

NEW ERA OF PUBLIC SAFETY

AN ADVOCACY TOOLKIT FOR FAIR, SAFE,
AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING

Opportunities for Action

Sometimes, events create opportunities to pressure different decision-makers in the system. These include:

The appointment of a new head of a law enforcement agency

Whenever a new police chief is being selected, community members have the opportunity to educate the mayor and advocate for candidates who have a particular vision or approach to policing, relevant experience, and a strong track record.

Budget season

Every year, state and local legislators approve budgets, including budgets for law enforcement. This creates an important opportunity to advocate for changes to the structure, function, and resources of a police department and against allocation of funds to buy military equipment.

Critical incidents

Individual incidents of excessive or lethal force, or of other officer misconduct, are important opportunities to pressure officials to make necessary changes to policing policies and practices, as well as to increase accountability and oversight.

Release of data

If the police department regularly releases information about stops, searches, and arrests, it can create opportunities to call for changes to the department's practices and priorities based on what the data show.

Elections

Elections for key positions, such as mayor, sheriff, and district attorney, present critical opportunities to raise issues about the impact of policing policies and to press candidates for their position on policing and public safety during public fora, one-on-one interactions, and campaign rallies; in the press; and on social media.

Oversight hearings

Local legislators can call oversight hearings and ask questions of agencies they fund. Typically, the public safety committee conducts hearings about how police departments operate, but hearings can also be called on topics such as race relations, health, and safety. Hearings offer opportunities to testify about policing practices, to pressure legislators, and to ask the department specific questions.



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