

**STATEMENT OF
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NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY, CIVIL RIGHTS AND IMMIGRATION
JUNE 18, 2007**

Good morning. I am Chief Douglas Zeigler, Chief of the NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau. Thank you for the opportunity to be here to discuss how the New York City Police Department works with the communities it serves.

Community policing is built into the very structure of the NYPD. Unlike many police agencies that conduct all police operations from one central base, we deliver police services primarily through the 76 precincts and 9 housing police service areas situated in, and closely aligned with, the 59 Community Boards throughout the City. This arrangement allows for close and constant contact between local officers and the residents, businesses, clergy, and community leaders in their geographical area, forming working relationships and addressing local problems together. And this precinct-based arrangement is not limited to just patrol officers.

Precinct detective squads perform the follow-up investigation for crimes that occur within the precinct. These detectives possess the same familiarity with the local community as the patrol officers do. In fact, many of the precinct detectives had previously been patrol officers in the same precinct. Likewise, our narcotics investigators are deployed in precinct narcotics modules. They work closely with the local precinct commander to address narcotics problems within the precinct's boundaries. They also often attend the precinct and police service area community council meetings to hear first-hand from the residents about serious narcotics problems. And, like the precinct detectives, many of the narcotics investigators had once patrolled the very same streets as uniformed police officers. Our local precincts serve on average a little over 100,000 residents each, so the City's neighborhoods truly have neighborhood precincts invested in the quality of life of a particular geographical area and the people who live and work there.

Citywide and specialized commands are also crucial to the mission of the Department, and they too build relationships and work with New Yorkers. As you know, our Housing police officers work out of nine police service areas and three satellites, primarily performing patrol on foot, with some bicycle, scooter and vehicle patrols. Perhaps less visibly, our Transit police officers work out of districts that encompass many precincts, so you may not think of them as serving a particular community. But they serve the seven million commuters who use the transit system daily. So whether you take the number 6 train, or the D train, or the R train, or the J train, the same police officers patrol those trains day after day and are intimately familiar with the crime and quality of life conditions on each specific line.

We recognize that it is essential for police agencies to reach out to their communities in both formal and informal ways. This is part of the mission of all of our local operational

commanders and their staffs. In times of great stress, for example after the shooting of Sean Bell, public debate centers on the way the NYPD polices the City, and whether we treat all communities fairly and equally. It is at those times that we find that the strong relationships which local commanders and their officers have developed with the people they serve enable the Department to continue to do its work.

Part of my job is to listen to that debate, and to help both the Department as a whole, and local commanders in particular, as they strive to improve the performance of their officers and foster good relationships with the community. We have a structure in place to assist in that mission, the Community Affairs Bureau. The Bureau was reorganized early last year under my command, to emphasize the importance of community relations. It was also greatly expanded to include within it the Department's School Safety Division, increasing the opportunity and resources directly available for reaching out to young people in New York City.

I would like to describe for you some of the efforts of the Community Affairs Bureau to develop strong relationships with the people we all serve.

First, we support and coordinate the efforts of the community affairs officers assigned to all of the City's patrol boroughs, precincts, police service areas, and transit districts. They are a visible and vital presence in our neighborhoods, sharing information, addressing local problems and concerns, and providing a crucial link to the Police Department in times of calm as well as during emergencies. Similarly, members of my staff are assigned as Borough Liaisons in each of the City's Patrol Boroughs, to keep us informed about local issues and to foster police-community partnerships.

We run several programs specifically aimed at involving volunteers from the community in the fight against crime and quality of life offenses. Our Blockwatchers program trains community members in how to accurately report crime. Our Civilian Observation Patrol program trains and supports local citizen patrols. Our Civilian Observer Ride Along program gives community members a realistic view of how a police officer spends his or her tour of duty. Our NYPD C.A.R.E.S. program is an email and fax notification system, designed to keep individuals and organizations informed of important information and upcoming events regarding public safety, quality of life and police-community relations, as well as to request the public's assistance with specific police-related matters. Perhaps most important, we coordinate and support the City's Precinct Community Councils, which give local residents and businesses a monthly forum for direct communication with the precinct leadership and serve as an invaluable mechanism for addressing local problems.

The goal of fostering community partnerships is also accomplished by our work with local clergy, through the Clergy Liaison Program, which includes formal meetings, training sessions, and one-on-one contact with over 300 of the City's religious leaders, representing all faiths. Our Special Projects Unit organizes annual special events relating to religious observances, for example, the annual Pre-Ramadan Conference and Pre-Passover Conference, as well as other types of special programs, including National Night Out, Harmony Day Picnics, Commanding Officer for a Day, Police Commissioner for a Day, and Toys for Tots.

Because the population of New York City is constantly changing, the Community Affairs Bureau has established a New Immigrant Outreach Unit, whose members serve as a link between the Police Department and new immigrant communities, organizing informational forums which may include speakers from other agencies, to address that community's specific issues. We would like to note particularly that within the last year we have brought on board two civilian Community Coordinators in our New Immigrant Outreach Unit, who serve as liaisons to the Muslim and African communities. The Unit also works with communities with special needs or concerns, such as senior citizens, the Lesbian/Gay/Bi-sexual/Transgender community, persons with disabilities and others not traditionally engaged with the Police Department.

The Community Affairs Bureau offers several different informative presentations through its Training Unit, speaking with community groups on topics as diverse as the Department's anti-graffiti initiative, gang awareness, and terrorism awareness. One especially helpful presentation is "Your Rights and Responsibilities" as part of the Unit's Youth Dialogue, in which our officers explain what to expect when interacting with the police. We have prepared a pamphlet which accompanies the presentation, and would be happy to share it with you.

Our outreach efforts to young people are coordinated by the Bureau's Youth Services Section, whose goals are to promote child safety, reduce youth violence, prevent drug use and gang involvement, and improve relationships between police and young people. Our youth programs include: the Police Athletic League, which is the largest independent youth organization in New York City; Law Enforcement Explorers, with over 4,000 members in every precinct and police service area in the City; the Summer Youth Police Academy, a five week program providing interactive role plays, drills, leadership, and team building exercises; a New York City-oriented version of the G.R.E.A.T. program, Gang Resistance Education and Training; Police-Youth Dialogues, which familiarize young people through role play with the experience of being a police officer; and Internship programs in the Police Department for high school and college students.

Finally, we encourage the public to take advantage of a program the Department offers, the Citizens Police Academy, which is based on the same core lessons taught to our recruits. The Academy normally conducts two 14-week sessions per year, consisting of one three-hour session per week. Veteran Police Academy instructors use lecture, video presentations, and role plays to provide insight into police work, and participants are selected by the Commanding Officers of every Precinct, Transit District, and Housing Police Service Area.

In closing, I would like to thank the Council for sponsoring its series of Town Hall meetings throughout the City, to discuss community-police relations. The meetings provided us with valuable feedback on the issues that New Yorkers care about, and gave us an additional opportunity to share our thoughts about what the Police Department as well as community members can do to improve both the reality and perception of policing in this great and complex city.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you about the Police Department's efforts to build strong partnerships with all of the communities of New York City, and welcome your questions.

1. Introduction.

Good morning. My name is Anita Khashu, and I am the Director of the Center for Immigration and Justice at the Vera Institute of Justice. Thank you for inviting me to participate in this morning's proceedings.

Every day, immigrants in New York silently face a variety of plights alone. Though their tribulations might be front page news in the mainstream community, many immigrants go to great lengths to stay invisible. Why might this be?

During a police community dialogue hosted at Vera, a Nigerian political refugee explained that, even though he had greater faith in the police in New York City than in Nigeria, for the first couple of years he lived in this country, he began to shake uncontrollably whenever he saw a police officer in uniform.¹ A community organizer working with Muslim communities in New York reported that a victim of a stabbing that required 34 stitches across the chest refused to report the crime for fear of being deported.²

During this presentation, my goal is to explain these and other barriers to effective policing in new immigrant communities, and offer some solutions. I will begin by framing the discussion of community policing within the context of immigrant communities, and address the larger set of challenges that community policing initiatives face in these neighborhoods. I will then highlight some of the positive steps the NYPD has taken to build stronger relationships with immigrant communities here in New York, and I will share some of the good practices and recommendations that we at Vera have learned from our national work in this area.

The Vera Institute launched its first project on policing, the Manhattan Summons Project, in 1964. Since that initial collaboration, Vera has collaborated with the NYPD to assist with a wide variety of police management issues—developing new projects, publications, experiments, and technological innovations to help police work more efficiently.³

Throughout the past 40 years, Vera's work on policing has included a focus on community policing, recognizing improved police-community relations as an anticrime force in and of itself. In the 1980s Vera worked with the NYPD to develop the Community Patrol Officer Program (CPOP). The program required 10 officers to get to know neighborhood residents and merchants and to work with them to identify and eliminate conditions that bred crime and the fear of crime. The outcome was that the community patrol officers made more arrests and received fewer civilian complaints than

¹ Anita Khashu, Justice and Safety in America's Immigrant Communities : A Series of Policy Workshops Princeton Policy Research Institute (2005).

² Anita Khashu, et al. Building Strong Police-Immigrant Community Relations: Lessons from a New York City Project (August 2005).

³ For the entire Vera policing history, see http://intranet.vera.org/verapedia/images/All_histories_2006.pdf (page 40)

Anita Khashu, Testimony at the New York City Council Hearing, "The Current State of Community Policing in New York City," June 18, 2007

other officers, and still found time to attend community meetings and attend block associations. The project was quickly expanded to 43 out of the 72 precincts in our city.

More recently, in 2001, Vera began working with the NYPD to develop and test a quantitative survey that measured the satisfaction of neighborhood residents following specific encounters with police. The department and Vera tested the surveys in five precincts and gradually expanded the project to all 76 precincts. The NYPD eventually became the first police department in the country to implement a system of monthly indicators of neighborhood satisfaction with the police.

At Vera's Center for Immigration and Justice, we have expanded the scope of Vera's focus on police-community relations, in recognition of the fact that it is essential to the effective delivery of justice that law enforcement officials gain the trust and confidence of new immigrant populations. Many immigrants—especially those from countries with corrupt, repressive, and violent police forces—are fearful of government officials. Many face language barriers, and certain immigrant populations may be intimidated by increased federal immigration enforcement and heightened scrutiny following September 11, 2001.

In response, Vera has partnered with law enforcement and justice agencies in New York City and nationwide to develop innovative and tailored solutions to the challenges police face as they serve increasingly diverse communities. In 2004, we conducted a series of forums to create regular channels of communication between the NYPD and NYC's Arab American, African, and Latin American communities. At the same time, we collaborated with academics, policymakers, and community members in NJ, NY, and PA to convene a series of regional workshops on police-immigrant relations and practical strategies for law enforcement to improve police practices in immigrant communities.

These two projects revealed that one of the biggest challenges to implementing community policing strategies in immigrant communities in this region is language barriers. Language barriers can prevent victims and witnesses from reporting crime, hinder police in conducting investigations, and impact many other law enforcement functions. Therefore, Vera launched its Translating Justice project, which assists law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in overcoming language barriers.

2. Community policing, and how should we think about it.

What is "community policing?" It is a term that is often thrown around and used interchangeably with "community outreach." Community policing is more than community outreach—it requires police and community members to join together as *partners* to both identify and address local issues. Mere public relations campaigns targeted towards immigrant communities are not sufficient, although they could be a part of a larger community policing strategy. Community policing represents a shift from more traditional law enforcement in that it focuses on crime prevention at the local level. By earning the trust of local community members, police can help community members see

that they are stakeholders in their own safety—and community ownership of local problems is an effective strategy for keeping our streets safe.

Community policing is not easy. Police departments throughout the country have faced challenges in implementing community policing programs, and in particular in immigrant communities. Research has shown, for example, that Chicago's community policing program was not as successful among Spanish-speaking Latino neighborhoods as it was among African American neighborhoods due to low participation rates in the Latino immigrant community.

3. So, what *are* the causes of low participation rates in community policing programs in immigrant neighborhoods?

- First, many immigrants—especially those from countries with corrupt, repressive, and violent police forces and criminal justice systems—bring expectations from their countries of origin that police are corrupt and abusive, and therefore they fear government officials
 - These fears may be exacerbated by news stories, which become political flashpoints in local immigrant communities
- Fear of deportation and detention may also lead immigrants to avoid contact with the police and other municipal service agencies. They may not report crimes because they are afraid that their or their family members' immigration status will be reported to federal immigration officials. This is especially true post September 11th.
 - Further, underreporting of crime means that immigrant neighborhoods may often be underrepresented when police allocate resources.
- Finally, language barriers often prevent effective communication between immigrants and the police. This is particularly a challenge in New York City, where ¼ of the city is limited English proficient, or do not speak English well. As I mentioned before, language barriers can severely impair vital communications between the police and community members.

So, in sum, cultural misperceptions about police abusiveness and corruption, post 9-11 fears of immigration enforcement by the police, and language barriers are all significant challenges to achieving high levels of participation in community policing initiatives in immigrant communities.

Now I'd like to turn to some of the innovative solutions that the NYPD has implemented to overcome some of these obstacles. From 2003-2004, Vera worked with the NYPD to improve police-immigrant community relations. While we have a pretty good understanding of NYPD's history of outreach with immigrant communities, our knowledge of NYPD's more recent initiatives is limited.

3. Positive Initiatives by NYPD

The NYPD's Special/New Immigrant Outreach Unit was created to develop and improve relations with New York's immigrant communities and other communities needing special attention. The NYPD recognized the important and complex relationship between immigrants and the police. They hired several police officers who were tasked with reaching out to immigrant and other hard-to-reach communities to overcome misperceptions about the police, increase trust, and bridge cultural and language barriers.

In 2003, the Unit employed 4 immigrant liaisons. Officers served as liaisons to the Hispanic, Asian, Haitian and Caribbean, and Arab and Muslim communities. These assignments reflected a policy of targeting large immigrant groups, as well as groups that historically had a tense relationship with the NYPD.

In the last year and a half, the Unit has grown from 12 to 20 members. New Immigrant Group Liaisons have been hired, whose job it is "to make inroads and foster trust in the city's growing immigrant communities." Nearly all of the unit's officers speak multiple languages and are intimately connected with the immigrant groups they are assigned to.

The NYPD has also become more diverse. During the inaugural event of New York City's new Global Partners program, Mayor Bloomberg emphasized the growing diversity of the police force as one positive step the city has taken to reach out to immigrant populations. The NYPD's ranks have diversified markedly with an increase in African Americans, Latinos, and women.⁴

Another innovative project the NYPD has developed is the creation of a voluntary language bank of both civilian employees and sworn employees who speak languages other than English. In an effort to maintain high professional standards, the department has an outside language services company test individuals' written and oral communications skills before they are placed in the volunteer database. While this is a model program, at the time Vera conducted a study of language access in criminal justice agencies in New York City three years ago, the officers were barely using this service.

1. Good practices and Recommendations

Because most of Vera's more recent work on police-immigrant relations is national, I'd like to offer you some examples of good trust-building efforts we've seen around the country:

- (1) Ongoing community forums and dialogues (where police, not the community take the lead);

⁴ David Crary AP National Writer, New York Police Department: Furor over shooting death, but overall an improving record (November 30, 2006).

- (2) Special liaisons assigned to immigrant groups (these individuals' main role is to be out in the community and transfer information and resources between the police and community);
- (3) Hispanic Area Resource Team (this is a program that exists in the LVMPD, where there are officers who make up the HART team. Their primary role is policing and crime fighting— they do not just do community outreach. They instead focus on increasing the # of immigrants who collaborate with police during investigations and report crimes);
- (4) "Store front" substations – this is when the police set up a satellite substation in the middle of an immigrant neighborhood (or shopping complex for example) to be more accessible to community members. The East Dallas PD did this and has reported positive outcomes;
- (5) Hispanic or Asian Recruitment Councils— one big issue with police-immigrant relations is the issue of the PD not being representative of the community— the LVMPD set up two different recruitment councils, which included community leaders, to target recruitment strategies for both civilian and uniformed positions at the Hispanic and Asian populations; and

Finding ways to overcome the language barrier is critical to improving community policing in immigrant communities. Some interesting ways that law enforcement has been providing language access include:

- (1) Language access/LEP policies;
- (2) Testing, certifying, and compensating bilingual staff;
- (3) Civilian interpreter programs. For example, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department recruits and trains Spanish-speaking residents to become paid civilian interpreters for its Hispanic Interpreter Services Program (HISP). HISP interpreters are stationed in a centrally located substation and either drive in LVMPD cars to the scene to interpret in person or interpret over the telephone.
- (4) Using telephonic interpreters and technology;
- (5) Interpreter training for bilingual staff and working with interpreters training for all staff; and
- (6) Translating forms and community outreach materials.

In closing, I'd like to offer some parting recommendations that came out of the series of workshops we co-organized at Princeton University at which we brought together more than 200 community leaders and police executives from New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

- (1) Law enforcement should strive to create partnerships with social service, faith, and other community organizations to help officers reach community members that they otherwise would not, and to help community members to feel safe.
- (2) Law enforcement should work with immigrant community members to develop strategies to build trust among segments of immigrant communities that face special challenges, such as young immigrants, children of immigrants, and day laborers.
- (3) Law enforcement should establish and publicize policies on immigration enforcement, and officers should have training on immigration issues.
- (4) Police departments should make interpreters and police forms available in multiple languages, and test and re-test language proficiency of officers.
- (5) Police departments should partner with immigrant community members to develop continuous cultural training for law enforcement, with different types of training for new and senior officers. Include training in the regular work of officers to avoid the perception that the training is an add-on.
- (6) Finally, law enforcement should assume responsibility for sustaining relationship-building efforts, since police must compete for the time of immigrant community members with families, jobs, and other civic and community commitments.

END.



TESTIMONY OF THE NEW YORK CITY GAY AND LESBIAN ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT (AVP)

Joint Oversight Hearing by the Committees on Public Safety, Civil Rights and Immigration
Council Chambers – City Hall
June 18, 2007

Oversight – The Current State of Community Policing in New York City

My name is Ivana Chapcakova, and I am here representing the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project (AVP).

Since its inception in 1980, the Anti-Violence Project has worked to end police misconduct and to improve police response towards lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual and HIV-affected crime victims, and to improve the relationship between police and LGTBH New Yorkers. Through ongoing dialogs with various NYPD units, case consultations and discussions regarding policies and protocols, and regular training programs for law enforcement on how to work with LGTBH crime victims, we have narrowed the gap between LGTBH communities in New York and the police department, and have also achieved a better and more professional response towards our clients and our community.

Today, we have a very strong and effective relationship with the Hate Crime Task Force, and have access to the police department through our linkage with the LGTB Liaison and Community Affairs Bureau. Despite these improvements, police misconduct, including verbal and physical abuse by the police, refusal to assist LGTBH crime victims, and unequal and selective application of the law, remains a major concern in our community. Many victims in the LGTBH community have been affected by police misconduct or have been re-victimized by the very individuals, agencies and institutions designed to protect and defend the most vulnerable among us.

It is still too frequent an occurrence that LGTB hate crime victims do not report bias incidents to law enforcement because of fear of bias attitude from and revictimization by the police. Last year, AVP documented over 20 reports of incidents of verbal and physical abuse by police against LGTB hate crime victims. Police refused to take complaint and assist victims of anti-LGTB hate crimes in at least 33 instances. There was also 118% increase in 2006 in reported incidents that were refused hate crime classification by police.

In cases of domestic violence, police officers are refusing to take Domestic Incident Reports, failing to arrest offenders, and are inappropriately referring LGTB domestic violence victims to family court when protections through family court are not available to same-sex couples – or unmarried heterosexual couples without children in common.

Like people of color and immigrant communities, lives of LGTBH people in this city are disproportionately affected by the police misconduct. To that end, we believe that the NYPD needs to do more to respond to concerns of communities disproportionately affected by police misconduct, actively engaging in dialogues with those communities and their representatives, and implementing their knowledge and expertise to educate and assist its members in understanding and responding appropriately to city's diverse populations.

In summary, we support every effort the City Council will make towards ensuring the accessibility of the criminal justice system for all communities, including LGTBH victims of crime, so that anyone in need of assistance, regardless of who they are, will be treated with the utmost respect, dignity, sensitivity and professionalism. Thank you.