

Stakeholders

In Section 2

Tool 2: Identifying Stakeholders



The Vision

Each person and organization (including the law enforcement agency) that is affected by, or can make an impact on the issue, brings skills and resources to the collaboration in anticipation of jointly working together.

Stakeholders

You don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note.

–Doug Floyd



Action Steps to Success

At the beginning of the problem-solving project or other community policing initiative, there may be only two individuals (often assigned to the effort) that are working together. Thus, one of their first tasks is to examine the issue/problem to be addressed by the project and identify as many individuals and/or organizations as possible that may have a vested interest in the outcome of the problem-solving effort. Remember, not knowing whether an individual or organization can/should be a stakeholder is just an opportunity to contact that individual or organization and learn more about their potential interest in being involved. The primary partners should take the following steps to identify the collaboration's stakeholders:

Step 1

Is Someone Else Already Working on This Issue?

Before initiating a new collaboration, gather preliminary information about the issue or problem to be addressed to ensure that it

warrants a collaborative effort. Also, scan the community to determine whether an existing collaboration is already in place to address the problem. If you determine that a collaborative effort is indeed warranted, then begin the process of identifying and engaging the collaboration's stakeholders.

Step 2

Cast the "Stakeholder Net" Broadly—Think Beyond Traditional Law Enforcement Partners.

When identifying potential stakeholders, consider the following six questions:

1. Who cares if the problem is solved/issue is addressed?
2. Who is being impacted by the problem or issue?
3. Who can help solve the problem or address the issue?
4. Who brings knowledge or skills about the issue?
5. Who will benefit if the problem is solved or the issue is addressed?
6. Who would bring a diverse viewpoint to the collaboration?

Section 2: Stakeholders

Potential stakeholders may include:

- School administrators and other school personnel
- School board members
- Business leaders
- Elected officials
- Neighborhood watch/block clubs
- Youth organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Community activists
- Probation/parole/pretrial services
- District Attorney/State Attorney General
- Trade organizations
- Faith community
- Social service organizations
- Federal law enforcement (FBI, DEA, ATF, INS, etc.)
- Corrections
- Media
- Private foundations or other charitable organizations.

Remember, depending on the specifics of the problem or issue, the list of stakeholders will vary. Refer to Section 9, Sufficient Means, for a discussion about encouraging diversity and engaging youth (step 10).

Step 3

Identify the Benefits of Participating in the Collaboration.

Stakeholders benefit, on a number of levels, by joining the collaboration. When recruiting stakeholders, it may be helpful to point out some of these benefits, which include:

- A sense of accomplishment from bettering the community.
- Gaining recognition and respect.
- Meeting other community members.
- Learning new skills.
- Fulfilling an obligation to contribute (due to professional status, etc.).

Example 2 Identifying Stakeholders

In a school-based partnership to address a bullying problem, stakeholders may include parents, students, school administrators, teachers, school support personnel, school board members, and school bus drivers.

When addressing auto theft in one district of a city, stakeholders may include car dealerships, neighborhood watch groups, victims, and elected officials.

While preparing a crisis management strategy in a school, stakeholders may include representatives of social services and rescue services, parents, students, school administrators, teachers, school board members, mental health professionals, and the media.

Step 4**Consider What Stakeholders May Expect and What They Can Contribute.**

Each individual and organization brings expectations to the collaboration. Before inviting stakeholders, hypothesize about the expectations and potential contributions each person and organization may bring, and whether these are within the goals of the community policing effort. Upon inviting the stakeholders to participate, discuss with the potential stakeholder, individual and organizational expectations for the collaboration and assess if these actual expectations are reasonable and within the goals of the community policing effort. Similarly, discuss the contributions and level of involvement that each stakeholder wants and is able to make to the collaborative effort. For example, in addition to their time, some organizational stakeholders will be willing to contribute additional resources to the collaboration, such as meeting space to host regular meetings or supplies and equipment to produce educational materials. Also determine whether the stakeholder can attend planned meetings, or is the stakeholder interested in a special activity/project of the collaboration?

Step 5**Identify Representatives from Each Organizational Stakeholder.**

When organizations partner in a collaborative effort, it is important to consider who should represent each organization—whether

individuals at the leadership/management level or staff level are appropriate. This decision may be based on the amount of time available, skills required for participation, knowledge of the problem, control of resources, or job responsibilities. Generally, with law enforcement partnerships, it is important that the active participant(s) from the department include a line-level officer, deputy, or detective, with support from the sheriff or chief or other law enforcement executive. Line-level personnel are most likely to have knowledge of the specific problem or issue; the neighborhood, community, or school in which the problem or initiative is located; and will often have the time (or be granted the time) to be directly involved in solving the problem. The support of the sheriff or chief, however, is critical to being able to commit organizational resources to an initiative.

Step 6**Extend an Open Invitation.**

Ask the identified stakeholders to participate in an information and visioning meeting. As identified stakeholders agree to participate, ask them to review the stakeholder list and recommend others with a vested interest in the problem that may have been overlooked.

Step 7**Reexamine the Stakeholder List as the Collaboration Progresses.**

Community policing collaborations, like all partnerships, evolve and grow over time. Projects and priorities change. As such, some initial stakeholders may wish to withdraw from the collaboration, and new stakeholders may need to be identified to account for changing

Section 2: Stakeholders

issues/priorities and resource/expertise requirements. Thus, partners should continually reassess the stakeholder list to allow members to depart and join the collaboration as needed. It is important to recognize when a stakeholder's involvement is simply "not working out" and allow that stakeholder to withdraw from the partnership. A stakeholder may overcommit time and resources, or may develop divergent goals from that of the collaboration, or the best interests of the community policing effort may be ill-served by the involvement of a particular stakeholder. While often difficult, it is important for the partners to acknowledge when a stakeholder needs to disengage from the collaboration and to facilitate the stakeholder's departure. Allowing for some amount of stakeholder modification will allow the collaboration to remain vibrant, bringing new skills and resources to the collaborative effort.



Avoiding the Pitfalls

When identifying potential stakeholders for a community policing collaboration, be mindful of the following pitfalls and consider implementing some of the strategies suggested for challenges the collaboration has already encountered. Also, to help diagnose a struggling partnership, please refer to Section 1, Tool 1: Unsticking Stuck Groups/ Reassessing the Collaboration; in particular, items 1–4 can help partners assess stakeholder involvement.

Pitfall:

Casting the "stakeholder net" to a narrow group of individuals or organizations. While well-established relationships clearly are the foundation of a successful partnership, a new community policing collaboration may benefit from networks beyond the traditional organizations and individuals with whom law enforcement often works.

Solutions:

Thinking creatively about who cares about the problem, and who can bring skills and resources to the collaboration (see Step 2 in Action Steps), will expand the network of potential stakeholders, and will bring new and diverse perspectives to the community policing effort.

Ask each identified stakeholder to identify others who may be important to include as a stakeholder.

Do not hesitate to ask for participation from high-profile or very busy individuals; the issue at stake may be important enough to prioritize within a busy schedule.

Pitfall:

A representative of an organizational partner is not in a position to commit organizational resources or make policy decisions on behalf of the organization.

This challenge means that partnership activity will be delayed while the representative takes information back to the policymakers at the organization to seek approval.

Solutions:

Before convening a meeting that may require commitment of organizational resources, request that organizational representatives bring policymakers to that meeting. Try to schedule the meeting to accommodate their attendance.

Use technology to keep management of the organizational partners informed, even if they cannot be present for each meeting. For example, circulate agendas and meeting minutes by e-mail.

If the organizational representative is not in a position to function as a true partner in the collaboration, request that the organization broaden its representation to include policymakers.

Pitfall:

Individual stakeholders' expectations and motivations are inconsistent with the project goals. Stakeholders bring specific expectations and agendas to the collaboration. At times, some individual or organization-specific goals may not support the common vision of the collaboration, which can cause the project to stray from the vision, stall forward momentum, or generate ill feelings among the partners.

Solutions:

Identify individual and organizational expectations as part of the stakeholder identification process and further discuss them during the vision meeting to minimize misunderstanding later in the community policing effort.

If the partners failed to discuss individual and organizational goals during vision development, revisit that component to reestablish buy-in, re-articulate the collaborative vision, and redefine the objectives and action steps for achieving the vision. It is possible that minor adjustments to the “how to’s” of achieving the overall vision will accommodate individual and organizational goals.

Pitfall:

Apathy in the community about the problem or issue.

Solutions:

Assess the nature and extent of the problem or issue to be addressed and determine if an existing collaboration is addressing or has already addressed the issue. What is perceived as apathy may actually be due to a lack of a real problem or that the problem is being addressed by another collaboration.

Apathy may result from lack of public education or awareness about the issue or a community’s frustration that “nothing can be done” about the problem. Thus, engaging one or two well-respected community leaders to champion the issue may be the first step toward garnering the interest of a broader network of potential stakeholders.



Tools to Plan and Chart Your Progress

Tool 2

Identifying Stakeholders,

This tool can be used to assist you in identifying potential stakeholders, their potential contributions, and their expectations for the problem-solving project or other community policing initiative.

Stakeholders are individuals, groups, and organizations who...

1. care if the problem is solved or the issue is addressed.
2. are being impacted by the problem or issue.
3. can help solve the problem or address the issue.
4. bring knowledge or skills about the issue.
5. will benefit if the problem is solved or the issue is addressed.
6. will bring a diverse viewpoint to the collaboration.

Directions:

Make additional copies of the chart as needed. The primary partners in the collaboration should ask the following questions for each potential stakeholder. The responses to the questions should help the partners determine whether involvement of the stakeholder may further the goals of the community policing

initiative. Answers to the questions will also provide talking points for the invitational conversation (e.g., the benefits to participation by the stakeholder).

- What is the reason that the individual or organization has been identified as a stakeholder for the community policing effort?
- How will the individual or organization envision their role and what expectations will they bring to the project?
- What does the individual or organization bring to the community policing effort?
- What is the goal of working together with the identified individual or organization?
- How will the individual or organization benefit from the relationship?
- How do you, as the primary partners, envision the individual or organization being involved in the collaborative effort?

Once all the stakeholders have been identified, develop a plan to obtain the commitment of the identified stakeholders for the collaborative effort. The plan should address how the individual or organization will be contacted, by whom, and by what date.

Identifying Stakeholders

| Stakeholder | | Stakeholder |
|---------------------------|--|-------------|
| Name | | |
| Affiliation | | |
| Telephone | | |
| Fax | | |
| E-mail | | |
| Mailing Address | | |
| | | |
| Reason Identified | | |
| Expectations | | |
| Possible Contributions | | |
| Goal of Working Together | | |
| Benefits of Participation | | |
| Involvement | | |
| Stakeholder | | Stakeholder |
| Name | | |
| Affiliation | | |
| Telephone | | |
| Fax | | |
| E-mail | | |
| Mailing Address | | |
| | | |
| Reason Identified | | |
| Expectations | | |
| Possible Contributions | | |
| Goal of Working Together | | |
| Benefits of Participation | | |
| Involvement | | |



Tool 2

| Stakeholder | | Stakeholder |
|---------------------------|--|-------------|
| Name | | |
| Affiliation | | |
| Telephone | | |
| Fax | | |
| E-mail | | |
| Mailing Address | | |
| | | |
| Reason Identified | | |
| Expectations | | |
| Possible Contributions | | |
| Goal of Working Together | | |
| Benefits of Participation | | |
| Involvement | | |
| Stakeholder | | Stakeholder |
| Name | | |
| Affiliation | | |
| Telephone | | |
| Fax | | |
| E-mail | | |
| Mailing Address | | |
| | | |
| Reason Identified | | |
| Expectations | | |
| Possible Contributions | | |
| Goal of Working Together | | |
| Benefits of Participation | | |
| Involvement | | |

