

Community Leaders' Checklist

for Use in Divisive Situations

- ✓ **Consult with community leaders** who are community bridge builders or have a stake in the conflict to listen to their concerns. Seek their help in constructive communication and problem solving before you make decisions about next steps. Let the public know about the consultations. Keep these leaders informed on an ongoing basis.
- ✓ **Develop a protocol** between the mayor and law enforcement and let the public know that the mayor and law enforcement are working together on a constructive response. Keep city/county department directors in the communication loop.
- ✓ **Seek counsel** concerning what other leaders have found helpful in analogous situations from organizations such as those listed on the reverse side of this card.
- ✓ **Frame** the matter (“What we are facing together is...”) to include the longer-term underlying issues as well as immediate concerns. The aim is to demonstrate your understanding of the depth and breadth of issues and to help the public understand the perspective of their fellow residents.
- ✓ **Acknowledge** the pain that may fall unevenly on residents but that it is the shared hope of all to deal with the hurt of any. Take time to acknowledge that city/county staff may be feeling the pain as well.
- ✓ **Lay the groundwork for more** discussion/deliberation regarding both the immediate and underlying concerns, and commit publicly to these plans.
- ✓ **Use communication** approaches and other means to reach and be trusted by each pertinent group within the community, city/county staff, social media influencers, and external audiences. Monitor social media and counter misinformation. Move quickly to reflect the urgency felt by the public.
- ✓ **Offer safe avenues** for residents and staff to express their views and emotions.

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Soon After:

- ✓ **Work with stakeholders** to develop solutions to both longer-term problems and immediate concerns and to implement them.
- ✓ **Let the public know** how issues are being addressed through regular reports. Keep residents engaged in addressing the issues.

The Bridge Initiative is part of The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law's Divided Community Project

<https://go.osu.edu/dcpbridge>.

To contact the Bridge Initiative, contact Thomas Battles,
tbattles38@yahoo.com or 678.993.9293.

Other organizations that might offer assistance:

- U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service, <https://www.justice.gov/crs>, askcrs@usdoj.gov, 202.305.2935
- Local community mediation programs
- State or city civil rights commissions
- International City/County Management Association, icma.org



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