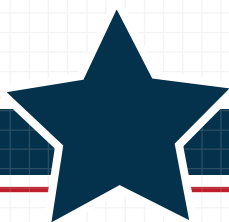


IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR GRANDMOTHER MOM  
 FRIEND RESIDENT DREAMER  
 WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER  
 SISTER RESIDENT WORKER INVENTOR POLICE OFFICER  
 COMMUNITY AMERICAN DOC  
 ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER DAD STUDENT  
 GRANDMOTHER MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR UNDOCUMENTED VOLUNTEER REST  
 FRIEND RESIDENT DREAMER  
 WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER  
 AMERICAN COMMUNITY ATHLET  
 ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER MOM STUDE  
 GRANDMOTHER MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR UNDOCUMENTED VOLUNTEER F  
 FRIEND RESIDENT DREAMER  
 WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER  
 AMERICAN COMMUNITY ATHLETE VOLUNTEER  
 ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER IMMIGRANT STUDENT FRIEND ENTREPRENEUR T  
 GRANDMOTHER MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR UNDOCUMENTED INNOVATOR MOM GRANDMOTHER T  
 FRIEND RESIDENT DREAMER  
 WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER  
 AMERICAN COMMUNITY ATHLETE VOLUNTEER  
 ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER IMMIGRANT STUDENT FRIEND TEACHER  
 GRANDMOTHER MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR UNDOCUMENTED INNOVATOR MOM  
 VOLUNTEER RESTAURANT OWNER MIGRANT RESEAR

# A BLUEPRINT FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

POLICE & COMMUNITY RELATIONS





## A BLUEPRINT FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

# NYPD NEW IMMIGRANT OUTREACH UNIT

**ISSUE AREAS:** Police and Community Relations, Public Safety, Emergency Response, Engaging Immigrant Communities

### **SUMMARY:**

In order to better serve New York City's immigrant communities, help newcomers understand the structure and function of the police department, and promote public safety in one of the world's most diverse cities, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) relies on the New Immigrant Outreach Unit (NIOU) to serve as a link between the Department and the City's various immigrant communities. NIOU liaisons are designated to serve specific communities of newcomers by forming relationships, establishing trust, and helping mediate and respond to issues within and among various communities. Each liaison is part of the community he or she serves and is committed to providing linguistically and culturally competent information and assistance.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- + Promote public safety by building and strengthening relationships with community leaders and organizations in immigrant communities
- + Coordinate with other bureaus, City agencies, organizations and various departmental units to address specific community concerns
- + Provide linguistically and culturally competent information on police department services and programs

# BACKGROUND

Ensuring public safety is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of municipal government. To effectively serve immigrant communities and promote public safety for all city residents, police departments must better understand the specific challenges immigrants face when interacting with law enforcement and implement policies and practices that account for and respond to those challenges. For a variety of reasons, immigrants may be more vulnerable to certain types of crime, and they may also be less likely to report crime to law enforcement. In their 2012 report, *Engaging Police in Immigrant Communities: Promising Practices from the Field*, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the Vera Institute of Justice identify several challenges to ensuring public safety in immigrant communities:

- + **Language access:** Effective community policing begins with communication. If departments are not able to communicate with the populations in their jurisdiction, they will have more difficulty serving them and promoting public safety for all residents. It is crucial that departments identify ways to provide effective interpretation and translation services.
- + **Fear of law enforcement:** Immigrants who come from places where law enforcement is corrupt, abusive or violent may fear police and avoid reporting crime due to this fear. Criminals may exploit this fear and target immigrants due to their perceived reluctance to report crime.
- + **Confusing federal immigration enforcement and local law enforcement:** Immigrants may fear local law enforcement due to a real or perceived connection with federal immigration enforcement, which may lead them to believe that they or their families will suffer immigration-related consequences if they report crimes to local police. These fears may be exacerbated by federal programs such as "Secure Communities" and state or local laws that effectively deputize local police officers to enforce federal immigration laws.
- + **Cultural differences:** Immigrants may not understand how to interact with police in the United States, while police officers may misunderstand cultural practices and traditions of immigrants. These misunderstandings can lead to negative interactions between immigrant communities and law enforcement.
- + **Previous negative experiences:** Negative interactions with individual officers can spread through immigrant communities and lead to community-wide distrust of the police. Because of this, even departments with community policing strategies and department-wide immigrant-friendly policies need to ensure that all officers are trained to work with diverse populations.

# NYPD NEW IMMIGRANT OUTREACH UNIT

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has taken a unique approach toward community policing by creating a New Immigrant Outreach Unit (NIOU) to build relationships and trust with emerging immigrant communities across New York City. As part of NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau, the Unit serves as a link between the NYPD and immigrants, identifying and mediating issues that may compromise public safety and social cohesion. The Community Affairs Bureau, which was first incorporated into the Department's organizational structure in 1966, seeks to create solutions for problems that arise within or among various communities by partnering with community leaders, civic organizations, block associations, and other concerned parties. The Department's commitment to community policing is demonstrated by the presence of a Community Affairs officer at each precinct citywide, as well as initiatives such as the New Immigrant Outreach Unit, which currently consists of two sergeants and six officers.

New Immigrant Outreach Liaisons currently serve the following communities: Arab, Caribbean/African, East Asian, Eastern European, Hispanic, Muslim and South Asian. Additionally, one liaison specifically serves immigrant women.

## COMPONENTS:

Liaisons are tasked full-time to complete the following responsibilities:

- + Initiate programs that address the specific needs and concerns of immigrant communities
- + Conduct presentations, forums and workshops to increase public awareness and involvement in crime prevention
- + Promote, connect and foster positive interactions between the police and community and educate new immigrant communities about their rights and responsibilities
- + Maintain daily contact with immigrant leaders, community-based organizations, schools and religious institutions
- + Serve as bilingual or multilingual representatives for the police department in various communities
- + Monitor international and local news in order to anticipate situations that may arise and have an impact on immigrant communities

## ASIAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN BROOKLYN

While monitoring crime data in one Brooklyn precinct, a set of Commanding Officers became aware of a robbery pattern in a building that had a large population of limited English proficient Asian immigrants. The precinct commander connected with the NIOU East Asian community liaison to better understand and address the issue. The liaison held a meeting with residents in the building and provided translation and interpretation services to connect residents with the Police Department and address community concerns. The liaison was able to connect the community with crime prevention education and build a sustained dialogue between the New Immigrant Outreach Unit, the precinct and the residents of the building, which has continued on an ongoing basis, and as a result the crime pattern has diminished. The NIOU is now invited back to the building on a regular basis for holidays and community events and has been able to use the connections made in the building to provide broader outreach to the Asian community.

# EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

STEP ONE >

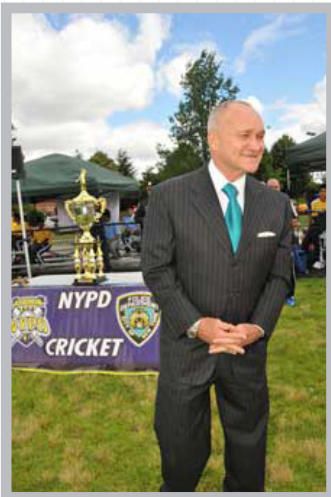
## BUILD A COMMITMENT TO SERVING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE DEPARTMENT



### SECURE SUPPORT FROM LEADERSHIP

In New York City, the Police Commissioner regularly attends functions in immigrant communities and also hosts events with immigrant community leaders, including the annual Pre-Ramadan breakfast at the NYPD headquarters. The Commissioner's consistent leadership on community policing positively impacts perception of immigrant communities within the Department as well as the immigrant community's perception of the Department as a whole.

### NYPD CRICKET AND SOCCER LEAGUES



*"New York today is home field for new immigrant and American-born players alike, many of whom excel at sports that local leagues don't traditionally offer. With our help, young enthusiasts from Bangladesh to Brooklyn now can expect to play them here. The NYPD has long provided programs for youth while promoting positive police-community relations."*

- POLICE COMMISSIONER RAYMOND W. KELLY

The New Immigrant Outreach Unit has created youth sports leagues to reach immigrant youth and their families, including soccer leagues with Middle Eastern and African immigrant communities and cricket leagues with South Asian communities. These leagues are aimed at 14-19 year-old immigrant youth to familiarize them with the NYPD and keep them engaged in a fun and positive activity. NYPD Community Affairs officers promoted the leagues by conducting outreach in schools and youth service programs. Additionally, they visited Islamic schools and mosques to better reach Muslim youth—an extension of the NIOU's work to establish positive ongoing relations with multiple ethnic groups including the Arab and South Asian communities. The program is now in its sixth year and some of the youth who have participated are currently going through the recruitment process to join the NYPD, helping to diversify the Department's workforce.



## PRIORITIZE CONFIDENTIALITY AND LANGUAGE ACCESS

Emphasizing confidentiality with regard to immigration status and providing access to public safety services in a variety of languages is key to working effectively with immigrant communities.

- + In their outreach to communities, NIOU liaisons emphasize that when an individual reports a crime, NYPD officers adhere to the City's Confidentiality Policy (Executive Orders 34 and 41), which prohibits City employees from inquiring about or disclosing immigration status, except when required by law, in conjunction with suspicion of illegal activity, or when an individual is arrested.
- + Recruits at the NYPD Police Academy are trained on the City's Confidentiality Policy and learn effective strategies for engaging immigrant communities. Liaisons from the New Immigrant Outreach Unit speak to new recruits about working with immigrant populations and often invite community leaders and faith leaders from various immigrant communities to assist with training on cultural competency and effective engagement.
- + The NYPD also has access to telephonic interpretation through an outside vendor, Language Line, to serve limited English proficient residents in over 170 languages. Each precinct, housing service area and transit district is equipped with dual-handset phones and patrol supervisors have access to Language Line on their cell phones.



## PROMOTE USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES

- + Each unit in the Department is made aware of who can provide training and information on cultural competency, language access and working with immigrant communities.
- + NYPD leadership regularly sends out letters to the Commanding Officers of each precinct letting them know about the NIOU and how the Unit can work with precincts to ensure their officers are able to serve immigrant communities.

### NYPD COMMUNITY AFFAIRS OFFICER SUMMARIZES KEY GOALS OF THE NEW IMMIGRANT OUTREACH UNIT AT A COMMUNITY FORUM

"Building trust is the ultimate goal of the NYPD New Immigrant Outreach Unit. Open and honest communication is key and must be ongoing. The police department's message should be clear and concise and should be re-iterated to the community at every opportunity. The Unit's officers who speak the same language and have similar culture and values, truly show that NYPD is there to serve. Immigrant communities must understand the police department will not know that there is a particular crime affecting their community if they do not report it to police - police cannot address the needs and concerns if they do not know about the issue. Above all, the immigrant communities MUST know that they can come to police if they are victims of a crime, witnesses to crime, or seeking help and the police will NOT ask about immigration status. In this way, the New Immigrant Outreach Unit is able to develop trust and lasting relationships, strengthening New York City's immigrant communities and promoting public safety for all New Yorkers."



Finding opportunities to build community representation into the Police Department is a way to boost cultural and linguistic competency and create, enhance and maintain lines of communication with immigrant residents.



## IDENTIFY PRIORITY COMMUNITIES

- + Liaisons should be assigned to communities according to need and should be representative of the communities they serve, increasing the likelihood of linguistic and cultural competency and further promoting and establishing trust. Priority communities may change over time as new immigrant groups arrive and need to be introduced to the work of the Police Department.
- + The NYPD uses Census data to understand growth of immigrant communities and where communities are located. American Community Survey data are released on a yearly basis and provide a way to track demographic changes at the neighborhood level more regularly.



## RECRUIT OFFICERS FROM PRIORITY COMMUNITIES

Diversity in recruitment and hiring is important across the board within the Police Department, and liaisons to communities must be familiar with the cultures of the communities they serve, be able to communicate effectively with their communities and have a strong commitment to building relationships within communities to ensure effective community policing.

- + NYPD New Immigrant Outreach Liaisons represent the communities that they serve and fluently speak one or more of the languages spoken by these communities.
- + Building connections in immigrant communities can lead to broader diversity in recruitment for the Department, as these communities begin to see the Police Department as a positive influence and policing as an honorable career.
- + The most recent class of NYPD recruits—850 in total—is one-quarter foreign-born, hailing from 52 different countries and speaking more than 65 different languages.



Community leaders act as cultural and linguistic brokers, helping to facilitate trust and communication between law enforcement and immigrant communities. Community leaders can be called upon to support and promote outreach around department priorities and ensure that communities are informed about key public safety issues.



### ENGAGE LEADERS TO BUILD TRUST

- + Working regularly with trusted community leaders helps liaisons build connections with new immigrant communities.
- + NIOU liaisons frequently work with faith leaders, leaders of immigrant associations and community-based organizations and other trusted and visible community leaders.
- + It is important to recognize that community leaders do not always have an official rank or title—liaisons must be proactive in order to understand who are the trusted leaders and who are the individuals community members turn to in times of crisis.
- + Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, NIOU officers engaged faith and civic leaders to support families that had been impacted by the disaster.



### UNDERSTAND HOW IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES PERCEIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT

- + Police in uniform may cause fear in immigrant communities due to the association with immigration enforcement or negative experiences in countries of origin.
- + Liaisons often introduce themselves to community members while wearing civilian clothes rather than the NYPD Community Affairs uniform. Liaisons gradually transition to full uniform over the course of their work with community members to help familiarize immigrants with the uniform and make them feel more comfortable with the NYPD.



### BE TRANSPARENT

- + Transparency leads to trust in immigrant communities.
- + When working with communities, NIOU liaisons are always straightforward about what they can and cannot do, and what their limitations are.



## ENCOURAGE BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL INTERACTIONS

- + NIOU liaisons attend informational fairs, community events, Know Your Rights & Responsibilities forums and other events within their communities. They are also present and visible in the community on an informal basis, talking to leaders, business owners and community members to build relationships and trust within communities.
- + NIOU liaisons stress that it is critical to never make assumptions about community members. Anyone can be a leader within a community and anyone can potentially be an asset to the Department's strategy.



## SUPPORT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

In NYC, some communities, such as the Chinese community in Brooklyn and the West African community in the Bronx, have created their own public safety associations in addition to participating in the Precinct Community Councils. NIOU liaisons regularly participate in these meetings.



## BE PROACTIVE

The NIOU has been mindful to proactively overcome barriers that prevent new immigrant communities from reporting crime and engaging with their local precincts. Notably, the New Immigrant Outreach Unit recently launched a new initiative called "Community Assigned Bases." The Unit has created these "bases" by partnering with trusted community venues, including a local library branch and a high school. They now hold public monthly meetings at these venues, inviting the Latino community in Corona, Queens and the Arab and Eastern European communities in Astoria, Queens to voice their concerns in a welcoming community setting. Through these "Community Assigned Base" meetings, community members are able to meet members of the New Immigrant Outreach Unit and their local precinct, learn how to receive police assistance to resolve issues in their communities, discuss NYPD youth programs, and interact with immigration service providers. Crucially, interpretation in Albanian, Arabic, Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian and Spanish is provided by the NIOU at these meetings to ensure community participation.



## TAKE MEANINGFUL STEPS TO SOLICIT AND INCORPORATE FEEDBACK

- + The NIOU liaisons are proactive in asking communities about their needs and concerns and bring these issues to the Community Affairs bureau and the NYPD.
- + Departments should build a structure for communities to express concerns and encourage immigrant residents to participate. Each NYPD precinct has a Community Council, comprised of volunteers who meet regularly to express community needs and concerns to the precinct Commanding Officers. Immigrant community leaders should be invited and encouraged to participate in these meetings.

**CITIES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION** aims to support the expansion of programs and policies that facilitate the economic, civic and cultural integration of immigrants across the United States. The NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) has provided and will continue to provide technical assistance and guidance to other municipalities in their efforts to support immigrant communities and encourages local governments to network and share best practices in this important field.

Blueprints for Immigrant Integration, as well as additional tools and resources, are available on [nyc.gov/integration](https://nyc.gov/integration) and will continue to grow over the coming months. Please feel free to write us and share feedback by contacting [integration@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:integration@cityhall.nyc.gov).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work highlighted in this document was made possible with the support and guidance of many talented colleagues in New York City and across the United States. The NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs would like to thank Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg for his visionary leadership on immigration, as well as our partner agencies, organizations, and funders, who share our commitment to supporting and investing in the well-being of immigrant New Yorkers.

MOIA is grateful to the New York Police Department for its commitment to serving to immigrant New Yorkers as demonstrated by the members of the New Immigrant Outreach Unit and the entire NYPD.

**Writing/Editing:** Kraig Cook, Fatima Shama, Matilde Roman, Monica Tavares, Daniel Wallace, Sarah Flatto, Nazli Parvizi

**Design:** Aaron Kinnari **Printer:** (add)ventures

*Cities for Immigrant Integration and the Blueprints for Immigrant Integration were made possible with support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The opinions and views of the authors do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Fund.*

*Support for printing of the Blueprints for Immigrant Integration was generously provided by Citi Community Development.*

*The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a nonprofit dedicated to innovative public-private partnerships, has provided support for the Blueprints for Immigrant Integration.*

Community Development



Office of  
Immigrant Affairs  
Fatima Shama  
Commissioner



Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
Philanthropy for an Interdependent World