

# Creating a Dialogue Between Youth and Police

Many communities are seeking to bring youth and police together to have a dialogue. Whether your community is seeking to have a one-time or ongoing dialogue, the following guiding principles have been adapted from NDAA's *Building and Improving Relationships Between Youth and Law Enforcement: A National Curriculum*, to assist you in the planning and implementation process. See [Building-Relationships-YLE-Curriculum-060724-REVISED-FINAL-2025-1.pdf](#).

NDAA has also provided suggested dialogue questions (see below) that were created by youth through NDAA's Juvenile Justice Division's Youth Leadership Council. See [YLC-Curriculum-.pdf](#).

### Guiding Principles

- Engage and encourage youth and Law Enforcement (LE) to come together, have conversations, humanize each other's experience, and form positive relationships.
- Prior to having a dialogue, involve youth and LE in the planning of the event, meeting, etc.
- The prosecutors and LE members who are chosen to participate should be individuals who are committed to working with young people and with communities in general, in the interest of improving relationships between youth and LE. They must be able to facilitate and navigate difficult conversations, including conversations in which there may be wide disagreement; they must be able to make children and youth feel comfortable around them and be able to encourage children and youth to ask them questions.
- Start and end every session with something positive to help open hearts and minds.
- Recognize the historic and current problems that affect relationships between youth populations and LE, including but not limited to slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, police brutality, and racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.
- Ensure that during discussions with youth about interacting with LE, youth take away from the experience the knowledge and understanding that they have rights when interacting with LE, but that it may be beneficial to exercise those rights by making a formal complaint subsequent to the incident rather than act in a manner that may escalate an ongoing situation.

## Questions for LE Suggested by Youth

1. What steps are being taken to ensure fair and unbiased policing in our community?
2. What is being done to ensure police are treating community members fairly?
3. Can you explain what to do if the police ever stop me?
4. What are my rights when being questioned or searched?
5. How can youth get involved in community policing efforts?
6. What community efforts can be organized to create a harmonious space between police officers and youth?
7. How did your perspective of police officers change before and after you became one?
8. How do stigma and prejudice affect policing?
9. What advice would you give to women wanting to join the police force?
10. How do you mentally and physically manage?

This project is supported by Grant #2019-MU-MU-K002 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.