

LAW ENFORCEMENT & ARAB
AMERICAN COMMUNITY RELATIONS
AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001
Engagement in a Time of Uncertainty

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Executive Summary

Recent decades witnessed a growing commitment among local police agencies and communities throughout the United States to community-oriented policing. However, heightened public fear and government policies implemented following the events of September 11, 2001, placed new pressures on law enforcement. These new concerns and policies also changed the landscape in which Arab American communities, in particular, found themselves.

This study, one of the first to examine the effects, nationally, of September 11 on law enforcement agencies and communities with high concentrations of Arab American residents, provides a window into current relations between Arab Americans and local and federal law enforcement, as well as the challenges that each of these stakeholders faces in responding to pressures that are increasingly global in nature. It also seeks to understand and document promising outreach practices among these groups.

To explore these issues Vera researchers conducted a telephone survey with community leaders, local law enforcement officials, and field office agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 16 representative sites around the country. Four of the sites were then selected for in-depth study involving additional interviews, facilitated focus groups, and observation of police-community relations.

Our inquiries confirmed that September 11 had a substantial impact on Arab American communities. In every site, Arab Americans described heightened levels of public suspicion exacerbated by increased media attention and targeted government policies (such as special registration requirements, voluntary interviews, and the detention and deportation of community members). Although community members also reported increases in hate victimization, they expressed greater concern about being victimized by federal policies and practices than by individual acts of harassment or violence.

Among law enforcement the most notable change was a new pressure to incorporate counterterrorism into their work. Local police and FBI participants alike reported that this pressure had frequently resulted in policies that were poorly defined or inconsistently applied. Immigration enforcement as a form of counterterrorism generated the greatest objections, however, with some local police refusing to participate altogether due to financial constraints and concerns that it would compromise their primary mission. Police officials and FBI agents did, however, describe an increase in dialogue between them.

Relations between Arab American communities and law enforcement agencies fell into two categories overall. Toward local police agencies, Arab Americans reported a fair amount of goodwill, even in jurisdictions where the two had little interaction. Where departments invested resources to cultivate this goodwill, the evidence points to dividends in the form of reduced tension. Community perceptions of federal law enforcement were less positive. Even though most of the FBI field offices in the study had reached out to Arab American communities, many Arab Americans remained fearful and suspicious of federal efforts.

Finally, our research found that community members and law enforcement respondents alike wanted improved relations. Given the popularity of community policing principles in recent times, however, surprisingly few jurisdictions were active in this regard. Where such measures had been adopted, we found meaningful partnerships that, consistent with community-oriented policing philosophy, suggested better success at addressing concerns about local and national security alike.

With the shadow of September 11 unlikely to lift anytime soon, local and federal law enforcement agencies are likely to continue to feel pressure to incorporate counterterrorism into their work. Our research suggests that even within this environment they should continue to be mindful of the principles of community policing and the promise these practices hold for good results for public safety.

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Introduction and background

Over the past 20 years, communities and local police agencies throughout the United States have worked together to strengthen their relationship and improve public safety. This increasingly popular model of policing, often referred to as community policing, has been largely effective at improving quality of life, decreasing fear of crime, and addressing local concerns about public safety.¹ However, in the months and years following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, many people across the nation registered a new sense of vulnerability and anxiety about their safety. Communities throughout the United States—from small towns to large cities—now also worry about how terrorism and the effects of international conflict impact their communities.

The federal government responded to this development by reinforcing its domestic efforts to combat terrorism and strengthen national security. For example, the government reorganized several of its agencies to create the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which oversees immigration and customs enforcement and transportation security at airports and ports, among other areas.² Similarly, bolstered by legislation such as the USA Patriot Act, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), DHS, and other agencies began intensively gathering information and conducting surveillance on people and organizations suspected of having ties to terrorism.

Washington has encouraged local law enforcement to take part in the counterterrorism effort as well. Consequently, in many jurisdictions, police departments have voluntarily assumed new responsibilities traditionally the job of federal agencies, such as enforcing immigration violations.³ Even though community and civil rights advocates, policymakers, and policing practitioners are still debating whether or not local police agencies can fulfill such federal obligations and still effectively serve their communities, it is possible that the expansion of local police powers will soon become federally mandated.⁴

Law enforcement agencies are not alone in experiencing significant changes since the attacks of September 11: Arab Americans across the nation have endured the event's political and legislative reverberations in a way that other Americans have not. Arab Americans have not only become the targets of individual acts of hate and bias, but they have also been subject to new federal policies and practices imposed in response to the attacks. Yet, apart from anecdotal evidence from news accounts and community and civil rights advocates indicating an increase in fear and anxiety, little is known about how Arab Americans have coped in the post-September 11

¹ L. Sherman and J. Eck, "Policing for Crime Prevention" in *Evidence-Based Crime Prevention*, L. Sherman, D. Farrington, B. Welsh, and D. MacKenzie eds., London: Routledge, 2002; M.A. Wycoff and W.G. Skogan, "Storefront Police Offices: The Houston Field Test," in *Community Crime Prevention: Does it Work?*, D.P. Rosenbaum ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1986.

² On October 8, 2001, President Bush established the Department of Homeland Security by Executive Order 13228.

³ Because many of the hijackers involved in the events of September 11 were in the U.S. on expired visas, the federal government has made immigration enforcement a central counterterrorism priority.

⁴ Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal (CLEAR) Act, sponsored by Representative Charles Norwood (R-GA) and currently being debated in Congress, calls for broadened police powers, including immigration enforcement and detention.

environment. Similarly, little is known about how they have interacted with their local police agencies during this time.

To learn more about these issues, the Vera Institute of Justice, with funding from the National Institute of Justice, embarked on a research project to gauge the current state of relations between Arab American communities and local and federal law enforcement agencies and to identify barriers to better relations and promising approaches emerging from existing efforts to build trust while addressing crime and challenges to public safety.

Vera researchers interviewed a wide range of stakeholders: Arab American leaders and community residents, police administrators and patrol officers, and FBI field agents and community outreach specialists. Many of the questions we asked applied to both the community and law enforcement. However, some questions were specific to each group.

This study, which was conducted between 2002 and 2005, is among the first attempts to gain qualitative insight into the experiences of both Arab American communities *and* law enforcement practitioners. Its exploratory nature allowed us to collect a substantial amount of interview and observational information that has not been strongly represented in traditional statistical data. We believe this research will begin the process of examining the complicated issues surrounding security and terrorism that these communities and law enforcement face. It is our hope that it will also provide tools for communities and law enforcement agencies to use as they seek to build mutual trust and strengthen relations.⁵

Federal policies

An understanding of the findings of this study must be firmly grounded in a familiarity with relevant federal policies enacted after September 11, 2001. Exhibit 1 provides a timeline of the major federal policies and initiatives, which are discussed in more detail below.

Exhibit 1: A selection of federal policies and practices after September 11, 2001

Oct 2001	USA Patriot Act is passed by Congress
Nov 2001	Voluntary interviews with 5,000 men
Dec 2001	Absconders Apprehension Initiative
Mar 2002	Voluntary interviews with 3,000 men
Sep 2002	Florida is the first state to enter into a Memo of Understanding to deputize state and local police to enforce immigration violations
Nov 2002	Special registration (“National Security Entry-Exit Registration System”) begins
Mar 2003	FBI is granted expanded immigration enforcement powers Voluntary interviews with 11,000 Iraqi Americans and Iraqi nationals
Jul 2003	CLEAR Act of 2003 (H.R. 2671) is introduced to the House of Representatives by Charles Norwood (R-GA)
Dec 2003	Special registration (NSEERS) program is suspended
Mar 2006	USA Patriot Act is renewed

⁵ D.A. Ramirez, S.C. O’Connell, and R. Zafar. *Developing Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Communities: A Promising Practices Guide*, Boston: Northeastern University, 2004: 17, 80.

USA Patriot Act. The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (USA Patriot Act) gives law enforcement agencies broader authority for gathering information and conducting investigations.⁶ The Act updates certain legal provisions in order to account for recent technological advances, allowing law enforcement to more effectively collect, study, and share information related to terrorism through the use of surveillance and searches, among other methods. It also facilitates the sharing of intelligence between investigators and law enforcement officials and agencies.⁷

A broad coalition of civil rights organizations have questioned the Act's constitutionality. In July 2003, a number of national and local Arab American community organizations filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Detroit charging that the FBI's broadened powers violated the First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments of the Constitution.⁸

Voluntary interviews. In November 2001, then-Attorney General John Ashcroft asked federal, state, and local law enforcement to conduct interviews with 5,000 young men from Middle Eastern countries in the United States on temporary visas. The interviews, said to be voluntary, targeted men 18 to 33 years old who had been in the United States since January 1, 2000, on student, tourist, or business visas.⁹ In March 2002, Ashcroft announced a second round of 3,000 interviews.¹⁰ He specified that while the interviews would focus on people who may have information relating to terrorism, none of the individuals were suspected of criminal activities. Ashcroft expected that the interviews would likely assist investigators in the September 11 attacks and interrupt any terrorist plots.¹¹

While most local police agencies assisted federal agencies in the voluntary interview process, some police chiefs questioned the effectiveness of using police officers untrained in gathering intelligence and what impact an unexplained canvass of community members would have on police-community relations. A few jurisdictions, including Portland, Oregon, refused to participate.¹² Community groups voiced concern about ethnic and religious profiling, while pointing out that the interviews could fuel already heightened public suspicion of Arab American and American Muslims as terrorists.¹³

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, *Report from the Field: The USA Patriot Act at Work*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, July 2004: 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸ Lyle Denniston, "Arab Groups in US File Lawsuit Seeking to Curb Patriot Act," *The Boston Globe*, July 31, 2003, A3.

⁹ Jodi Wilgoren, "Michigan Officers Fear Pressure of US Plan," *New York Times*, November 17, 2001.

¹⁰ Terry Frieden, "U.S. to Interview 3,000 More 'Visitors' in Terror Probe," *CNN.com*, March 20, 2002, <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/US/03/20/ret.ashcroft.terrorism/?related>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Fox Butterfield, "A Police Force Rebuffs F.B.I. on Querying Mideast Men," *New York Times*, November 21, 2001; Frieden, "U.S. to Interview 3,000 More 'Visitors' in Terror Probe;" Wilgoren, "Michigan Officers Fear Pressure of US Plan."

¹³ Jean AbiNader and Kate Martin, "Just the Facts, Mr. Ashcroft," *Washington Post*, July 25, 2002: A21; Wilgoren, "Michigan Officers Fear Pressure of US Plan."

Absconders Apprehension Initiative. In an effort to locate absconders—people who have overstayed their visas—and undocumented persons, the federal government started to enter civil absconder warrants into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database, a system that, in that past, only dealt with criminal warrants.¹⁴ Under this initiative, state and local police were authorized to detain these individuals if found.¹⁵ Law enforcement initially focused on “priority absconders,” people “who come from countries in which there has been Al Qaeda terrorist presence or activity.”¹⁶

Special registration. In December 2002, immigration authorities began the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, a three-month campaign to register, fingerprint, photograph, and question male foreign nationals from countries that the U.S. identified as supporting terrorism or harboring terrorist groups. Tens of thousands of men from countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, and Syria, among others, participated in the “special registration,” which was designed to disrupt and deter foreign-born terrorists and their activities in the U.S.¹⁷ Combined with a companion effort at airports and other ports of entry to the U.S., this led to the registration of more than 170,000 men aged 16 and older. The Justice Department maintained that registration was intended to help government officials better understand who enters and exits the country.¹⁸ Immigration authorities put nearly 14,000 of those registered into deportation proceedings and found that approximately 150 registrants had committed crimes.¹⁹

Memorandums of Understanding related to immigration enforcement. Under a provision of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, states can enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the federal government to allow state and local police to enforce civil immigration violations.

In 2002, Florida became the first state to enter into an MOU, with Alabama and Virginia following soon after.²⁰ Unlike the voluntary interviews, the MOUs are not limited to Arab and Muslim groups. Consequently, community organizations, immigrant coalitions, and certain law enforcement agencies have been very vocal in their criticism of the MOUs. They warn that the very involvement of local police in these partnerships could deter undocumented immigrants

¹⁴ Craig E. Ferrell, Jr., “Immigration Enforcement: Is It a Local Issue?” *The Police Chief* 71, no. 2 (February 2004).

¹⁵ National Immigration Law Center, <http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/arrestdet/ad059.htm>.

¹⁶ National Immigration Law Center, <http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/arrestdet/ad046.htm>.

¹⁷ Dan Eggen and Nurith C. Aizenman, “Registration Stirs Panic, Worry: Some Muslim Foreign Nationals Risk Arrest to Meet INS Deadline,” *Washington Post*, January 10, 2003.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Immigration and Customs Enforcement, <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/news/factsheets/NSEERSfactsheet120103.pdf> (no longer available). Changes to NSEERS are available at <http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/factsheets/nseersFS120103.htm>.

²⁰ National Immigration Law Center, “Alabama State Troopers said to receive ‘clear authority’ in civil immigration enforcement,” *Immigrants’ Rights Update*, 17, no. 7 (November 24, 2003); Mary Beth Sheridan, “Va. Seeks New Role Against Illegals; Police to Enforce Immigration Law,” *Washington Post*, April 24, 2004.

from reporting crimes and could easily lead to racial profiling.²¹ Responding to the criticism, Virginia has since halted its MOU negotiations.²²

The CLEAR Act. The Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal (CLEAR) Act, the most prominent immigration legislation pending during the period of our research, would affirm state and local police authority “to investigate, apprehend, detain, or remove aliens in the United States.”²³ The act would also give state and local police the appropriate training, access to data on undocumented immigrants, and funding needed to carry out their new mandate.²⁴ U.S. Representative Charles Norwood, who introduced the bill, as well as other supporters, argue that the presence of undocumented immigrants in the United States poses a risk to public safety and national security.²⁵

Within the law enforcement community, there are arguments for and against increasing and expanding the role of local police agencies in immigration enforcement.²⁶ Proponents say that police officers can leverage their position in the community to gather information and enforce immigration and that their participation can compensate for a lack of manpower from federal agencies. Those opposed to the bill say that blurring the lines between the activities of federal agencies and local police may jeopardize local law enforcement’s first mandate to maintain public safety and control crime.

Arab American experiences

Prior to September 11, 2001, Arab Americans went largely unnoticed in the American mainstream.²⁷ The relative scarcity of academic research on Arab Americans and the fact that the U.S. Census only began keeping information on people of Arab descent in 2000 are both evidence of their low profile.

It is therefore not surprising that Arab Americans are the object of many misconceptions. Although often viewed as a monolithic group, Arab Americans come from any of the 22 Arabic-speaking countries. U.S. Census figures illustrated in Exhibit 2 show that most originate from seven countries—Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Syria. While media portrayals more often associate them with Islam, an estimated two-thirds of Arab Americans are Christian.

²¹ Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, “Police May Join Hunt for Illegal Migrants; Advocates See a Way to Boost Enforcement, but Officers and Civil Rights Groups Fear Abuses,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 11, 2003; Chris McGann, “Police Balk at Watching for Illegal Immigrants,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer Reporter*, May 2, 2002; Sheridan, “Va. Seeks New Role Against Illegals; Police to Enforce Immigration Law.”

²² Sheridan, “Va. Police Back Off Immigration Enforcement,” *Washington Post*, June 6, 2005, B01.

²³ U.S. Congress, H.R. 2671, Washington, DC: 2003, Section 101.

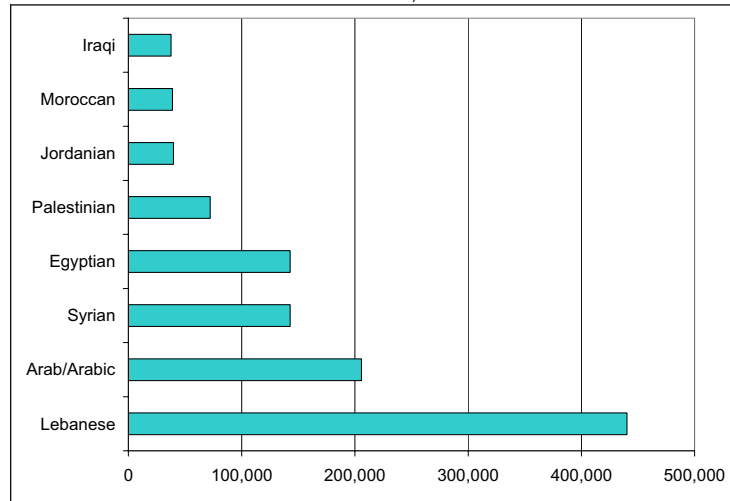
²⁴ U.S. Congress, H.R. 2671.

²⁵ Office of Congressman Charlie Norwood, “News Release: CLEAR Act Pointed to as Solution to Criminal Alien Crisis at House Hearing,” October 1, 2003.

²⁶ Laura Parker, “Police Departments Balk at Idea of Becoming ‘Quasi-INS Agents,’” *USA Today*, March 7, 2002.

²⁷ Nadine C. Naber, “Ambiguous Insiders: An Investigation of Arab American Invisibility,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 1 (January 2000): 37–61.

Exhibit 2: Distribution of Arab ancestry groups in the United States, Census 2000



American policing: Past and present trends

Policing in the United States is a highly fragmented, decentralized “industry” that has evolved in response to a range of conditions.²⁸ For the past two decades the dominant policing philosophy has been community policing, an approach that engages communities in problem-solving partnerships to address crime and public safety concerns. Since the early 1990s, community policing has been the nation’s prevailing policing model.²⁹

As Figure 1 shows, community policing is not defined by any one set of policies. Almost any activity that increases face-to-face interactions and builds relationships with the community, such as bike and foot patrols, liaisons with ethnic groups, substations placed in high crime areas, and working groups and monthly forums, may qualify as a form of community policing.

²⁸ Wesley Skogan and Kathleen Frydl, eds., *Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence*, Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2004.

²⁹ Robert Trojanowicz, *Community Policing: A Contemporary Perspective 2nd Edition*, Ohio: Anderson Publishing Company, 1998, 55.

Figure 1

Core elements of community policing		
<p>Organizational Elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Philosophy Adopted Organization-Wide 2. Decentralized Decision-Making and Accountability 3. Fixed Geographic Accountability and Generalist Responsibilities 4. Utilization of Volunteer Resources 5. Enhancers 	<p>Tactical Elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enforcement of Laws 2. Proactive, Crime Prevention Oriented 3. Problem-solving 	<p>External Elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Involvement in Community Partnerships 2. Government and Other Agency Partners

Source: "What is Community Policing?," the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

However, because these are generally time intensive efforts with delayed payoffs, community outreach is often an easy target when budget cuts are called for.³⁰ Also, while many departments have adopted the language of community policing, few have fully incorporated the philosophy into a departmentwide approach.³¹

Following September 11 some policing scholars and practitioners have encouraged local agencies to leverage their street-level position to become more involved in intelligence gathering and immigration enforcement. In some jurisdictions local police have responded by embracing surveillance and intelligence gathering, or "offender search." This, combined with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's overall shift toward counterterrorism and the expansion of Joint Terrorism Task Forces, in which local police and FBI staff work together, have further changed the landscape of law enforcement activities.

Yet, scholars and practitioners are still debating whether police departments can continue building trusting partnerships with immigrant communities if they are also going to gather intelligence and enforce immigration law. There is little, if any, existing literature on relations between law enforcement and Arab American communities prior to September 11. However, other research has consistently shown that immigrant communities are often distrustful or wary of law enforcement due to experiences in their home countries and language and cultural differences.

Given this deficit of trust and the impact of hate crimes, heightened public scrutiny, and the impact of certain federal policies on law enforcement practices, examining the current state of relations between law enforcement and Arab American communities is timely and important.

³⁰ Fox Butterfield, "As Cities Struggle, Police Get by With Less," *New York Times*, July 27, 2004; Elizabeth Williamson, "Frederick Police Caught in a Squeeze: While City Grows, Federal Aid Falls," *Washington Post*, April 10, 2005.

³¹Trojanowicz, 2.

Methodology

Our research was structured to capture general trends and issues at the national level, as well as to shed light on more complex local issues. We accomplished this by developing a two-phase study design: a national telephone survey followed by focus groups and interviews in four case study sites.

Background research that we conducted into existing relations between law enforcement agencies and Arab American communities yielded little substantive work. Consequently, we adopted a grounded theory approach—entering the study without preconceived notions and allowing themes to emerge from the collected data.³² Our interview instruments included semi-structured, open-ended questions in order to allow respondents to talk about concerns and issues on their own terms without the constraints of a predetermined line of questioning.

Site selection. Using 2000 Census data, we identified 37 communities with the highest concentrations of Arab American residents, based on percentage and number. From these 37 sites, which account for 25 percent of the total Arab American population in the United States, we compiled a sample of 20 jurisdictions selected for their diversity based on geographic region, population size, and demographic makeup of the Arab American community.³³ Law enforcement agencies in four of these sites declined to participate in the study, leaving a final sample of 16 municipal jurisdictions.

Our study sample was carefully selected to represent Arab Americans residing in concentrated communities across the United States and not the entire U.S. Arab population. This was necessary because once disaggregated into community clusters there were significant differences between Arab Americans nationally, who tend to be more established, and those living in concentrated communities on measures of immigration, educational attainment, household income, and reported rates of violent crimes for 2004 (see Exhibit 3).³⁴ These 16 sites account for nine percent of the total U.S. population of people of Arab descent.

³² B. Glaser, and A. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Chicago: Aldine, 1967.

³³ The sample of 20 sites included four major cities with a total population greater than 500,000, four second-tier cities with a total population between 250,000 and 500,000, four third-tier cities with a total population between 100,000 and 250,000, and four small cities with a total population under 100,000.

³⁴ With regard to violent crime rates, the UCR shows 74 violent crimes per 10,000 residents for the initial sample of 37 sites; similarly, there were 72 violent crimes per 10,000 residents in our final sample of 16. This is in contrast to the U.S. average of 47 violent crimes per 10,000 residents.

Exhibit 3: Comparison of study site characteristics, Census 2000

	Native born	Not a citizen	Entered U.S. between 1990-2000	With a Bachelor's degree	Median family income
	%	%	%	%	\$
<i>U.S. population</i>	88	7	5	15	\$41,994
<i>U.S. Arab population</i>	59	19	19	15	\$47,459
<i>Concentrated communities (37 sites)</i>	47	27	51	15	\$40,796
<i>Study sample (16 sites)</i>	42	30	54	14	\$39,911

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Data collection. We conducted a total of 107 telephone interviews with police personnel (n=38), FBI agents (n=16), and community leaders (n=53) across the 16 telephone survey sites. Based on interview responses to questions regarding law enforcement and community relations, four sites were to be selected for case studies. Although we had originally planned to choose sites with active outreach efforts by both the police and community, only two sites appeared both particularly innovative and not overly studied by previous research. We therefore developed alternative criteria, including a record of active community outreach to police departments and the presence of Arab American law enforcement staff. Follow-up in-person interviews in the four case study sites were conducted with 22 police officials and community leaders. An additional 35 police officers and 45 community members participated in focus groups, for a total of 209 contacts with the police, FBI, and community in both the telephone surveys and the case studies.

We analyzed the resulting data using the constant comparative method in which data is continually revisited as categories evolve and existing themes are refined. To ensure that perspectives and opinions were accurately described, 24 community, police, and FBI participants were asked to review the draft report and provide feedback. By collaborating closely in this process with study participants, we believe we have improved the quality of the research and increased the likelihood that our findings will be relevant to community advocates and members, practitioners, and policymakers.

Findings

The findings from our study derive from the telephone survey and the regional focus groups and in-person interviews. We found it conceptually useful to present our findings in three broad sections focusing, respectively, on the Arab American community, law enforcement, and the intersection between the two. Nevertheless, because the issues addressed are interconnected, and because it is occasionally relevant to represent a range of views on a particular subject, findings drawn from more than one group appear in each of the three sections below.

Arab American communities after September 11, 2001

A number of community members and law enforcement personnel indicated that September 11 brought greater public attention to Arab Americans. Not surprisingly, given the government response described earlier, attitudes within the Arab American communities have changed substantially. The differences were articulated most vividly by the community respondents themselves—although they found some echoes among law enforcement officials, too. The key dynamics affecting Arab Americans include

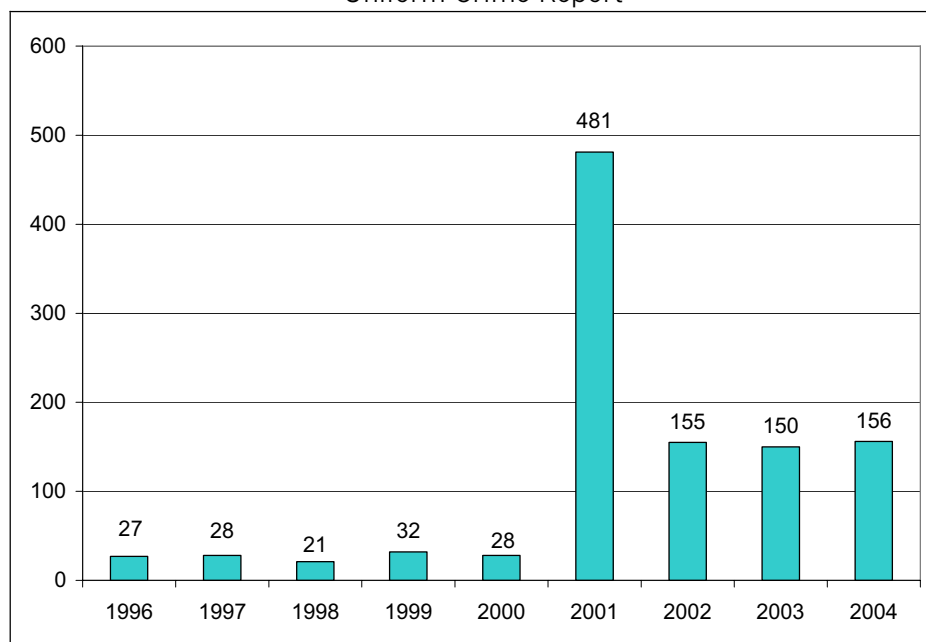
- an increased sense of being victimized and harassed;
- heightened suspicion of government and law enforcement;
- anxiety about their place in American society, particularly fuelled by new federal policies; and
- concerns about protecting their civil liberties.

Community members report increase in hate and bias incidents and harassment

Leaders from Arab American communities across the nation spoke of September 11 as a pivotal moment in terms of hate crimes and discrimination. In 12 of the 16 study sites—keeping in mind that responses were not unanimous in every site—they described a spike directly after September 11 and then a leveling off.

This finding is supported by data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, which show that incidents of anti-Islamic hate and bias crimes increased dramatically in 2001 and leveled off in the subsequent three years (see Exhibit 4). While these numbers refer only to anti-Islamic hate crimes directed against victims of any ethnicity, they give an idea of the number of recorded hate crimes directed at some members of the Arab American community.

Exhibit 4: Total anti-Islamic hate crimes 1996-2004,
Uniform Crime Report³⁵



Eighty percent of community respondents to our survey pointed to some type of hate-related victimization, such as harassment, vandalism, and violence, in their community. Harassment, sometimes in the form of threatening phone calls and racial slurs, was an issue for 34 percent. Respondents described incidents in which rocks and eggs were thrown at mosques, trash was thrown into the yards of people of Arab descent, and shops and stores were set afire.

Religious or cultural symbols associated with Islam, such as the *hijab*, a headscarf worn by Muslim women, were described as triggers for harassment and victimization. However, the backlash was not limited to Arab Muslims but also targeted Arab Christians. Nonreligious symbols such as signs or names in Arabic or physical appearance also triggered hate-inspired violence. As one participant commented, “People know who is an Arab from looking at the face, from hearing the accent. There is no difference between Christians and Muslims in this way. I don’t think Christians are getting less [targeted] than Muslims.”

Communities and law enforcement have different perceptions of prevalence. Our study revealed noteworthy discrepancies between rates of hate-related victimization reported by community respondents and those reported by law enforcement respondents. We found that

- community members in 12 of 16 sites reported a spike in hate crimes after September 11;
- local law enforcement officers in only five sites recounted a spike in hate crimes directed at Arab Americans; and³⁶

³⁵ The Uniform Crime Reports, which collect and report national level data on recorded hate crimes, have a specific category for religiously based hate crimes but do not have a specific category for Arab Americans. As a result we are using anti-Islamic as a proxy measure.

- FBI respondents' perceptions were slightly more aligned with community perceptions: in 9 of 16 sites FBI respondents reported an increase in hate crimes directed at Arab Americans; in four sites they reported none, and in three sites participants stated that they did not know.

These findings, which are consistent with the literature, suggest that some hate crimes might be underreported by community members, under-recognized by law enforcement or judicial systems, or simply poorly defined. Community members frequently cited language barriers, immigration status, cultural norms, and previous experiences with police in their home countries as barriers to reporting. A handful of FBI respondents, and by far the minority, suggested that the systems that process hate crimes—law enforcement agencies and courts—may also contribute to underreporting because of recording differences across agencies and even across divisions in the same police department. These differences, they noted, were both intentional and unintentional. Finally, some law enforcement participants blamed a lack of clarity about what qualifies as a hate crime. As one FBI agent offered, “What is a hate crime? It is a murky area.”

False reporting has had a negative impact on communities and law enforcement

While the full scope of the increase in reports of hate and bias incidents as a consequence of 9/11 remains unclear, there is no doubt about the increase in other types of reports and the challenges they present to communities and law enforcement alike. Community representatives indicated that government-led encouragement of the public to be on “high alert” for signs of terrorist activity has left some Arab Americans worried about anonymous tips.³⁷ “The fear is that someone just picks up the phone and tells [the FBI] to target individuals,” one community member explained. “At what point do I become an American?” said another. “It reminds me of Syria. If someone wants to get you, they just call the police.”

Whether intentional or not, false leads are also a hassle for officers and agents who must respond to them. One police officer explained how such reports can compromise police-community relations: “Suppose I get a call about suspicious activity. I have to respond, even if it’s based on prejudice. If I show up, the Arab American feels he is being profiled and trusts the police less. If I don’t show up, I get an angry call or complaint that I am not doing my job. It’s a lose-lose situation.” FBI agents described responding to calls stemming from petty disputes, business competition, and dating rivalries. “We had to run down everything that was called in, even though we knew it was not relevant,” an FBI special agent in charge said. “[I]n the months following 9/11 we were going into homes in a way that was probably discriminatory.” When asked whether 9/11 changed his job, a patrol officer in a focus group replied, “Yes, to some degree. Right after [September 11] we would get calls from people who would say things like,

³⁶ Local law enforcement interviews were not completed in two sites, therefore n=14.

³⁷ Adam Liptak, “A Nation of Informers—or Alert Citizens,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2002; President Bush had also proposed a program under Citizen Corps named Operation TIPS (Terrorism Information and Prevention System), described in George W. Bush, “Securing the Homeland, Strengthening the Nation,” 2002.

‘I’m at Wal-Mart, and there is an Arab guy who is buying ammo.’ We had to go and take a report on this!’

Communities report more fear of policies and practices than of physical violence

Significantly, community respondents expressed more concern about federal policies and practices than individual acts of bias or harassment. There is a “cultivation of a climate of fear” within the United States one community advocate said, explaining some Arab Americans’ feelings that they are being collectively victimized by government policies and agencies. “My problem is not with the FBI and police officers; they are just following orders.... It is [with] the policies,” said an Imam from a large, well-established community, citing a commonly made distinction between making and enforcing policy.

Exhibit 5: Community Concerns

Responses to “What are the main concerns of your community at this moment?”

	% of respondents (n=50)
<i>Government policies and actions</i>	
Immigration enforcement	17
Racial profiling by law enforcement	14
The USA Patriot Act/civil liberties	13
Detentions and deportations	10
Special registration	8
<i>Victimization</i>	
Viewed with suspicion	9
Harassment	6
Hate crimes	4
Employment discrimination	3

Community respondents concerned about immigration enforcement. Exhibit 5, indicating community participants’ most frequently cited concerns, shows immigration enforcement at the top of the list. Many expressed anxiety about engaging law enforcement for fear that “secret evidence” would be used against them or that they would be “rounded up” or “deported” by federal authorities. “I have a friend whose house, just after 9/11, got raided. They knocked down the door and everything,” a focus group participant recalled. “They [the people in the house] were out of status.” Stories like this, retold within the community, may help explain one community leader’s assertion that investigations of immigration status were being used to silence the Arab and Muslim communities.

Community respondents reported great concern over the expansive surveillance powers of the USA Patriot Act. Community members voiced great concern that their privacy and civil liberties had been compromised by the USA Patriot Act. One survey participant summed up the sense of the community saying, “If you want to make someone angry, say two words: ‘Patriot Act.’” A community focus group participant illustrated her own discomfort by recounting an experience with a door-to-door encyclopedia salesperson. When the salesperson asked to use her bathroom,

the participant worried that she might have been an agent planting a listening device. Many focus group participants expressed similar concerns. “The community feels like the Patriot Act has lowered the bar for the FBI to conduct surveillance,” explained a community leader. “Phones can be tapped; people can be spied on more easily.”

Fear of detention and deportation is high. In all four case study sites residents spoke of recent detentions and deportations of people they knew or about whom they had heard from friends. Describing how special registration had affected his community, one leader said, “Many people went to register and got arrested. About 1,200 were arrested from this site area, and they were all Arab.” Another leader, referring to the voluntary interviews, said, “People went in for interviews and they took the government’s intentions at face value and were ultimately put through deportation.” It was noted generally that the threat of detentions and deportations contributed to the underreporting of crimes and exacerbated the general climate of fear and anxiety.

A conflicted community response: disengaging and engaging

Community participants suggested that September 11 sparked two polar reactions within the community: organizing and activism among some residents and further withdrawal among others. As one community member put it, “There are two extremes: either people embrace fully or deny their culture.”

Disengagement. Many participants in the community focus groups reported a drop in engagement with community-based organizations after September 11. “We had some big demonstrations before 9/11, but now there is less turnout and there are fewer families, too,” said a community leader from a city that had been politically active for years. A resident of that same area explained, “Today, a lot of Muslims hide. There is fear.” In the words of another resident, “Nine-eleven did something to people—it made you afraid.”

Our telephone interviews with representatives of community-based organizations, schools, and mosques uncovered a reluctance among community members to give time, money, and support once federal authorities began investigating Arab Americans and American Muslims. Several leaders of community-based organizations told us that rumors of FBI raids on organizations and subsequent deportations of affiliated members had made people hesitant to associate with Arab or Muslim organizations, reducing their membership rolls.

They also described economic stresses that these organizations faced as a result of fewer donations. As the principal of an Islamic school explained, “One of the major pillars of Islam is to give to charity, and people are afraid to give now because they believe that law enforcement is trying to link people to each other. [It] has affected everyone, especially our school and our ability to raise money.”

Engagement. At the same time, others saw September 11 lead to greater activism among community members, often in the form of ongoing engagement with the police. “We had relations [with the police] prior to 9/11, but there was a conscious decision to intensify these after 9/11,” said one community-based organization director. “We became proactive; we did not just let something be and fix itself.”

Community responses and our own observation suggest that the disposition to become more engaged may be related to a recent immigration, economic and professional standing, and age. Those with greater political capital were more likely to increase engagement than those with less.

Changes in federal and local law enforcement since September 11, 2001

As noted at the outset of this report, there has been much debate over whether local law enforcement should undertake federal responsibilities such as immigration enforcement.³⁸ Our research with law enforcement personnel—both local police and FBI staff—uncovered similar debate. Specifically, we found

- confusion regarding roles in enforcing immigration laws,
- differing experiences with new counterterrorism priorities, and
- greater contact between local police and federal law enforcement agencies.

Confusion about immigration enforcement

Immigration enforcement was an unresolved concern among both police and FBI personnel.

Local police and immigration enforcement. Our interviews with local police officers indicated that the degree to which they enforce immigration law fell along a spectrum. Some departments had formal arrangements authorizing enforcement, others left enforcement up to the discretion of individual officers or did not enforce due to a lack of resources, and some departments had clear policies against engaging in enforcement.

Two departments in our sample were in states that had agreements with the Department of Homeland Security’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) department to deputize state and local police to enforce immigration law. One city followed the state agreement and deputized its local police; in the other city the police chief rejected the policy.

³⁸ International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), “Police Chiefs Announce Immigration Enforcement Policy,” press release, Washington, DC: IACP, December 1, 2004; Major Cities Chiefs Association, *Terrorism: The Impact on State and Local Law Enforcement*, Published Report from the Major Cities Police Chiefs Association Intelligence Commanders Conference, June 2002: 3; Rebecca McCarthy, “Immigration Status Not Local Matter. Police, Others Resist US Legislation to Have Them Enforce Law,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 17, 2004; Sheridan, “Va. Seeks New Role Against Illegals; Police to Enforce Immigration Law;” Alonso-Zaldivar, “Police May Join Hunt for Illegal Migrants; Advocates See a Way to Boost Enforcement, but Officers and Civil Rights Groups Fear Abuses;” William Lyons, “Partnerships, Information and Public Safety: Community Policing in a Time of Terror,” *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 25, no. 3 (2002): 530–531.

The first city's approach appeared to have undermined Arab American trust. The head of a community-based organization there told us, "In this state the police can investigate people for immigration status now. They don't have to do anything to get investigated, so people don't want anything to do with the police." The chief in the second city described his position, saying, "[W]hen the law was first announced, we actively went to the newspapers and publicized the fact that we were not going to enforce immigration violations."

The majority of police officers we surveyed said they would be unable to enforce immigration violations because their time and resources were needed for responding to local crime and public safety concerns. Police officers in focus groups concurred. As one officer put it, "We've never really focused on a person's status. We don't have the manpower to do it."

In some survey sites the absence of a clear policy led to substantially different reports from officers about the actions their department would take regarding immigration enforcement. Most officers in these sites said they were not authorized to enforce immigration violations but would refer cases to immigration authorities, depending on the circumstances. In some cases, officers from the same department described different scenarios for referring people to immigration authorities, depending upon whether the people were suspected perpetrators, victims, or witnesses of a crime.

Arab American communities are well aware of these ambiguities, as the following community member's comments about a high profile deportation incident illustrate:

The police had the initial contact with an undocumented immigrant via a speeding ticket and reported it back to the government. ...but I've also seen detectives not caring about a person's status. It's on a cop-by-cop basis. The police department doesn't have a publicized policy addressing immigration enforcement.

The large number of procedural discrepancies reported to us suggests that it is not uncommon for departments to not have a clear policy on immigration enforcement.

The FBI and immigration enforcement. Federal law enforcement policies enacted after September 11 placed new emphasis on terrorism and immigration enforcement. Nevertheless, FBI participants in our telephone survey also were vague and inconsistent in describing official immigration enforcement policies—even though our interviews took place more than a year after then-Attorney General John Ashcroft had broadened the bureau's authority to detain those suspected of being undocumented.³⁹

The majority of agents asserted that their office did not enforce immigration law because it was not within their mandate. Said one agent, "We don't do immigration [enforcement]; we investigate criminal matters, that's our goal. [Immigration enforcement is] something for immigration [authorities], not for us."

³⁹ Kelli Arena and Terry Frieden, "FBI Granted Expanded Immigration Enforcement Powers," *CNN.com*, March 20, 2003.

Six survey respondents said they were authorized to refer undocumented immigrants to ICE or DHS. But only one of these said that he or she was likely to detain someone who was out of status. Another five said they rarely acted on their power to enforce immigration policy. As one FBI agent noted, “We’ve been given immigration powers, but we don’t practice [them].”

Despite their varied understandings of official policies, however, most of the agents we spoke with indicated that they would enforce immigration violations if it would help them in an investigation. “We will basically use it as a tool if there is someone really undesirable who we are trying to get rid of,” said one deputy chief.

Different experiences with new counterterrorism priorities

Most of the police officers in our focus groups felt that their everyday work had not been affected by the greater national emphasis on counterterrorism. As one officer put it, “If I saw a car drive through and break into an airport, I’d treat it as a traffic violation, not a terrorist attack.” As noted earlier, this attitude may result from a lack of resources. It might also reflect a different perspective on their role in counterterrorism or skepticism toward federal priorities and policies: “They’ve disbanded the gang unit,” complained one police captain, “and what they don’t understand is that our ‘terrorists’ are our youth and our gangs.”

Yet, even if the average officer has not seen substantial changes, our telephone survey suggests that police officials, as well as representatives from the FBI, believe that local departments are carrying out counterterrorism and national security activities. This includes working closely with the FBI on investigations; sitting on a Joint Terrorism Task Force; cultivating informants; and in the words of one officer, getting “involved with the Threat Risk Assessments.”⁴⁰

Although much of this specialized work is performed by dedicated units or individuals within local police departments, some local police officials underscored the role that good overall relations with the Arab American community also play in developing counterterrorism intelligence and strategies. “The fact is...the collection of intelligence will come from the community. So a relationship and confidence with the [Arab American] community is important... We can’t afford to alienate them. Otherwise, we cut off our sources of information,” explained one police chief. “...Community policing is a lot of work, and when it started it wasn’t considered police work. [But] it is prevention.”

FBI agents report significant resources devoted to counterterrorism. Between 2001 and 2003, FBI counterterrorism investigations increased 183 percent while investigations of traditional

⁴⁰ It must be noted that only two other sites mentioned informants. Of those that did, one described a close working relationship with federal authorities. “Some of this happens through directed patrol. But we have paid informants through the terrorism task force. We have ongoing efforts with the Feds, the IRS, Immigration, and the CIA, etc. At the FBI building we have some people working as informants.”

targets, such as major drug trafficking, decreased by 60 percent.⁴¹ Unlike local police who reported little change in their everyday work, the FBI personnel we contacted have felt this shift away from traditional criminal investigations such as organized and financial crimes. “We are busy—basically swamped,” said one agent. “We diverted all of our resources to counterterrorism, and now we have been playing catch up with criminal matter.”

Building relationships with communities has helped the FBI gather intelligence. Like the police chief quoted earlier, nearly all of FBI respondents (14 of 16) indicated that outreach and relationship-building with Arab American communities were valuable intelligence gathering efforts. As a head of a local Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) stated, “[T]he natural by-product of [developing relationships] is intelligence building.” “[Relationship building] allows us to get a better grasp of potential threats,” said a special agent in charge. “Having this dialogue helps us to change our priorities,” said another FBI participant. Community members “don’t see us as a threat because we are not going to lock them up for immigration violations,” said one JTTF leader, adding, “I really can’t talk about the specifics, but we get a lot of information from our established relationships in the community.”

Greater contact between police and FBI

Federal directives aimed at increasing collaboration between federal and local law enforcement agencies have led to enhanced working relationships and the development of interagency initiatives and working groups.⁴² These include activities such as jointly sponsored town hall meetings, community working groups, and meetings with community leaders. Nearly all (34 of 37) local police respondents felt that cooperation with federal agencies had improved since September 11.

Joint Terrorism Task Forces are important conduits for information. JTTFs are partnerships between FBI field offices, other federal agencies (including DHS, ICE, CIA, and the IRS), and state and local law enforcement agencies that focus on counterterrorism activities. “We deal mostly with international-based threats or threats connected to an international group,” said one JTTF participant. “We also do anything out of the airports; we have an e-mail threat program, and we respond to any kind of suspicious packages or bomb threats in our jurisdiction.” Fourteen of the 16 local police departments in the telephone survey were involved with a JTTF. FBI respondents in nine sites described the JTTF as the primary communication bridge between local and federal law enforcement.

⁴¹ US Government Accountability Office, *FBI Transformation*, Washington, DC: US Government Accountability Office, August 2004, GAO-04-1036.

⁴² Executive Order from President Bush creating Anti-Terrorism Task Forces, 9/11 Commission suggestion for Director of National Intelligence, The Patriot Act, and proposed CLEAR Act.

Nearly half of FBI field offices conducted trainings for local law enforcement. Respondents in seven of the 16 sites reported engaging in trainings addressing a range of topics, including hate crimes, cultural awareness, terrorism awareness, intelligence gathering, and responding to terrorist incidents.⁴³ Often, these trainings were coordinated with the FBI or supported by federal initiatives.

Two of the four departments in our case studies required their officers to participate in day-long trainings, including a “weapons of mass destruction” class. Several focus group participants from these sites did not find the trainings particularly useful or relevant to their everyday work, however. Some questioned the purpose of such trainings, saying that they are more “political” than practical. One officer bluntly dismissed the training. “They spend a day telling you to put on an expensive suit to protect you from biochemical weapons and then to run in the opposite direction,” he explained.

Local police reported a need for further cooperation and dialogue with the FBI. While almost all police departments suggested that there was increased communication between agencies, nearly two-thirds felt that the working relationship could be improved by even better communication and information sharing. They referred specifically to the federal agency’s tendency to withhold information. “If there was more open communication, it would help with the cooperation,” explained one police representative. “I think that there is still a culture within the federal agencies that they need to keep their intelligence to themselves and closely guard it.”

Relations between law enforcement agencies and Arab American communities

A central goal of our research was to learn about how Arab American communities and law enforcement have worked together to address public safety concerns. Our telephone survey showed outreach efforts varying from site to site, with some sites having ongoing dialogue and others having little to no communication. Based on these findings, we categorized the level of outreach on the part of communities, police departments, and FBI agencies as either “active,” “passive,” or “inactive.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Training included, among other activities, tabletop exercises, State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training (SLATT), and weapons of mass destruction training.

⁴⁴ The term “active” applies to communities, police departments, and FBI offices that exhibited commitment to consistent outreach and dialogue. Active communities were well organized, held frequent community events, and approached their local police and FBI offices to offer translation services, cultural sensitivity training, and other resources. Active police departments and FBI offices had established formal partnerships including advisory boards or task forces, held diversity trainings with their staff, and made working with the community a priority. Oftentimes, these police departments and FBI offices had specially assigned officers or units working as liaisons with Arab American communities in their jurisdiction.

Communities, police departments, and FBI offices that have held one or two joint meetings and made sporadic efforts at outreach were classified as “passive.” In many instances, these groups were able to organize and hold meetings in response to specific concerns yet lacked the capacity or desire to consistently maintain dialogue and establish formal partnerships. Whereas passive police departments and FBI offices may support community outreach even if unable to consistently maintain partnerships and dialogue, “inactive” groups were largely reactive in their

Overall, we found that communities tended to be more engaged, that is, more active in reaching out, than local police departments. Only five police departments (less than one-third) had tried to develop contacts with the Arab American community in their jurisdiction. Where they had, the communities were similarly engaged. Almost twice as many FBI agencies were engaged with Arab American communities: nine FBI sites qualified as active, compared to five active police sites. Moreover, only one FBI agency had no formal outreach activities, compared to five similarly inactive police sites (see Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Level of outreach, by number of sites

	Police	FBI	Community
Active	5	9	7
Passive	6	6	8
Inactive	5	1	1

With few exceptions, police officers consistently maintained that September 11 brought the Arab American community into focus for their departments. When asked to elaborate on how their relationship with Arab American communities had changed in that time, of 38 police responses, 21 noted a positive change, 14 saw no change, one described a negative change, and two did not comment (See Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: Police responses to survey question about changes since September 11

In terms of the issues we have talked about, in which ways has the relationship between law enforcement and Arab American communities changed since September 11, 2001? Can you explain how and why?			
Positive change	No change	Negative change	Don't know
21	14	1	2

Most of those whose departments had some type of outreach believed their efforts were initiated in response to concerns about backlash and hate crimes rather than national security. However, a handful of officers attributed their department's heightened awareness of Arab American communities to concerns about national security.

One of the most encouraging findings to emerge from the study was a strong desire among all participants for increased communication and dialogue. In the words of one FBI special agent in charge, "If [we're] going to be productive, we need to have a strong dialogue with the community."

policing philosophy with little to no knowledge of community structure, leadership, or concerns within Arab American communities in their jurisdiction. Similarly, inactive communities were not well organized and had engaged in little to no formal dialogue with their police departments or FBI offices.

Communities distinguished between federal and local agencies. Community participants generally drew a distinction between federal and local law enforcement—a finding not entirely consistent with other studies, which have shown that immigrants often confuse police with immigration authorities.⁴⁵ Arab American community representatives most often attributed the distinction between local and national law enforcement to Arab American’s experience with and third party accounts of the conduct of the FBI during investigations, local agencies’ better knowledge of the communities, and some local agencies’ decision to not participate in counterterrorism efforts.

Many community representatives were suspicious of and/or intimidated by the FBI, feelings they generally did not have toward the local police. Corroborating this point, an FBI agent observed that Arab Americans “are concerned with ICE, the FBI, maybe Customs [and the] AUSA [Assistant United States Attorneys]. They don’t have issues with [local law enforcement].”

Barriers to working together

At the end of each telephone interview survey, FBI, police, and community respondents were asked to identify any barriers they faced when working on issues of crime and public safety with members of the other respondent groups. Drawing on their responses and additional information gathered from the focus groups, we discovered that community leaders, police officers, and FBI personnel overwhelmingly cited similar barriers to greater inter-group cooperation. Exhibit 7 shows the most frequently mentioned barriers in descending order.⁴⁶

Exhibit 7: Comparison of top five barriers mentioned by type of respondent

Community leaders	Police personnel	FBI personnel
1 Distrust of law enforcement	1 Distrust of police by community	1 Distrust of FBI by community
2 Lack of cultural awareness	2 Reluctance or fear of having contact with law enforcement	2 Reluctance or fear of having contact with law enforcement
3 Reluctance or fear of having contact with law enforcement	3 Language	3 Immigration status
4 Language	4 Perception that Arab American communities have a closed culture	4 Experiences in home countries
5 Immigration status	5 Lack of cultural awareness	5 Lack of resources and workload

⁴⁵ L. Herbst and S. Walker, “Language Barriers in the Delivery of Police Services: A Study of Police and Hispanic Interactions in a Midwestern City,” *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 29, no. 4 (2001): 329–340; Ramirez, *Developing Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Communities: A Promising Practices Guide*.

⁴⁶ Interviewee responses were coded in the analysis phase by researchers into the categories listed.

Among all three groups, distrust was the most frequently cited barrier to better relations. Community representatives, who were more likely to have ongoing dialogue and cooperative relationships with local police than with the FBI (see previous section), reported greater levels of trust in local police than in the FBI. However, they reported having more direct contact—often in the form of questioning—with the FBI.

FBI respondents were well aware of community members' discomfort with them. One assistant special agent in charge of an FBI field office cited Arab Americans' "tremendous lack of trust" in the FBI as the biggest barrier to greater cooperation between these two parties. However, a handful of law enforcement participants—both police and FBI—mentioned their own reservations about the trustworthiness of the community as well.

Another frequently cited barrier was inadequate cultural awareness. Among community respondents, this was the second most frequently cited barrier; among police respondents it was the fifth. Only FBI respondents did not identify cultural awareness as a major concern—a single agent cited it as a barrier. "What was needed was true understanding of the community and Islam," said a community member describing relations with the FBI, noting that "a community that trusts law enforcement would be vigilant in stopping terrorism."

Overall, community members' responses aligned more closely with the responses of local law enforcement than with the responses of FBI agents, a possible consequence of the agencies' different mandates. FBI respondents' more frequent mention of immigration status and of Arab Americans' past experiences with law enforcement in their countries of origin may reflect their greater involvement in immigration enforcement.

Recommendations for improving law enforcement-community relations

In addition to identifying barriers to better relations among Arab American communities and law enforcement agencies, this research sought to mine participants' experiences to begin identifying ways in which these barriers might be effectively overcome.

Exhibit 8 highlights the research participants' most frequently cited ideas and suggestions.

Exhibit 8: Comparison of top six solutions for overcoming barriers to working together mentioned by type of respondent

Community leaders	Police personnel	FBI personnel
1 Cultural awareness training	1 Improve/initiate communication and dialogue	1 Improve/initiate communication and dialogue
2 Improve/initiate communication and dialogue	2 Cultural awareness training	2 Increase resources for outreach
3 Hold meetings/forums	3 Recruit from Arab American community	3 Cultural awareness training
4 Recruit from Arab American community	4 Build trust	4 Identify and work with strong community leaders
5 Strengthen community leadership/increase political capital	5 Hold meetings/forums	5 Be more accessible
6 Appoint a community-police liaison	6 Appoint a community-police liaison	6 Involve religious leaders

We found that community representatives and law enforcement officials—including the FBI—largely agree on the steps that ought to be taken.⁴⁷ For example, cultural awareness training for law enforcement staff and better communication were high scorers in all three groups. We did, however, also find some noteworthy differences. For example, community leaders placed a higher priority on cultural awareness training, while police and FBI respondents emphasized initiating or improving communication and dialogue. Similarly, while many community and local police participants thought law enforcement agencies should recruit more in Arab American communities, this was a recommendation of only one FBI agent.

Drawing on the information presented in Exhibit 8 and our own wider observations afforded by our national research perspective, we offer the following recommendations for each of the three stakeholder group.

Steps communities can take

Participate in training. Among community participants, cultural awareness training and education for local and federal officers, with a focus on Arab cultures in their communities, was the most frequently cited solution to barriers to better cooperation. Their view found support in our finding that sites with a relatively high level of cooperation had developed cultural awareness trainings with input from the community.

⁴⁷ Interviewee responses were coded in the analysis phase by researchers into the categories listed.

Community trainers: An example from a medium-size police department

In a site with an “active” police department and community, the director of a community advocacy group described how his organization collaborated with the chief of police to develop cultural training for local officers after September 11:

The chief has allowed us to give presentations and sensitivity training to all officers throughout last year on relations with the community. They are eight two-hour sessions, and we are going to do it again in June and July. We have been able to identify certain areas of importance for law enforcement. We train on gender issues, cultural nuances, dress, and religious nuances. We teach basic things about beliefs.

“There is no doubt that this training helped,” he concluded. Since the trainings, he added, his office does not “get many complaints from the community” about how they are treated by the local police.

Initiate dialogue. Developing or initiating communication and dialogue was the second most frequently mentioned solution among community respondents. Communities could initiate contact with law enforcement agencies by inviting local police officials and FBI personnel to community events or other meetings held in the community, as was the case in communities in our study. In a site with positive police-community relations, the police chief described how the Arab American community has “made our job easier because they have made a significant effort to integrate. From a cultural standpoint, they are visible and proud and invite you to organized events like weddings.”

Attend meetings and forums. Another strategy, mentioned by law enforcement and community participants, is for both groups to consistently attend and actively participate in meetings and forums, which can be important methods to formalizing dialogue and communication. We found that it was important for community leaders and organizations to notify law enforcement of appropriate times and to participate in regular precinct or station community meetings.

Assist in recruitment. Given the stated desire among community and local police respondents for greater Arab American representation in law enforcement agencies, communities are encouraged to collaborate with law enforcement to identify ways to attract community members into the policing profession.

Strengthen communities. As discussed earlier, the Arab American community is not monolithic. Moreover, interethnic conflict can undermine building a strong and organized community. A number of community leaders emphasized a need for more Arab American community building and increased political participation. In addition, communities are encouraged to confront existing issues, such as acknowledging internal unlawful behavior, so that police and communities can engage in problem solving.

Steps local law enforcement can take

Increase communication and dialogue. Given the high level of support across all three groups for increases in communication, local police agencies should prioritize initiating or improving communication and dialogue with the Arab American community. Honest, meaningful dialogue can be the first step toward bridging the gaps that exist between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Without ongoing communication, misunderstandings and misinformation can develop and have a detrimental effect, as community policing literature has shown.

Develop person-to-person contact. Community leaders identified person-to-person contact as an important part of establishing relationships and doing outreach. And they emphasized the importance of face-to-face dialogue, rather than alternatives such as telephone or e-mail contact. Some community leaders—as well as police officers of Arab descent—suggested that having an Arab American community member initiate contact with the community often helps open the door: “A non-Arab who invites the [members of the Arab American] community to dinner or to a function will not have the same turnout as if someone from the Arab American community invites them on [law enforcement’s] behalf.”

Some participants advocated a specific three-pronged approach when attempting to contact members of the community: start by sending either a letter or similar overture to the person; follow up with a phone call; and make a personal follow-up visit.

Provide cultural awareness training. Many of the police officers and administrators said training was critical to their jobs. Like community leaders, police officers emphasized training on cultural and religious issues. Officers specifically asked for training on Arab culture; basic Arabic words; customary behaviors, such as how to enter a mosque; cultural considerations when arresting someone; and cultural considerations when interrogating someone. Both groups noted that it is also important to involve community members as part of the training. “We have to educate them on our culture, and they have to educate us about their [police] culture,” said a political advocate and community leader.

Recruit more Arab Americans into law enforcement. While it is important to train officers to be sensitive and knowledgeable about Arab culture, it is also important to recruit people from the Arab American community itself. This was a common sentiment among police respondents, although most agreed that the process should begin with dialogue and more regular contact before moving on to recruitment.

Recruiting within Arab American communities: Strategies and ideas

- **Focus on young people**
Cultural ideas about jobs and experiences in immigrants' home countries may make careers in law enforcement unappealing. Focusing on young people by working in schools may begin to break down this barrier.
- **Translate recruitment materials into Arabic**
In one of the “active case study sites, the police department translated recruitment materials into Arabic and handed them out at a police-community forum. Across sites, community members frequently offered to translate documents. This is another opportunity for law enforcement agencies to reach out to Arab American residents.
- **Provide incentives for Arabic-speaking officers**
Some police agencies give officers incentives for speaking Spanish. None of the police departments in the case study sites offered such an incentive for Arabic speakers. Such an incentive might encourage willingness to join the department.
- **Expedite citizenship for recruits of Arab descent**
A liaison office in one of the most active sites suggested expediting citizenship for new immigrants who are interested in becoming police officers. This strategy requires an existing relationship with new immigrant communities.

Identify the needs of the community. Evidence from sites with good police-community relations and active outreach had one key thing in common: they began their efforts by identifying the needs of the community. “When issues come up, we reach out to communities to find the answers instead of sitting in a room with police trying to find answers,” said one police official.

Create a community liaison position. Across the 16 study sites, three police departments had an official liaison assigned to work with the Arab American community; three sites had unofficial liaison officers; one site had an advisory board comprising 15 Arab American leaders; and nine sites had no liaison. A sergeant from an “active” outreach department observed that regular officers may not fully realize that a good relationship with the community helps them do their jobs. Indeed, the correlation we found between the existence of outreach positions and relatively high levels of cooperation among community and law enforcement suggest that liaisons can play a vital role for communities and police departments in smoothing out situations before patrol officers are confronted with a problem.

Steps FBI field offices can take

Training and cultural awareness. Cultural awareness training was the third most frequent recommendation of FBI personnel. Several FBI respondents noted that insensitive agent conduct—from not saying “excuse me” to “knocking down the front door”—can cause tension during investigations. Field offices should provide training on cultural norms and religion, particularly around understanding Islam, and should involve communities in

devising the training. FBI respondents stressed the importance of recognizing cultural norms, which in other cases might be viewed as strange or suspicious behavior. For example, a few well-informed agents mentioned that direct eye contact—usually interpreted as evidence of being open and honest—is considered rude in many Arab countries.

Communication and dialogue. Like community and local police respondents, nearly all of the FBI personnel interviewed stressed the need for more dialogue and consistent communication with community leaders and residents. The topics such exchanges might cover include information about the FBI’s mandate, specific policies and practices, and training on hate- and bias-motivated victimization.

Provide resources for community outreach. The second most frequently mentioned solution among FBI respondents was increasing resources for outreach. “The only barrier is the criminal workload in this office,” explained one FBI special agent in charge. “It gets in the way of vigorously getting out there and doing outreach.” Specific recommendations included more resources in the form of increased personnel and funding for a full-time liaison to Arab American communities and to address hate crimes.

Conclusion

The events of September 11, 2001, sent shockwaves through law enforcement agencies and Arab American communities alike. Law enforcement staff—both federal and local—are grappling with new counterterrorism responsibilities, including a stepped up role in immigration enforcement. At the same time, people of Arab descent, who before the attacks were largely unnoticed in the fabric of American life, find themselves the center of attention that is mostly unwelcome.

According to our findings, these developments have generated substantial fear among Arab Americans. But even more than fear of being physically assaulted or victimized by other individuals, Arab Americans fear falling victim to government actions, especially through immigration enforcement and surveillance. This has left many members of the community hesitant to engage with law enforcement for any reason—an outcome that bodes poorly for traditional law enforcement services. One of the more promising outcomes, however—and a finding that defies expectations set by prior research—is that most Arab Americans we spoke with were well aware of the difference between the FBI and local police. The former, likely because of their explicit involvement in federal counterterrorism efforts, engendered far more suspicion. Local police, in comparison, enjoyed a notable—if still modest—degree of goodwill.

Given this context and pre-existing support among police agencies for community policing, law enforcement agencies might have been expected to place a premium on improving relations with Arab American communities. Yet only five police agencies in 16 sites, and just over half of the surveyed FBI sites, were reaching out to Arab American communities. Where such outreach

was evident, though, our findings indicated that dialogue and communication can substantially improve relations between Arab American communities and law enforcement, even in the shadow of September 11.

Although each of the survey groups had its own distinct set of issues, all three expressed dissatisfaction with the heightened emphasis on immigration enforcement. Arab Americans feared being singled out and subjected to unfair treatment. To different degrees, FBI and police participants alike revealed ambivalence, inconsistency, and, in some cases, hostility toward federal pressure to enforce these laws. Looking forward, the practical viability of immigration enforcement in the service of counterterrorism may need to be reconsidered. At the very least, law enforcement officials at all levels will need to better define their roles in this area—particularly if they want to enjoy the benefits associated with the trust and engagement that derive from community policing.

Overall, our findings are consistent with the conclusions of other scholars who argue that, even in the aftermath of 9/11, law enforcement should remain committed to the principles of community-oriented policing. This means that in Arab American communities, where fear of police and federal authorities is palpable—indeed, as in all immigrant communities—law enforcement agencies must actively seek to establish positive, trusting relations if they are to enlist willing partners in addressing crime, public safety, as well as issues related to national security.

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Law Enforcement and Community Toolkit

The following Toolkit consists of resources for law enforcement officials and Arab American communities to develop stronger relations and partnerships. Law enforcement agencies and communities are encouraged to analyze local problems and concerns and use these resources, as appropriate.

Useful Publications

Building Strong Police-Immigrant Community Relations: Lessons from a New York City Project, Vera Institute of Justice, 2005.

Anita Khashu, Robin Busch, Zainab Latif, and Francesca Levy

In 2004, the New York City Police Department and the Vera Institute of Justice collaborated on a series of forums to strengthen relations between police and new immigrant communities. The organizers recognized that because immigrants interact with law enforcement in a variety of ways, regular channels of communication and mutual understanding are essential to build trust and resolve conflict. During the forums, representatives of Arab American, African, and emerging Latin American immigrant communities met with police officials to discuss issues affecting their communities. This report describes the lessons learned from the resulting discussions and is intended as a guide for other police departments, local-level government officials, and community groups interested in building better relations between police and immigrant communities.

Download the report at: http://www.vera.org/publication_pdf/300_564.pdf

Developing Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Communities: A Promising Practices Guide. Boston: Northeastern University, 2004.

D.A. Ramirez, S.C. O'Connell, and R. Zafar.

This guide is part of a larger study at Northeastern University—"Partnering for Prevention and Community Safety Initiative (PfP)." From May 2003 to May 2004, PfP studied promising partnerships among community leaders, local law enforcement, and federal law enforcement in three sites: Southeastern Michigan, Southern California, and Greater Boston. This guide describes the benefits and challenges of institutionalized partnerships and outlines promising practices that can be used by other sites that may be interested in pursuing collaborations with community.

Download the report at: <http://www.ace.neu.edu/pfp/projects/guide.php>

Protecting Your Community from Terrorism: Five-Volume Series

- *Protecting Your Community from Terrorism Volume 1: Local-Federal Partnerships*
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), March 2003.

This PERF white paper funded by the COPS Office is based in large part on an executive session in November 2002 that brought together chief law enforcement executives, FBI special agents in charge and antiterrorist experts, and other leading thinkers on how law enforcement will deal with the new terrorist threat.

Download the report at: <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1362>

- *Protecting Your Community from Terrorism Volume 2: Working with Diverse Communities*
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), March 2004.

This PERF white paper is the result of an executive session in June 2003 sponsored by the COPS Office which brought together law enforcement chief executives, diverse community leaders and advocates, and federal law enforcement officials.

Download the report at: <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1364>

- *Protecting Your Community from Terrorism Volume 3: Preparing for and Responding to Bioterrorism*
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), September 2004.

This report discusses the relative threats of various biological and chemical agents and the response challenges for first responders.

Download the report at: <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1365>

- *Protecting Your Community from Terrorism Volume 4: The Productions and Sharing of Intelligence*
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), February 2005.

This white paper discusses the importance of intelligence-led policing and its correlation with problem-oriented policing principles.

Download the report at: <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1438>

- *Protecting Your Community from Terrorism Volume 5: Partnerships to Promote Homeland Security*
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), November 2005.

Community policing should be a key component of the nation's homeland security efforts. That's just one of more than 40 recommendations found in *Partnerships to Promote Homeland Security*.

Download the report at: <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1642>

Law Enforcement Resources

Learn more about your community

- One of the most important things law enforcement agencies can do when beginning to develop relationships with local communities is to learn more about the communities they serve. A powerful, accessible, and relatively easy way to do this is to make use of the U.S. Census (<http://www.census.gov/>).
- Another way is to reach out to community organizations in your area. National Arab American organizations may have local chapters, contacts, or other resources in your jurisdiction. Some organizations that may be helpful include:
 - The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) <http://www.cair-net.org/>
 - American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) <http://www.adc.org/> and the ADC Research Institute <http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=277>
 - Arab American Institute (AAI) <http://www.aaiusa.org/>
 - Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) <http://www.mpac.org/>

Offer resources to your patrol officers

- The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has published a pamphlet for law enforcement, “Law Enforcement Official’s Guide to the Muslim Community” (<http://www.cair.com/asp/0002.asp>).
- You may want to consider developing your own Patrol Officer Fact Sheet. The following document is a copy of a fact sheet on Arab culture developed by Arab American community participants for patrol officers assigned to the seven New York City Police Department precincts with the highest concentrations of Arab American residents. The fact sheet was developed as a part of the COPS-funded project *Building Strong Police-Immigrant Community Relations: Lessons from a New York City Project*, Vera Institute of Justice, 2005.



New York City's Arab Communities

Arab-Americans live throughout New York City but are most heavily concentrated in a handful of communities. They live in Bay Ridge and Sunset Park (068/072 precincts), Sheepshead Bay (061 precinct), and the Atlantic Avenue area (076/084 precincts) in Brooklyn; Astoria (114 precinct) and Woodside (108 precinct) in Queens; and parts of Staten Island (122 precinct). They have immigrated to New York from all 22 countries of the Arab world: Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Because of the severity of law enforcement in Arab countries, many Arab immigrants fear the police and may hesitate to contact authorities. Since September 11, 2001, community leaders report that this problem has worsened and that Arab-Americans have greater fear of police. These factors make it extremely important for police officers to understand cultural norms in order to establish a good rapport with the Arab community.

WHAT CODES OF CONDUCT SHOULD I KNOW WHEN ENTERING AN ARAB PERSON'S HOME?

- Honor and hospitality are important parts of Arab culture. When greeting an Arab person, be sure to shake hands and make eye contact. While some Arab people do not shake hands with those of the opposite sex, it is generally preferable to offer your hand to someone who does not shake hands than to not offer your hand to someone who does.
- It is also important to understand that Arab people communicate closely. If an Arab person gets very close to you, it is not necessarily a sign of aggression.
- It is considered offensive to ask questions about personal religious behavior or politics in Arab countries.
- Many Arab Muslim households remove their shoes at the door because carpeting is used for prayers.
- It is recommended that you visit as a male/female pair. Some Arab people will not admit persons of the other sex into their home unless a relative of that sex is also present.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR RELIGIONS OF THE ARAB COMMUNITY?

Arab people practice many religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. A follower of the religion of Islam is a Muslim. Not all Arab people are Muslim, and not all Muslims are of Arab descent. The majority of Arabs in the U.S. are Christian.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW WHEN ENTERING A MOSQUE?

- You may be asked to remove your shoes before entering a mosque.
- Women are expected to dress modestly and may be asked to cover their heads. Men wear long pants and shirts. Women and men often pray in different areas.
- An imam is the leader of prayer at a mosque and an important community leader. If there is a need to address large groups of Arab-American Muslims on a particular public safety or quality of life issue, it would be useful to reach out to the imam.
- The imam gives sermons on Fridays, the holiest day of the Islamic week.

WHY DO SOME MUSLIM WOMEN WEAR A HEAD SCARF?

The word *hijab* means modesty and can be used to refer to a head scarf sometimes worn by Muslim women. This is a religious, not cultural, practice. If police deem it necessary for a woman to remove her head covering, it is recommended that it be done in the presence of female police officers, not male.

WHAT LANGUAGES DO ARAB PEOPLE SPEAK?

- There are several dialects of Arabic spoken in different regions of the Arabic world. Speakers of different dialects are not necessarily able to communicate with each other.
- Arabic is not the only language spoken by Arab people. Berber, Kurdish, and Aramaic are a few of the many other languages spoken in Arab countries. Because of colonization, French and English are often spoken in Arab countries.

USEFUL PHRASES IN ARABIC

- **Hello:** Marhba
- **Goodbye:** Ma saHaama
- **How are you:** Keef haHak (when speaking to a man), or Keef haHek (when speaking to a woman).
- **Fine:** Kway-iss (if you are a man), or Kway-issa (if you are a woman).
- **What's your name?:** Ma issmak (when speaking to a man), or Ma issmooky (when speaking to a woman).
- **My name is:** Ana iss-mee.
- **What is the exact address where you live?:** Ma enwanek?
- **What is your telephone number?:** Aish raqem telefonek?
- **What is your date of birth?:** Ma hoowah tarikh meeladek (when speaking to a man)? or Ma tarikh meeladooky (when speaking to a woman)?
- **May I see your driver's license?:** Moomkin ashoof rokhsetek (when speaking to a man)? or Moomkin ashoof rokhsetokey (when speaking to a woman)?
- **Do you understand English?:** Hail tefhem Ingleyzy (when speaking to a man)? or Hail tefhemmy Ingleyzy (when speaking to a woman)?
- **Do you understand what I said?:** Hail tefhem ma agool (when speaking to a man)? or Hail tefhemmy ma agool (when speaking to a woman)?
- **I don't understand:** La lem efhem.
- **Thank you:** Shook-run.
- **You're welcome:** Aaf-wan.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

To learn more about New York City's Arab communities, contact the following organizations:

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Contact: Monica Tarazi (212) 480-2955 or (212) 480-2956
80 Wall Street, Suite 718, New York, NY 10005

Arab American Association of New York

Contact: Dr. Ahmad Jaber (718) 745-3523
7111 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11209

Arab American Family Support Center

Contact: Emira Habiby Brown (718) 643-8000
150 Court Street, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201



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Community Resources

Learn more about your police department

- Attend your local police department's Citizen's Police Academy. Citizen's Police Academies are designed to provide insight into the internal workings of the police department, including how police officers perform their duties and why particular policies and practices are in place. These courses are free and usually require a 10-12 week commitment, with most classes held on weeknights. Check with your local police department for further information.
- Participate in Citizen Ride Along programs. Some police departments offer their citizens an opportunity to ride along with patrol officers and experience first-hand the typical day-to-day challenges that officers face. Check with your local police department for further information.

Explore what community organizations are already doing

- Reach out to any community organizations in your area. National organizations may have local chapters, contacts, or other resources in your community. Some organizations that may be helpful include:
 - The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) <http://www.cair-net.org/>
 - American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) <http://www.adc.org/>
 - Arab American Institute (AAI) <http://www.aaiusa.org/>
 - Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) <http://www.mpac.org/>

Hold a community session on local rules, laws, and regulations

- We often heard from community residents that law enforcement policies and practices in the United States can be different from those in recent immigrants' home countries. You may want to consider holding sessions to increase community understanding of available police services and resources. Your local police department's community outreach division may already have experience leading these types of educational sessions. Topics can include when and how to dial 911, how convenience store owners can work in partnership with the police, and your rights when being questioned by the police.