far too long. It is clear that multiple forms of violent extremism, while only a small part of the violence that plagues America, will continue to be a serious problem for years to come.

For many years, and especially since the terrorist attacks of 2001, federal, state and local policing agencies have been grappling with the challenge of determining how to address the threat of violent extremism inside America's borders. One set of responses has focused on intelligence collection and criminal law enforcement, including surveillance authorities in the Patriot Act, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and new institutions such as state and regional intelligence fusion centers.

<sup>1</sup> President Obama established the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing on December 18, 2014. The Task Force released its final report in May 2015. Some of the recommendations of the President's Task Force, especially "Pillar 1 – Building Trust and Legitimacy," touch on key themes of this project.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Martin and Dalia Sussman, "Fear of Terrorism Lifts Donald Trump in New York Times/CBS News Poll," *New York Times*, December 10, 2015. This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Much thought and effort have also been dedicated to addressing how to prevent individuals from adopting violent extremist ideologies and acting on those beliefs. Theorists and practitioners have called for application of community policing strategies – which for decades have been applied to preventing violent crime – to the problem of violent extremism.<sup>3</sup> While efforts along these lines began to be implemented by some law enforcement agencies in the years after 9/11, this concept was not endorsed as an official strategy until 2011, when the White House released its national strategy document *Empowering Local Partnerships to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*. The White House stated that this concept of local partnerships should be applied to all forms of extremism, but noted that due to the magnitude of the threat emanating from Middle Eastern terrorist groups, special efforts would be made to build local partnerships between law enforcement agencies and Muslim American communities. The umbrella term applied to a wide range of preventative efforts has been “Countering Violent Extremism,” or “CVE”.

The purpose of this project is to provide an independent assessment of the efforts of local law enforcement agencies to engage with communities as part of the national strategy, which is now entering its fifth year of operation. This assessment was designed to perform the following tasks:

- Measure the extent to which local law enforcement agencies across the country are attempting to implement community engagement programs as a means to address violent extremism;
- Identify the strategy and programmatic elements of these efforts;
- Catalogue promising practices;
- Identify barriers that inhibit engagement efforts; and
- Recommend policies and practices to improve the efficacy of these programs.

We conclude that CVE efforts face substantial challenges, both from the perspective of Muslim American communities and police and sheriffs’ departments attempting to implement outreach and engagement strategies. Foremost among these problems is that the CVE strategy is being applied almost exclusively to addressing violent extremism by Muslims and not to other forms of violent extremism, which multiple studies have shown to be a comparable, if not greater threat in America.<sup>4</sup> Any set of practices or policies that is applied in this manner has little prospect of providing a foundation for a trusted partnership between police and the communities they serve.

Our interviews with Muslim community members suggest that policy prescriptions for developing police-community partnerships must take into account what we believe is best described as a form of trauma that Muslim Americans have experienced since 9/11. This trauma has been caused by the painful, pervasive societal reaction against Muslim Americans resulting from the fact that the 9/11 attackers were Muslims and that Muslims in al Qaeda, and now in ISIS, have been perpetrating horrific acts of violence around the world. This trauma deeply impacts Muslim Americans’ perceptions of how they fit into American society and their trust in governmental authorities like the police.

With this background in mind, we have found that many Muslim Americans are deeply suspicious of governmental outreach and engagement programs including the federal government’s “CVE” initiative. This suspicion exists even with respect to local police departments with which local Muslim Americans have few specific grievances. Outreach and engagement efforts by local law enforcement must therefore be highly sensitive to community concerns and be implemented with a great deal of care and patience. Community-

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Gill et al., “Community-Oriented Policing to Reduce Crime, Disorder, and Fear and Increase Satisfaction and Legitimacy among Citizens: A Systematic Review,” *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 10:399–428, 2014; Lawrence W. Sherman et al., *Preventing Crime: What Works What Doesn’t, What’s Promising* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> See studies cited in Scott Shane, “Homegrown Extremists Tied to Deadlier Toll than Jihadists in the U.S. Since 9/11,” *New York Times*, June 24, 2015.  
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police relationships must be based on a long-term effort to build trust, rather than a short-term, quid pro quo arrangement in which governmental engagement is based on an overt or implicit agreement that Muslim Americans will provide information to law enforcement about people in their communities.

Law enforcement outreach and engagement programs also face internal obstacles. Local police departments face a myriad of public safety issues, many of which present a greater day-to-day threat to their citizens than violent extremism. Consequently, many community outreach and engagement programs with Muslim Americans are under resourced. Most agencies do not have full-time officers dedicated to these programs. We have found many instances of police officers who spend time on their off-duty hours and weekends, usually without pay, to attend community events and build relationships with local Muslim American communities. Police understand that effective engagement programs require the participation of other governmental agencies, such as schools and mental health services, but often these agencies are under-resourced as well and cannot dedicate personnel and funding to community engagement with Muslim Americans or other communities. Successful outreach and engagement also requires specialized training, which, again, requires resources. Our research suggests that without dedicated funding for these functions, outreach and engagement efforts between police and Muslim American communities will be sporadic, scattershot, and highly dependent on the presence of police chiefs and individual officers who are personally dedicated to this cause.

Despite these substantial challenges, we also conclude that the concept of community-police partnerships – if properly framed, resourced, and implemented – can provide a foundation for addressing a range of public safety problems in the United States, including, but not limited to, violent extremism.

From the community perspective, we spoke with many Muslim Americans who, despite their suspicions and concerns, either already experience a positive relationship with their local police or express a willingness to engage with police departments based on principles of fairness and equal treatment. At the outset, to gain the support and trust of Muslim Americans, it will be necessary to start with a clean slate, by pitching overboard the inaccurate “countering violent extremism (CVE)” label to describe these preventative efforts. The term CVE perpetuates the unhelpful idea that community based outreach and engagement efforts are focused primarily on identifying potential terrorists.

We also found that many police departments – cognizant of the challenges identified above – have been interacting with their Muslim American constituents for years or are forging ahead with substantial efforts to build relationships of trust with Muslim American communities. These departments are following a set of principles and implementing promising practices that are instructive to departments around the country interested in developing or improving their outreach and engagement programs. We suggest that such programs are most accurately labeled as “**Community Partnerships with Law Enforcement to Enhance Public Safety**” or “**COMPLETE Public Safety**.”

The promising practices we observed follow a set of core principles applicable to all community outreach and engagement programs, but are especially important for outreach to Muslim Americans. These promising practices aspire to respect the inherent human rights of Muslim Americans to enjoy the promise of American freedom and equality, while also providing a firm foundation to promote public safety and national security.

**First, community outreach and engagement programs must be broad based, address core concerns of the community, and be applied to all communities, not just Muslim Americans.** To gain the trust, and ultimately the cooperation and partnership of a community, police must actively demonstrate that they are public servants, who are there to provide safety and address as many community concerns as possible. Such

services should be provided equally, to all parts of a community, on a non-discriminatory basis. The general applicability of these efforts is especially important to Muslim Americans who are highly sensitive to any implication that they have a greater connection to international terrorist movements than any other community in this country. Likewise, the exclusive focus of such efforts cannot be preventing violent extremism. Police departments must first build trust with communities by addressing their public safety needs. Establishment of such a relationship can then provide an opening to tackle a broader set of issues, from community support for criminal investigations to preventing violent extremism.

**Second, community outreach and engagement programs must be consistent, participatory, creative, and personal.** Trust is not established in a day or through one visit by a police officer to a church or mosque. Rather, trust is gained in a variety of ways, over time, and through persistent effort by both police and communities. The ways to build trust are virtually limitless: visits to community organizations, talking to community members in their store or on the streets, open houses at police departments, public demonstrations of police equipment, or police participation in fairs, carnivals, or other community events. No matter where or how these interactions take place, in the end, trust is built through person to person relationships – the police chief to the leader of a mosque, the outreach officer to a business owner, the officer on the beat with a group of kids playing ball in the park.

**Third, trust cannot be built without transparency.** Consequently, outreach and engagement efforts must be strictly separated from intelligence gathering and criminal investigative functions. The police cannot expect to be welcomed to community events and be considered a partner in addressing public safety concerns on the one hand, if, on the other, these same officers are collecting information about community members that is fed to intelligence officers and criminal investigators. Strict separation between outreach and intelligence means that outreach officers do not report on the communities with which they interact. If information is **provided** to outreach officers by the community, there need to be procedures in place for them to pass information to other parts of police departments, so outreach officers are in no way involved in intelligence collection and analysis or criminal investigations. A commitment to transparency also requires that these policies be explained to community members. Police should tell communities what they are going to do with information provided to them about an individual that might be radicalizing to violence. There may not be clear, one-size fits all, answers to such questions. The key point is that whatever the answers are, there has to be complete transparency on these difficult issues between the police and the communities in which they are interacting.

**Fourth, outreach and engagement works best when there is open communication and give and take between both sides of the partnership.** Just as the police should enlist the community to help them do their jobs, so too can communities lend their expertise and services to the police to enhance public safety and welfare. So, for example, communities should expect that the police understand their cultural and religious customs. But they should also reach out to the police to offer expertise and instructional programs to provide cultural awareness. Police cannot be expected to know when they are welcome at community events. But they will come if invited.

**Fifth, the job of gaining community trust and providing services cannot fall exclusively to the police.** The police have limited resources and many public safety threats to address. They cannot be everywhere at all times. Genuine community engagement requires partnerships with multiple government agencies – the schools, public and mental health agencies, the parks, transportation, and other local government experts. Likewise, many community concerns arise from activities of the federal government, like immigration enforcement or airport security. Addressing federal issues, and suspicions of federal authorities, must be part of the mix. Local police can lead the engagement effort, but other government agencies need to participate as well.

Readers may note that very little of this discussion pertains directly to preventing violent extremism. But that is the point. Virtually every individual we interviewed for this project said that establishing trust between the police and the community they serve needs to come before targeted efforts to prevent violent extremism. Once established, however, such a relationship can serve as a platform for confronting many difficult issues, including violent extremism. We fully believe that Muslim American communities are willing partners in such an endeavor. Muslim American communities understand quite plainly that few things could advance their collective well-being more than preventing new terrorist attacks by Muslim Americans inside the United States. They also welcome help preventing young Muslim Americans from traveling abroad to fight in foreign conflicts. Police agencies are ready and able to support and assist them in achieving these goals. We hope that the ideas and recommendations in this report will aid both police agencies and the communities they serve in working together to achieve their common objectives.

# BACKGROUND

## From 9/11 to the National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism

### A. The Role of Community Policing in Response to 9/11

Community policing involves collaboration between police and community members characterized by problem-solving partnerships to enhance public safety.<sup>5</sup> Community policing was adopted widely among law enforcement agencies in the 1990s, with a view toward improving trust between community members and police, and leveraging police resources through voluntary assistance by community members in public safety measures.<sup>6</sup>

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, a number of scholars and law enforcement organizations proposed that the benefits of community policing approaches might extend to counterterrorism, as well as other priorities,<sup>7</sup> to “bring neighborhood policing into the counterterrorism apparatus ... providing local communities with a degree of direct democratic influence over how they are policed.”<sup>8</sup> As early as 2002, the International Association of Chiefs of Police called for a community-policing approach to the fight against terrorism.<sup>9</sup> The following year, FBI Director Robert Mueller convened a meeting of Muslim, Sikh, and Arab American leaders where he called for strengthening relationships and enhanced cultural sensitivity.<sup>10</sup> “We can’t do it without you,” Mueller told these groups.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Community Policing Consortium, *Understanding Community Policing: A Framework for Action* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994); Dennis P. Rosenbaum and Arthur J. Lurigio, “An Inside Look at Community Policing Reform: Definitions, Organizational Changes, and Evaluation Findings,” *Crime & Delinquency* 40(3):299-314, 1994; Dennis P. Rosenbaum, ed., *The Challenge of Community Policing* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> George L. Kelling and Mark Harrison Moore, “The Evolving Strategy of Policing,” *Perspectives on Policing* 4:1-16, 1988; Edward R. Maguire and Stephen D. Mastrofski, “Patterns of Community Policing in the United States,” *Police Quarterly* 3(1):4-45, 2000; Michael M. Berlin, “Community Policing, Evolution of,” pp. 53-59 in Kenneth J. Peak, ed., *Encyclopedia of Community Policing and Problem Solving* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Ben Brown, “Community Policing in Post-September 11 America: A Comment on the Concept of Community-Oriented Counterterrorism,” *Police Practice and Research* 8(3):239-251, 2007; see also Jose Docobo, “Community Policing as the Primary Strategy for Homeland Security Prevention at the Local Law Enforcement Level,” *Homeland Security Affairs* 1(4), 2005; Robert R. Friedmann and William J. Cannon, “Homeland Security and Community Policing: Competing or Complementing Public Safety Policies,” *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 4(4), 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Innes, “Policing Uncertainty: Countering Terror Through Community Intelligence and Democratic Policing,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 605(1):222-241, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> International Association of Chiefs of Police, “Community Policing: A Valuable Tool in the Fight against Terrorism,” Resolution COP017.a02, adopted at the 109th Annual Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 8, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> “FBI Director Mueller Meets with Muslim, Sikh and Arab American Organization Leaders,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, March 7, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Id.



Research found that Muslim communities were also motivated to and effective in preventing radicalization to violence, and that many leaders of these communities were eager to partner with police.<sup>12</sup> In 2004–2005, the Police Executive Research Forum published a six-volume series of documents on strategies for local law enforcement to protect communities from terrorism, including a volume dedicated to partnerships with diverse communities.<sup>13</sup> The Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), which was central to the diffusion of community policing policies in the 1990s, sponsored initiatives urging law enforcement agencies to adopt the tools of community-oriented policing in the realm of counterterrorism.<sup>14</sup>

Efforts along these lines developed in many cities across the country. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) was one of the pioneers in applying a community oriented approach to the challenges of 9/11. In describing the LAPD’s approach, Lt. Mark Stainbrook wrote that:

*Local community engagement is best done on a personal level. A community may never truly trust the police as an organization, but cultural norms in many Muslim communities may dictate that close, personal associations with individuals can move mountains. The key is finding the right community leaders who can be trusted and who will act as allies to the police.*<sup>15</sup>

Similar initiatives have emerged in a number of European countries as well,<sup>16</sup> the most prominent being the British “Prevent” program, which emphasized “working with Muslim communities to improve their approach to tackling extremism.”<sup>17</sup> Preventing terrorism requires “the support of communities and community organisations in this country to protect vulnerable people from radicalisation, and recruitment to terrorism,” the revised policy stated in 2009. “Because the greatest threat at present is from terrorists who claim to act in the name of Islam, much Prevent activity takes place in and with Muslim communities. But the principles of our Prevent work apply equally to other communities who may be the focus of attention from violent extremist groups.”<sup>18</sup> Public criticism prompted a review of Prevent, and the program was revamped in 2011.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, the concepts underlying Prevent appear to have provided some of the models for the Obama Administration’s program on countering violent extremism.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Debbie A. Ramirez, Sasha Cohen O’Connell, and Rabia Zafar, “Developing Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Communities: A Promising Practices Guide,” Partnering for Prevention & Community Safety Initiative Publications, Paper 4, 2004; Nicole J. Henderson, Christopher W. Ortiz, Naomi F. Sugie, and Joel Miller, “Law Enforcement & Arab American Community Relations After September 11, 2001: Engagement in a Time of Uncertainty,” Vera Institute of Justice, June 2006; David Schanzer, Charles Kurzman, and Ebrahim Moosa, “Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim-Americans,” Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, January 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Heather J. Davies and Gerard R. Murphy, “Volume 2: Working With Diverse Communities,” *Protecting Your Community from Terrorism: The Strategies for Local Law Enforcement Series* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, and Police Executive Research Forum, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Robert Wasserman, *Guidance for Building Communities of Trust* (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services, July 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Mark G. Stainbrook, “Policing with Muslim Communities in the Age of Terrorism,” *The Police Chief* 77:32–40, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach (Vienna, Austria: OSCE, 2014); European Crime Prevention Network, *Community (Oriented) Policing in Europe* (Brussels: EUCPN.org, 2012), pp. 28–43; Lorenzo Vidino and James Brandon, *Countering Radicalization in Europe* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, King’s College London, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom’s Strategy* (Norwich, UK: TSO, July 2006), p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering International Terrorism (Norwich, UK: TSO, March 2009), p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Rachel Briggs, “Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom,” *International Affairs* 86:971–981, 2010; Arun Kundnani, *The Muslims Are Coming!* (London: Verso, 2014), pp. 156ff.

<sup>20</sup> Secretary of State for the Home Department, *Prevent Strategy* (Norwich, UK: TSO, June 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Will McCants and Clint Watts, “U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism: An Assessment,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, December 2012.

## B. The Obama Administration's National Strategy for Countering Violence Extremism (CVE)

In August 2011, the White House formally issued its national strategy on *Empowering Local Partnerships to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*. The new, community-based “countering violent extremism” (CVE) strategy called for “engaging and empowering individuals and groups at the local level to build resilience against violent extremism.” The White House strategy noted that “law enforcement plays an essential role in keeping us safe, but so too does engagement and partnership with communities.”<sup>22</sup> According to this strategy, “engagement with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists” will “empower local partners, who can more readily identify problems as they emerge and customize responses so that they are appropriate and effective for particular individuals, groups, and locations.”

Local police agencies are central to this effort, according to the national strategy, because “Government and law enforcement at the local level have well-established relationships with communities, developed through years of consistent engagement, and therefore can effectively build partnerships and take action on the ground.” Just as local policing agencies have worked with community partners to address gang violence, school shootings, hate crimes, and other “community safety” issues, “so must we address radicalization to violence and terrorist recruitment through similar relationships and by leveraging some of the same tools and solutions.”

While this approach “should be enduring and flexible enough to address a variety of current and possible future threats,” the policy identifies Muslim Americans as the primary object of community engagement, on the grounds that “al-Qa’ida and its affiliates and adherents represent the preeminent terrorist threat to our country” and “are attempting to lure Americans to terrorism.” At the same time, the policy encourages government officials not to “stigmatize or blame communities because of the actions of a handful of individuals,” and warns against “unnecessarily creating tensions with potential community partners.” The policy “must ensure that in our efforts to support community-based partnerships to counter violent extremism, we remain engaged in the full range of community concerns and interests, and do not narrowly build relationships around national security issues alone.”

Later in 2011, the White House issued a “Strategic Implementation Plan” spelling out the steps taken and anticipated by the federal government to promote community-based efforts to counter violent extremism.<sup>23</sup> In support of local law enforcement’s efforts in this area, the implementation plan called for expanded federal initiatives that focus on “developing relationships among local law enforcement departments, fusion centers, and the communities they serve”; creating a federal task force to identify “best practices in community engagement,” and; assigning federal agencies the role of “facilitator, convener, and source of information to support local networks and partnerships.”<sup>24</sup> The plan also called for federal assistance in “identifying opportunities within existing appropriations for incorporating CVE as an eligible area of work for public safety, violence prevention, and community resilience grants.” Training was identified as a key area for development.<sup>25</sup> Under the plan, local law enforcement would be trained on “rigorous curricula based on the latest research, which conveys information about violent extremism; improves cultural competency; and imparts best practices and lessons learned for effective community engagement and partnerships.”

<sup>22</sup> White House, *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, August 2011.

<sup>23</sup> White House, *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, December 2011.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Training: Guidance & Best Practices,” October, 2011.

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) developed a series of “key principles” for “law enforcement organizations considering, planning, and employing community policing practices tailored to countering violent extremism in their communities”:<sup>26</sup>

1. Foster and enhance trusting partnerships with the community.
2. Engage all residents to address public safety matters.
3. Leverage public and private stakeholders.
4. Utilize all partnerships to counter violent extremism.
5. Train all members of the department.

In the 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice also announced pilot projects in three metropolitan areas – Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis/St. Paul – to test initiatives bringing together federal officials, local police, and community representatives to negotiate priorities and procedures for countering violent extremism.<sup>27</sup> The projects are still in their early stages and are being formally evaluated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Policing practices are an important feature of these pilot projects, but they also include many other activities and initiatives. This report is not an effort to comment on or evaluate the federal pilot projects. Our findings, however, are relevant to the policing activities that are taking place in both the pilot project cities and police and sheriffs’ departments across the country.

<sup>26</sup> International Association of Chiefs of Police, *Using Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism: Five Key Principles for Law Enforcement* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group, “The Los Angeles Framework for Countering Violent Extremism,” February 2015; Greater Boston Region Collaborative, “A Framework for Prevention and Intervention Strategies: Incorporating Violent Extremism into Violence Prevention Efforts,” February 2015; United States Attorney’s Office, Minneapolis, MN, “Building Community Resilience: Minneapolis-St. Paul Pilot Program, Fact Sheet,” February 2015.

## PROJECT PURPOSE AND METHODS

**T**he purpose of this project is to identify how law enforcement agencies throughout the country are engaging with communities who may have members at risk of recruitment to violent extremism in order to promote public safety and protect national security. We are not examining the full range of local law enforcement’s counterterrorism activities. Rather, we are focusing on the strand of these activities that encompass efforts to prevent groups and individuals from embracing violent extremist ideologies and from taking violent action in furtherance of these ideologies. As noted above, these activities have been labeled by some with the moniker “CVE” or “countering violent extremism.” Our research has shown that this terminology has fallen into disfavor among many police departments and community members, so we will avoid using it from this point forward in this report, except as references to past practices and programs.

**The first element of this project involved a survey of state and local law enforcement agencies, inquiring about their use of community policing practices as part of the broader strategy to prevent violent extremism.** This survey was conducted in the first half of 2014. The sampling frame was all 480 state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies with more than 200 sworn officers, plus 63 additional county and municipal agencies with 200 or fewer sworn officers in selected jurisdictions that experienced an incident or prosecution for violent extremism in recent years. The survey yielded responses from 339 of the larger agencies (a 71 percent response rate) and 43 of the smaller agencies (a 68 percent response rate), for a total of 382 law enforcement agencies (a 70 percent response rate), including 35 state agencies, 141 county agencies, and 206 municipal agencies, whose combined jurisdictions cover 86 percent of the U.S. population. In this report, we aggregate data separately for county and municipal agencies of different sizes: those serving populations of less than 200,000 (which we call “smaller agencies”); those serving populations of 200,000 to 1,000,000 (“mid-size agencies”); and those serving populations over 1,000,000 (“large agencies”).

**The second element of the project involved telephone interviews with 19 municipal and county law enforcement agencies,** selected from the survey respondents to represent a variety of regional and demographic constituencies. We also selected departments based on how they ranked the level of the violent extremist threat and the source of the violent extremist threat in their jurisdiction (al Qaeda inspired vs. “other” extremist threats).<sup>28</sup> These interviews were conducted with the chief of police, sheriff, or the lead

<sup>28</sup> This survey was developed in 2013 and fielded in the beginning of 2014, about six months before ISIS captured Mosul and declared a “caliphate.” Consequently, when asking police departments to rank the source of the violent extremist threats they faced – we used the term “al Qaeda inspired” violent extremism rather than mentioning ISIS because ISIS was not commonly known at the time and there were few indications at the time that ISIS was inspiring violent extremism in the United States.

officer responsible for outreach and engagement efforts. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to two hours. The interviewees were offered confidentiality so that they would feel free to speak freely.

**A third element of the project involved site visits to local law enforcement jurisdictions** around the United States, selected to represent contrasting approaches to the use of outreach and engagement activities with communities whose members may be vulnerable to recruitment to violent extremism. These visits lasted from two to three days and included significant interaction with at least one dozen law enforcement officials and two dozen community members at each location for a total of more than 50 interviews with law enforcement officials and interviews and focus groups with approximately 200 community members representing all major segments of Muslim American communities, including African-American, Arab, South Asian, and other races and ethnicities. All police and community interviewees were promised confidentiality.<sup>29</sup>

At each site, one team of researchers met with law enforcement leaders and officials engaged in outreach and violent extremism prevention efforts. Site visits included interviews with police chiefs and sheriffs, as well as officers involved in community outreach and engagement as part of their regular duties. In some areas, police departments arranged for our team to interview community officials who worked in conjunction with the police department and communities on outreach and engagement, as well as efforts to build resiliency against violent extremism.

A separate team of researchers, traveling at different times, met with community organizations and focus groups of community members. Participants were recruited from a variety of ethnicities, age groups, genders, and religious ideologies, with a view toward generating conversations that would offer contrasting experiences and opinions of Muslim-Americans' interactions with law enforcement. As with all focus groups, each of these conversations generated its own dynamics, with some involving relatively heated disagreements and others downplaying differences of opinion. The participants were not randomly selected and cannot be considered statistically representative of Muslim communities in the United States. The focus groups were intended to document a range of perspectives and experiences that are found among Muslim Americans, but the prevalence of different views in these focus groups cannot be extrapolated to Muslim Americans at large.

The project annotated the recordings of the conversations and transcribed sections identified as being particularly relevant to the project's inquiry. This material was then sorted into themes, with especially telling examples quoted in this report.

The original project design anticipated community interviews of both Muslim Americans and members of other communities whose members may be targeted for recruitment by violent extremists. However, during the telephone interview stage of the project, we did not identify police departments that had a formal outreach program designed to counteract anti-government, racist, or other forms of violent extremism. Consequently, it would have been difficult to identify a community to visit to gain information about efforts by the police to prevent these other forms of extremism. Due to these shortcomings, our focus groups included only Muslim Americans.

Developing methods for police to interact with communities whose members may be vulnerable to anti-government, racist, or other forms of violent extremism is an important area for policymakers, police departments, and the research community to address. We make recommendations for investments in these areas below.

<sup>29</sup> The original project design anticipated site visits to eight communities and police departments. Community focus groups were held in eight locations, but we were unable to arrange site interviews with the police departments in three of these cities.

# RESULTS FROM A NATIONWIDE SURVEY ON USE OF COMMUNITY POLICING TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

**O**ur nationwide survey of policing agencies showed that a majority of them are using at least some form of outreach and engagement to address violent extremism. That said, this strategy for preventing violent extremism is not deeply engrained and is not supported, for example, by a deep investment in training.

The findings on the adoption of community policing to counter violent extremism are mixed. **Well over half of respondents indicated that their agency was familiar with the federal strategy on countering violent extremism.** Familiarity with the strategy was greater in large county and municipal agencies, where six out of seven respondents said their agency knew about the federal strategy (Table 1).

**Table 1. Are personnel in your agency familiar with the Federal Government’s National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism, Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States?**

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsize Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Yes	77.1	41.3	61.5	85.7	57.6
No	22.9	58.7	38.5	14.3	42.4
No response	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

The survey listed 14 counterterrorism strategies drawn from the extensive literature on police responses to terrorism, and asked agencies to indicate which strategies their agency uses to counter al Qaeda inspired violent extremism and to counter other forms of violent extremism (Table 2).

**There was a significant gap between the number of agencies that relied on traditional law enforcement tactics, compared to the more preventative approach of community outreach and engagement. For**

example, 88.3 percent of the agencies reported using “criminal investigatory techniques,” and 90.3 percent of the agencies “coordinated with a state or local intelligence fusion center.” By contrast, the strategy of “outreach and engagement with the communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism” was reportedly in use by only 45.7 percent of the agencies. **Outreach and engagement ranked third lowest of the 14 strategies.** Among large local agencies, the prevalence was somewhat higher, at 62.9 percent, but this rate still ranked fourth lowest of 14 strategies.

Other elements of a community-based prevention strategy were even less common. “Engaging in dialogue on social media ... to counteract violent extremist recruitment and messaging” is used in only 19.9 percent of the agencies and “foreign language training” is being provided in only 4.7 percent of the agencies.

However, cultural awareness training, an important element of outreach and engagement, was reportedly being provided in 63.0 percent of the agencies.

**Table 2. Please indicate which strategies your agency uses to address violent extremism: (Please check all that apply)**

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsize Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Coordination with the DOJ Joint Terrorism Task Force	76.5	71.2	88.3	94.3	81.8
Participation in other local, state or federal task forces	79.4	73.7	85.1	82.9	80.4
Traditional criminal investigatory techniques targeted at individuals suspected of engaging in criminal conduct	79.4	90.7	88.3	88.6	88.3
Police patrols of potential terrorism targets and public spaces	64.7	81.4	81.8	85.7	80.4
Video surveillance of public areas	47.1	48.3	48.7	57.1	49.3
Monitoring of social media or other online sources of intelligence	61.8	61.9	70.8	88.6	68.6
Engaging in dialogue on social media and other online platforms to counteract violent extremist recruitment and messaging	11.8	18.6	19.5	34.3	19.9

*continued*

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsize Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Outreach and engagement with the communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism	32.4	39.0	50.0	62.9	45.7
Unit within department dedicated solely to countering violent extremism (e.g., intelligence units)	52.9	28.8	59.1	71.4	49.3
Training in intelligence gathering related to countering violent extremism	70.6	54.2	72.7	74.3	66.3
Foreign language training for purposes specifically related to concerns about terrorism	5.9	3.4	5.2	5.7	4.7
Cultural sensitivity training	50.0	54.2	69.5	77.1	63.0
Coordination with a state or local intelligence fusion center	97.1	83.9	91.6	100.0	90.3
Dedicated tip line	52.9	32.2	43.5	65.7	42.8
Other	2.9	5.1	8.4	11.4	7.0
None	2.9	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.9
No response	2.9	17.5	8.9	0.0	10.7

A follow-up question on the survey asked which community-oriented strategies the agencies used to counter violent extremism, offering a list of 20 strategies drawn from community policing manuals and other sources (Table 3). Here, the percentage of agencies listing at least one of these community-oriented strategies was somewhat higher than in the previous questions. **More than three quarters of all respondents indicated that their agencies used at least one of these community-oriented strategies to counter violent extremism, including 88.6 percent of large agencies.** On average, large agencies reported using between 9 and 10 community policing strategies to counter violent extremism. Attendance of police leaders at important community events, neighborhood watches, regular meetings with community leaders, working with communities to address public safety issues other than violent extremism, and presentations at schools were the most commonly used community policing strategies.



**Table 3. What types of community policing strategies does your agency engage in with communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism? (Check all that apply)**

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Regular meetings with leaders of communities that may be targeted for violent extremism	20.6	37.3	42.2	60.0	40.2
Town-hall style meetings with groups of these community members	14.7	25.4	29.2	42.9	27.9
Regular meetings with working groups from these communities	11.8	25.4	29.9	54.3	29.0
Development of volunteer opportunities for these community members within the police department	2.9	20.3	26.0	40.0	23.2
Creation of “sub-stations” to improve accessibility of officers to members of these communities	0.0	22.9	33.8	22.9	25.5
Assignment of a community liaison officer to these communities	14.7	33.1	42.9	51.4	37.5
Regular foot patrols in these communities	2.9	24.6	14.3	5.7	15.8
Recruitment of these community members to join the police department as officers or other employees	14.7	22.0	27.3	42.9	25.8
Presentations or interactions at places of worship	11.8	30.5	46.1	54.3	38.1
Presentations or interactions at schools	23.5	44.9	46.8	60.0	45.2

*continued*

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsize Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Expanding social service outreach to youth and at risk populations	5.9	29.7	33.8	28.6	29.0
Community training about the role of immigration enforcement in the investigations of terrorism and hate crimes	11.8	15.3	16.2	20.0	15.8
Working with these communities to address concerns other than violent extremism	26.5	43.2	50.6	68.6	47.5
Communication with these communities through social media	17.6	28.8	33.8	48.6	32.0
Communication with these communities through traditional media (e.g., newspaper articles or advertisements)	11.8	26.3	22.1	25.7	22.9
Attendance of police leaders at important events in these communities	29.4	54.2	64.3	82.9	59.2
Increased civil rights enforcement efforts	11.8	16.9	18.8	20.0	17.6
Inclusion of community members in citizen oversight boards or other community/police functions	20.6	25.4	33.8	37.1	29.9
Promoting/organizing neighborhood watch and other community anti-crime activities in these communities	8.8	51.7	55.8	62.9	50.4

*continued*

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Respondents
Providing referrals to other government agencies	32.4	48.3	46.1	57.1	46.6
Other (Please describe):	5.9	2.5	5.2	11.4	5.0
None of the above	44.1	24.6	18.8	11.4	22.6
No response	2.9	17.5	8.9	0.0	10.7
<b>Average number of strategies</b>	3.2	6.7	7.6	9.6	7.0

This use of community policing practices appears to have grown over the past decade, as compared with the results of two surveys conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2003 and 2007 on large samples of law enforcement agencies around the United States.<sup>30</sup> These surveys – known as LEMAS (Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics) – covered an extensive range of issues, with only a handful of questions related to terrorism. Only one question corresponds specifically with community-oriented policing strategies: an item asking whether the agency “partner[s] with culturally diverse communities” as part of its “terrorism preparedness activities” (Table 4). This question is not an ideal match with the present survey, since “terrorism preparedness” may involve responses to incidents of violence, rather than prevention, and the phrase “culturally diverse communities” may have limited the scope of the community partnerships that agencies chose to report. With these caveats in mind, it appears that community partnerships were less common in 2003 and 2007, especially among small agencies, than in 2014: fewer than one quarter of agencies in 2003 and 2007 reported community partnerships for terrorism preparedness, while 45.7 percent of agencies reported outreach and engagement as a strategy to address violent extremism in 2014 (Table 2).

<sup>30</sup> United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS): 2003* (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], ICPSR04411-v1, 2006); United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS), 2007* (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], ICPSR31161-v1, 2011).

**Table 4. Terrorism preparedness activities: Partner with culturally diverse communities**

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsize Agencies	Large Agencies	All Respondents
LEMAS 2003 survey (901 responses)	24.5	17.5	28.6	54.8	22.9
LEMAS 2007 survey (2,836 responses)	33.3	18.8	44.4	50.0	21.8

While community policing appears to be applied to violent extremism prevention efforts more often today than a decade ago, relatively few officers receive training for this activity. **According to the survey, only one quarter of law enforcement agencies offer training on engaging with communities targeted for recruitment by terrorists, including just over half of large agencies (Table 5).**

**Table 5. Has your department directly provided, or otherwise arranged for, training of your employees on how to engage with communities that have been targeted for recruitment by violent extremists?**

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsize Agencies	Large Agencies	All Respondents
Yes	20.0	16.8	24.9	54.3	24.1
No	77.1	65.0	65.7	45.7	64.7
No response	2.9	18.2	9.5	0.0	11.3

Similarly, the community policing practice of holding community meetings with representatives from communities that may be targeted for recruitment by violent extremists has not been widely adopted. Again, just over a quarter of all agencies are holding such meetings. This practice is most prevalent, however, in large agencies – about two-thirds of large agencies are holding community meetings with the relevant communities. (Table 6).

**Table 6. Does your agency hold meetings with representatives from communities that may be targeted for recruitment by violent extremists?**

Percent within each category	State Agencies	Smaller Agencies	Midsize Agencies	Large Agencies	All Respondents
Yes	17.1	14.7	27.8	65.7	25.4
No	77.1	67.1	62.7	34.3	63.1
No response	5.7	18.2	9.5	0.0	11.5

**Results from the entire survey are provided in the Appendix.**

# THE CHALLENGE:

## Obstacles to Using Community Policing to Prevent Violent Extremism

Policing agencies face multiple obstacles to creating community partnerships focused on preventing acts of violent extremism. A core difficulty is that in some communities these partnership building efforts have been applied almost exclusively to addressing violent extremism by Muslims and not to other forms of violent extremism. Seeing this as a double standard, some Muslim Americans have expressed reluctance to participate or expressed outright opposition to such programs. Also, due to Muslim Americans' traumatic experiences in the post-9/11 era, there is deep suspicion of direct interaction with government authorities. Distrust of even well-intentioned policing activities may arise from fears of intrusive surveillance and entrapment or anger over treatment at airport security or immigration checkpoints. Policing agencies face internal obstacles as well. In an era of tight police budgets, outreach and engagement programs requires substantial resources. There are also competing priorities for these resources such as traditional public safety concerns like violent crime, drugs, and gangs.

### A. Muslim Americans See Police Outreach Efforts as a Double Standard, Because Similar Programs Are Not Directed at Non-Muslims

#### 1. Perceptions of Muslim Americans

Much of the suspicion that Muslim Americans in our focus groups expressed toward community outreach and engagement arose from the perception that these initiatives are directed primarily at Muslim communities. With other communities, they felt, violent extremism was treated as a fringe element and not the responsibility of the entire community. For example, some focus group participants believed that law-abiding Christians were not the subject of law enforcement outreach efforts to identify and prevent violent extremism by Christians. As one focus group participant put it, "As an American Muslim I want to be treated like any other community. ... I want to be treated like any other community is treated here, which will give my kids confidence they shouldn't have to fear being Muslim."

Another focus group participant objected to a police briefing held with community members on the subject of community awareness to counter radicalization:

*The entire profile was on Muslims. Had it been a meeting with a fair, balanced representation of the American community saying we need your help, and the slideshow would show a balanced violent extremism by all groups and faiths and say, this would be a legitimate call for us, but when you sit here and invite us as Muslims ... this makes our work much more difficult.*

As it happens, all of the police agencies in this jurisdiction rated extremism inspired by ideologies other than al Qaeda (such as anti-government extremism) as a threat equal to or greater than al Qaeda-inspired violent extremism. However, these agencies' community outreach regarding violent extremism gave Muslims the impression that they alone were tasked with the burden of raising awareness and preventing radicalization. A participant in another focus group made a similar point:

*They're having briefings on terrorism or how to help law enforcement, but we shouldn't be singled out as, "The Muslim community has a problem." It should be a balanced representation of all the areas of the community, so we're seen less as "We have a problem" and "There's something inherently wrong with our community," and [instead], "Let's join with everybody and tap into group wisdom and work together with the community."*

In another area of the country, a focus group participant had a similar reaction to a town hall style meeting that police held with local Muslim American community leaders:

*[They should] hold town halls for everyone instead, not just Muslims. ... We don't think these special relationships resolve long-term issues. We want a more open relationship with the community that isn't based on a tiny number of special relationships.*

A different focus group participant criticized a perceived "double standard" in which Muslims making violent comments are considered potential terrorists, while violent statements by non-Muslims – including statements directed against Muslims – are considered protected political speech:

*They [law enforcement] showed us a video about jihadists [at a community awareness briefing] and showed the vile things they say, and said, "Watch your community for this type of talk." ... I said, "I see this on TV and Fox News and people making these types of statements – a guy came in to a high school and said these sorts of things about Muslims, like in the 'American Sniper' movie, so for me it's like, why are we comfortable with the non-Muslim community saying this kind of stuff?" We need to raise a red flag, everybody has to watch out, but there's a special treatment for Muslims that you have to be held to a standard higher than others in the U.S. and you can't cross this line of saying things. There's this big double standard.*

Some Muslim Americans resent the implication that Muslims form a single community and would necessarily know potential extremists, whereas non-Muslim communities are not expected to be aware of every fringe element that claims to share their faith tradition. As one focus group participant put it:

*Our whole argument is look, yeah, there are bad people out there, but we don't know them, they're not in our communities, we don't see them in our mosques. So there's the idea that us Muslim organizations can find these people and work with [police] to bring them to justice, which fuels [the idea] that these people are within our communities. My initial reaction was they're missing the whole point that we don't know these people, they're not in our communities. These fringe elements of society don't come to our mosques.*

Another participant felt it was unfair for the entire Muslim American community to be held responsible for the actions of every fringe Muslim that commits violence:

*There's the saying that if you see a Muslim doing something wrong, you need to stop them. But consider the number [of community members who engaged in terrorist-related activity]. For those [few] youth, we worked with so many youth, how can we be expected to stop that .001 percent of the population? ... If even one of them gets through the filter, what are we going to do, say our programs failed and we couldn't stop that one youth?*

Referring to a recent crime that was in the news, one focus group participant reported relief at finding out the suspect was not Muslim, and the different sense of communal responsibility associated with suspects from different communities:

*If that person [the suspect] was a Muslim, we'd all stand to be guilty in the eye of law enforcement, and are guilty until proven innocent. I can understand their challenge, but if someone is caught and committed a terrible act, why hold the entire community responsible? With the Newtown [Connecticut school] shooting, they don't hold the rest of the family and community responsible.*

## **2. Police Approaches to Addressing “Other” Forms of Violent Extremism**

The police departments we interviewed are well aware of the threat from anti-government, racist, environmental, or other forms of violent extremism. Our survey of police agencies found that 74 percent of 382 law enforcement agencies rated anti-government extremism, such as “sovereign citizen” movements that do not recognize the authority of laws or governments, as one of the top three terrorist threats in their jurisdiction. By comparison, 39 percent listed extremism connected with al Qaeda or like-minded terrorist organizations as a top terrorist threat, and 33 percent listed environmental extremism.<sup>31</sup> When asked to assign a ranking of 1-5 of the terrorist threat in their jurisdiction, 170 departments ranked “other” forms of terrorism higher than al Qaeda whereas 21 departments ranked al Qaeda higher. This survey was conducted in early 2014, so it is possible that police threat perceptions may have been impacted by events that have taken since then, including the spike in arrests of Americans attempting to travel to Syria to join ISIS, as well as the multiple mass shootings in San Bernardino, Charleston, Chattanooga, Colorado Springs, and elsewhere.

**Despite this threat profile, many of the law enforcement agencies we interviewed had well established outreach and engagement programs with Muslim Americans, but had starkly different practices for addressing the threat from anti-government, racist, environmental and other types of extremists.**

Some agencies told us that engagement with the communities targeted for recruitment by these groups simply is not possible. When one police department was asked what kind of outreach it conducted to anti-government groups, the answer was, “We don’t.” This department noted that “we can talk to them about particular incidents, but ... we don’t have meetings with anti-government groups and militia groups.”<sup>32</sup> Another agency said that with respect to groups who were “anti-law enforcement... we are not actively bumping heads with them and they are not actively bumping heads with us.” One agency with a strong reputation for engagement with Muslim Americans stated that “there is not that much going on” with respect to communities targeted for recruitment by right-wing, anti-government groups.

<sup>31</sup> Charles Kurzman and David Schanzer, “Law Enforcement Assessment of the Violent Extremist Threat,” Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, June 25, 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Id.

Some law enforcement agencies explain the absence of formal engagement efforts on the lack of actionable intelligence and a paucity of strategic openings to interact with individuals connected with anti-government and racist groups. One agency believed it would be possible to engage with communities to prevent racist violent extremism, but stated that “we don’t have active intelligence to act on.” The agency explained that “a lot of times the train has already left the station and these people are already in the process of engaging in criminal acts that need conventional law enforcement action.” Similarly, an agency from a rural county with a large sovereign citizen problem explained that it is difficult to engage with these groups because they do not self-identify. “No one is walking around here saying they are sovereign citizens. We can’t identify them.” Another agency claimed that these individuals are “living in the shadows and not drawing attention to themselves.”

An agency from a large metropolitan area asserted that engagement with sovereign citizens, for example, could be possible, but it would require finding one person who “isn’t that far off the edge” and is willing to “sit down at the table and have [a] conversation.” The problem, the agency noted, is that “we haven’t been fortunate enough to come in contact with somebody that we can have that relationship with.”

Similarly, another agency from a large metropolitan area asserted that outreach and engagement could work to address all forms of extremism if the “officers are creative enough to be able to find ways to create dialogue.” The outreach specialist from this agency explained that if you can create dialogue in a community, “that is where people ... with whatever extremist views they have, somebody will usually raise a flag and say, ‘I think this person is going too far.’” The agency representative admitted that with hard-core sovereign citizens, that “regular ongoing interaction” might not be possible.

When engaging with anti-government extremists or community members who interact with them, officers note that it is important to let them know that police respect their rights to “believe what you want to believe” and are “not going to try to change [their] minds.” As one officer stated, “It’s within their right to be anti-government, it’s protected by [their] First Amendment rights. It only becomes a police and law enforcement issue when there is a criminal aspect to it. I can hate the government, but it’s different when I want to blow up a courthouse because I hate the government.”

**Some police departments asserted that they are addressing anti-government, racist, and other forms of right wing extremism through their general, non-targeted outreach activities to the community at large.** “You are not going to get them through community policing,” one metropolitan agency official noted, “but building relationships in the surrounding neighborhoods, people will give you a heads up if the sovereign citizens are meeting ... or they’re planning to do something over in this location.” Similarly, an official from an agency from a mostly rural state explained that its violence prevention efforts benefit from events like canine shows, SWAT team demonstrations, and national night out celebrations. These kind of interactions, the official noted, have led to the police obtaining anonymous tips about potential anti-government extremism. As one police chief from a jurisdiction that includes rural areas said, “We are talking to all of our citizens. Hopefully, at one of those meetings or gatherings a person hears a positive message or interacts with us and then says, ‘Jimmy down the street there seems to be doing this, this and this ... and we’ve heard some booms coming from his yard.’” “With tips like these, police can open an investigation.

**One agency identified a dramatic difference between Muslim American communities and communities that are targets of recruitment for right-wing extremist groups.** “The major difference is that Muslims are coming to us with open arms and asking for assistance. The right-wing groups are not coming to us with open arms and open ears and trying to cultivate a relationship. That makes a difference. We do try to talk to them, but the conversations are very limited.”



In sum, despite the federal government's insistence that "any solution that focuses on a single, current form of violent extremism . . . will fail to secure our country and communities," we found little evidence of any formal police outreach and engagement efforts to address forms of extremism other than those inspired by al Qaeda, ISIS, and like-minded groups. Consequently, our project focused principally on law enforcement agencies' outreach to Muslim American communities and efforts to prevent extremism inspired by al Qaeda and ISIS.

## **B. Muslim Americans Have Experienced Trauma Since 9/11**

Law enforcement officials and policy makers contemplating outreach and engagement programs should keep in mind that Muslim Americans have experienced what we believe is best described as form of trauma resulting from the 9/11 attacks and events that have subsequently unfolded over the past fourteen years. Naturally, this experience colors how Muslim Americans think about interactions with government authorities, including the police.

Muslims share the same fear of all other Americans since 9/11 that they could be a victim of a terrorist attack. But the impacts of 9/11 have been much more consequential for Muslim Americans due to the societal reaction against them resulting from the fact that the 9/11 attackers were Muslims and the violence around the globe that has been perpetrated by Muslims in al Qaeda, ISIS and like-minded groups.

**The trauma Muslim Americans have experienced arises from many sources ranging from societal discrimination that Muslim Americans experience at work, school, and walking down the street, to media coverage of Muslims and Islam, to government security programs that many Muslim Americans perceive to be discriminatory.** During our focus groups of Muslim Americans, we heard repeated reports of individuals experiencing harassment, embarrassment, insult, and substantial inconvenience at our airports and when they return to home from international travel. Many Muslim Americans feel that television shows, movies, and news programs consistently link Muslims and Islam with terrorism, causing this connection to seep into the public's consciousness.<sup>33</sup> And Muslims know that since 9/11 they have been victims of increasing levels of hate crimes and on occasion vicious acts of violence, including a particularly horrific triple-murder that took place mere miles from the homes of two of this report's authors.<sup>34</sup>

Muslim Americans are also being aggressively targeted by a highly organized and well-funded set of organizations and individuals focused on raising fear among Americans about Islam.<sup>35</sup> These anti-Islam activists are frequent guests on cable news and talk radio and have organized sweeping grass-roots organizations that spread anti-Islam propaganda.<sup>36</sup>

This virulent anti-Muslim bigotry has even infected our political process with 16 state legislatures enacting laws intending to ban legal application of Islamic principles in courts,<sup>37</sup> some members of Congress calling into question the loyalty of Muslim American civil servants,<sup>38</sup> and presidential candidates stating that a

<sup>33</sup> David Boroff, "American Sniper' movie sparks hateful reaction towards Arabs on Twitter," *New York Daily News*, January 19, 2015; Laila al-Arian, "TV's most Islamophobic show," *Salon.com*, December 15, 2012; Christian Kolmer and Roland Schatz, *Annual Dialogue Report 2015* Media Tenor.com, 2015 (tracking consistent negativity of portrayals of Islam in global media since 9/11).

<sup>34</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Hate Crime Statistics 2013," (noting that 13.7 percent of victims of religious hate crimes were Muslims, five times higher than prior to 9/11); Margaret Talbot, "The Story of a Hate Crime," *The New Yorker*, June 22, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew Duss et al., "Fear Inc. 2.0: The Islamophobia Network's Efforts to Manufacture Hate in America," Center for American Progress, February 11, 2015; Wajahat Ali et al., "Fear Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America," Center for American Progress, August 26, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> For example, see "Stop Islamization of America," <https://www.facebook.com/Stop-Islamization-of-America-109113042509908>; "Act for America," <https://www.actforamerica.org>.

<sup>37</sup> Greg Garrison, "Amendment banning 'foreign law' in Alabama courts passes, will be added to Alabama Constitution," *AL.com*, November 4, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Nancy Cordes, "Michele Bachmann refuses to back down on claims about Huma Abedin," *CBS News.com*, July 19, 2012.

Muslim should not be able to serve in high office or that certain mosques should be closed.<sup>39</sup> The trends have only been compounded in aftermath of the Paris and San Bernardino attacks, which generated open public discussion about religious tests to determine admissibility of refugees, religion-based surveillance, and, of course, the proposal by one presidential candidate to temporarily bar foreign born Muslims from entering the United States.<sup>40</sup>

These strong messages against Muslims and Islam have a deep impact on public opinion. One 2015 poll in North Carolina reported that 72 percent of the respondents said that a Muslim should not be allowed to be president of the United States and 40 percent of respondents said that Islam should be illegal.<sup>41</sup> Other polling has shown a consistent erosion of Americans' attitudes towards Islam and Muslims since 9/11.<sup>42</sup>

Our focus group interviews confirm that Muslim Americans continue to feel the backlash from 9/11, even fourteen years later (we have not collected new data post-Paris and San Bernardino). A mere sample of these comments reinforce the multiple sources of discrimination and disparagement the interviewees have experienced:

*We have incidents ... where a young man ... goes into an ESL program ... and his teacher looks at him studying [maps in] a book to help him become a taxi driver. His teacher thinks he's planning a terror plot, so she brings on the local police and they call the FBI.*

*When I do get stopped [by the police] and they see my name, they'll say... "are you a sleeper cell?" or "what really happened on 9/11?" They take it as a joke, but I don't.*

*When you experience a hate crime... that decreases trust, not just with the [police] but also with the people in your community.*

*I've noticed anti-Islam and Islamophobic speakers hovering around the periphery of law enforcement... We even heard that the Third Jihad DVD was being run for several weeks as part of training.*

*We have always faced the label of terrorism, even before 9/11... This is due to Islamophobia in the media. My name is Muhammed and I still get stopped at [the domestic airport] on my American passport... I ask them what the problem is but they ask me to comply.*

*I remember an incident with my son... He had a science fair... and he dressed up as the [Muslim] guy who invented algebra thousands of years ago. Somebody came up to him, a second or third grader, and said, "Are you a terrorist?" He just became quiet and said, "No, I'm not."*

*They set up a spot check at the gate and I was the only one searched. They said, "It's a random check." But I was the only non-white person on the flight.*

*People do feel that average Americans are not Islamophobic. The media influence on the people is the real problem.*

<sup>39</sup> Adam Edelman, "Donald Trump: I would shut down certain mosques in U.S. if elected," *New York Daily News*, October 21, 2015; Ed Demaria, "Ben Carson Does Not Believe a Muslim Should Be President," *NBCNews.com*, September 20, 2015.

<sup>40</sup> For example, see Nick Gass, "Obama scolds those calling for 'religious test' of Syrian refugees," *Politico.com*, November 16, 2015; "Trump and Carson repeat calls to spy on U.S. Muslims," *Associated Press*, Nov. 22, 2015; "Jeremy Diamond, "Donald Trump: Ban all Muslim travel to U.S.," *CNN.com*, December 8, 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Public Policy Polling, "Trump Steady in North Carolina; Biden Polls Well," September 29, 2015.

<sup>42</sup> For a compilation of surveys measuring public opinion on Muslim Americans, Muslims, and Islam, see Charles Kurzman, "Anti-Muslim Sentiment Rising in the U.S.: What is Happening to Religious Tolerance?," *IslamicCommentary*, February 13, 2014, <http://islamiccommentary.org/2014/02/anti-muslim-sentiment-rising-in-the-u-s-what-is-happening-to-religious-tolerance>.

One focus group member summed up this theme, saying, “A sense of insecurity has been instilled in us due to the broader dynamics. Muslims are made to feel different and not fully American.” Similarly, a religious leader who participated in this study publicly stated that:

*I just had a painful conversation with a [college] student. This bright and incredibly promising Muslim American girl was grieving over recent national debate about Muslim-Americans ... “Can a Muslim American be POTUS, serve in U.S. Congress.” Regardless of what people say in response to these questions, the fact that this was up for debate was hurting both of us so deep. She genuinely asked: “Do we really have a future in this country?”*

While the focus of this project is not about mistreatment of Muslim Americans, describing the day-to-day experiences and perceptions of some Muslims Americans is vitally important to fully understand the challenges police agencies face in creating partnerships with Muslim American communities.

It is also important to note that while the prevailing sentiment in our focus groups was the sense of trauma that many Muslim Americans have experienced since 9/11, many of our interviewees did not express these concerns and feel very secure in the United States. One focus group member said:

*I have been in the United States for almost fifty years now, but I have never felt any prejudice... This is my personal experience... For example, when I was involved in building a mosque in [my community], people said that you will have a tough time because [my town] is a redneck area. But I didn't face any problem.*

### **C. Many Muslim Americans Link Police Outreach and Engagement Efforts with Aggressive Surveillance Tactics They Oppose**

Another set of issues raised in the community focus groups involved a fear that police outreach and engagement efforts were a cover for efforts to conduct surveillance on Muslim American communities and individuals.

Focus group participants frequently expressed a belief that their communities and mosques were subject to surveillance by undercover law enforcement agents or paid informants. While we heard claims that “I know there was an informant in my mosque” on many occasions, these comments were perceptions of individuals, rather than statements of proven facts. This generalized fear, in some cases, appears to have arisen from media reports of actual cases of paid informants infiltrating mosques and other widespread media reports of surveillance of Muslims in the New York metropolitan area.<sup>43</sup> We made no efforts to determine (nor could we hope to find out) if these kind of intelligence collection activities were actually occurring in the communities where we conducted interviews. The point is, however, that our focus group participants appear to believe that their communities were subject to surveillance and, in some cases, their belief caused them to be highly suspicious of police outreach and engagement.

One of the most striking expressions of this critique came from a Muslim American woman who said that Muslims in her neighborhood had never had any negative experience with the police themselves. However, they had heard that police were conducting surveillance of Muslim Student Associations at local colleges, and the possibility that her children might be placed under surveillance troubled her:

*When you talk about our community, I think the paranoia is slightly real, we are not living in a bubble. When you read about how law enforcement infiltrated the MSA [Muslim Student*

<sup>43</sup> Paul Harris, “The Ex-FBI informant with a change of heart,” *The Guardian*, March 20, 2012; This American Life, “Episode 471: The Convert,” WBEZ Radio, August 10, 2012; Matt Apuzzo, “AP’s Probe into NYPD Intelligence Operations,” AP.org, 2011-12.  
This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

*Association], ... I don't consider this as paranoia. Even though we are educated, we are [at risk of surveillance]. My kids are here and they will go to university and hopefully join the MSA. ... I don't feel isolated from this paranoia. I feel it's real.*

Muslim community leaders in this area, most of them immigrants, had begun to work closely with law enforcement agencies on a number of levels, including involvement in a sheriff's electoral campaign and participation in a law enforcement civilian oversight board. These individuals, who are well established in the community and who expressed support for policing and public safety, resented the "sense of insecurity" and the feeling that Muslims are treated as "different and not fully American," as one of them put it. The blame did not lie primarily on police, these focus group participants stressed; they blamed "the anti-Muslim rants in the media" and other factors.

However, the members of this focus group formed a consensus that relations with police suffered when the community believed it was being subjected to blanket surveillance instead of being treated by the same standards as other communities.

At another focus group, a participant voiced similar concern:

*Every community will have good and bad people in it, regardless of whether they're devout Muslims or Christians or atheists. So let's work with common sense. What is the function of law enforcement? Enforcing the law. You see the crime, you go after the crime. ... How is this the work of the police to spy on every one of us to prevent something that's in their head?*

Another focus group member reported her disgust when she was told that a police exhibit set up for children at a community picnic was purportedly being used for intelligence gathering. "That's a violation of the community's trust, where people take their kids to see a police [exhibit], and they ask for list of people in attendance."

In another region of the country, a focus group participant said it was impossible to distinguish "positive outreach" from intelligence-gathering, because she believed that "even things that seemed positive" sometimes turned out to be "malicious in intent or dual purpose, for intelligence gathering." As this participant noted:

*What looked positive was [sports] teams that used to exist between local police precincts and local communities. That seemed positive. Calling Muslims in for meetings, creating a Muslim advisory council with police seems positive. Going to visit mosques and saying, "I'm just checking in, how are you doing?" It seems positive. But with both local and federal levels, [I believe that] all of this was a guise for intelligence-gathering, so it all seems negative now.*

The sense of betrayal stemming from perceived intelligence collection was expressed particularly strongly by one focus group participant who has worked with police for many years:

*On the one hand, there's the need for the police and the day-to-day functioning of our city. Muslims [in town] have a parade; who makes sure traffic moves swiftly for the parade? It's the cops! But at the same time, we've had the rug pulled out from under our feet on this national security front. ... I don't know how to navigate my relationship with them, because I need them, but then [I believe] they're sending people into the very mosque that I attend. And I don't like that. ... because it's an invasion of a sacred space. It's offensive that they think my community's involved in this – you name the issue. It's a complicated relationship, and it's not what I expect of my local law enforcement. Of course I want them to keep the city safe, but my expectation is not that they're doing counterterrorism intelligence-gathering. That's a very new role for law*

*enforcement, and they've really been very aggressive about it, and that's kind of almost made it worse for them.*

A community's relationship with its police force can be disrupted even by the surveillance practices of police agencies elsewhere in the country. Focus groups participants at almost every site brought up the New York City Police Department's surveillance of Muslim community organizations, which was reported in a series of articles by the Associated Press.<sup>44</sup> None of these participants suggested that their own local law enforcement agencies were engaged in such widespread intelligence activities, but the existence of such operations directed against Muslim communities anywhere in the country made them uneasy. As one participant said, "The NYPD came out where they tried to say these are the indicators of radicalization. Their radicalization theory came down to if they attend a hookah bar, [they might be engaged in violence] like eight years later."

Concerns about surveillance and aggressive law enforcement tactics among some Muslim Americans may result in a reduced flow of information from the community to police. On the one hand, a number of focus group participants reported instances in which community members had reported possible signs of radicalization to their law enforcement partners. Indeed, these examples of community cooperation account for a significant proportion of terrorism-related cases brought against Muslim-Americans since 9/11.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, we encountered some Muslim Americans who worry that sharing information with police may lead to a full-scale investigation that puts them and everyone they know under suspicion. One research participant spoke about actually withholding information about a person thought to be overseas in a conflict zone – apparently working in humanitarian relief, not as a combatant – because she feared that the resulting police inquiry would focus on her:

*We haven't reported him missing because we assume we know where he is. He isn't missing, he just isn't here. ... [It's] not because I'm trying to actively hide illegal activity.... Once in a great while, we'll talk about it like, "Do you think that's what he's doing? Do you think that's where he is?" And someone will say, "Yeah, I do, I do," but we don't really know. And you know the hell, literally the hell, that would rain down on every person this person has ever interacted with that [person who] is in no way whatsoever associated [with violent extremism]... It's really not an option [to report the person to the police]. And for what? So that our local law enforcement can get on a plane and go try to find this person?*

Several focus group members said they felt that information-sharing sometimes led to the prosecution of community members, instead of a collaborative effort to steer individuals away from radicalization. At one focus group, a discussion developed about a participant's willingness to report cases of imminent violence when they were uncertain about how to detect imminent violence. The group participants expressed concern that police would be more likely to encourage a plot in order to make an arrest, rather than to divert people onto a nonviolent path that community members and family members would prefer:

*The problem is that there's no clear definition of what to report and who to report. One of the concerns with CVE [was that] they were going to create an anti-radicalization council, consisting of imams [and] local law enforcement. And if anyone is having issues with their child, have any suspicion, they report that to this council. And [our] question is, "Who do you report?" ... If there are legitimate issues with kids who may join a terrorist organization, how do you distinguish? If there was a clear definition of who to report, behavioral characteristics, that would help.*

<sup>44</sup> The Associated Press's coverage was assembled by the series' authors, Matt Apuzzo and Adam Goldman, in their book *Enemies Within: Inside the NYPD's Secret Spying Unit and Bin Laden's Final Plot Against America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013).

<sup>45</sup> Schanzer, Kurzman, and Moosa, "Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim-Americans"; Charles Kurzman, "Muslim-American Terrorism Cases in 2013," Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, February 5, 2014.

*Second participant: [Police] should be completely honest with the community: We're going to try to stop these problems. No parent wants their child to go to [a foreign country where militants are operating].*

Equally problematic, in the view of some focus group participants, were cases in which cooperation with police appears to have led to the prosecution of individuals who, the community members believe, had not previously expressed any tendency toward radicalization.

A focus group participant expressed bitterness about what he called the “entrapment” of community members who had gone along with a violent plan hatched by an undercover law enforcement agent:

*We tried to have relationships with law enforcement, showed we were right there with them trying to give info if we heard of something. And what they did was they sent someone to our community, and the person they sent to our community was there to set someone up. Now we have ... people in prison for something that was manufactured by the government.*

Another focus group participant said “entrapment” was common in his region:

*[Police] will openly tell us that they're sending agent provocateurs, so how could we possibly trust them? And the numbers of stories I've followed, you know, it's straight entrapment. Create a situation, feed it, help to radicalize someone, and to say they are terrorists. I would never want to involve the police unless I really felt there was an actual threat, because they're going to create the problem and not address it.*

In the words of another focus group member: “Outreach feels like a one-way street: We want you to be our informants. It doesn't feel like a two-way street: Take responsibility for [police] informants who come in [to our communities] and radicalize kids.... All these news stories, they come in, recruit them, tell them what to do.”

There have been no successful assertions of an entrapment defense in any terrorism prosecutions of Muslim Americans in the United States since 9/11.<sup>46</sup> However, the allegation of entrapment by the government is commonly heard and believed among community members. They claim that in many cases, the accused Muslim Americans would not have committed a crime absent the intervention and urging of a paid government informant or undercover agent. One focus group participant also explained the deleterious impact that he believed the recruitment of informants was having on his community:

*I actually went to high school with a guy who recently came out as an informant....I feel like he was kind of abused ... because [the police] said if you do this for us, we'll just drop the marijuana charge. ... It shows the dichotomy. If you can, you come to the Muslim community to feel safe, a community that understands your spiritual needs and are really united. But then, when you have someone who's paid by an outside organization to infiltrate that space, then where do you go? So it's hard to say who to trust.*

## **D. Actions of Federal Government Agencies Affect Muslim Americans' Attitudes toward the Police**

Many focus group participants made a distinction between their views of local police and their opinions about federal law enforcement agencies. They frequently knew officers from their local agencies and worked with them on traffic control, crime reduction, youth sports leagues, or other issues and programs. Federal agencies, in their view, were only present in their lives when a member of their community was

<sup>46</sup> Center on Law and Security, NYU School of Law, “Terrorist Trial Report Card, September 11, 2001-2011,” 2011, p. 26. This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

under suspicion, and they perceived federal law enforcement officers as not interested in helping their community. As one focus group participant put it, “I think local law enforcement is more approachable, since there isn’t so much mistreatment as with federal agencies. People in general will feel more comfortable approaching local law enforcement.” In a similar vein, another focus group participant in another area of the country said, “My experience with the local police has been good. They are nice to me. My only issue, the only issue I’ve had has been with the FBI.” In another city, a participant said curtly, “No one trusts the FBI. Period.”

Two grievances about federal agencies came up repeatedly in focus group discussions with Muslim Americans. The first was the extra scrutiny that they and fellow community members experience at security checkpoints and immigration and customs officials at airports. Even a Muslim police officer participating in a focus group reported being pulled aside for additional screening on a regular basis. One community leader said he was subjected to extensive security treatment at the airport just days after helping police on an investigation they were pursuing. Others reported that their small children were frisked, that they and their families were pulled off of planes that they had been allowed to board, that they were paraded with a security detail through the airports, and otherwise subjected to unnecessary humiliation.

“I get stopped at the airport a lot,” one focus group participant said. “The first time, I was 8 or 9 years old and got stopped at [the airport] for three and a half hours. I was going to see my grandmother. They took my bag off the plane and searched it, there were all these armed guards there.” These incidents have continued over the years. “I was born and raised and educated here. I work here and pay taxes here. I love my country because it’s the only country where someone can work hard and make something of themselves and make an honest living, so when that happens, it kind of hurts.”

Another focus group participant described his unexplained detention for several hours by immigration authorities at the Canadian border:

*They asked us to pull over the vehicle, they wanted to search it. . . . I guess they wanted to hold us for questioning; they never gave us a full explanation. They told us they weren’t allowed to [explain]. . . . At the end they said I was free to go. They gave me a piece of paper that told me I could follow up with DHS [the Department of Homeland Security] to find out why they held me. I asked if they could give me anything [information] and they said no. Then I went to CAIR [the Council on American–Islamic Relations] and talked to them about it, and they filed the inquiry for me, and they still didn’t give us a clear answer. They said that it’s a possibility that I was on a watch list for some reason, and the only way we are going to find out if it’s corrected is if I go over the border again.*

Another focus group participant said he had come to expect extra scrutiny at the airport. Now, he said, a good day at the airport was when he got his extra scrutiny at the security checkpoint instead of being pulled off the plane in front of his children and other passengers or forced to walk through the terminal with a security escort:

*I am sour at this particular aspect because of my name. Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim is a triple whammy, I’m on the “four S” list.<sup>47</sup> Special security. It’s a simple thing, if you have something against me, fine. But if you don’t, why do I have to go through this every time? It’s so denigrating when they have my [young child with] legs spread being searched. . . . [On another occasion, returning from overseas,] they [immigration officials] wait at the door and everybody in front of*

<sup>47</sup> We found that many Muslim Americans refer to a marking on boarding passes that looks like this – SSSS – as the “four-S list,” denoting individuals to be pulled out of the normal airport security screening line for secondary screening.

*me walks through until it's my turn, and they realize it's me, and one officer calls another and says, "I got them." They take me and my wife and four daughters. We're walking for a mile, me and my family, with one officer in front and one in the back like top criminals who have been caught. I was interrogated for two hours, lost my connection [home]. [The airline] says, "It's not our problem, it's an immigration problem," so I'm stuck with my family and twelve pieces of luggage that the airline wouldn't check. ... We decided to just sleep at the airport. It happens to a lot of people. This affects the relationship with [local] law enforcement. Because they work with all these federal agencies, there is this level of mistrust.*

One imam interviewed for this project, who has worked extensively with law enforcement, said he felt that his "trust [in working with government agencies] is not being reciprocated." On one occasion, he went from a meeting with federal law enforcement officials, where they discussed their ongoing cooperation, to the airport, where he was held for hours at security and missed his flight. This was not an isolated instance, he said:

*Since 2004 or 2005, after every international trip, I have to sit for 3-4 hours when I come back. For what reason? No one ever tells me. For 11-12 years, no one has ever said anything to me. ... So now after that happening, on the other side I'm struggling to communicate the message to my community [to work with law enforcement], and I've told you I've spoken to the person who represented the police department. So I'm trying to teach my community that we have a law, we have a commitment to this country, we have to abide by the law, and our faith is the first thing to make us responsible for this. But I personally do happen to know that in this wonderful, beautiful country, and my father's been here since [decades ago]. I don't know who to talk to. Who would address my issue?*

The second most common grievance involved allegations of FBI undercover operations at mosques and other community institutions. A few focus group participants felt that local police were involved in such activities, but most attributed these tactics to federal authorities, and they resented them. One widely reported instance mentioned by several focus group participants involved a mosque in California that obtained a restraining order against an individual who turned out to be an undercover federal informant.<sup>48</sup>

Several focus group participants mentioned cases of suspected agents attempting to radicalize their own community as well:

*One particular individual was visiting two mosques in [our area] and we reported him [to local police] and he got trespassed [served with a restraining order forbidding him to enter the mosques]. He went to another mosque in [our area], was saying weird things like about fighting in other countries, leaving the USA and traveling. ... So we were like, why was he let go, and why is he in our mosques now?*

While focus group participants routinely made a distinction between local and federal law enforcement agencies, several also expressed the concern that federal initiatives such as the Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) program require local officers to feed information into the federal system, where it might be used more aggressively by federal agencies that lack local contacts and local context. Community members express concern that SAR reporting by local police might lead to negative consequences. In the words of one focus group participant, who is a naturalized U.S. citizen:

*There's obviously informal information-sharing between the Department of Homeland Security*

<sup>48</sup> Dennis G. Fitzgerald, *Informants, Cooperating Witnesses, and Undercover Investigations: A Practical Guide to Law, Policy, and Procedure*, Second Edition (Hoboken, NJ: CRC Press, 2014), pp. 396-397.



*and the FBI and [local police]. Be honest: If I'm meeting with [local police], and I say I'm from another country, does that mean DHS will knock on my door the next day leading to deportation hearings?*

In another area, the police department's Muslim community outreach officer was also the agency's designated liaison officer to the "fusion center" responsible for information-sharing between local and federal law enforcement. These dual assignments could create a perception that outreach and engagement are linked with federal intelligence-collection.

## **E. Some Muslim Americans Believe That Their Public Safety Concerns Are Not Being Fully Addressed**

Some Muslim American focus group participants believe that their public safety concerns are not always treated as a high priority by police, even as police ask for their cooperation in countering violent extremism. In one city, for example, several focus group participants mentioned a series of unsolved homicides in their community, which they felt warranted more attention by the police. As one community member put it:

*One area of major concern that hasn't been solved is, sadly, [the cases of] youth being killed by other ... youth, gang killings. Tragically, up to now, only two or three have been solved, out of maybe ten. It was a lot ... some kind of cycle. Someone is killed, there's revenge. There's a feeling [local police] are not sincere. Kids can hide their footprints and guns so well that a modern-day police department can't solve this? There's a feeling that they're not seeing this as a serious issue or concern.*

Police agreed that lack of trust with communities can adversely impact public safety. Representatives from one local police agency expressed frustration that they cannot solve crimes without community members who are willing to come forward to share relevant information with the police.

This view that police do not value Muslim Americans' security as much as other communities' security was expressed by a number of focus group participants. As one participant put it:

*Law enforcement doesn't make me feel comfortable or safe. To this day, my mom will say, "Be careful of the police." If I'm ever somewhere like a protest or something, my mother will be like, "Run another way." And not just a protest, on a day-to-day basis. As a minority, I'm very aware of how other minorities are treated by law enforcement. I know we're all painfully aware of what's going on these days, so in terms of how [law enforcement agencies] police minorities and communities, other minorities are very aware of that.*

Several focus group participants spoke of this sense of solidarity with other minority experiences with police, especially African-Americans' experience:

*Increasingly, Muslims communities are working side by side with other communities of color in [our area] and learning from other communities of color who have been dealing with these issues for decades. ... So the trust is intertwined, so as things happen in other communities of color [referring specifically to the death of Eric Garner in New York City], it causes more unity among communities.*

The history of minority groups' sense of insecurity around police has created obstacles to trust and cooperation, as one focus group participant noted:

*I grew up here, and this is just having to do with young people and [our area] being urban. ... [T]he culture is, "The cops are bad, stay away from them, don't get caught talking to them, it's just*

*a weird thing to do.” So you have all of that in the culture. And a lot of those grievances are justified, because when you talk about police profiling of black and brown youth, that’s happening. And there’s the history, institutional discrimination, the DOJ [Department of Justice] report from Ferguson [Missouri], it happens, so that’s part of it.*

Issues of public safety may be different for each minority group: “If I’m a young black man in [our neighborhood], and I’m coming back from masjid taqwa [prayers] at night, I’ve got a very different trust issue with law enforcement than if I’m a young Arab kid with a beard and kufi [skullcap].” But increasingly, according to these focus group participants, Muslim Americans’ experiences with police seem to be intertwined with other minority groups’ experiences.

## **F. Police Have Limited Resources for Outreach and Engagement**

**Law enforcement officials often noted in our interviews that a lack of funding for engagement and outreach programs was a major concern.** Our survey of law enforcement agencies around the country found that 42.5 percent of agencies considered lack of funding to be a barrier to implementing a community policing strategy as a means to address violent extremism. Even agencies that had long-established programs mentioned funding as the top limiting factor. Indeed, 81.5 percent of agencies surveyed (including 94.3 percent of large agencies) reported that increased funding would encourage the agency to implement or strengthen a community policing strategy to address violent extremism. **Funding is needed to start outreach programs, hire officers to staff them, train officers in outreach skills, pay for overtime when officers attend community events, and to grow these outreach efforts in the long term.**

### **1. Law Enforcement Agencies Are Experiencing Budgetary Stress**

Local law enforcement agencies receive funding from two streams: 1) the local governmental body that created them (i.e., city, county, or state government), and 2) state and federal grants. The economic downturn starting in 2008 has negatively affected both of these funding sources. Indeed, according to a 2011 report by the federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office:

*The economic downturn of the past several years has devastated local economies and, by extension, their local law enforcement agencies. . . . The effects of the economic downturn on law enforcement agencies may be felt for the next 5–10 years, or worse, permanently. . . . Police agencies are some of the hardest hit by the current economic climate. Curtailing revenues nationwide have forced local governments to make cuts in spending across the board, which includes public safety operating budgets. While budget cuts threaten the jobs of law enforcement officers, the duties and responsibilities to ensure public safety remain.<sup>49</sup>*

Similarly, a 2012 survey of state and local criminal justice stakeholder organizations reported that 77 percent of respondents had seen a decrease in their grant funding since fiscal year 2011, with 52 percent reporting that their workforce has also been cut during the same period.<sup>50</sup>

Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates underscored the problem, saying, “We know that it’s the cop on the street that’s one of the most important things to be able to keep our communities safe. But yet over the past decade, there’s been a 40 percent reduction in the grant money that’s available for cops on the street.”<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, “The Impact of the Economic Downturn on American Police Agencies,” 2011, pp. 2-3.

<sup>50</sup> National Criminal Justice Association and Vera Institute of Justice, “The Impact of Federal Budget Cuts on State and Local Public Safety: Results from a Survey of Criminal Justice Practitioners,” 2012, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Carrie Johnson, “No. 2 at Justice Warns Growing Prison Budget Deficits from Public Safety,” National Public Radio, June 1, 2015. This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

## 2. Community Engagement and Outreach Programs Require Significant Resources

Outreach programs, unsurprisingly, are impacted by budget pressures that have affected law enforcement agencies nationwide. Chronic understaffing is a primary concern, given the time-intensive nature of outreach work. Many of the outreach officers with whom we spoke explained that their work does not stop at the end of a shift, but oftentimes they do not receive overtime pay for all the hours they spend building and maintaining productive relationships with community members. As one outreach officer said:

*A lot of times we're working on our own dime – we get invited to events on the weekends, during the evening, and so on. We don't get paid extra for overtime, but I typically work more than the 40 hours a week that I'm paid for. . . . Outreach is more than a full-time job, and you need to work more than full-time in order to get results. . . . Just by virtue of having my phone on me, I'm available – and people call. In order to maintain that relationship, you have to pick up the phone even if you're off [work] or you're on vacation.*

This sentiment was echoed by another outreach specialist:

*I'm going to events in the community three to four nights a week. . . . People are calling me all the time – day and night. . . . weekday, weekend, doesn't matter. But I have to answer, because if I don't, people will wonder why and might get upset. They don't always understand that they're not the only ones calling me, and that there are lots of other people in the community who call me too and who want me to go to events and to help them out with all sorts of things. That's why I have to answer every time – because I need to be available to them all the time in order to maintain my relationships with them.*

Neither of these experiences is unique. In practice, the success of outreach programs is often determined by outreach officers' willingness to consistently work more than 40 hours a week, and sometimes volunteer their time, in addition to being constantly accessible via telephone so that they are available to the community. This can also mean paying out of pocket for lunches, dinners, and coffee meetings with community members, costs which quickly add up and can put a strain on outreach officers. One outreach specialist said that “funding” would be the most effective way to encourage his department to strengthen its outreach program, explaining that:

*There are many times that we have been invited to community events that include dinner and entertainment. It would be nice to be able to return the nice gesture and pick up the bill. We are also invited to meet with community members for lunch or even a cup of coffee and sometimes it can get rather expensive.*

New funding for these expenses is unlikely. In fact, reports suggest that outreach and crime prevention programs are often among the first things to be cut when municipalities face financial pressures.<sup>52</sup>

**Funding is also necessary to provide cultural awareness training to as much of the force as possible, as well as specialized training to outreach and engagement specialists.** Our nationwide survey of law enforcement agencies indicate that presently, only 24 percent of agencies provide training on how to engage with communities whose members are targeted for recruitment by violent extremists. Even in those agencies with established outreach programs, outreach officers did not necessarily receive any specialized cultural awareness and outreach training beyond what might have been taught in the academy. Often, their learning

<sup>52</sup> Keegan Kyle, “San Diego Police’s New Identity,” Voice of San Diego.org, May 1, 2011; Kevin Bohn, “Police Face Cuts as Economy Falters,” CNN.com, October 23, 2008; National Criminal Justice Association and the Vera Institute of Justice, “The Impact of Federal Budget Cuts on State and Local Public Safety,” 2012; National Criminal Justice Association and the Vera Institute of Justice, “The Impact of Federal Budget Cuts from FY10-FY13 on State and Local Public Safety,” 2013; Craig R. Wilson, “Improving Services at Small- and Medium-Sized Police Agencies During a Recession,” *Police Chief Magazine*, September 2015

is done on the job as they are transitioned into their roles by officers whose outreach positions they are filling, or by other culturally competent officers on the force.

As with staffing, training is often a question of funding. Departments have to develop and deliver training programs themselves, pay for training created by other entities, or must send their officers to programs offered elsewhere. Even agencies with fully developed cultural awareness training programs might not always have the resources required to deliver them. As one outreach officer explained, delivering the cultural awareness class that he has put together for his department means paying overtime to maintain patrol levels while officers are being trained. Though his agency would like all of its officers to take the class, the financial outlay to do so is simply too great.

### **3. There Are Strong Competing Demands for Police Resources and Attention**

Resource allocation is not only a question of how much money law enforcement agencies have available to them, it is also one of prioritization. Police departments face multiple public safety challenges, including violent crime, gangs, drug trafficking and domestic violence. Police outreach and engagement with multiple communities must compete with these pressing demands for resources and attention. As one officer noted:

*Am I worried about terrorism? Of course. But I've got to worry about murders, rapes, gang activities, robberies ... That's what bites me every day.... We have so much crime out here, ... it's just hard to keep focus on this sort of thing.*

Nonetheless, many chiefs and outreach officers believe that good community engagement is worth the investment, because it can effectively address a range of public safety problems. One police official described the positive impact on public safety that arose as a byproduct of community engagement efforts:

*After Ferguson, one of the leaders from [one of our city's minority communities] asked to sit down with me and a fellow outreach officer, and told us that what was going on in Ferguson, with all of the riots, would never happen here, because his community trusts us and would trust us to do an investigation.*

### **4. Police Face Language Barriers When Engaging with Community Members**

As many police departments have discovered, some of the community members with whom they would like to engage have limited English language skills. Reaching out to these communities can be a challenge for police officers who are not able to communicate with community members in the language with which those community members are most comfortable. As one outreach officer explained when asked about mistrust of police in areas with recent immigrant populations, "We do a good job of reaching out to folks, but part of the problem is the language barrier." This was echoed in our survey of law enforcement agencies: 29 percent of respondents reported that language barriers were an issue when attempting to use community policing principles to combat recruitment to al Qaeda-inspired violent extremism.

# THE PROMISE:

## Principles for Community Partnerships with Law Enforcement to Enhance Public Safety

**D**espite the formidable obstacles to using community policing strategies to counter violent extremism, our research identified numerous police departments that have established positive relationships with the Muslim American communities that they serve. Likewise, we spoke to many Muslims Americans who respected their local police departments and demonstrated a willingness to engage with them on a full range of public safety issues. **Our conversations with police and community members suggested a set of principles that should be followed to lay the groundwork for an effective police-community relationship.** Following these principles will not guarantee the creation of a strong, trusting relationship between police and Muslim Americans. Nor will they ensure the prevention of radicalization or acts of violent extremism by individuals. **These principles are critically important foundational steps, however, for initiating and/or strengthening police-community partnerships that have the potential to provide a bulwark against radicalization and a means to counteract a wide variety of public safety problems, including violent extremism.** To a great extent, these concepts are firmly grounded in long-standing principles of community policing that some police departments have been applying successfully to address a range of public safety problems for many decades.

Our research did not scientifically test these concepts to demonstrate effectiveness, so we do not claim they are “best practices.” However, since they were frequently mentioned by many of the police departments, and their comments resonated with what we learned through community interviews, we feel confident identifying them as “promising practices.”

### **A. Effective Community Partnerships Require Committed Police Leaders and a Community Open to Engagement**

Muslim community members in several cities said that ongoing commitments by law enforcement leaders – police chiefs, sheriffs, and other top-ranking personnel – could make a significant difference in positive community relations. “There has to be an executive champion,” said one focus group participant. “The starting point is a passionate belief in community policing, and developing a strong understanding of

Islam and who are the Muslims in your community. From there can spring the community forums, the training for law enforcement.”

In another part of the country, a focus group participant praised the leaders of the local law enforcement agency for being “upfront, well-known, welcoming – the current one and even the previous one. With that leadership, [our city’s law enforcement agency] seems more engaged and visible.”

Another focus group member recounted a time when the leader of a local law enforcement agency came to a Muslim community event. “Some people [in the community] came up to me and were disgusted, like, ‘Why is that pig here?’ And I said, ‘Instead of asking me, why don’t you go ask him? He’s here on a Thursday night, you think he wants to be here? And do you know who this is? This isn’t a random beat cop, it’s a chief.’”

In another city, a focus group member said that a local police leader’s “act of being more humble about it, [rather] than being accusatory, I think it makes a difference. I know there are people on the activist side who are like, ‘Are you kidding me? Let’s focus on what happened [referring to perceived violations of the community’s civil rights].’ But the tone at the top helps.”

Only a commitment at the top can mandate the kind of agency-wide practices that support effective community partnerships, according to several of our respondents. “I’ve seen [police officers] attend all-day events. They don’t just come for 10 minutes and leave. They attend all-day events and conferences and panel discussions on diverse Muslim perspectives, on theological issues and social issues. So for [a law enforcement leader] to mandate that a few outreach people consistently appear, I’m like, you’re there on a Sunday in uniform?”

Our research with police departments reinforced this community perception that support from the top is critical. **Officers in agencies with active engagement programs noted that strong support from the police chief and in many instances, political leaders, was essential.** “In order for community policing to be successful, it needs to be an ingrained philosophy,” said one law enforcement officer, “and that all comes from leadership.” An outreach officer from another jurisdiction explained: “Before [our current chief], we weren’t as involved with the community at all levels of the department. Our chief has changed that. ... From the lowest levels up, we have officers involved in the community.” Another police officer pointed out: “The chief is the one responsible for finding funding for any initiative and allocating resources to continue a program. So she or he must support it and believe in it for it to be successfully implemented.”

**Committed police leaders also need community members open to engagement who understand the value of improved relationship between police and the Muslim American community.** While many of our community interviewees explained the sources of distrust between the Muslim American community and law enforcement, many also understood the value of community-police engagement. One focus group participant explained:

*A sense of insecurity has been instilled in us due to the broader dynamics – Muslims are made to feel different and not fully American, especially due to the anti-Muslim rant in the media. The Muslim leadership had been focused on getting security for events, etc., but that is the police’s duty. So now the community is focusing on establishing relations beyond this, so that they feel safe and secure and the broader climate of fear and insecurity can be countered by establishing relations – so the police can also provide protection to the Muslim community.*

Another said:

*It is very, very important that we are comfortable with our cops.... That’s part of us educating [our youth]: “These guys are putting their lives on the line for you. If push comes to shove, they’re*

*going to have to protect you with their own lives.” So you need to have a different mentality when you think of them. That’s what we need to do as a bigger community. Build that trust, that positive relationship, where people are viewing them as partners, as protectors, rather than “They are looking at me as a Muslim. They’re probably coming after me for information.”*

In sum, effective community engagement requires equal investment from both police and Muslim American community leaders in building a trusting and productive relationship.

## **B. Community Policing Strategies Should Involve the Whole Community, Not Just Muslim Americans**

According to the law enforcement agencies we interviewed, the ideal community engagement program is broad-based and informed by a “whole community” approach. **The purpose of outreach and engagement is to create an inclusive sense of belonging in which everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, religious belief, socio-economic background, gender, or culture feels a part of the larger whole.** The importance of the whole community approach is reflected in the breadth of the outreach effort in jurisdictions we visited. As one officer put it:

*The chief has no boundaries. . . . We will do outreach with anybody. We are building resilient communities. . . . The police department can be with you in any facet.*

As a result, community members are all equally invested in keeping their shared community safe. Creating this environment serves to build (or in some places, maintain or restore) trust between the police and the communities that they serve, as well as building bridges between segments of the community who might otherwise be isolated from one another.

**Outreach programs that do not encompass the entire community run the risk of alienating the particular community members on whom the program concentrates.** Engagement efforts that focus on a single segment of a community may appear discriminatory and can create a perception that outreach efforts are auxiliaries of the investigation and prosecutorial functions of police departments, rather than sincere initiatives to build police-community partnerships. This is particularly true for Muslim Americans who, as previously noted, have experienced extensive trauma and societal discrimination since 9/11. As one law enforcement agent stressed:

*We don’t want to have a safety net set up where our programs only focus on a religious ideology. . . . It’s got to be on what kinds of things may drive violent extremism. . . . It might not always be religion, it could be anti-government based, it could be a multitude of different factors that could drive someone toward extremism. A framework should never be specific [to a religion or group] like that.*

One member of a police outreach unit emphasized the importance of the police conducting outreach and engagement with the full range of groups and even individuals within their community:

*We will partner with anybody that wants to build peace in the community and send a good message. We are going to do anything we can to help that effort.*

*When police departments are actively engaged with a broad array of groups within a community and addressing a range of public safety and other problems with them, we believe Muslim Americans will find participation in such outreach activities both acceptable and desirable.*

Our research identified a number of police departments, however, that had active engagement programs with Muslim American communities to prevent extremism inspired by al Qaeda and like-minded groups,

but did not have similar programs to address other forms of violent extremism. This approach is problematic because it creates the perception among Muslim Americans that they are being singled out for police scrutiny. We found, however, that the lack of specific police programs to address anti-government, racist, or other forms of extremism was not due to an intent to single out the Muslim American community, but rather resulted from law enforcement’s difficulties attempting to interact with individuals and groups that they perceived to be hostile to law enforcement.

The anti-law enforcement attitudes of certain individuals cannot be a bar to use of community outreach and engagement to address anti-government, racist, or other forms of extremism. **If engagement between the police and law-abiding Muslim Americans can be used to create community resiliency against violent extremism inspired by al Qaeda and ISIS, then engagement with other law-abiding communities should be useful to build resilience against other forms of violent extremism.** Indeed, the U.S. Justice Department has acknowledged the utility of community engagement to address anti-government extremism. In a recent speech on new efforts to confront domestic terrorism, Assistant Attorney General John Carlin advocated the use of outreach and engagement, noting “community members are often best-positioned to identify and relate to individuals who have begun on a path to violent extremism.”<sup>53</sup>

### **C. Community Outreach and Engagement Programs Should Be Separate from Intelligence-Gathering and Criminal Investigation**

Our interviews with community members and some police departments suggest that, if possible, community outreach and engagement programs should be organizationally separate from the intelligence and criminal investigations units of police departments. As noted above, one reason that some Muslim Americans are wary of community outreach and engagement programs is that they believe these efforts are simply intelligence-gathering disguised as community outreach. **To establish community trust, it is critically important that officers assigned to community outreach and engagement be separate from organizational units with responsibility for intelligence-gathering or criminal investigations.**

Our interviews with police departments highlighted these concerns. One department official noted that:

*When our outreach team was formed, we put together policy and guidelines on how information was collected and stored to make sure that intelligence and outreach were kept completely separate. All of our information is stored separately, and we don’t have access to each other’s information. ... We don’t want any misuse of data. Our outreach team has to be trusted in the community, and to do that it has to be able to operate independently. There can’t be any indication that they’re going out and gathering intel and reporting it back. We had to make sure that there was no mission creep.*

Another department made clear that its Muslim community relations leader “has never been affiliated with the intelligence program here. ... There’s no integration between him and [intelligence gathering].”

Our interviews also revealed a diversity of organizational structures used by police departments to conduct community outreach. Some cities, especially large cities with a long, deeply established tradition of community policing, have units dedicated exclusively to community outreach.

Other cities take a more decentralized approach. Officers assigned to neighborhoods or precincts have responsibility for all outreach activities in that geographic area. In one of the agencies with this more diffuse approach to outreach and engagement, this was described as an “all hands on deck” approach to

<sup>53</sup> John Carlin, U.S. Department of Justice, “Remarks on Domestic Terrorism,” October 14, 2015, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/assistant-attorney-general-john-p-carlin-delivers-remarks-domestic-terrorism-event-co>.



engagement. All officers, not just outreach officers, are expected to make outreach and engagement a part of their work in the community, as part of a larger departmental philosophy of community policing. Even in an agency with full-time outreach specialists, the police chief made clear that “we try at every level of our department’s operation [to communicate] that we’re all community policing ambassadors.”

Some departments situate their outreach and engagement groups within a larger criminal investigation or intelligence bureau. We also found examples in smaller jurisdictions where officers were designated as ILOs (intelligence liaison officers) or FLOs (fusion center liaison officers) with dual responsibilities to conduct community outreach and also interact with intelligence collection units, either inside or outside the police department. Finally, we found other examples, again in smaller jurisdictions, where a single officer was responsible for community outreach, liaison functions with the regional intelligence fusion center, and serving as the police department’s representative on the local Joint Terrorism Task Force.

**These varying approaches have advantages and liabilities. As noted, we believe that complete separation is the approach most likely to foster community trust. However, we understand there are a limited amount of resources that even large police departments can dedicate to outreach and engagement units and, therefore, a strict separation requirement would reduce the volume of engagement activities a department can offer.**

The decentralized approach, in which all beat and precinct officers participate in community outreach, reinforces a culture of a community engagement department-wide and broadens the manpower base from which specific programs can be maintained. It also underscores that all law enforcement officers are a part of the communities that they serve. However, a potential difficulty of this approach is that lines between outreach and intelligence gathering can be blurred. It can also create an ‘ownership’ issue: If no one is assigned to a specific outreach function, who would be invited to and/or attend the community functions? Most precinct officers have many other responsibilities, such as responding to calls for service. Community outreach officers have more time to engage with community members and get to know them on a more personal level.

**Even in resource constrained environments, organizational structures in which officers participate in both community outreach and intelligence collection should be reconsidered.** We believe the potential cost of this approach in terms of lost trust from the community is not worth the benefit of the resources saved from a dual-responsibilities arrangement. This concern was echoed by many of the agencies we visited. As one officer explained:

*When we established our program, our first thought was to make it two-fold: conduct outreach and solicit intelligence. Then we looked around and learned from other agencies that had made that mistake, and we modified the scope of our program to only address community engagement.*

Despite our preference for separating community engagement from intelligence-gathering, we understand that community policing officers must transmit information about potential criminal activity that they learn in the course of their duties to others within the law enforcement agency. **Indeed, the police departments we interviewed consistently stated that information that community members provided about an individual who showed evidence of possible connection to violent extremism would be provided to intelligence and investigation units, and potentially to federal authorities.** The outreach officers noted that **although they pass such information on, they are rarely involved in subsequent investigations that result from this information.**

This policy of information transfer will not, in our view, undermine community trust so long as police departments are transparent about their policies and activities. In fact, community policing officers will gain

greater trust and respect from communities if they are frank and candid about how they handle information provided to them. As one outreach officer put it:

*Just be completely honest. Tell them, “Hey, look, this is what is going on.” You say, “This is the only thing I can do.” Make them understand that ultimately we are going to pass [information about potential criminal activity] to the feds, we are going to pass it to our investigative unit. This is what we are going to do. Just be honest with them. Don’t say – “Yeah, we will talk to [a troubled community member], not a problem,” and then pass [information to the FBI]. ... If you are honest, you don’t have the problems like the NYPD had. You are completely transparent with them.*

We believe transparent explanation of the role of outreach and engagement is vitally important, can build trust, and strikes the proper balance for officers between promoting effective policing and fulfilling the duty to report relevant information. The key guidelines on this issue are:

- Outreach and engagements officers should make clear that they do not collect intelligence, provide the names of individuals who attend community meetings to intelligence databases, or report police-community meetings or activities to intelligence and investigation units.
- Outreach and engagement officers should also explain that it is not their job to encourage community members to provide information, cultivate sources, or follow up on intelligence leads.
- However, these officers should make clear to community leaders and other community members that if they obtain information about potential criminal activity or are provided such information voluntarily by community members, they are required to provide this information to other parts of the department for them to use as they see fit.
- When these information transfers occur, the outreach officer should not be responsible in any way for following up on the information or participating in any investigation resulting from this information.

## **D. Law Enforcement Agencies Should Recruit and Hire a Workforce that Reflects the Composition of the Community**

Community members expressed strong support for hiring and promoting police officers who are Muslim. Increasing Muslim American representation on police forces would provide police departments with culturally-aware personnel to draw on as resources in partnering with the community. Diversity hiring would also provide non-Muslim officers the experience of working with colleagues who are Muslim. Young people that interact with Muslim officers may also be more inclined to consider a career in policing.

One focus group participant, who expressed reservations about many local police policies, praised one agency’s record on diversity, saying that the department “has done a good job recruiting Muslims. Some are not cops, some are behind the scenes, but each one creates more sensitivity in the system.” Another focus group participant echoed this point: “Recruiting Muslims is the primary thing they have done. And some of these people on patrol, they go into the communities, have sensitivity during Ramadan, take their shoes off when they go into the mosques, and Muslim officers are manning their own communities, especially at holiday time.”

Officials from several police departments acknowledged the connection between hiring a diverse workforce and effective community outreach and engagement. The officials noted that when officers share a cultural or religious bond with community members, it can make the community more open to relationship-building and more willing to trust that outreach officers understand them and are truly committed to improving their quality of life. As one law enforcement officer described it:

*We have officers who are reflective of every aspect of the community who are out there. ... They keep us plugged into the community and in tune with what's going on. ... We don't do any special outreach [to specific segments of the population] because they're all a part of the [agency's] "family."*

Another advantage to hiring Muslim American officers is that some of them may have language skills, as well as cultural and religious awareness, that facilitate working with immigrant communities. As one police official noted:

*Without the language and religion, they can't have the same access or understanding of nuances. ... Being able to communicate directly, officers interpreting situations in a more educated way, has made a difference.*

These positive impacts are amplified when police departments hire individuals directly from the communities that they serve. As officials from several agencies explained, "being local" matters. Officers who grew up in, or have spent many years in, the community in which they are conducting outreach are often better able to form productive partnerships with community members. As one officer put it:

*I'm a hometown boy. ... People know me, know that I care, and know that I'll take care of my city.*

## **E. Successful Outreach and Engagement Requires Multiple Types of Training**

To create robust outreach programs, police agencies must equip their officers with the skills and knowledge base that will allow them to forge productive partnerships with the community. This includes training on cultural awareness, information about the structure, leaders, and nuances of specific communities, foreign languages, and behaviors indicative of violent extremism.

### **1. Police should use community members to provide cultural awareness training that is mandatory for all officers**

Formal cultural awareness training is a crucial part of fostering understanding between police officers and the communities they serve. The importance of such training is demonstrated by feedback from community members regarding the uneven level of cultural awareness exhibited by police officers in their interactions with Muslims. Some focus group participants listed unpleasant incidents that had resulted from a lack of training in this area, such as mistaking a woman's headscarf for a sign that she did not speak English, not realizing that many Muslim women who wear headscarves were born and raised in the United States. In other cases, community members said that police have called in reinforcements when Muslims kneeled to pray in a parking lot, not realizing that prayer may be performed anywhere. Other focus group members complained that some police seem to view long beards as an "indicator" of potential radicalization, not realizing that beards are a common expression of piety among Muslim men. "It's great if the chief can know a Muslim leader," one focus group participant said, "but [what about] officers patrolling the street who see Arabic on the wall and call this suspicious activity? How does that [high-level relationship] translate to the street officer?"

Our research identified jurisdictions with strong cultural awareness programs, but also a number where such training was lacking. One focus group member noted that a friend of his serving as a police officer had outreach responsibilities, but consistently had to call him to ask even the most basic issues about Islam. "He calls me his go-to Muslim guy," the community member noted, even though his level of expertise on many Islamic issues was not particularly advanced. Another focus group member commented that he believed some of the police officers who had served in the U.S. military in Afghanistan or Iraq seemed to have a

fearful or hostile attitude toward Muslims they encountered in their community that were not being addressed through training. At another agency, the top outreach officer received no formal training, noting that his training consisted of the books on Islam and Muslims he bought himself.

**Cultural awareness training should not be a negative approach that simply lists things that officers should not do or say. Rather, such training should be presented as a tool that empowers officers to engage with community members with diverse backgrounds.** Training should cover topics such as religious practices and holidays, forms of dress and adornment and what they mean, and the history of a given community. An example of the value of such training comes from a city with a large Sikh population. The outreach officer noted that “We saw a void in some of the understandings that officers had with the Sikh community, most of which had to do with the kirpan, a short, dull knife they carry as a religious symbol.” To remedy these issues, the department worked with a city employee who was Sikh and created a video about the culture. It covered issues such as why they wear a headdress, why men don’t shave, and why they carry a kirpan. The outreach officer said, “I learned that every Sikh has a metal bracelet that they wear. So now I know that if you see someone and you don’t know if they are Muslim or Hindu or Sikh – well, all you have to do is look at their wrist.”

Training should cover harmful stereotypes and the effects that they have on communities as well. The overall goal is to make officers more comfortable engaging with community members, and to encourage meaningful interaction. A community member who partnered with the local police department to conduct one such training noted:

*They asked me to help them put together a Muslim training session for officers and it was awesome. At the beginning of the class, I asked the class of 70 people, “How many of you know about Islam?” and everyone raised their hands. Next, I said, “What do you know?” And they... were very uneducated answers. [But we taught them a lot], and at the end, the feedback was great. They had learned a lot more and were more aware. Education is important to fight all these misconceptions and stereotypes. All they need is education.*

**The best way to craft cultural awareness training is to involve community members in its development and delivery.** First, this ensures that the training is effective: there is no better authority on the cultural mores and practices of a given community than the community itself. Second, the process of working with community members on creating the training program builds a bridge between the community members and their police department. The department demonstrates its investment in the lives of community members and in delivering quality policing services, and the community is empowered by being given a crucial role in educating the police on the best ways to interact with community members.

Training sessions by community members also give officers and community members an opportunity to get to know each other and ask questions in a non-threatening environment. As one police leader said, bringing the community into the training process underscores that “we need to be a part of the community, not apart from the community.”

**Cultural awareness training should be mandatory for sworn officers and non-sworn employees.**

A mandatory training requirement 1) establishes cultural competency as an agency value; 2) reduces the chance that any community member will have a negative experience when interacting with police; and 3) ensures that employees other than officers, such as department members who provide victim services, will have the skills to successfully interface with the community.

## 2. Capture and share institutional knowledge to ensure program continuity and success

Training programs for police departments should include institutional knowledge about the community that outreach officers have accumulated. While Muslim American focus group participants in several cities praised the community outreach officers with whom they worked, some communities expressed a concern that these programs relied on the talents and charismatic personality of a single individual. If this individual retires or is reassigned, the outreach program could be in danger of having to start from scratch. We witnessed this difficulty at one site, where an effective community liaison retired and was replaced by a person who did not have the training or the personal characteristics to carry on where the previous officer had left off. **Incorporating what these officers have learned into cultural awareness training will spread the knowledge base, and make the agency better prepared to interact with and serve communities.** Such training should include the outreach officers' understanding of the historical relationships among different community groups and between those groups and the department, how officers should navigate internal community disputes, and an explanation of any specific outreach initiatives in which the department is currently engaged and why they are successful. The training should also discuss specific outreach techniques that officers have found to be successful in forming and sustaining productive partnerships with community members.

The potential for turn-over in an outreach program will also require careful management of the transition between established outreach officers and the new officers who replace them. Such transitions can present a unique challenge for outreach programs because the success of these programs is predicated on personal relationships with community members. **Outreach officers who are leaving their positions should share their knowledge of the community with their replacements, introduce new officers to their contacts in the community, and facilitate the formation of new relationships between the community and new members of the outreach team.** In this way, existing relationships are not compromised and community members are included in the transition process. Departments should develop a succession plan and involve the community when they anticipate change. Including the community in discussions about transition demonstrates that the police department considers the community to be a true partner.

## 3. Partner with social service agencies to enhance the ability to communicate effectively with recent immigrants or refugees

Foreign language proficiency is a challenge for many police-community interactions, but it is especially important for outreach and engagement with recent immigrant or refugee communities. Muslim immigrants have often arrived in the United States from authoritarian countries where the police are used as an instrument of abusive state power, so community members may be deeply afraid or wary of interacting with police officers in the United States. **In such circumstances, having police officers who can communicate in the community members' native language can be a key asset for initiating community policing activities and building a relationship with community members.**

Providing intensive foreign language training to officers, though, is often costly and takes a long time to achieve proficiency. As an alternative, departments can use hired interpreters, place officers with the necessary language skills into outreach and engagement roles, or use trusted bi-lingual community members. Some agencies also use a service called "language line," a call-center translation service that they can use for a fee.

Another promising practice is partnering with local social service providers that offer resources to recent immigrants and refugees. For example, one police agency has developed active partnerships with a local

attorney who handles asylum cases and organizations such as Catholic Charities. These service providers have the language skills to help the police communicate effectively with the new arrivals. The police department also leverages these partnerships to provide training to this community on how to interact with the police, an activity that helps build relationships with immigrants and refugees as they begin settling in United States.

Ultimately, however, outreach by the police generally occurs without an interpreter present and most officers lack the language skills necessary to communicate with the full range of communities in their jurisdiction. **Consequently, police departments should provide at least some basic language training to key members of outreach and engagement teams.** Such training would enable outreach officers to understand key words and phrases and greet community members in their native language. Even using a few words as a greeting can serve as a token of good faith and respect. Training officers to become fluent in the multiple languages that may be spoken in a jurisdiction is probably too expensive and impractical for most agencies. An investment in basic language training, however, will likely have a beneficial return.

One of the policing agencies interviewed for this project offered a 12-week course in the language of their largest immigrant community. The department also offered English language classes to the leaders of that community. In both instances, the department's goal was to demonstrate their investment in the community and facilitate direct communication between community members and officers.

Another police agency asked a community member with whom outreach officers had built a relationship to identify key phrases and create a reference card to fit into officers' pockets. The outreach officers said that this made them more comfortable in approaching community members when they first began their outreach and made a difference in how their efforts were received. Community members appreciated these officers' efforts to communicate with them in their native language and thus responded warmly to their efforts to engage.

#### **4. Ensure that anti-Islamic "training" materials and presentations are prohibited**

**Another important practice is for police departments to vet counterterrorism training programs and materials to ensure they do not include anti-Islamic themes.**

There is a large supply of anti-Islamic presentations, videos, and speakers in circulation which are labeled as counter-terrorism "training" for law enforcement. Mistaken or unknowing use of these materials for training sessions can undermine efforts to build relationships with Muslim American communities and damage the credibility of police outreach to communities.

In one metropolitan area, police officials and community members told us that police departments in the region had previously hired a self-described "expert" on Islam to conduct trainings for officers, but the trainer turned out to be a poorly informed bigot who urged officers to treat all Muslims as terrorism suspects. The agencies stopped paying for this "instructor," but some community members expressed disappointment and wondered how the police agencies could have hired such a person without checking his qualifications. One community leader interviewed for this project said that he offered a more well-informed training, but that some police agencies in the region continued to send officers to the inaccurate trainings.

In another city, focus group participants referred to news stories about an anti-Islam video that been used for training of police officers, despite unsubstantiated claims in the video about a supposedly widespread plot among Muslim Americans to undermine the United States government. This video was no longer

being used for training in the jurisdiction, but its use contributed to poor relations between law enforcement and the local Muslim community. A focus group participant commented: “The explanation was, ‘Oh, somebody played it.’ But how can somebody play something like this for weeks?” He continued, “I’m okay if [the police are] ignorant [about Islam], but if anti-Islam folks get access to the police department, that’s even more dangerous. We don’t want our police force to have negative stereotypes of people they’re trying to protect.”

The federal government took strong steps to eliminate inaccurate, prejudicial training materials from its curricula in 2012,<sup>54</sup> and various state and local agencies have canceled such trainings and refused to offer in-service training credits for them. **Agencies should vet counterterrorism training programs with other departments, their communities, or federal authorities before exposing their officers to them.**

## **5. Training on preventing violent extremism should be provided jointly to police and communities and should address all forms of violent extremism**

As police departments and communities build trusted relationships, methods for building community resilience to violent extremism is an appropriate topic for police and communities to address. **Training communities about preventing violent extremism is an important aspect of building community resilience. Yet, this topic is also controversial and, if not handled with sensitivity, could erode trust between the police and communities, especially Muslim Americans.**

Discussing the issue of violent extremism with Muslim American community members is among the most difficult and delicate tasks facing police departments with active outreach and engagement programs. As noted above, for these efforts to be successful, the police-community relationship must be based on a partnerships that address the full range of public safety issues concerning the community. **Focusing strictly on national security is likely to alienate a significant portion of the Muslim American community.**

At the same time, preventing acts of violent extremism should be on the public safety agenda for all communities, including Muslim Americans. Two mass shootings by Muslims Americans claimed the lives of 19 people in 2015 and over the past 18 months, dozens of Muslim Americans have been arrested for connections with terrorist plots or attempting to travel abroad to join ISIS.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, high-profile incidents of racist or anti-government motivated violence in Charleston and other cities have underscored the need for police to address these forms of extremism as well.

Police should provide communities with the information they need to identify and build resilience against the different types of ideological violence that could be a threat in their region. When providing such information or training, police departments should follow a set of guidelines to ensure that broaching this topic does not undermine community trust.

**First, training regarding violent extremism should not be attempted early in the relationship-building process.** Once the police build trust by addressing other community public safety concerns, it is much easier to take on issues like violent extremism. As one officer noted:

*When you’re out there every day, the kids and the families see you, and you do something for them that demonstrates you care – taking care of a speeding problem on the street, for instance. When*

<sup>54</sup> “FBI removes hundreds of training documents after probe on treatment of Islam,” Fox News.com, February 21, 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, “ISIS in American: From Retweets to Raqqa,” Program on Extremism, George Washington University, December 2015; Charles Kurzman and David Schanzer, “Law Enforcement Assessment of the Violent Extremism Threat,” Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, June 25, 2015, p. 8; Eric Schmidt, “ISIS or Al Qaeda: American Officials Split Over Top Terrorism Threat,” *New York Times*, August 4, 2015.

*you're out there two months later and asking about terrorism, they know that it's coming from a place of caring for the community, and they take you seriously and will talk to you.*

**Second, training about violent extremism should be embedded in generalized public safety briefings on a variety of topics.** Discussions of the violent extremism threat will be accepted if they are part of briefings on other topics, such as cyber-safety and anti-bullying programs.

**Third, police should provide information to communities on both the threats of violence inspired by al Qaeda and ISIS as well as other forms of extremism such as anti-government or racist extremism.** Non-Muslim communities should receive the same briefings on these topics as Muslim Americans.

**Finally, police agencies should provide community members with a clear idea of what they want community members to do to assist in addressing this problem.** Our interviews with Muslim American community members suggest that a clear, actionable message has not been delivered to all communities by the police on this topic. Yet, there are a number of core principles regarding violent extremism prevention that police should be communicating to communities:

- **Police should explain that violent extremist recruitment in recent years is taking place primarily on-line.** Police should emphasize to parents that they are responsible for knowing what their children are doing on the Internet and who they are engaging with on social media.
- **Police should encourage family members and community leaders to seek assistance for young people who may be exhibiting signs of mental illness and identify local service providers as a resource.** The perpetrators of tragedies in Chattanooga and Lafayette, Louisiana, both exhibited signs of mental illness before engaging in their mass shooting attacks. It appears that many individuals were aware that these perpetrators had exhibited erratic, questionable behavior but did not bring them to the attention of law enforcement.

**Police should identify specific suspicious activities or known pre-cursors to violent extremism that they would like community members to report to the police.** Departments should take care to ensure that these activities are either criminal, or known pre-cursors to criminal activity (such as stockpiling weapons or surveillance of a target).<sup>56</sup> A message from the police that they want community members to identify terrorists or people about to commit a terrorist attack may not be well received because it presumes that without police encouragement, Muslim Americans would not fulfill the most basic duty of citizenship of informing police about a known terrorist or potentially imminent act of violence. In a number of focus groups, Muslim Americans expressed uncertainty as to the specific types of behaviors the police believe should be reported other than obvious criminal activities. The issue of training communities about “suspicious behaviors” or “indicators” of violent extremism should be reviewed with great care. Police must ensure that any training materials are produced by credible sources, based on solid research, and, reflect the complexity of this issue. **Training materials that provide a simplistic checklist of behavioral indicators to suggest which individuals are “vulnerable” to violent extremism should be viewed with deep skepticism.** Leading scholars believe that there are multiple, complex pathways to radicalization and violent extremism that cannot be easily predicted.<sup>57</sup> **Over-reliance on a categorical, check-list approach can lead to unfair targeting of individuals based on stereotypes (such as “increased religiosity”), and may result in police**

<sup>56</sup> For example, see Joint FBI/DHS Suspicious Behavior Poster, <http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/suspicious-behavior-poster.pdf>; Northern California Regional Intelligence Center, “Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Criteria Guide,” <https://ncric.org/default.aspx?menuitemid=587&menugroup=NCRIC+Public+Home>

<sup>57</sup> Randy Borum, “Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories,” and “Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research,” *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4(4):7-62, 2011; John Horgan, “From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618:80-94, 2008; Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20:415-433, 2008; ARTIS Research & Risk Modeling, “Theoretical Frames on Pathways to Violent Radicalization,” August 2009.



ignoring violent individuals who do not exhibit the indicated behaviors. Training materials should emphasize the diversity of pathways to violent extremism and rely on case studies demonstrating how different types of individuals with different backgrounds and characteristics have, in the past, committed ideological violence. Such training may not provide cut-and-dry instructions that some officers or community members seek, but it will give them a greater understanding of the complex phenomenon they are trying to counteract.

When communicating with communities about conduct and behaviors that should be brought to the attention of the police, trainers and community outreach officers should explain the difference between genuine suspicious pre-cursors of criminal behavior and First Amendment protected speech and behavior, such as religious practices, political debate, or criticizing U.S. foreign policy. However, police should also discuss with community members that not all speech is protected speech, and that it is appropriate to report speech that indicates an individual may be planning to commit violence or is encouraging others to commit violence.

## **F. Law Enforcement Agencies Should Conduct a Wide Range of Engagement Activities Designed to Establish Trusting Relationships**

Each step of the engagement process – from first laying the groundwork for building productive partnerships to sustaining established relationships in the long term – requires that outreach teams be both diligent and thoughtful in their efforts to earn and maintain the trust of their communities. As one outreach officer said, “[It’s] all about building and sustaining trust. [You] need to interact with folks during non-crisis situations [and] become a trusted presence before issues arise.” Similarly, another officer advised, “You have to be real with these community members – you can’t be like an absentee father. They only trust you and listen to you if they know you and know that you’re invested and you demonstrate your investment. You need to show that you’re doing things for the community.” Even though every community is different, our research identified common themes and principles that constitute the foundation of an effective community outreach and engagement program.

### **1. Address all needs of the community, not just violent extremism**

Numerous focus group participants said that their relationships with police were at their strongest when they went beyond issues of violent extremism to include other issues of importance to that particular community, such as protection from crime and gang violence, promotion of community events and institutions, and assistance with cases of domestic violence.

**A partnership that starts with combating violent extremism is unlikely to lead to deeper relationships with police, several focus group participants said, while a partnership that starts with other issues of mutual concern can lead to enduring partnerships in all areas, including violent extremism.**

Community members positively identified a range of interactions with the police that left them with positive impressions that helped build trust. One focus group participant described police involvement in a sports league in which many Muslim children participated, pointing out how those young people saw police officers as coaches and mentors rather than potential enemies. Another said that “the average Muslim shopkeeper who lives in that area ... just wants to know what police are doing about crime in their neighborhood.” One focus group participant mentioned a volunteer project to clean up vacant lots that were being used for criminal activity, through which police officers and community members got to know one another. Another participant gave the example of a homeless person at the mosque that the community

did not know how to help. A relationship with police helped put them in touch with the appropriate social services agency. Several participants noted that police officers' roles sometimes verged on social work, because officers were the most visible representatives of the government in some neighborhoods. **When officers are able to steer community members toward services that people need, they build trust and good will in the community.**

**The police officers we interviewed echoed the same sentiments.** "Our goal," one officer noted, "is empathy, treating people with respect and understanding." Many police departments and communities emphasized that for a community engagement program to be successful, the police must be attentive to the needs of the community at every stage of the process:

*If you really want to police someone well, know their history, know where they're coming from. Respect has to go both ways. Enforcement-focus at the expense of relationship-building is bad for business.*

**Good policing often involves a combination of social work and attention to quality of life issues that might otherwise be classified as low priorities by the department but are hugely important to community members.** As one officer commented:

*Eighty percent of what we do is service-oriented, and only twenty percent is law enforcement, so we can't be in enforcement mode all of the time. We need to have the mentality that we're providing a service.*

Often, community members are concerned about quality of life issues such as abandoned cars and houses, excessive speeding in their neighborhoods, and other similar issues that police officers might not first identify as being of the greatest concern to community members. Taking the time to listen to the community's concerns and then following up to resolve them demonstrates officers' investment in improving community members' quality of life and helps in building a trusting relationship with them. Communities may have concerns that have little to do with public safety, but outreach and engagement officers can build trust by helping them navigate these issues. For example, in one jurisdiction, an outreach officer explained that:

*A group of imams came to us [with] a concern about not getting a mosque in their area. Granted, the sheriff may or may not have that control, but he was able to assist them, direct them, and bring them to the line of various other agencies in the state. [At community outreach] roundtables, community members bring up their concerns and the sheriff addresses them the best he can. . . . [He] can also use it to direct them to how to get those issues solved.*

Similarly, one officer said she recently helped a community member get his paycheck. He drove a taxi cab, and his employer had not paid him in several months, so the officer simply made a call to the owner to find out what was holding up the process. The next day, the community member was paid. This is an example of extra duties, not typically included in the usual scope of police work, performed in order to help community members lead better lives. Community members who believe that their police department is invested in their well-being, in turn, are more willing to invest in the police force and its efforts.

We found that successful outreach officers are open and willing to learn from the community. One outreach officer we interviewed described this as "getting comfortable being uncomfortable." "Officers," he said, "have to get out of the car and be okay with engaging people and accepting criticism and grievances graciously and respectfully. [You] can't run away from criticism, [you] have to address it and grow from it."

**While aiding communities with non-law enforcement matters is a good way for police to begin to develop a relationship with a community, a strong response to crime in a community can also help build**

**relationships of trust.** At one department, an officer was alerted by a Muslim community member that there was a drug dealer operating out of an apartment in an abandoned building near their mosque, which made the members feel unsafe when they entered or left their house of worship. He took this information to his department and coordinated with undercover detectives to conduct surveillance and, ultimately, arrest the perpetrator. This showed community members that the police department was sincere in building relationships and assisting with quality of life issues they faced.

**A particular issue for trust-building in Muslim communities is the police response to hate crimes against Muslims.** Several focus group participants said that prompt and respectful police treatment of reports of hate crimes – threatening phone calls, hostile graffiti, and name-calling – is a positive sign in an era in which Muslims feel like an embattled minority. Instances of police support in the handling of the victimization of Muslims were noted as especially welcome:

*There was one [incident] we had recently [when local police] came out here because someone threw a rock through the glass door [of the mosque]. We're not sure why, someone pulled up and tossed it through. [Police] came by and showed their support, and there was a squad car outside for a week, and that was nice too.*

Even when a specific incident has not occurred, police can demonstrate their understanding and sensitivity to Muslim American community concerns by reaching out to them during times of tension. As one community member recalled:

*[After the] Charlie Hebdo [attack], I'd just come back from Medina and I got a call from [an outreach officer]. He said, ... "Do you guys need anything? Do you need us to stay at the center in case someone tries to retaliate?" ... He did a whole security check of the mosque, checked all the cameras, exit and entrance points.*

## **2. Don't use the "CVE" label to describe outreach, engagement, and other trust-building activities**

Given the diversity of Muslim Americans' public safety concerns, labeling police outreach efforts as being primarily geared toward countering violent extremism ("CVE") is counter-productive. Using the "CVE" label may inadvertently imply that the police are not invested in addressing the full spectrum of issues that must be dealt with to improve the quality of life in their communities. It may also suggest that outreach programs are motivated by a desire for intelligence about community members, rather than a dedication to building strong relationships of trust.

As one police officer explained, "There's been years of basic outreach that we didn't call 'CVE.' 'CVE' rubs people the wrong way, so why would we re-label our outreach efforts that?" Another officer said, "What we do isn't just CVE; it's community outreach. Doing things like that – attending family nights, helping with quality of life issues – builds community trust. CVE is a byproduct of building sincere relationships with the community."

Efforts to engage Muslim American communities need to take into account sensitivities of the community arising from the difficulties of being Muslim in post-9/11 America. **Regardless of their intention, police activities labeled "countering violent extremism" will often have the potential to be perceived by Muslim Americans as being linked to surveillance of their communities, information-gathering, and the potential infiltration of their mosques by government informants.** It also immediately links police outreach and engagement efforts to the false notion that Muslims, just by virtue of their religious affiliation, have knowledge about or connections to violent extremist activity. The CVE label, therefore, is an awkward way

to start a conversation that needs to be about community building and partnerships. In both form and content, community outreach and engagement efforts with Muslim communities should be about the full range of public safety concerns expressed by the community, not just violent extremism.

### **3. Develop meaningful relationships with community leaders, then expand engagement efforts to reach a broader audience**

Police use a wide variety of tools to establish and deepen relationships with communities. We asked a leader of one outreach unit: What techniques work the best to establish relationships with communities based on trust? Is it open community meetings? One on one meetings with community leaders? Meetings between police and boards of organizations? He answered: “All of the above.” He elaborated:

*You look at it as a business model. You start with one customer. I would start with a community meeting at the police department. Invite them in. Have a town hall setting. Help them get to know the police department. You are inviting them into your house. Make them feel comfortable.*

He also noted that simply asking communities what they need is another way to establish a relationship. The officer recalled having a chance to introduce himself to a leader from a small Christian sect:

*I went up and told him “Anything you need, we are there for you.” He said, “I know the department is there, but what do you mean by anything?” I said, “Well, you want us to come out to the church? Do you have any after-school programs?” He said, “We are having a yearly carnival, can you come to that?”*

*So we took a police car out there. We stayed for 5 hours. . . . I know it sounds weird, but we handcuff all the kids. That is all they want is to be handcuffed. . . . Kids love to go in the back of the [police] car. . . . All those people [at the church carnival] are now seeing the police in a different light. Now they have that trust.*

Another successful technique for establishing a relationship with new communities is to attend ceremonies or community events:

*[When Boko Haram started becoming a threat,] we made a point of meeting people from our community from [Nigeria]. So we just went to a Christian church, we attended the service. In the middle of the service, they invited us up front, they asked us all kinds of questions: “How can I get out of a traffic citation? How can I prevent burglary?” It was just about being available for them. None of those folks had ever spoken to someone from the police department before. But now we established that relationship with them and involve them, and get them to understand, hey, we are not just coming to your church. We talk to people and tell them we want to get to know them. . . . Now, they have gotten so comfortable with us we have people who get invited to weddings.*

**Police departments that want to develop relationships of trust with communities, need to develop personal bonds with community leaders.** These leaders are repositories of cultural and community knowledge who can advise the police on the best ways to communicate with community members. One outreach officer emphasized:

*Who you partner with in the community is hugely important – it will make or break you. You need to be partnered with the right people. You need someone who will bring the community to you, not someone who will stand between you and the community.*

Forging these relationships with community leaders is often dependent on demonstrating a real and consistent interest in their needs and those of their communities. Outreach officers note that getting to

know these leaders sometimes requires dozens of meetings over cups of coffee or tea, but that is what they do, day to day, week to week, to gain trust and convince community leaders that the police want to partner with them to address problems.

**Despite the importance of creating relationships with community leaders, engagement programs cannot meet their full potential without promoting interaction between the police and a broad, diverse range of community members.** One outreach officer expressed how engagement programs should not be satisfied establishing relationships with only community leaders:

*It is important to have good relationships with big organizations ... but that is not the grass roots, the people out on the street. Don't just meet with people that we already have relationships with. That is easy. Get out there and meet some [new] people.*

Yet, there are reasons why engaging more broadly with communities is difficult. First, some community leaders oppose the concept of police-community engagement because, as set forth in this report, they are suspicious of law enforcement's intentions. Indeed, a number of community-based and civil rights organizations have announced their opposition to the Obama Administration's CVE programs.<sup>58</sup> Some community leaders actively resist police efforts to go around them. In one jurisdiction, the lead outreach officer said, "Sometimes they want to be kind of gatekeepers. They want us to go through them to reach out."

Police departments need to work creatively and with determination to address this challenge. To overcome determined opposition to engagement among some leaders and organizations, one outreach officer recommends, "It's going to have to start with ... that one person who's maybe less extreme in their [opposition to engagement]. We know that this can work." Another officer suggested that the police need to "look for opportunities to approach these mosques, communities, schools without going through that particular organization's leaders, [because] we like to go directly to build relationships at a grassroots level ... without getting anyone's approval."

Experienced outreach officers expressed confidence that with an intensely personal approach, they can engage with the broader community in which they serve. One officer described his approach:

*At a community forum, we ask people: "How are you doing? Where do you live?" We meet with them. They are just a regular Joe who lives on A or B Street. You just go over there to his house.*

*People who know [the police chief] they may [tell him], "I am having a problem with my son." You just go over and you help them out with that problem. So you go to a basketball game because you have a relationship now with that son, and people see you there. They see the police in a different light.*

A number of police departments stressed the importance of making special efforts to interact with women, which is especially difficult in some immigrant communities due to their cultural norms.<sup>59</sup> **Many departments we interviewed include female officers in their outreach units because they know that some Muslim American women will feel more comfortable interacting with them than with male officers.** These agencies have found that women from immigrant communities respond more positively and participate more actively in activities facilitated by women in the police department, such as female-only gym nights, salon socials, and movie nights.

<sup>58</sup> Letter to Lisa O. Monaco, "Re: Federal Support for Countering Violent Extremist Programs," December 18, 2014, <http://www.muslimadvocates.org/files/Countering-Violent-Extremism.pdf>.

<sup>59</sup> Allison Peters, "Creating Inclusive National Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism," Center for Inclusive Security, August 10, 2015. This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

#### 4. Take direct, affirmative steps to confront and overcome community distrust of the police

To build a productive community engagement program, police departments need to work towards overcoming distrust of law enforcement agencies that community members might have. Doing so requires that the police identify the cause of this distrust and then take steps to address it appropriately.

Recent émigrés and refugees may be distrustful of law enforcement because of experiences with authorities in their countries of origin. In these instances, police agencies should work collaboratively with resettlement agencies and other organizations that provide services to new arrivals. The police can offer classes on the role of the police in the United States, the laws that new arrivals to their community most need to know, and the differences among the various law enforcement agencies that they might encounter. An officer at one agency with a great deal of experience with refugees noted that:

*A lot of these refugees come from places where the police are to be feared, so there's a rebuilding that has to occur. [We] need to break down these stereotypes [and] negative or fearful attitudes toward law enforcement as quickly as possible when refugees come in.*

To address these issues, the agency provided a regular set of interventions:

*[We] offer a class on law enforcement [that] is taught every six weeks to new arrivals. Every other month, [we] teach a class to new arrivals on how to get jobs and how to make sure that they're doing it within the bounds of the law and culture so that they don't get into trouble. [We] teach a class every six weeks to refugees discussing things like domestic violence and child care. [We] do referrals to social services, counseling, PTSD treatment.*

These classes should be collaborative and include topics that refugees have identified as important. Providing these services and educational opportunities emphasizes the difference between policing in the United States and the law enforcement agencies that new arrivals might have known in their countries of origin.

Beyond providing education, it is crucial that the police are sensitive to the trauma history of refugees and others fleeing conflict in their home countries and respond with sensitivity, understanding and, when appropriate, referrals to social services. Doing so reinforces their role as partners with the community, and creates a strong foundation on which they can build a trusting relationship with refugee groups.

Domestic violence training and support services for the victims of domestic violence are especially important. Several of the law enforcement agencies with whom we spoke provide domestic violence-specific programming to refugee groups so that these new arrivals are aware both of the laws surrounding domestic violence in the United States and the resources that are available to domestic violence victims. Another of the agencies with whom we spoke partners closely with a domestic violence victim advocacy group that has service providers who are well-versed in the cultural milieu of the immigrant communities that they serve. "We want to make it as easy as we can for victims to feel supported at the very beginning," said one practitioner. "[Our goal is] for them to understand the laws and their rights. ... [W]e educate them that ... this is a new place."

Community distrust of the police also results from community members' experiences with police in *this* country. One community member's perception was that:

*Police lack a basic knowledge about Islam and Muslims and that's where the problem lies. ... The biggest piece is to have sound professional training including police. They should know their community before the crime takes place. We're not the natural suspects.*

Another felt that police officers buy into societal stereotypes:

*When it comes to certain police officers ... [they] have inherent ideological biases toward Muslims. Recently, [a political figure] talked about no-go zones. Well, you have officers who buy into that. They've never met a Muslim in their lives and buy right into that and eat up the propaganda.*

These community perceptions, whether based on ingrained anti-police biases or actual first-hand experience, are a reality that outreach officers must recognize and address directly. **Outreach officers should be willing and equipped to engage in difficult conversations about any community members' interactions with police in which they believe that they were discriminated against, unfairly targeted, or disrespected.** Outreach officers should not discount or minimize these experiences. Instead, they should focus on ensuring that their interactions with these community members do not repeat the mistakes of the past. They can do this, first of all, by applying standard and required principles of fairness and equal treatment to Muslim Americans. Learning about Islam and how it is practiced within the various Muslim communities that outreach officers' department might serve is also important.

**It is also possible to overcome distrust by delivering educational programming about policing policies and laws that govern police actions.** A number of police departments achieve this through educational programs for communities, which in some jurisdictions take the form of "academies" for community members. In one jurisdiction, they have programs ranging from a 16-week academy that meets weekly to consolidated one-day academies. The longer versions of the program address an array of issues: differences between federal and local law enforcement, drug enforcement, gang prevention, the civil process, courts, patrols, and a jail tour. The one-day academies go into less depth, but cover much of the same ground. **Whether through academies, community meetings, police presentations, or interactions with youth, police should find as many opportunities to familiarize community members about how they do their jobs and the laws and policies that govern what they can and cannot do. These educational activities will pay large dividends in undermining suspicions and building trust.**

## **5. Integrate local government agencies into engagement programs**

Outreach and engagement programs can be strengthened by including local government agencies, including social service agencies that can provide support for communities that are beyond the expertise of the police.

**Establishing interagency relationships improves the delivery of services to the community, which in turn strengthens their relationships with local government as a whole.** For example, one police agency supported efforts of a local mosque to get its sidewalk classified as a loading zone to help facilitate the arrival and departure of congregants. Though mosque leaders had tried for months to secure the help of the city, they had made no progress. However, when sheriff's deputies made some calls to their contacts in local government, the re-zoning was approved within a matter of weeks. Outreach officers in another agency were approached by members of their Ethiopian community for help in finding a way to celebrate Ethiopian New Year, which falls on September 11 every year. The outreach officers helped the community secure a permit to hold its traditional bonfire in a local park and made sure that others in the police department, as well as other local agencies, were aware that this New Year's celebration was going to be taking place on September 11. This was a key piece of information that enabled the community to celebrate their New Year publicly without fear of misunderstanding. In these instances, the police use their authority to initiate contacts with other agencies, which builds relationships and empowers the community to seek assistance from other entities besides the police.

**Incorporating local social service agencies like the schools and public health expands the tools that police can use to promote public safety.** Many police departments work closely with their local schools, often using school resource officers (SROs) to engage with young people and school administrators. Police can also make referrals to public health authorities when appropriate. These linkages can be applied to a wide variety of public safety issues, but, as noted below, can also be used to develop intervention models for addressing violent extremism.

Interagency relationships can be strengthened by developing working groups to coordinate functions and share information. One police department we visited created a working group including representatives from local and federal law enforcement agencies as well as local government. The group meets once a month with the goal of sharing experiences and best practices as well as coordinating outreach efforts.

Trying to forge interagency partnerships is not, however, without its challenges. As with police departments, the availability of resources can be an issue. As one police officer noted:

*There are funding issues too. It is resources. They have other jobs to do. When you invite them to participate in [outreach and engagement], they have cases to work, they have other problems. They don't have the staffing. They need resources to pay someone to go to these events. It is all about dollars and availability.*

## **6. Facilitate interactions between the community and federal security agencies**

**Forming interagency partnerships with federal agencies can also be a beneficial way to provide comprehensive services to communities.** Many of the issues that affect communities – such as immigration, airport security, and hate crimes enforcement – often fall within federal jurisdiction. Police departments that are close to their communities can facilitate interaction with federal authorities, which are often more distant and more difficult for communities to penetrate. In fact, the federal government has been conducting pilot projects in three cities (Boston, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles) that are attempting to integrate the outreach and engagement activities of federal, state and local law enforcement as well as local social services agencies.

**Partnerships with the federal government on community outreach and engagement, however, should be handled with sensitivity.** Some federal agencies have engendered deep distrust within parts of the Muslim American community, therefore close association with federal agencies could impact Muslim American's perception of local law enforcement. As one sheriff's deputy noted:

*You have to tread lightly there. ... Anyone who uses letters, ICE, FBI, anything like that, community members are very, very hesitant because of that. ... Sometimes it's very important that I separate myself, and I'm doing that constantly with the community to let them know that. ... Again, I'm doing community engagement and they want to know, "Hey are you doing this for the FBI or are you doing this for ICE?" ... And I have to let them know, "Hey, no, we're trying to reach out to make our jobs easier and our relationship with this community better."*

Police need to keep in mind there is some tension between the goal of building community trust and working closely with federal agencies that many community members distrust. One police department noted the need to educate the community on "the differences between the sheriff, police, FBI, ICE, [and] TSA." Once communities understand these differences, "it usually gets better from there." Another agency pointed out that communities should be advised that, for the most part, the police do not have the lead responsibility for terrorism. "Extremism and terrorism are investigated by the FBI," an outreach officer noted, "so if they ask about tactics and techniques of the FBI, we refer them to the FBI."



Other departments point to programs like BRIDGES, through which a wide variety of federal agencies hold community meetings where individuals can identify problems and express grievances with federal agencies. In one city, the local police department said that the community had “a lot of angst” with the FBI and the TSA. But “slowly, as time went on, as the communication got better ... the trust improved.” In a different metropolitan area, the local police force does not see this as an issue at all. “The FBI has a great relationship with the community in [this city]. ... The FBI is a close partner of ours ... they personally get invited to every event we are invited to because of the relationship we have.”

While there may be issues in some communities about associations between local police and federal agencies, building networks of government agencies can be an effective method of engaging communities. Multiagency outreach can take any number of forms: shared participation in community-led events and groups, shared town halls and community meetings, and shared participation on community boards. These forums are beneficial because they help send a unified message that the entire government is dedicated to helping communities address their concerns. By partnering with federal agencies, the police can aid communities, especially immigrant communities unfamiliar with the U.S. system, to cut through bureaucracy to get the help they need.

## **G. The Police Should Work With Communities to Develop Non-Criminal Law Enforcement Intervention Models**

Some deeply engaged police departments have worked with their communities to develop non-criminal interventions for individuals that may be at risk of recruitment to violent extremism or possible other criminal behavior. Creating these interventions can greatly contribute to building trust and engendering community cooperation to prevent violent extremism. Communities will be more willing to openly communicate with the police when they know that there is a possibility that such cooperation will not automatically result in a criminal investigation being opened.

Law enforcement agencies face difficult choices, however, when they receive information about an individual who appears to be headed down the path to violent extremism, but has not committed a crime. A number of factors will play into the any decision that is made, including the age of the individual, the relationship with family members, existing partnerships with social service providers that can be recommended, and the nature of the suspicion reported.

Depending on these factors, agencies may choose or be required to pass along the information to federal authorities (via a Suspicious Activities Report or through a Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) liaison), or pursue a non-criminal law intervention such as speaking with the individual or working with the community to steer the individual away from potential violence.

In practice, we found that some agencies do not feel free to pursue non-criminal law interventions, due to a lack of available programming or perceived legal restrictions. Other policing agencies have begun to develop intervention alternatives internally, or in conjunction with the community and other local agencies.

We encountered a number of law enforcement agencies that view this problem exclusively through a criminal law enforcement lens. One agency made clear that any information about individuals that might be radicalizing to violence is provided to federal authorities:

*[W]e share it with JTTF and fusion center. ... JTTF opens up a file on them and see[s] exactly what his or her beliefs are. Often they may ... interview the person. ... When you talk with people with strong beliefs... they tell you exactly what they believe. If we feel that they're strong against the government ... we keep them on the radar.*

Another agency echoed the sentiment that Muslim Americans suspected of possible extremist tendencies would be referred to federal authorities:

*If you are talking about somebody who is [suspected of being] al Qaeda inspired, we almost 100 percent of the time would push that case federally and would depend on the FBI to steer that outcome.*

One agency noted that, in limited circumstances, it has authority to make a mental health referral, but has few other non-criminal enforcement options:

*It's important to realize the police [are] restricted to illegal activity. [I]f there's talk about radicalization or looking at websites and [an individual] hasn't violated anything, all police can do is talk to other individuals and see how serious this person is. ... If there are indications he's a danger to himself or others, [the] psychologist can legally say that and commit the person for 72 hour evaluation. But the information the police department has, especially [with respect to a] radicalization concern, would be passed on to JTTF. There's no other type of mandatory referral they can send other than psychiatric evaluation.*

Similarly, another large urban agency noted that its primary options were to open an investigation or refer the case to a crisis intervention team.

Many other departments, when faced with an individual of concern, would conduct an assessment and then determine the course of action. This assessment “may involve interviewing friends, family, or, if the person is a student, talk to professor [or] counselors [to] get more information on the individual and what's troubling them.” Another agency explained that faced with a student who has made statements about possibly engaging in violence, the police would:

*[G]et out immediately to the home and [do] an assessment of the living conditions, adults in that person's life. ... You're going to do a consent search if that's allowed. [Y]ou're going to see what he's got on his walls, see the electronics, get the parents involved and see what their input is on him. ... [Y]ou may advise from there. A referral to the school psychologist [is] one [option]. [A referral to] a public health official away from home [is another]. If we do get a feeling ... he poses a threat, we're going to take the right action ... on the enforcement side.*

A few agencies have a social services network to provide treatment alternatives to individuals that have expressed violent extremist tendencies:

*Oftentimes, there is some level of mental illness that could be possibly be involved. We will try to contact family members to see what the family are willing to do ... in terms of intervention. So we will use that network of outreach ... to get that individual back on track to not having violent intention. We may not totally get them back to the world of productivity, but in some cases that has been effective.*

One agency relies on its lead outreach officer to make the assessment and works directly with individuals and their families to steer them down a more productive pathway:

*[The outreach officer] will speak to the family, he will speak to friends. Unless the kid is an imminent threat to the safety and security of the country, [the officer is given a chance to] counsel the youth on his own and turn them around. ... [W]e want to get it before it has to become an investigation. We have a kid that is going a bit sideways and get him back on track.*

But even this agency, which has an experienced outreach officer, acknowledges the weakness of its intervention options. The agency is in the process of developing a stronger network of services, but it is a work in progress:

*We are looking to expanding [to include] people from mental health, people from social services. We want to invite them to be members of the group so we could use them as resources when things like this happen.*

*The problem with working with the community is trust. The trust issue is so important that when they share information with you, they don't want anyone to know. They are concerned about privacy of the family, privacy of the community, and they are very careful who that information goes to.*

*I don't think the other aid agencies in town that have that responsibility are doing that sort of outreach. I don't know anyone from family services or child services out here who are interested or have any sort of responsibility in that area. That is a recruitment effort we should make.*

Ideally, outreach officers are afforded the discretion – and have the necessary relationships with other government agencies and social service providers – to conduct interventions with community members if no criminal behavior has yet occurred. Doing so reaffirms their commitment to the well-being of all community members and their understanding that traditional law enforcement measures are often inadequate for addressing the factors such as trauma, social isolation, unemployment, and mental illness that often underlie an individual's vulnerability to violent extremist rhetoric and materials. The goal of interventions is to identify and ameliorate these underlying factors so that extremism loses its effectiveness, and the individual in crisis develops a sense of belonging to and investment in the well-being of the community as a whole. Research is being conducted elsewhere to identify the types of interventions and programs that can effectively address these issues. **The key point with respect to police outreach and engagement is that creating intervention options will help to provide a service to communities targeted for recruitment by violent extremists and build stronger bonds between police and the communities they serve.**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**W**e conclude from this study that though there are obstacles to developing trusting relationships between the police and Muslim American communities, they can be overcome through the application of community policing principles. Police can build trust by addressing the public safety needs of the community, establishing strong personal relationships between police and community leaders, promoting open dialogue and transparency about sensitive issues, and addressing core concerns of the community through outreach to other service providers and government agencies. Creating a trusted relationship between the police and the community can serve as a platform to advance community goals, enhance public safety, and prevent acts of extremist violence.

Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations:

## Recommendations for Local Policing Agencies

- **Establish outreach and engagement units within departments to the greatest extent budgets can support.**
- **Do not use the phrase “Countering Violent Extremism” or “CVE” to describe the activities of these units. We suggest COMPLETE Public Safety (COMmunity Partnerships with Law Enforcement To Enhance Public Safety) instead.**
- **Prioritize addressing public safety and other concerns of the community.** Doing so will help build trust and enable police and communities to address more sensitive issues – such as building resiliency to violent extremism – in the future.
- **Conduct outreach and engagement with all communities and sub-communities in a jurisdiction.** Do not focus outreach and engagement activities exclusively on Muslim American communities. Apply outreach and engagement strategies to all forms of violent extremism that impact your community – not only extremism inspired by al Qaeda, ISIS and like-minded groups. Develop methods for engaging with community members who may be targeted for recruitment by anti-government, racist, or sovereign citizen violent extremist groups.
- **Separate outreach and engagement units from intelligence collection and criminal investigatory units.** Departments should develop clear policies regarding when and how information provided to outreach officers should be transmitted to intelligence or criminal investigatory units. These policies should be transparent and shared with the community. Outreach officers should not be involved in any criminal investigations arising from information they obtain.

- **Recruit and hire a workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and religious composition of a community.** These hiring practices should extend to Muslim Americans, especially if the department has an outreach and engagement unit that interacts with the Muslim American community.
- **Mandate that officers receive cultural awareness training with respect to all major ethnic and religious communities within a jurisdiction.** Use community members to provide this training. Ensure that officers are not exposed to anti-Islamic training materials or bigoted presenters that market themselves as “counterterrorism experts.” Vet materials or programs with knowledgeable authorities and community members.
- **Provide basic language training to outreach officers that interact with immigrant communities.**
- **Work with communities to determine the best way to educate officers and communities about the threat of violent extremism and identify behaviors that should be brought to the attention of the police.** Ensure that officers are taught that behavior such as wearing religious symbols or attire is not an indicator of extremism. Consider joint training exercises with police and community members to promote discussion about the types of activities or behaviors that should be brought to the attention of the police.
- **Conduct a wide variety of outreach and engagement activities with community leaders and community members to familiarize them with the police, show them that police are there to serve the community, and build trust.** Work hard to develop relationships deeply into communities. Do not limit outreach and engagement activities to only organizations and individuals that welcome contact with law enforcement. Do not focus solely on male community members – establish outreach initiatives with women. Develop creative ways to engage with young people as well.
- **Educate community members about police policies and practices, including commitments to protect individual civil rights and civil liberties, as a means of demystifying police work and undermining sources of mistrust.**
- **Integrate local government agencies into community outreach and engagement programs.** Encourage schools, public health officials, mental health officials, and other social services agencies to participate.
- **Facilitate interactions between communities and federal government agencies.** Such interactions can help to address community concerns with federal issues such as immigration, discrimination, and surveillance policy.
- **Work with communities to develop non-criminal intervention programs for individuals attracted to violent extremism.** Community members should participate in creation and delivery of such programs. They should also be involved in developing guidance for determining when referrals to such programs are appropriate.

## **Recommendations for Muslim American Communities:**

- **Engage with police departments to address public safety and other core concerns of the community.** Explain to police the terms on which communities, organizations, or individuals are willing to engage. Be active citizens; do not categorically reject all offers of engagement on an assumption that they are discriminatory or will be used to conduct surveillance.
- **Explain community concerns about equal treatment, unfair profiling and stereotyping, surveillance, and any other issues pertaining to police conduct or policies.** Work with policing agencies to address these issues. Give them an opportunity to demonstrate that the police will protect and provide services to all community members on a non-discriminatory basis.

- Work with the police to develop sensible, non-discriminatory ways to inform community members about behaviors that indicate potential criminal conduct that should be reported to policing agencies.

## **Recommendations for the Federal Government:**

- Provide long-term funding directly to police departments to support outreach and engagement personnel.
- Ensure that all federal research and training programs on practices and techniques for law enforcement engagement with communities address all forms of violent extremism, including anti-government, racist, sovereign citizen, and environmental violent extremism.
- Fund technical assistance and training to assist policing agencies in conducting outreach and engagement with all communities whose members may be at risk of recruitment to violent extremism in the United States.
- Stop using the phrase “Countering Violent Extremism” or “CVE” to describe community outreach and engagement activities by the police and other government agencies. We suggest use of the phrase COMPLETE Public Safety (COMmunity Partnerships with Law Enforcement To Enhance Public Safety) instead.
- Recognize that many of the factors breeding distrust between communities and local law enforcement arise from activities of the federal government. Redouble efforts to prevent discriminatory treatment, profiling, and harassment of law-abiding citizens at airports and immigration checkpoints. Require all FBI field offices to engage with community groups to explain their policies regarding surveillance, use of informants, and preventing entrapment.

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# APPENDIX

## Results from Nationwide Survey on Use of Community Policing Practices to Prevent Violent Extremism

January-May 2014

**Small Agencies** – County & municipal law enforcement agencies serving under 200,000 population

**Midsized Agencies** – County & municipal law enforcement agencies serving 200,000 -1,000,000 population

**Large Agencies** – County & municipal law enforcement agencies serving over 1,000,000 population

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Survey responses	35	143	169	35	382

(All figures below are percentages within each category unless otherwise noted.)

**1. On a scale from 1 to 5 (5=Severe Threat, 1=No Threat), please rate how severe your agency believes the threat of violent extremism is in the United States as a whole, for the following forms of extremism (check one box in each column):**

### Al-Qaeda inspired violent extremism

1 = No threat	2.9	4.9	0.6	0.0	2.4
2	2.9	7.0	5.9	8.6	6.3
3	28.6	21.7	30.8	31.4	27.2
4	45.7	34.3	39.1	42.9	38.2
5 = Severe threat	20.0	32.2	23.7	17.1	25.9
MEAN LEVEL OF THREAT:	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8

### Other violent extremism

1=No threat	0.0	3.5	0.6	0.0	1.6
2	0.0	6.3	1.2	0.0	2.9
3	14.3	19.6	21.9	22.9	20.4
4	57.1	41.3	47.3	51.4	46.3
5=Severe threat	28.6	29.4	29.0	25.7	28.8
No response	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
MEAN LEVEL OF THREAT:	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0



	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
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**2. On a scale from 1 to 5 (5=Severe Threat, 1=No Threat), please rate how severe your agency believes the threat of violent extremism is within your jurisdiction, for the following forms of extremism (check one box in each column):**

**Al-Qaeda inspired violent extremism**

1 = No threat	5.7	29.4	11.2	2.9	16.8
2	42.9	40.6	38.5	22.9	38.2
3	25.7	16.1	32.0	48.6	27.0
4	17.1	11.2	17.2	14.3	14.7
5=Severe threat	8.6	2.8	1.2	11.4	3.4
No response	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>MEAN LEVEL OF THREAT:</b>	2.8	2.2	2.6	3.1	2.5

**Other violent extremism**

1=No threat	2.9	18.9	8.9	0.0	11.3
2	14.3	26.6	11.8	5.7	17.0
3	34.3	33.6	40.2	42.9	37.4
4	37.1	17.5	31.4	42.9	27.8
5=Severe threat	11.4	3.5	7.7	8.6	6.5
No response	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>MEAN LEVEL OF THREAT:</b>	3.4	2.6	3.2	3.5	3.0

**3. What are the main violent extremist threats that your agency faces? Please check up to three items below.**

Al-Qaeda inspired violent extremism	48.6	30.1	39.1	68.6	39.3
Anti-government violent extremism	82.9	68.5	74.0	85.7	73.8
Racist violent extremism	20.0	26.6	23.7	22.9	24.3
Environmental violent extremism	42.9	28.7	33.1	40.0	33.0
Anti-capitalist violent extremism	2.9	14.0	17.8	14.3	14.7
Other violent extremism	17.1	6.3	11.8	14.3	10.5
Not applicable	2.9	20.3	13.0	0.0	13.6
No response	0.0	2.8	4.1	0.0	2.9

**4. Are personnel in your agency familiar with the Federal Government's National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism, Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States?**

Yes	77.1	41.3	61.5	85.7	57.6
No	22.9	58.7	38.5	14.3	42.4
No response	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
<b>5. Please indicate which strategies your agency uses to address violent extremism: (Please check all that apply)</b>					
<b>Al-Qaeda inspired violent extremism</b>					
Coordination with the DOJ Joint Terrorism Task Force	73.5	64.4	85.7	94.3	78.0
Participation in other local, state or federal task forces	73.5	57.6	76.6	82.9	70.4
Traditional criminal investigatory techniques targeted at individuals suspected of engaging in criminal conduct	67.6	60.2	64.9	71.4	64.2
Police patrols of potential terrorism targets and public spaces	61.8	61.0	72.1	77.1	67.7
Video surveillance of public areas	32.4	33.9	44.8	54.3	40.8
Monitoring of social media or other online sources of intelligence	50.0	36.4	54.5	74.3	49.9
Engaging in dialogue on social media and other online platforms to counteract violent extremist recruitment and messaging	5.9	8.5	14.3	22.9	12.3
Outreach and engagement with the communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism	29.4	26.3	39.6	57.1	35.8
Unit within department dedicated solely to countering violent extremism (e.g., intelligence units)	52.9	23.7	48.7	62.9	41.9
Training in intelligence gathering related to countering violent extremism	67.6	47.5	64.9	68.6	59.5
Foreign language training for purposes specifically related to concerns about terrorism	5.9	1.7	3.2	5.7	3.2
Cultural sensitivity training	50.0	42.4	59.7	71.4	54.0
Coordination with a state or local intelligence fusion center	97.1	75.4	87.0	100.0	85.3
Dedicated tip line	47.1	25.4	37.7	62.9	37.0
Other	2.9	3.4	7.1	11.4	5.9

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
None	2.9	13.6	3.2	0.0	6.5
No response	2.9	17.5	8.9	0.0	10.7
MEAN NUMBER OF STRATEGIES:	7.9	6.3	8.5	10.1	7.8
<b>Other violent extremism</b>					
Coordination with the DOJ Joint Terrorism Task Force	73.5	69.5	87.0	91.4	80.1
Participation in other local, state or federal task forces	79.4	72.9	84.4	82.9	79.8
Traditional criminal investigatory techniques targeted at individuals suspected of engaging in criminal conduct	79.4	89.8	87.0	88.6	87.4
Police patrols of potential terrorism targets and public spaces	61.8	79.7	78.6	85.7	78.0
Video surveillance of public areas	47.1	47.5	47.4	57.1	48.4
Monitoring of social media or other online sources of intelligence	61.8	61.9	68.2	88.6	67.4
Engaging in dialogue on social media and other online platforms to counteract violent extremist recruitment and messaging	11.8	17.8	19.5	31.4	19.4
Outreach and engagement with the communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism	29.4	35.6	45.5	51.4	41.1
Unit within department dedicated solely to countering violent extremism (e.g., intelligence units)	52.9	28.8	58.4	71.4	49.0
Training in intelligence gathering related to countering violent extremism	70.6	53.4	71.4	74.3	65.4
Foreign language training for purposes specifically related to concerns about terrorism	5.9	3.4	4.5	5.7	4.4
Cultural sensitivity training	44.1	50.0	65.6	68.6	58.4
Coordination with a state or local intelligence fusion center	97.1	82.2	90.9	100.0	89.4
Dedicated tip line	52.9	30.5	42.9	62.9	41.6

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Other	0.0	4.2	7.8	8.6	5.9
None	2.9	1.7	0.6	0.0	1.2
No response	2.9	17.5	8.9	0.0	10.7
MEAN NUMBER OF STRATEGIES:	8.4	8.0	9.5	10.6	9.0

**5 (Continued). Please indicate which strategies your agency uses to address violent extremism: (Please check all that apply)**

**Either Al Qaeda Inspired or Other Violent Extremism**

Coordination with the DOJ Joint Terrorism Task Force	76.5	71.2	88.3	94.3	81.8
Participation in other local, state or federal task forces	79.4	73.7	85.1	82.9	80.4
Traditional criminal investigatory techniques targeted at individuals suspected of engaging in criminal conduct	79.4	90.7	88.3	88.6	88.3
Police patrols of potential terrorism targets and public spaces	64.7	81.4	81.8	85.7	80.4
Video surveillance of public areas	47.1	48.3	48.7	57.1	49.3
Monitoring of social media or other online sources of intelligence	61.8	61.9	70.8	88.6	68.6
Engaging in dialogue on social media and other online platforms to counteract violent extremist recruitment and messaging	11.8	18.6	19.5	34.3	19.9
Outreach and engagement with the communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism	32.4	39.0	50.0	62.9	45.7
Unit within department dedicated solely to countering violent extremism (e.g., intelligence units)	52.9	28.8	59.1	71.4	49.3
Training in intelligence gathering related to countering violent extremism	70.6	54.2	72.7	74.3	66.3
Foreign language training for purposes specifically related to concerns about terrorism	5.9	3.4	5.2	5.7	4.7

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Cultural sensitivity training	50.0	54.2	69.5	77.1	63.0
Coordination with a state or local intelligence fusion center	97.1	83.9	91.6	100.0	90.3
Dedicated tip line	52.9	32.2	43.5	65.7	42.8
Other	2.9	5.1	8.4	11.4	7.0
None	2.9	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.9
No response	2.9	17.5	8.9	0.0	10.7
MEAN NUMBER OF STRATEGIES:	8.6	8.2	9.7	10.9	9.2

**6. What types of community policing strategies does your agency engage in with communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism? (Check all that apply)**

**Communities Targeted for Recruitment to Al-Qaeda Inspired Violent Extremism**

Regular meetings with leaders of communities that may be targeted for violent extremism	14.7	20.3	32.5	57.1	29.0
Town-hall style meetings with groups of these community members	11.8	12.7	21.4	37.1	19.1
Regular meetings with working groups from these communities	8.8	9.3	22.1	48.6	19.1
Development of volunteer opportunities for these community members within the police department	2.9	8.5	18.8	37.1	15.5
Creation of "sub-stations" to improve accessibility of officers to members of these communities	0.0	12.7	25.3	22.9	18.2
Assignment of a community liaison officer to these communities	14.7	19.5	34.4	51.4	29.0
Regular foot patrols in these communities	0.0	15.3	11.7	5.7	11.1
Recruitment of these community members to join the police department as officers or other employees	11.8	11.0	24.0	42.9	20.2
Presentations or interactions at places of worship	11.8	16.1	38.3	54.3	29.6
Presentations or interactions at schools	20.6	23.7	37.0	60.0	33.1

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Expanding social service outreach to youth and at risk populations	2.9	18.6	27.3	25.7	21.7
Community training about the role of immigration enforcement in the investigations of terrorism and hate crimes	5.9	9.3	11.7	17.1	10.9
Working with these communities to address concerns other than violent extremism	17.6	26.3	43.5	65.7	37.2
Communication with these communities through social media	14.7	16.1	27.3	42.9	23.8
Communication with these communities through traditional media (e.g., newspaper articles or advertisements)	11.8	13.6	17.5	25.7	16.4
Attendance of police leaders at important events in these communities	29.4	32.2	53.9	77.1	46.3
Increased civil rights enforcement efforts	8.8	7.6	14.3	20.0	12.0
Inclusion of community members in citizen oversight boards or other community/police functions	17.6	13.6	26.6	34.3	22.0
Promoting/organizing neighborhood watch and other community anti-crime activities in these communities	5.9	28.8	46.8	60.0	37.8
Providing referrals to other government agencies	29.4	33.9	42.2	54.3	39.3
Other (Please describe):	5.9	1.7	5.2	11.4	4.7
None of the above	47.1	50.8	25.3	14.3	35.2
No response	2.9	17.5	8.9	0.0	10.7
MEAN NUMBER OF STRATEGIES:	2.6	2.7	6.1	9.1	5.3
<b>Communities Targeted for Recruitment to Other Violent Extremism</b>					
Regular meetings with leaders of communities that may be targeted for violent extremism	20.6	34.7	35.1	45.7	34.6
Town-hall style meetings with groups of these community members	11.8	23.7	24.7	34.3	24.0

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Regular meetings with working groups from these communities	8.8	25.4	25.3	45.7	25.8
Development of volunteer opportunities for these community members within the police department	2.9	20.3	22.7	28.6	20.5
Creation of "sub-stations" to improve accessibility of officers to members of these communities	0.0	22.9	32.5	20.0	24.6
Assignment of a community liaison officer to these communities	14.7	32.2	40.3	48.6	35.8
Regular foot patrols in these communities	2.9	24.6	13.6	5.7	15.5
Recruitment of these community members to join the police department as officers or other employees	14.7	22.0	22.7	34.3	22.9
Presentations or interactions at places of worship	11.8	29.7	40.3	42.9	34.0
Presentations or interactions at schools	23.5	44.1	45.5	54.3	43.7
Expanding social service outreach to youth and at risk populations	5.9	28.8	32.5	25.7	27.9
Community training about the role of immigration enforcement in the investigations of terrorism and hate crimes	11.8	14.4	14.9	17.1	14.7
Working with these communities to address concerns other than violent extremism	26.5	40.7	45.5	54.3	42.8
Communication with these communities through social media	14.7	28.0	33.1	42.9	30.5
Communication with these communities through traditional media (e.g., newspaper articles or advertisements)	11.8	26.3	20.8	25.7	22.3
Attendance of police leaders at important events in these communities	29.4	54.2	59.1	71.4	55.7
Increased civil rights enforcement efforts	11.8	16.9	15.6	20.0	16.1
Inclusion of community members in citizen oversight boards or other community/police functions	20.6	25.4	31.2	34.3	28.4

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Promoting/organizing neighborhood watch and other community anti-crime activities in these communities	8.8	49.2	51.3	57.1	46.9
Providing referrals to other government agencies	32.4	45.8	43.5	51.4	44.0
Other (Please describe):	2.9	2.5	2.6	2.9	2.6
None of the above	44.1	27.1	20.8	17.1	24.9
No response	2.9	17.5	8.9	0.0	10.7
MEAN NUMBER OF STRATEGIES:	3.1	6.5	6.9	8.1	6.5

**6 (continued). What types of community policing strategies does your agency engage in with communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism? (Check all that apply)**

**Communities Targeted for Recruitment Either to Al-Qaeda Inspired Violent Extremism or to Other Violent Extremism**

Regular meetings with leaders of communities that may be targeted for violent extremism	20.6	37.3	42.2	60.0	40.2
Town-hall style meetings with groups of these community members	14.7	25.4	29.2	42.9	27.9
Regular meetings with working groups from these communities	11.8	25.4	29.9	54.3	29.0
Development of volunteer opportunities for these community members within the police department	2.9	20.3	26.0	40.0	23.2
Creation of "sub-stations" to improve accessibility of officers to members of these communities	0.0	22.9	33.8	22.9	25.5
Assignment of a community liaison officer to these communities	14.7	33.1	42.9	51.4	37.5
Regular foot patrols in these communities	2.9	24.6	14.3	5.7	15.8
Recruitment of these community members to join the police department as officers or other employees	14.7	22.0	27.3	42.9	25.8
Presentations or interactions at places of worship	11.8	30.5	46.1	54.3	38.1
Presentations or interactions at schools	23.5	44.9	46.8	60.0	45.2



	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Expanding social service outreach to youth and at risk populations	5.9	29.7	33.8	28.6	29.0
Community training about the role of immigration enforcement in the investigations of terrorism and hate crimes	11.8	15.3	16.2	20.0	15.8
Working with these communities to address concerns other than violent extremism	26.5	43.2	50.6	68.6	47.5
Communication with these communities through social media	17.6	28.8	33.8	48.6	32.0
Communication with these communities through traditional media (e.g., newspaper articles or advertisements)	11.8	26.3	22.1	25.7	22.9
Attendance of police leaders at important events in these communities	29.4	54.2	64.3	82.9	59.2
Increased civil rights enforcement efforts	11.8	16.9	18.8	20.0	17.6
Inclusion of community members in citizen oversight boards or other community/police functions	20.6	25.4	33.8	37.1	29.9
Promoting/organizing neighborhood watch and other community anti-crime activities in these communities	8.8	51.7	55.8	62.9	50.4
Providing referrals to other government agencies	32.4	48.3	46.1	57.1	46.6
Other (Please describe):	5.9	2.5	5.2	11.4	5.0
None of the above	44.1	24.6	18.8	11.4	22.6
No response	2.9	17.5	8.9	0.0	10.7
MEAN NUMBER OF STRATEGIES:	3.2	6.7	7.6	9.6	7.0

**7. Please list any collaborative partnerships your agency has developed with community organizations with regard to countering violent extremism (e.g., advocacy groups, business groups, faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, school groups). Please put "N/A" in the box below if you do not have any partnerships. [Open ended responses not provided.]**

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
<b>8. Has your department directly provided, or otherwise arranged for, training of your employees on how to engage with communities that have been targeted for recruitment by violent extremists?</b>					
Yes	20.0	16.8	24.9	54.3	24.1
No	77.1	65.0	65.7	45.7	64.7
No response	2.9	18.2	9.5	0.0	11.3
<b>9. Please describe the training:</b> [Open ended responses not provided.]					
<b>10. Who within your agency receives the training? Check all that apply:</b>					
Executives	11.4	11.2	16.6	28.6	15.2
Managers	17.1	11.2	18.3	37.1	17.3
First-line Supervisors	11.4	14.7	22.5	45.7	20.7
Investigators	11.4	14.7	22.5	45.7	20.7
Patrol Officers	11.4	16.1	23.1	45.7	21.5
Analysts	11.4	5.6	15.4	28.6	12.6
Administrative Staff	5.7	3.5	7.7	11.4	6.3
Other (Please explain):	0.0	2.1	2.4	14.3	3.1
<b>11. How often is the training offered?</b>					
More than once a year	5.7	2.1	6.5	11.4	5.2
Yearly or less often	11.4	14.7	18.3	42.9	18.6
Not indicated	2.9	0.7	0.6	0.0	0.8
<b>12. How do the attendees rate the training program?</b>					
Very Good	5.7	6.3	7.7	28.6	8.9
Good	2.9	5.6	10.1	17.1	8.4
Acceptable	2.9	4.2	3.0	0.0	3.1
Poor	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Very Poor	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>13. Are community members involved in the delivery of any training (e.g., cultural awareness training)?</b>					
Yes	28.6	21.7	29.6	48.6	28.3
No	60.0	55.9	53.9	45.7	54.5
No response	11.4	22.4	16.6	5.7	17.3
<b>14. Has training been provided to community members on how individuals become radicalized and what has worked to prevent violent extremism?</b>					
Yes	17.1	7.7	19.5	34.3	16.2
No	77.1	72.7	70.4	62.9	71.2
No response	5.7	19.6	10.1	2.9	12.6

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
<b>15. Does your agency hold meetings with representatives from communities that may be targeted for recruitment by violent extremists?</b>					
Yes	17.1	14.7	27.8	65.7	25.4
No	77.1	67.1	62.7	34.3	63.1
No response	5.7	18.2	9.5	0.0	11.5

**16. Please identify the different groups (e.g., business leaders, religious leaders, civic groups, school officials) within the community that attend such meetings:** [Open ended responses not provided.]

**16a. Please list the principal concerns that are addressed at these meetings:** [Open ended responses not provided.]

**17. How frequently are meetings held between your agency and representatives from communities that may be targeted for recruitment by violent extremists?**

4 or more times per year	8.6	5.6	8.3	31.4	9.4
Less than 4 times per year	8.6	9.1	19.5	34.3	16.0

**18. Please identify any resistance or barriers from the community regarding the use of a community policing strategy to counter violent extremism: (Check all that apply in the table below)**

(Percent of agencies within category that use community policing to counter violent extremism.)

**Communities Targeted for Recruitment to Al-Qaeda Inspired Violent Extremism**

Unresponsive community	20.0	18.3	16.3	23.1	18.1
Lack of trust in the police	20.0	19.7	35.6	61.5	32.4
Lack of trust in the government more generally	13.3	21.1	43.3	53.8	35.2
Fear of police	26.7	14.1	31.7	57.7	28.7
Cultural misunderstanding	20.0	18.3	46.2	61.5	37.0
Language barriers	26.7	21.1	42.3	46.2	34.7
Gender role barriers	20.0	5.6	21.2	34.6	17.6
Divisions, tensions or disagreement within the community	6.7	9.9	12.5	30.8	13.4
Anger about external factors like discrimination or U.S. foreign policy	6.7	12.7	21.2	23.1	17.6
Anger at the federal government due to immigration policy	6.7	14.1	14.4	30.8	15.7
Anger at the federal government due to counterterrorism policies	6.7	5.6	17.3	26.9	13.9

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Other (Please describe):	20.0	2.8	4.8	11.5	6.0
No barriers	46.7	56.3	28.8	15.4	37.5
<b>Communities Targeted for Recruitment to Other Violent Extremism</b>					
Unresponsive community	20.0	25.0	22.9	18.5	22.8
Lack of trust in the police	33.3	38.9	46.7	55.6	44.3
Lack of trust in the government more generally	40.0	41.7	53.3	48.1	47.9
Fear of police	40.0	36.1	36.2	48.1	37.9
Cultural misunderstanding	26.7	30.6	36.2	40.7	34.2
Language barriers	26.7	29.2	28.6	25.9	28.3
Gender role barriers	13.3	11.1	14.3	11.1	12.8
Divisions, tensions or disagreement within the community	13.3	20.8	16.2	22.2	18.3
Anger about external factors like discrimination or U.S. foreign policy	6.7	18.1	19.0	18.5	17.8
Anger at the federal government due to immigration policy	13.3	26.4	28.6	37.0	27.9
Anger at the federal government due to counterterrorism policies	6.7	12.5	13.3	14.8	12.8
Other (Please describe):	13.3	6.9	4.8	7.4	6.4
No barriers	40.0	23.6	18.1	25.9	22.4

**18a. How did your agency attempt to alleviate the barrier(s) you faced to develop a stronger relationship with the community?** [Open ended responses not provided.]

**19. Have there been internal barriers to implementing a community policing strategy as a means to address violent extremism? (Check all that apply)**

(Percent of agencies within category that use community policing to counter violent extremism.)

Resistance from line-level officers and/or first-line supervisors	6.3	7.4	8.0	6.7	7.5
Resistance from commanders and/or command staff	0.0	2.5	5.3	0.0	3.3
Competing demands and expectations	18.8	24.7	32.7	53.3	31.7
Lack of interagency cooperation	6.3	6.2	6.2	0.0	5.4

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Efforts are not a part of an employee's performance assessment	0.0	9.9	15.0	16.7	12.5
Insufficient incentives for officers to participate	12.5	9.9	15.9	10.0	12.9
Language barriers	6.3	19.8	38.9	30.0	29.2
Cultural barriers	6.3	18.5	30.1	36.7	25.4
Mistrust of the community	6.3	13.6	11.5	16.7	12.5
Lack of support from federal agencies	0.0	7.4	6.2	0.0	5.4
Lack of funding	56.3	39.5	40.7	50.0	42.5
Other (Please describe):	12.5	7.4	8.0	10.0	8.3
No barriers	31.3	34.6	25.7	23.3	28.8

**20. Within your agency, please identify the official (title/rank) who has primary responsibility for supporting and making key decisions regarding community policing efforts to counter violent extremism. Please list multiple people if responsibility is divided among several individuals. [Open ended responses not provided.]**

**21. Has your agency used federal funding for community policing initiatives specifically aimed at countering violent extremism?**

Yes	5.7	12.6	10.7	28.6	12.6
No	85.7	65.0	77.5	71.4	73.0
No response	8.6	22.4	11.8	0.0	14.4

**22. Which of the following Internet-based information sharing networks does your agency use to gain information about community engagement and outreach strategies for countering violent extremism? (Please check all that apply)**

The Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN)	70.6	36.4	60.4	68.6	54.0
Law Enforcement Online (LEO)	70.6	57.6	69.5	71.4	65.7
Other	20.6	17.8	16.9	8.6	16.7
None	14.7	24.6	12.3	17.1	17.3
No response	5.7	22.4	11.2	2.9	14.1

**23. Is your agency coordinating with other local, state, or federal law enforcement agencies that are also engaged in countering violent extremism efforts within your jurisdiction?**

Yes	80.0	67.1	82.8	88.6	77.2
No	14.3	11.2	6.5	11.4	9.4
No response	5.7	21.7	10.7	0.0	13.4

**23a. How were these efforts coordinated? [Open ended responses not provided.]**

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsized Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
<b>24. Have your community policing strategies to counter violent extremism resulted in actionable information?</b>					
Yes	25.7	22.4	26.6	62.9	28.3
No	54.3	50.4	56.2	34.3	51.8
No response	20.0	27.3	17.2	2.9	19.9

**24a. Please elaborate if you are at liberty to share (unclassified information only please):** [Open ended responses not provided.]

**25. Have your agency's community policing strategies to counter violent extremism resulted in cooperation to address other matters of interest to the community, such as hate crimes, discrimination or other issues?**

Yes	14.3	30.8	45.0	71.4	39.3
No	65.7	45.5	37.9	22.9	41.9
No response	20.0	23.8	17.2	5.7	18.9

**26. From your agency's perspective, the level of trust between the department and the community targeted for recruitment to violent extremism is:**

**Communities Targeted for Recruitment to Al-Qaeda Inspired Violent Extremism**

Very High	0.0	1.4	3.0	11.4	2.9
High	11.4	10.5	17.2	37.1	16.0
Neither High Nor Low	34.3	28.7	42.0	31.4	35.3
Low	0.0	4.2	5.9	5.7	4.7
Very Low	2.9	2.8	3.0	5.7	3.1
Not Applicable	45.7	27.3	14.2	5.7	21.2
No response	5.7	25.2	14.8	2.9	16.8

**Communities Targeted for Recruitment to Other Violent Extremism**

Very High	0.0	2.8	2.4	11.4	3.1
High	11.4	12.6	20.1	22.9	16.8
Neither High Nor Low	34.3	32.9	42.6	42.9	38.2
Low	0.0	8.4	8.3	8.6	7.6
Very Low	2.9	4.2	3.0	0.0	3.1
Not Applicable	45.7	19.6	11.8	5.7	17.3
No response	5.7	19.6	11.8	8.6	13.9

**27. What measures would be most effective in encouraging your department to implement or strengthen its community policing strategies to address violent extremism? (Please check all that apply)**

Funding	67.6	79.7	83.1	94.3	81.5
Training opportunities	70.6	78.0	76.0	65.7	75.1
Provision of training materials	26.5	44.1	39.0	40.0	39.6
Publications outlining best practices	29.4	46.6	43.5	51.4	44.0
Greater political support	11.8	12.7	14.9	25.7	15.0

	State Agencies	Small Agencies	Midsize Agencies	Large Agencies	All Agencies
Technical assistance provided to requesting agencies in cooperation with state and local practitioners	32.4	33.1	28.6	14.3	29.0
Language immersion programs/opportunities	8.8	23.7	26.0	25.7	23.5
Other	11.8	5.9	5.8	2.9	6.2
No response	11.4	21.0	13.6	2.9	15.2

**27a. Please elaborate on all the items checked above:** [Open ended responses not provided.]

**28. Does your agency evaluate the effectiveness of its work with communities to counter violent extremism?**

Yes	20.0	19.6	21.3	42.9	22.5
No	65.7	58.7	66.9	51.4	62.3
No response	14.3	21.7	11.8	5.7	15.2