



RESOURCES FOR POLICE TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

» During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

Resources

The social distancing required to address the current public health crisis can cause feelings of isolation and loneliness and make it difficult for community members to access much-needed support and resources. These negative effects have an even greater impact on individuals with mental health issues or other special needs.



Officers can assist community members while practicing social distancing by sharing materials in print (e.g., mailings, flyers) as well as online to raise awareness of and access to resources. Below are some recommendations for supporting your community during this time.

TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR OFFICERS AND AGENCIES »

The Police Executive Research Forum has a [COVID-19 resource page](#), which provides not only news and up-to-date information about the pandemic, but also tips related to officer wellness and ways to support your community. The National Police Foundation's [COVID-19 real-time dashboard](#) is a useful resource for enhancing regional and national awareness about the pandemic's impact on law enforcement operations.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police has [extensive resources available](#), many with a specific focus on the pandemic's impact on agency operations. Other materials, [like this resource](#), offer guidance and example policies and procedures for how agencies can adapt their operations to best serve the community while keeping officers and communities safe.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Police Executive Research Forum developed a [guide](#) for law enforcement agencies to effectively communicate during public health emergencies. This critically important resource outlines how agencies can communicate information, both internally and externally, about the pandemic. Their recommendations focus on coordination with other first responders and government agencies and on clear and transparent communication with communities served.

HOW SHOULD OFFICERS COMMUNICATE WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS? » Social

distancing and the isolation associated with sheltering in place present new challenges for how officers can engage community members. An effective social media strategy can address many of the challenges of communicating with the community while adhering to public health guidelines. The Urban Institute's [Social Media Guidebook for Law Enforcement Agencies](#) is a comprehensive resource for agencies that want to improve the way they engage the community through social media—or for those that want to begin doing so. Here is some of the helpful guidance that the guidebook offers:

- » **Set goals.** Goal setting will allow your agency to consider the type and frequency of social media communications while also serving as a mechanism for accountability.
- » **Make social media engagement a discussion.** Treat discussions on social media as an opportunity to have a conversation. Prompt and consistent replies to messages from the community are critical for fostering meaningful conversations. Don't just respond to questions—be intentional about community member engagement.
- » **Don't have a large following? Connect with users who do.** Agencies that are new to social media or have a limited following can broaden their reach into the community by connecting with social media users with large followings.
- » **Plan on posting earlier in the week.** Urban's analysis indicated that posts made earlier in the week (Sunday and Monday) were retweeted more frequently than posts made later in the week.

WHAT SHOULD OFFICERS COMMUNICATE TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS? »

There are many

high-quality, evidence-based resources at both the local and national levels that can help support the health, safety, and well-being of the communities you serve.

Location	Official website link:	
Resource 1 name	Resource 1 link:	
Resource 1 description		
Resource 2 name	Resource 2 link:	
Resource 2 description		
Resource 3 name	Resource 3 link:	
Resource 3 description		

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed a number of evidence-based recommendations on [daily life and coping](#) in the context of COVID-19. Their page includes [strategies for stress and coping](#), including the following recommendations:

- » **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media.** Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- » **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
 - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep.
 - Avoid alcohol and drugs.

- » **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- » **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Consider connecting with loved ones by
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Letters or cards
 - Text messages
 - Video chat
 - Social media

The National Alliance on Mental Illness published a comprehensive [COVID-19 Resource and Information Guide](#), which contains detailed guidance and resources related to a number of specific mental health-related topics, including combating feelings of isolation and loneliness, coping with the loss of a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic, and supporting individuals with loved ones who are incarcerated or in a detention center.

TAKING ACTION » Police officers can help their communities by sharing these resources and others related to COVID-19. Many websites, including and the CDC website, provide materials formatted for print (in both English and Spanish) as well as for sharing online. Consider sharing information about key resources on your website, social media pages, and other high-traffic communications channels—and in public places where community members access essential services.

RTI 13513 0420



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