

CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL LEADERS FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 19, 2021

The Divided Community Project offers this brief checklist, in case it might be helpful as you do contingency planning regarding your community's reactions to the verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial for charges stemming from George Floyd's death.

Before the trial verdict is announced:

- ✓ **DEVELOP AND SHARE SAFE ALTERNATIVES** for people to express safely their emotions, including their grief, outrage, celebration, or opposition to other groups, so that, depending on the community's reactions, the indicated events/opportunities can be quickly announced.
- ✓ **ESTABLISH A NETWORK** of individuals and groups that are influential with some community members (faith leaders, directors of advocacy groups, athletes/entertainers, social media influencers, bar leaders, etc.) who would be willing to speak out jointly in favor of peace on short notice.
- ✓ **CONTACT KEY GROUPS** right away to discuss their concerns and explain safety plans. These groups would include likely demonstrators (what they are permitted to do, what can be done to preserve safety of marchers, discussions of routes and distancing of opposing groups), local business owners (regarding plans to safeguard their premises and options available to them), university and school leaders (preparation for them to communicate with students and, in the case of schools, with parents; prepare for demonstrations and walkouts), and faith leaders (clarity re plans, counseling). When feasible, develop consensus ground rules that both protestors and safety forces will follow. See, e.g., <https://www.thetruthaboutguns.com/dont-shoot-coalition-rules-for-police-on-upcoming-michael-brown-shooting-protests/>
- ✓ **CREATE A COMMUNICATIONS TEAM** that will convey resources and safety information and can be convened quickly, including expanding staff by consultants where needed to deal with national media, social media, and hard-to-reach groups, such as recent immigrants and national media. Consider including spokespersons from the protestors and community advocates in your group.
- ✓ **PREPARE FOR VIOLENCE AND LOOTING** by those who might try to blend in with peaceful marchers with the intent to commit violence, loot, or destroy property and encourage others to do the same. The U.S. Community Relations Service offers guidance to train volunteer event marshals who can serve as a buffer between the marchers and safety forces, help to protect the safety of marchers, and keep them apart from those who do not have peaceful aims. <https://www.justice.gov/crs/our-work/training/event-marshalls> Marshals from the community can also de-escalate with the marchers and avert the confusion for law enforcement, thereby reducing the chances of arrests or chemical weapons use against peaceful marchers as law enforcement seeks to remove violent individuals. Two former U.S. Community Relations Service administrators discuss some of these ideas at https://youtube/Iq_LKDHsV7I

DIVIDED COMMUNITY PROJECT, THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY MORITZ COLLEGE OF LAW
go.osu.edu/dcptoolkit | @TrustDCP

*Recipient of the American Bar Association's 2018
John W. Cooley Lawyer as Problem Solver Award*



CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL LEADERS FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 19, 2021

Once the trial outcome is announced:

- ✓ **SPEAK OUT IMMEDIATELY AND FREQUENTLY** as events develop. Rumors spread, community members need reassurance, and trust is fragile.
 - **Describe the plans** made to keep both the community and demonstrators safe during large gatherings, and leverage traditional and social media platforms frequently as events unfold. When plans are not yet settled, communicate the values that will govern decisions (e.g., “We will always facilitate the broadest expression of views consistent with protecting the safety and well-being of those involved in the demonstrations or community.”).
 - **Frame the situation** by summarizing what has happened or is occurring, noting expression of underlying angst about racial injustice, recognizing the impact of the situation throughout the community, and describing the often-competing values involved in improving the situation. For a discussion of short-term and long-term plans in Sanford, Florida, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POakuVddgsg>.
 - **Expand understanding across divisions** by using your communications to help people understand each other. Acknowledge, where pertinent, that decisions/situations impact people differently. Explain why that is occurring and point out the value of allowing people to be heard and afforded opportunities to flourish.
 - **Reference community aspirations** (such as the just-mentioned desire that all residents are want to share the fears and frustration of a portion of residents) shared by the vast majority of residents within each part of the community.
 - **Convey authenticity** by responding quickly to acknowledge the urgency felt by the community, “getting through” to people by speaking more informally/less “bureaucratically.”
- ✓ **ESTABLISH A COMMAND CENTER** that includes decision-makers for safety forces, experts in de-escalation, communications officials, and community engagement officials who have relationships with various community groups. Consider including some community member advocate representatives within the command center if the trust level is sufficient. Make decisions on the tone that will be conveyed by law enforcement actions. For example, former police chief Rick Myers suggests, “Keep tactical or crowd control officers who may be using protective uniforms out of sight until absolutely needed to quell riotous behavior, so as to not unintentional escalate the violence. Encourage officers in the standard uniforms or ‘soft uniforms’ to engage the protestors individually in dialogue to increase trust rather than escalate violence.”
- ✓ **IMPLEMENT PLANS MADE IN ADVANCE** for safe alternatives (depending on the predominate emotions of residents), joint calls for calm by community influencers, and updates to key groups involved in demonstrations.

For Additional Information, see

- From DCP: <https://go.osu.edu/dcptoolkit>
- See also <https://www.edurisksolutions.org/blogs/?Id=3370> AND <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/03/919957881/policing-strategies-to-keep-protests-peaceful>

DIVIDED COMMUNITY PROJECT, THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY MORITZ COLLEGE OF LAW
go.osu.edu/dcptoolkit | @TrustDCP

Recipient of the American Bar Association’s 2018
John W. Cooley Lawyer as Problem Solver Award

