

# Learning about Law Enforcement

*An Educator's Resource Guide  
for Classroom Projects*



**COPS**

Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice



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OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS





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# Introduction

**On behalf of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF)** and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), we would like to welcome you to *Learning About Law Enforcement: An Educator's Resource Guide for Classroom Projects*. This guide is intended to help educators plan constructive classroom projects and discussions. The resources, which may be adjusted or adapted by educators to best serve their classroom's needs, are intended to help young people learn more about law enforcement, the critical role officers play in our society, and the dangers or stressors they may face.

The profession of law enforcement is one of the most dangerous in the nation. It is a job whose practitioners are frequently assaulted, injured, and sometimes killed while carrying out their duties. Officers may suffer from emotional trauma and poor health, and they have a shorter life expectancy than the average American. Many young people may not see a police officer every day and may not realize that law enforcement officers are responsible for protecting the public and enforcing our nation's laws in almost every sector of our society. From ensuring the flow of people and goods across our borders are secure to protecting students on campuses around the country and safeguarding public lands and native wildlife, our nation's law enforcement officers and officials are hard at work every day. This guide can help facilitate a greater understanding and bridge the gap between young people and law enforcement.

In the following pages, we have curated a selection of resources, tips, ideas, and exercises for instructors. This guide is recommended for Police Explorers or middle school-aged students and is structured to assist the teacher or facilitator as they direct the student through a short-term educational initiative. Educators need to consider these resources and their appropriateness for their classrooms in light of students' ages and abilities and may need to tailor or pick and choose different parts of some of these resources. Some of them may be appropriate as is, and some may not. This guide is intended to inform educators; it is their job to leverage this information to educate themselves and therefore their students.





## 1

# The History of Policing in the United States



**This law book, one of the oldest objects in the National Law Enforcement Museum's collection, includes many of the English-derived laws that governed early American policing, including law enforcement institutions like sheriffs and constables.**

## Scope

**A classroom discussion or activity** on the origins of law enforcement can help students learn about the different eras of American policing, especially if a timeline of major historical events and milestones is used as a template. For example, students may be surprised to see how much the role, mission, tools and technology, and compositions of some law enforcement agencies changed during the 20th century. Discussions and activities may also help them better understand the way law enforcement has shaped American history as a whole and come to have a broader appreciation for the standards and procedures that exist now. This section provides a high-level overview of the origins of American law enforcement and highlights the differing roles and responsibilities at some agencies today. The resources in this section will inform students about the broad history of law enforcement in the United States and introduce them to the many variations of law enforcement roles throughout the country. Later in this guide, students will

be introduced to the topic of officer safety and wellness, which will use all of the following sections as context to better understand the importance of recognizing the physical dangers and challenges enforcement officers face.

*The resources here are intended to provide supplemental information for students to learn about various facets of American law enforcement. Following the list of resources is a collection of relevant discussion topics written with these resources in mind to further engage students in learning and understanding the topic.*



**This one-handed restraint dating to 1874, a precursor to the handcuffs, was used by wrapping the chain around a suspect's wrist and holding the two bars between the officer's fingers.**

## Online and Reading Resources

Dees, Tim. 2021. **“Police Jobs A-Z: The Ultimate Guide to Law Enforcement Job Titles.”** Police1. Last modified October 7, 2021.

<https://www.police1.com/how-to-become-a-police-officer/articles/police-jobs-a-z-the-ultimate-guide-to-law-enforcement-job-titles-tizobe6n89cSGhXp/>

*Police1 lists more than 50 types of law enforcement roles employed today in the 18,000+ police agencies in the United States. Certain positions, like Bike Patrol Officer, feature an embedded video further detailing the responsibilities of the role.*

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Discover Policing. 2022a. **“Types of Law Enforcement Agencies.”** International Association of Chiefs of Police. Accessed May 2, 2022.

<https://www.discoverpolicing.org/explore-the-field/types-of-law-enforcement-agencies/>

*Discover Policing, a partnership between the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), provides an overview of different law enforcement agencies in the United States and their responsibilities.*

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Discover Policing. 2022b. **“Types of Sworn Law Enforcement.”** International Association of Chiefs of Police. Accessed May 2, 2022.

<https://www.discoverpolicing.org/explore-the-field/types-of-sworn-law-enforcement/>

*Discover Policing also provides an overview of different types of sworn law enforcement officers and their responsibilities.*

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**Officer James Bosco of the Garden City (New York) Police Department demonstrates the use of their newest traffic technology. The radar gun, a 1974 CRI Speedgun, is calibrated with a tuning fork to ensure accuracy in the field.**

## Online and Reading Resources *cont'd*

FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation). 2022a. **“A Brief History.”**

Accessed May 2, 2022.

<https://www.fbi.gov/history/brief-history>

*The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has a wealth of resources for students on its website. “A Brief History” offers a hundred-year overview of the agency from 1908 to 2008 with pages for famous cases and criminals, a gallery of notable artifacts in their collection, and histories of many field offices.*

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FBI. 2022b. **“Field Office Histories.”** Accessed May 2, 2022.

<https://www.fbi.gov/history/field-office-histories>

*Find the Field Office history closest to your location and be sure to research if they have any established student tours or a Teen Academy to enroll in. The FBI also takes speaker requests for classroom visits and has an Adopt-A-School Program that puts special agents and educators in touch to create programs to help kids improve academically and become good citizens.*

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FBI. 2022c. **“Mobile: Community Outreach.”** Accessed May 2, 2022.

<https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/mobile/community-outreach>

*The FBI offers several resources on this page that may work for school groups, explorer groups, or other groups. For the Community Outreach section, volunteers from the FBI may be available to help address community concerns related to crime, drugs, or violence. Also see their Teen Academy, Citizens Academy, FBI-SOS (Safe Online Surfing), and Speaker Requests.*

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**An explorer group visiting the National Law Enforcement Museum learns about the ways different substances are detected by forensic scientists.**

## Online and Reading Resources *cont'd*

Lloyd Sealy Library. 2022. **“Exhibit: From ‘Policewomen’ to ‘Police Officers.’”**

John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Accessed May 2, 2022.

<https://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/blog/exhibit-policewomen-police-officers>

*The John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York provides a brief history of women police officers from 1845 through the 1970s with a selection of movies and books for further reading.*

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NLEOMF (National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund). 2019.

**“Important Dates in Law Enforcement History.”** Last modified March 31, 2019.

<https://nleomf.org/memorial/facts-figures/dates-in-law-enforcement-history/>

*The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund has published a detailed timeline of significant dates in law enforcement from the 1600s to the present with historical information on fallen officers.*

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Ohio Attorney General. 2024. **“History.”** Accessed May 7, 2024.

<https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Law-Enforcement/Bureau-of-Criminal-Investigation/About-BCI/History>

*The Ohio Office of the Attorney General provides a brief history of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation.*



**Spotsylvania (Virginia)  
Sheriff's Deputy Kory  
Kelley and his K9 Dux  
pose with their statues  
at the National Law  
Enforcement Museum  
on opening day, October  
13, 2018.**

## Advanced Resource

Potter, Gary. 2013. **“The History of Policing in the United States, Part 1.”**

Eastern Kentucky University. Last modified June 25, 2013.

<https://ekuonline.eku.edu/blog/police-studies/the-history-of-policing-in-the-united-states-part-1/>

*Eastern Kentucky University offers a comprehensive six-part series about the history of policing in the United States. Instructors may find it helpful as a template for different historical eras of American law enforcement. Scroll to the bottom of the web page for links to the other essays in this series.*

## Discussion Topics

- After reading the history of your local FBI Field Office, is the class able to find an instance of that office having an effect on local history or American history as a whole? For example, the Alaska Anchorage Field Office was involved in the investigation of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, one of the largest environmental crime investigations in American history.
- After comparing the different types of law enforcement officers employed today outlined in the resources from Discover Policing and Police1, ask the students which kind of law enforcement career they'd be most interested in and why.
- Considering the timeline of important dates in law enforcement from the National Law Enforcement Museum, ask the class if they'd like to learn more about any of the fallen officers. Use the link at <https://nleomf.org/memorial/fallen-heroes/remembers> to access their remembrance page.
- After reviewing some of the notable women in early policing from resource #3, like Betty Blankenship and Elizabeth Robinson, discuss the obstacles that those women may have had to overcome as pioneers in their profession.





# 2

## Community Policing



**A school group learns about the history of fingerprinting and how fingerprints are collected today.**

### Scope

**Infographics and personal testimonials** captured on video are two helpful tools that can provide deeper insight into what community policing is. Infographics can help explain the major tenets of community policing and how they fit into an overarching goal or initiative. Video essays with comments both from the community and from officers illustrate how these groups come together to learn from each other to the benefit of all. Having the students observe community policing from both

perspectives will allow them to better empathize with the hard work it takes from everyone to achieve a community partnership. This section will help students better understand the intersection of law enforcement and their own communities. Some students may view law enforcement as something other than themselves—a force at work near them, but not with them. By engaging these resources, students will find examples of officers working in and with communities, helping to make their own communities better and building relationships students might not otherwise understand.

*The resources here are intended to provide supplemental information for students to learn about various facets of American law enforcement. Following the list of resources is a collection of relevant discussion topics written with these resources in mind to further engage students in learning and understanding the topic.*

## Online and Reading Resources

City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. 2019. “**A Day in the Life: Community Policing Specialist.**” YouTube. Last modified May 7, 2019.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X02PDrkL8-A>

*The Grand Rapids (Michigan) Police Department has a video profiling two of its full-time community policing specialists that takes the viewer through a day on the job as they communicate with community members, schools, and businesses to enhance community safety and education.*

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City of Lincoln, Nebraska. 2022. “**Community Based Policing.**” Accessed May 17, 2022.  
<https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Police/About-LPD/Community-Based-Policing>

*Some police departments have pages on their website dedicated to highlighting the work they do in engaging with their communities. One such agency is the Lincoln (Nebraska) Police Department. This page also has an engaging explanation of what community policing is and is not and provides a call to action for civilian involvement.*

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COPS Office (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services). 2014. **Community Policing Defined.** Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.  
<https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p157>

*The COPS Office has created a guide that delineates the basic tenets of community policing and partnerships for law enforcement. This high-level overview of the concept is filled with graphs and figures that convey these broad topics concisely.*

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**An explorer group learns about the science of calculating the trajectory of projectiles.**

## Online and Reading Resources *cont'd*

Discover Policing. 2022c. **“What Is Community Policing?”** Accessed May 17, 2022.

<https://www.discoverpolicing.org/explore-the-field/what-is-community-policing/>

*Discover Policing offers a thoughtful multipronged answer and resources for the question “What is Community Policing?”*

**Tip:** Under the “Explore Field” dropdown, you can click the “Real People Real Stories” button for personal accounts from officers around the country on what community policing means to them and the success they’ve found.

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NLEOMF (National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Fund). 2021. **“A Network of Support for Lasting Change.”** YouTube. Last modified June 18, 2021.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk\\_OYbsYXmc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk_OYbsYXmc)

*In partnership with Reuters; Engage Public Safety; MovementForward, Inc.; and the American Society for Evidence-Based Policing, as well as the Tempe (Arizona) and Montpelier (Vermont) Police Departments, NLEOMF has produced a panel discussion on bridging communication gaps and improving coordination with community organizations regarding policing.*

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NextGenTalks: The Future of Policing. 2021. **“Meeting between Gen Zers and Law Enforcement.”** YouTube. Last modified April 13, 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y86FvDX8WLM>

*NextGenTalks, an initiative of the National Gen Z and Millennial Community (NMC), hosted a 10-part video podcast series called The Future of Policing in partnership with the National Law Enforcement Museum. Law enforcement leaders and NMC members shared their perspectives on what American policing will look like in the years to come.*

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## Online and Reading Resources *cont'd*

Prince William County, Virginia. 2021. **“The BUZZ – Inaugural Community Fair – September 25, 2021.”** YouTube. Last modified September 30, 2021.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_hB7J55hWBI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hB7J55hWBI)

*The Prince William County (Virginia) Police Department has implemented an annual Community Fair designed to bring together the local law enforcement officers and the diverse community they serve so they can better understand one another. After the inaugural fair in 2021, they created a video highlighting the success of the event.*

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Stamper, Norm. 2016. **“Legitimate Community Policing: How Citizen Participation Creates a Successful and Collaborative Enterprise.”** Human Rights 42(1).

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/2016-17-vol-42/vol-42-no-1/legitimate-community-policing--how-citizen-participation-creates/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/2016-17-vol-42/vol-42-no-1/legitimate-community-policing--how-citizen-participation-creates/)

*The American Bar Association’s award-winning quarterly Human Rights dedicated an entire volume to law enforcement called Black and Blue: The State of Policing Today. One enlightening article from the work is “Legitimate Community Policing: How Citizen Participation Creates a Successful and Collaborative Enterprise.” It offers a five-step plan that takes the reader from the introduction of the concept to a template for creating collaborative partnerships for their own community.*

**Tip:** Follow this link to access all the articles in the volume:

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/2016-17-vol-42/vol-42-no-1/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/2016-17-vol-42/vol-42-no-1/)

## Discussion Topics

- After learning about some of the creative ways police departments around the country have used to connect with the communities they serve, students may notice that each department portrayed is employing relatively new technologies. From social media and individual pages on agency websites to webinars, apps, and registration software, these agencies are harnessing the power of recent innovation to connect with their communities like never before. Ask the class to think of some new ways of enhancing the relationship between law enforcement and the community.
- Ask the class if they've ever been to a community event organized by law enforcement like Prince William County's Annual Fair or National Night Out. If so, what was their experience like?
- After viewing the video on the day in the life of the Grand Rapids community policing specialists, ask the class if that sounds like a role in law enforcement they'd be interested in. Ask them to compare the responsibilities of a community specialist to other positions in law enforcement and describe what appeals to them.





# 3

## Officer Safety and Wellness



**Law enforcement officers exercise at their agency gym.**

### Scope

**From the resources in the previous sections,** students should have an idea of the leaps and bounds that both safety and technology have made in American policing since its inception. However, policing is still a profession fraught with many hazards and stressors that educators can demonstrate with the searchable databases and other resources to follow. Stories of the innovations and successes made

in this arena are also valuable tools in teaching students the real-world consequences and struggles of keeping our nation's law enforcement professionals safe. This section will provide students with several resources to explore to help gain an understanding of the fundamental problems faced by law enforcement officers. This selection of assorted video presentations and readings will outline the core elements of officer safety and wellness. The students will learn firsthand from chiefs, sheriffs, and mental health practitioners about some of the most important risk factors they try to mitigate as they work to improve the safety and well-being of their officers.

*The resources here are intended to provide supplemental information for students to learn about various facets of American law enforcement. Following the list of resources is a collection of relevant discussion topics written with these resources in mind to further engage students in learning and understanding the topic.*



**A deputy directs traffic while wearing a high-visibility safety vest.**

## Online and Reading Resources

Baltimore Police Department. 2022. **“Officer Safety and Wellness.”**

Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://www.baltimorepolice.org/about/officer-safety-wellness>

*The Baltimore City (Maryland) Police Department provides online resources about its officer safety and wellness initiatives. This agency has successfully used therapy dogs to enhance resiliency and wellness among its officers as well as its civilian staff.*

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BJA (Bureau of Justice Assistance). 2024. **“Featured Resources.”**

Accessed May 7, 2024.

<https://www.valorforblue.org/Clearinghouse>

*The U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), in partnership with the Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR), offers a clearinghouse of safety and wellness resources under the VALOR for Blue Officer Safety and Wellness Program.*

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Blechman, Phil. 2022. **“Tactical and Functional—How to Train Like Law Enforcement.”** BarBend. Last modified July 27, 2023.

<https://barbend.com/how-to-train-like-law-enforcement/>

*Educators can use this article to show the varied techniques and exercises officers may employ in their time at the gym. These exercises not only help maintain officers’ physical fitness levels but also prepare them for specific incidents that they may face in the course of their duties.*

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## Online and Reading Resources *cont'd*

City of San Mateo, California. 2022. **“Officer Safety and Wellness.”**

Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/4337/Officer-Safety-and-Wellness>

*The San Mateo (California) Police Department has a page on its website explaining the considerable time and attention it has dedicated to enhancing officer safety and wellness programs and initiatives it has undertaken. The page emphasizes both the physical and mental health resources the department offers its officers.*

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COPS Office. 2022a. **“National Officer Safety and Wellness Group.”**

Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://cops.usdoj.gov/oswg>

*The National Officer Safety and Wellness (OSW) Group is a working group of law enforcement representatives and researchers that publishes resources, tools, and articles that officers and their agencies can use to help implement or enhance a culture of safety and wellness.*

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FBI. 2022d. **“Crime Data Explorer.”** Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/home>

*The FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program generates crime statistics for use in law enforcement. Under the umbrella of the UCR is the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) data collection. Students can use this link to see trends in law enforcement assaults and fatalities or download their monthly reports.*

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## Online and Reading Resources *cont'd*

IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police). 2022. **“Practices in Modern Policing: Officer Safety and Wellness Video.”** Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://www.theiacp.org/resources/practices-in-modern-policing-officer-safety-and-wellness-video>

*The IACP has a 10-minute video called “Practices in Modern Policing: Officer Safety and Wellness” that broadly explains the risks posed to officers and the different types of officer safety and wellness programs that can specifically address them.*

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NLEOMF. 2022a. **“Destination Zero Winners and Finalists.”** Accessed January 7, 2023.

<https://nleomf.org/officer-safety-and-wellness/destination-zero/award-winners/>

*Destination Zero, an officer safety and wellness initiative of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund since 2014, hosts dozens of award-winning officer safety and wellness programs on its website, along with videos highlighting agency successes. They also offer Technical Assistance Briefs (TAB), which are short videos on specific training or equipment that officers may use to enhance their safety or wellness. Visit this page to see a selection of TABs: <https://nleomf.org/officer-safety-and-wellness/destination-zero/technical-assistance-briefs/>*

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NLEOMF. 2022b. **“Officer Safety Videos.”** Accessed May 17, 2022.

<https://nleomf.org/officer-safety-and-wellness/NHTSA/officer-safety-videos/>

*NLEOMF’s Partnership for Traffic Safety with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) produces officer traffic safety public service announcements (PSA) for officers, especially those in patrol or traffic enforcement. Content advisory: There is some crash footage in these PSAs.*

## Discussion Topics

- Discuss what it would have been like to work as a police officer with no safety or wellness programs available to them. And if they were a chief or sheriff in that agency, what would be their list in order of priority of the programs they would implement?
- One major component of officer safety and wellness is keeping officers physically healthy and maintaining certain fitness standards. Ask the class to find out if your local or state police agencies implement any officer safety and wellness initiatives.
- After reading about the use of therapy dogs in the Baltimore City Police Department's Wellness Unit, have the students try to come up with other animals that could be used for therapeutic purposes for law enforcement. Hint: In recent years, some agencies have employed the use of equine therapy animals.



**Students learn about components of DNA by using beads on a string.**





# Virtual and In-Person Class Trips

## National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum

To learn more about the history of American law enforcement, visit the campus of the National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum in Washington, D.C. Suitable for guests of all ages, please contact the group sales representative at [group tours@nleomf.org](mailto:group tours@nleomf.org).

NLEOMF. 2022c. **“Five Communities.”** Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://nleomf.org/exhibit/five-communities/>

*The National Law Enforcement Museum hosts an online exhibit called “The Five Communities” that profiles five police departments and their efforts to engage with the communities they serve. Created in partnership with the Cleveland (Ohio), Charleston (South Carolina), Chicago (Illinois), Somerville (Massachusetts), and Dallas (Texas) Police Departments, this exhibit provides regional and culturally relevant approaches to the same goal: bridging the gap and creating lasting partnerships.*



**A view of the National Law Enforcement Museum's exhibit floor in 2018.**

## National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum *cont'd*

### NLEOMF. 2022d. **“Post-9/11: The Evolution of Law Enforcement.”**

Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://nleomf.org/exhibit/post-9-11/>

*Another virtual exhibit at the National Law Enforcement Museum is “Post 9/11: The Evolution of American Law Enforcement.” This powerful exhibit marks the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and honors the officers who rose to the challenge that day.*

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### NLEOMF. 2022e. **“Eyes to the Sky.”** Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://nleomf.org/exhibit/eyes-to-the-sky/>

*The National Law Enforcement Museum’s first exclusively online exhibit is “Eyes to the Sky.” This interactive program covers a century of law enforcement aviation and airborne public safety. Take a sneak peek at the special preview version available now.*

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## Other organizations

### Coffee with a Cop. 2022. **“Coffee with a Cop is for Community Members.”**

Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://coffeewithacop.com/community/>

*Coffee with a Cop is a nonprofit organization that aims to improve trust and build relationships between police departments and their communities, one cup of coffee at a time. They offer events in all 50 states, including the annual National Coffee with a Cop Day. If you’re organizing a Coffee with a Cop event in your community, you can add it to Coffee with a Cop’s event calendar.*

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## Other organizations *cont'd*

DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) Museum. 2022a. **“DEA: Air, Land, and Sea.”** Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://museum.dea.gov/exhibits/online-exhibits/dea-air-land-and-sea>

*For a virtual exhibit experience, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Museum offers DEA: Air, Land, and Sea. Students will learn the different types of investigations the DEA undertakes and the equipment, vehicles, and vessels they use to complete them.*

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DEA Museum. 2022b. **“A Life of Service: Harry Jacob Anslinger.”** Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://museum.dea.gov/exhibits/online-exhibits/anslinger>

*The DEA Museum also offers a virtual exhibit profiling the life of Harry Jacob Anslinger, a notable law enforcement official and commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, the predecessor agency of today's DEA.*

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Discover Policing. 2022d. **“Take a Virtual Ride-Along.”** Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://www.discoverpolicing.org/explore-the-field/take-a-virtual-ride-along/>

*Ride-alongs are a way for observers to accompany police officers on patrol and speak with a sworn officer during a real-world look into police work. Your local police department may have a youth ride-along program. Most agencies have a form available on their website or by request via a nonemergency phone number. Age restrictions may vary from agency to agency.*

*Discover Policing's virtual ride-along is a series of 10 animated short videos. This program includes a self-assessment that students can complete after completing the video series.*

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## Other organizations *cont'd*

**National Night Out. 2022. “Registration.” Accessed May 18, 2022.**

**<https://natw.org/registration/>**

*National Night Out is an annual campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie, generally on the first Tuesday in August. These events can include block parties, cookouts, and parades, as well as safety demonstrations and youth-oriented events. Be sure to reach out to local organizations to see if any National Night Out events are being organized in your area, or register free online for virtual events.*



# Student Projects and Programs

## Based on class trips

Have the students virtually tour the “Five Communities” exhibit after the topic of community policing has been introduced to them with the resources in this guide and break into small groups. Ask them to consider what was most compelling about each city’s effort and then apply it to their own community. Have the groups design their own community-police partnership and present it to the class. Why is having a visible and strong relationship between the community and their law enforcement officers so important? What ideas could they propose to help bridge the gap between law enforcement and their community?

Have the students form small groups and ask them to consider what they think is the most pressing safety or wellness issue facing law enforcement officers today and then to create a mock safety or wellness program to address that issue. The goal of this project is to have the students analyze the relevant fatality data and apply that information. In addition to the information and resources provided in this guide, students can reference <https://nleomf.org/officer-safety-and-wellness/destination-zero/> for dozens of award-winning officer safety and wellness programs.

## Other ideas

COPS Office. 2022b. **“Community Policing in Action: Photo Contest.”**

Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://cops.usdoj.gov/photocontest>

*Each year, the COPS Office holds the Community Policing in Action photo contest. Explorer groups can create a project of capturing their local law enforcement interacting with their community, and after deciding on just one photo, applying with their local agency. Scroll to the bottom of the page for links to previous winners and use them as a template for success.*

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NOBLE (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives). 2022.

**“The Law and Your Community.”** Accessed May 18, 2022.

<https://noblenational.org/tlyc/>

*The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), a member of the Community Oriented Policing Consortium, has a nationally recognized hands-on interactive training program called “The Law and Your Community” for young people from ages 13 to 18, structured to educate them about different facets of American policing and to improve their communication with law enforcement at no cost. Use this link to access a printable program flyer: <https://noblenational.org/wp-content/uploads/NOBLE-TLYC-Palm-Card.pdf>.*



# About the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

The mission of the **National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF)**, founded in 1984, is to honor the fallen heroes, tell the story of American law enforcement, and make it safer for those who serve. Our vision is to inspire all community members to value law enforcement and the vital role it plays in our society.

A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., NLEOMF built and continues to maintain the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial—the nation’s monument to law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. NLEOMF is a principal organizer of the National Police Week observance every May and hosts a candlelight vigil every May 13 to honor all fallen officers. In addition, NLEOMF maintains the largest, most comprehensive database of line-of-duty officer deaths; conducts research into officer fatality trends and issues; and serves as an information clearinghouse.

In 2018, NLEOMF opened the National Law Enforcement Museum, adjacent to the memorial in Washington, D.C. The museum tells the story of American law enforcement through exhibits, collections, research, and education.

# About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When law enforcement and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than \$20 billion to provide training and technical assistance, enhance crime fighting technology, and add more than 136,000 officers to our nation's streets. COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, <https://cops.usdoj.gov>.



This publication developed by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund presents an assortment of resources, lessons, exercises, and projects for use by teachers or facilitators in middle school classrooms to teach students about law enforcement, the critical role played by officers in our society, and the dangers or stressors they may face. For students in Police Explorers programs, such classroom activities may enrich their awareness of law enforcement as a potential profession; for others, they may expand their understanding of law enforcement and foster stronger community relations.



U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services  
145 N Street NE  
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs,  
call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at [cops.usdoj.gov](https://cops.usdoj.gov).



National Law Enforcement  
Officers Memorial Fund  
444 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001

For information about NLEOMF  
programs, call 202-737-3400 or  
visit us online at [NLEOMF.org](https://NLEOMF.org).