

Eagle County Law Enforcement Immigrant Advisory Initiative



Fostering meaningful relationships.

OUR MISSION

Eagle County Law Enforcement and Immigrant Community representatives (LEIAC) work together to provide resources and information through education and outreach to build trust and collaboration with the immigrant community.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INITIATIVE

- Increase police-immigrant community trust and advancing civil rights.
- Increase the frequency of collaborative interactions between law enforcement and the immigrant community.
- Increase the number of Hispanic/Latino(a)s who report crime.
- Decrease the rate of victimization among the immigrant community.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

LEIAC members developed a three-phase implementation plan to deliver the LEIAC Initiative. Phase 1 included the integration of existing programs (Coat and Food Drives, and Shop-With-a-Cop for underprivileged families); incorporation of best practices of similar programs from other jurisdictions; analysis of crime trends; and, identification of key issues and priorities from community surveys. Phase 2 framed short and long-term goals for brand recognition and marketing, educational campaigns, crime prevention and problem-solving milestones. Phase 3 defined measurement tools to test the effectiveness of the initiative in meeting target goals.

KEY ELEMENTS TO MEET OBJECTIVES

To effect change, law enforcement agencies in Eagle County make it a priority to hire culturally and ethnically diverse personnel, provide comprehensive ethnic diversity training to law enforcement, reinforce positive police-immigrant relations, involve every sector of the community in the process of reporting and solving crimes, educate the immigrant community on the rule of law in the U.S. and their civil rights, help immigrants acclimatize to living and working in the U.S., and formally acknowledge law enforcement personnel who contribute time or resources to humanitarian causes.



Law Enforcement Members

Program Co-Chair

Chief Dwight Henninger, Vail Police Department (970-479-2218)

Interim Chief Greg Daly, Avon Police Department (970-748-4049)

Chief Greg Knott, Basalt Police Department (970-927-4316)

Chief Joe Stauffer, Eagle Police Department (970-328-6351)

Sheriff James Van Beek, Eagle County Sheriff's Office (970-328-8509)

Community Members

Program Co-Chair

Coordinator Megan Bonta, Catholic Charities (970-949-0405)

Holly Kasper, Bright Future Foundation (970-763-7204)

Olga Wilkins, Community Volunteer (olguish27@gmail.com)

Edgar Arroyo, Eagle County School District (970-328-3956)

Patricia Pierce, Salvation Army (970-748-0704)

Kendra Cowles, The Youth Foundation (970-777-2015)

Deena Ezzell, Victim Services Coordinator (970-328-8539)

Rosario Medina, Mental Health Counselor (720-544-7413)

Reggie O'Brien, Polar Star Properties (970-949-9417)



Criteria for committee membership

To apply for a seat on the Eagle County Law Enforcement Immigrant Advisory Committee (LEIAC), non-law enforcement applicants must have legal residency, solid levels of trust in the immigrant community and an aptitude to dispel rumors. They must also have a readiness to engage in constructive dialogue, advise law enforcement and channel responsible information to the community.

Current committee members include the regional Catholic Charities Coordinator, representatives from seven law enforcement agencies in Eagle County, a domestic violence advocate, and representatives from the Eagle County School District, Youth Foundation, Salvation Army, Victim Services, Eagle County Human Services, Eagle County Head Start and community volunteers.

Ongoing Projects & Programs

Volunteer Interpreter Program

This program was developed by the committee in response to a growing need for in-person, third-party interpreters when doing interviews, victim statements and investigations. Even if an individual speaks English, when put in a stressful situation or asked to express emotion, they often will revert back to their first language. Currently, there are trained interpreters available for Spanish, Russian and French.

Coat and Food Drives & Shop-with-a-Cop

Existing programs, such as the drives and Shop-with-a-Cop, were integrated into the Initiative. More examples of off-duty, public-spirited participation include ringing Salvation Army Bells and helping residents of the local domestic violence home. The selfless conduct of public safety personnel in the county is extraordinary and a contributing factor to solid partnerships in the community.

Frequently Asked Questions Brochure

One of the most tangible achievements has been the creation and dissemination of 12,000 copies of a Frequently Asked Questions brochure, published in both English and Spanish. The brochure addresses a variety of topics including questions related to family and children, witnessing and reporting a crime, being the victim of a crime, traffic and driving rules and tips, general police activity, and domestic violence.

Living in the Valley Resource Guide

Once published, this guide will provide information on motoring issues (winter driving, DUI, seat belt laws, car safety requirements, insurance requirements); legal issues

(court system, law enforcement); employment (workers' rights compensation, human trafficking); community information (schools, libraries, public transportation); and health care.

Outreach Events

Community outreach events, including National Night Out, tailored to each immigrant neighborhood characteristics which encourage positive interactions and "get-to-know-you" activities between the residents and local law enforcement. Immigrant community members have participated on law enforcement ride-alongs to better understand what it is like to be a law enforcement officer.

Two-Way Training

Training for law enforcement officers include communication tips for speaking with non-English speakers, a basic orientation to immigration law, and culture-specific information about the immigrant community in Eagle County. For the immigrant community, presentations cover topics on road safety, the judicial system, child welfare, the police-immigrant relationship, and the role of private security agencies. During presentations, LEIAC members are able to quickly rectify misinformation and respond to rumors in the community related to law enforcement.

Spanish Citizen's Police Academy

The first academy was held in August and September and will be run against next year. Total graduates:16.

The 2010 U.S. Census shows over 30% of the population in Eagle County are Hispanic/Latino and 19.9% are foreign-born.



Successful Initiative Outcomes

Crime reporting by the Hispanic community in Eagle County as compared to the total service population has increased from 5.4% in 2010 (at the group's inception) to 13.5% today. The percentage of Hispanics arrested as compared to the total service population has decreased by 7% since the group's inception and the percentage of Hispanics victimized as compared to the total service population has decreased by 2%.