

B. POLICE–COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

The following discussion questions, which also appear at the end of Chapters 2-5 of *Beyond the Beat: Ethical Considerations for Community Policing in the Digital Age*, can help police–community ICT partners sort through the myriad issues that are likely to arise during the planning process.

Discussion Questions on Working Together

Assessing the Current Relationship

1. What police–community collaborations have been successful, and why?
2. What has not worked well, and why?
3. On a scale of one to ten, how would stakeholders categorize the level of trust the community has in the police? How about the trust of the police in community members?
4. What might hinder a police–community ICT partnership? (Consider both pre-existing barriers and those that might be introduced by the technology.)
5. What resources might enable the community and police to overcome these barriers and work in partnership on this project (e.g., third-party interventions, training, involvement of leadership)?
6. Are there important aspects of any current community-police collaborations that participants will want to maintain as they move forward with the ICT project (e.g., face-to-face contact, community events, meetings)?
7. Are project leaders committed to the project and trusted by the police department and the community?

Defining the Community

8. Which groups in the community have the greatest stake in and ability to contribute to a police–community ICT project (e.g., business leaders, service providers, crime victims, residents, ex-offenders)?
9. Who will represent these different groups in the project? Will they be selected by the current partners, by established community organizations, or by other means?
10. To what extent should community partners be directly involved in the different phases of the project, including design and planning?
11. Will the proposed ICT tools attract community members who have not been actively involved in community policing efforts?

Defining Shared Values

12. What values should the project aim to promote and protect?
13. What are the challenges to those values in the context of the current police–

community relationship?

14. Throughout the planning and implementation process, how can the ICT project verify that the decisions being made are consistent with the identified values? What process will partners follow if they are not (e.g., changing course, revisiting the values)?

Establishing Goals and Objectives

15. What do the police and the community want to achieve through an ICT project? Can they agree on a common set of overall goals for the project?
16. What are the specific objectives for each ICT activity or tool?
17. Do the goals and objectives fit within the institutional priorities and strategic plans of both the police department and any partnering community agencies?
18. How will the project's success in achieving these goals and objectives be evaluated? What will be measured?

Participant Roles and Accountability

19. How will the project leadership be structured?
20. What are participants' roles and responsibilities? (Consider the roles of both organizations and individuals.)
21. How can participants hold each other accountable to those roles and responsibilities (including taking remedial action if necessary)?
22. What process will the group use to make decisions about the project (e.g., consensus, democratic vote, executive authority)?
23. How will participants resolve conflicts and handle disagreements (e.g., over policies, procedures, tools) that prevent forward movement on the project? Will an internal group process be sufficient, or will an independent facilitator be recruited?
24. Given legal and political demands on the police, how can the partners plan for situations where the police must have the final word, even if the agreement was to share decision making?
25. Can the project build in ways for the partners to publicly acknowledge and appreciate each other's contributions?

Discussion Questions on Access to Technology

Pre-project Planning

1. What is the demographic make-up of the community and which groups does the project seek to involve? (Consider age, race/ethnicity, education level, income level, and impact of crime.)
2. Among the groups in the community, who does and does not have access to the technological tools required by the project? For those members with access, what type do they have (e.g., shared, private, public)?
 - Hardware (e.g., computers, cell phones, personal digital assistants)
 - Connectivity (e.g., Internet access, cell phone service)

3. Among the groups in the community, what are the needs and capacities with regard to the following:
 - Language, literacy, and disability access
 - Skills for using the technologies
4. Which technologies or approaches will create the broadest access to the project (e.g., using devices other than computers, such as cell phones and pagers; providing the technological devices to users; conducting classes on how to use the technology)?
5. Do project planners need to increase access before proceeding?

Ongoing Projects

6. Has the ICT project design process provided an opportunity for input from all relevant groups?
7. Will enough people have access to the technology and the skills (computer, literacy, and language) necessary to participate in the project?
8. Will a varied group of users be able to understand quickly how to use the ICT tool (i.e., is it user-friendly)?
9. What documentation is or will be available to support users?
10. Will someone be available to help users? Will there be community training?
11. Does the ICT tool present information and statistics in a variety of user-friendly formats, such as text, pictures, charts, and other graphics?

Discussion Questions on Handling Personally Identifying Information

General Project Planning

1. Do the police–community ICT project planners have the information and tools they need to identify and evaluate privacy issues and make informed decisions? If not, can a local privacy expert be brought into the discussions?
2. How will the project planners balance concerns for the privacy of all parties against the interest of public safety? What criteria will be used to make these decisions?
3. What systems, policies, and personnel will be needed to ensure the implementation of privacy protections (e.g., user privacy policies, data management policies, full-time privacy officer, privacy panel to review compliance, outside parties)?

Specific Technology Activities and Tools

4. What objective does the proposed ICT tool serve?
5. What are the types of information this tool will gather?
6. Is all the proposed information necessary to achieve the objective?
7. Does the proposed tool respect the information privacy rights of the following parties?
 - Computer users
 - Crime victims and witnesses
 - Police officers
 - Suspects, arrestees, and convicted individuals
 - Neighborhoods

Protecting the Community

8. Will the ICT tool harm the reputation and community development efforts of certain neighborhoods?
9. Will the tool unintentionally reinforce stereotypes (e.g., people of color disproportionately break the law) without explaining why this may appear to be the case?
10. What can be done to monitor, explain, or learn from unintended consequences of the tool?
11. Does the tool hold the potential to strengthen the community, promote collaboration, and benefit police work?
12. What potential harm could befall individuals or the community at large by publishing the proposed information through the tool? What benefits can be expected? Do the benefits outweigh the harms?

Preventing Problems by Limiting Data Collection, Retention, and Sharing

13. How will the project prevent unnecessary collection of data and unintended disclosure of personal information?
14. Can the project integrate a means to assess information before it is shared widely, preventing inappropriate information from being made public and deleting inappropriate posts?
15. Are there First Amendment issues to consider in developing policies that limit what users can post or that allow for a moderator to decline or delete posts?
16. Can and should the agency or agencies operating the system limit internal access to personnel who are directly involved in the project or who need to know the information to do their jobs?
17. How will the data in the system be secured?
18. How long will data be retained?
19. Will there be disclaimers to clarify the limitations of the information shared on the system?
20. How will the use of information by third parties (such as independent Web site operators and bloggers) be reviewed and addressed if necessary?

Responding to Problems

21. What will be the system for reporting abuse and misuse of the ICT tool?
22. How can false information be corrected?
23. How will the project respond to a data security breach?

Discussion Questions on Operational Requirements

Leadership and Commitment

1. Does the ICT project have the full support of the law enforcement agency's leadership and that of any participating organizations? If not, what steps can be taken to secure that support?
2. Who needs to be involved at the inception of the ICT project? How can this involvement be arranged?
3. Has agency leadership adequately communicated its support for the ICT project and its expectations for police officers and other staff?
4. Are police officers and other staff fully aware of how the new technology will be integrated into their work?
5. How can the ICT project planners encourage feedback from all levels of the agency and respond to concerns in a timely fashion?
6. How will each organization institutionalize its support of the project (e.g., written commitments from the organizational leadership, memoranda of understanding between the police and partnering organizations)?

Organizational Capacity

7. Within the police department and partnering organizations, are there sufficient levels of the following resources to engage in an ICT project?
 - Technological expertise
 - Necessary equipment
 - Dedicated staff and volunteers
 - Expertise in key issue areas, including information privacy, victim and witness safety, relevant laws, community development, and language skills
 - Capacity to train others in the use of the technology and the key issue areas
 - Funding for other needs that may arise
8. If the project is currently lacking any of these resources, where might planners find them? (Consider universities, local businesses, independent Web site operators, local or state government, community foundations, and other local assets.)
9. Might the local government be willing to provide the financial resources to enable active participation by a "seed" group of residents or by a community agency lacking resources of its own?
10. What resources (human, technological, and otherwise) will be required to develop and sustain any specific ICT tool, and can the partners commit to those resources?
11. If not, can the tool be adapted to the resources available and still achieve the intended objective?
12. What new skills and knowledge will be needed for the police and community members to use the ICT tools effectively and responsibly, and how will that training take place?

Policies and Procedures

13. What are the specific issues and concerns that the ICT policies and procedures should address?
14. Who needs to be involved in the development of policies and procedures? (Consider the range of legal, technical, administrative, and operational expertise needed for this task.)
15. How will ICT project policies and procedures be documented and communicated to police officers, staff, project partners, and the community at large?

Project Evaluation

16. What will be the measures for determining success (e.g., the number of people who sign up to participate, “hits” on a particular Web site, improved satisfaction with police among residents, measurable decline in crime in target neighborhoods)?
17. Who will be responsible for ensuring that milestones are met?
18. Who will be responsible for evaluating the project?
19. How can the project make mid-course corrections if the evaluation suggests that the project is not achieving its objectives?
20. How will other project partners contribute to the evaluation process?