CONVENCING CRUCIAL COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON RACE, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE LAW

A Guide Produced by Georgia Appleseed through the generosity of the Atlanta Bar Association Lawyer Referral and Information Service and the Atlanta Bar Foundation

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INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 2015, the Georgia Appleseed Center for Law & Justice (“Georgia Appleseed”) began to seek the views of community members throughout Georgia---law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, defense lawyers, neighborhood associations, faith leaders, political leaders, nonprofits and others -- to help in assessing the nature of police-community relations in our state and to seek recommendations for changes to law as well as policies and practices that could improve or enhance them.

This effort was in response to the highly publicized incidents of police encounters with citizens—most often men and women of color—in Ferguson, North Charleston, Baltimore, Waller County (TX), and several Georgia communities (and the unrest that often followed).

Georgia Appleseed brought to this effort a commitment to objective assessment, a deep respect for the extraordinarily difficult, important and oftentimes dangerous service that law enforcement personnel provide to our society and a belief that every Georgian must be afforded the rights promised by the federal and state constitutions.

The results of our research and interviews are summarized in a report issued in January 2016 titled: Seeking the Beloved Community: Fostering Crucial Conversations about Race, Law Enforcement and the Law. The Report also recommended changes to law and policy in Georgia.

Shortly after releasing the Report, Georgia Appleseed worked with local law enforcement agencies to hold community meetings in the Metro Atlanta area, which have given us helpful insights as we continue to seek needed reforms.
PURPOSE

The purpose of this manual is to provide practical, “nuts and bolts,” advice to community leaders who wish to work with local law enforcement to have their own “crucial conversations.” Georgia Appleseed hopes this manual will support positive community engagement with law enforcement throughout the state.

The need for meaningful, sustained community engagement is great. In the months since we issued the Report, we continue to hear, on the national and local news, about all too many shootings of unarmed suspects, especially men and women of color, and retaliatory shootings of police officers.

This is a complex problem with no single, simple solution. We believe, however, that, in one sense, the beginning of the solution is fairly straight-forward, though admittedly easier said than done: community members and law enforcement personnel must find ways to have honest conversations – where they talk to – and listen to – and hear – each other. In doing so, meaningful solutions will present themselves. But how do we go about this straight-forward, but hard, process of sitting down and talking with each other? Especially when we don’t know each other well and perhaps, as a result, do not have a high level of trust already in place? This manual is intended to help you figure out just how to take the first steps in having honest, crucial, conversations . . . in your own community.

Georgia Appleseed wishes to thank the Atlanta Bar Association Lawyer Referral and Information Service and the Atlanta Bar Association for its financial support of this Guide.
EARLY STEPS

• Forming the Team

If you are an individual wanting to make change, we recommend that you reach out to a local community organization that shares your community-minded vision and would be willing to take the lead on this effort, especially if you volunteer to help. We then recommend that the organization form a small work group of one to three persons to plan and carry out the community meeting. This team should then reach out to local law enforcement leaders to introduce your desire to work with them in planning and holding a community meeting.

The level of cooperation offered by law enforcement can vary. In one of our community meetings, the chief of police wanted to take a lead organizing role; in another, the meeting planning and organizational effort was a joint undertaking; in another, the police agency was supportive but deferred to Georgia Appleseed to assume the lead role.

Whatever the roles of your organization and the participating law enforcement agency, it is important that the agency’s Chief appoint a “primary contact” who will be available to work with you throughout the planning process. Sometimes this “primary contact” will be a community relations professional or public information officer.

• Identify Purpose

A critical first step in the planning process is to identify the purpose of the community meeting. In its community meetings, Georgia Appleseed’s primary purpose was to inform the community of the findings and recommendations contained in its January 2016 Report. A link to the full Report, the executive summary, and a summary of recommendations is provided in Appendix A (Additional Resources).

Community leaders who wish to include these recommendations as a focus of their community meeting are very welcome to consult our report for conversation topics. Georgia Appleseed cannot participate in all such meetings, due to limited personnel, but Georgia Appleseed staff can review the Report’s findings and recommendations with you and can assist meeting organizers in considering the most effective way to hold the meetings. (See the contact information provided at the very end of this manual to reach Georgia Appleseed if you have questions.)
There are, of course, many important issues, other than those raised in the Georgia Appleseed Report, that could be discussed at your community meeting. Your organization and the cooperating law enforcement agency should work together to be sure that the issues that are most important to your community members are the ones that are covered at the community meeting. For example, your community might wish to understand and have input on issues such as:

--Law enforcement “use of force” policies
--Community policing practices and policies
--Law enforcement engagement with vulnerable populations (those who are mentally ill and/or homeless, and those who are minors, etc.)
--Citizen complaint procedures
--Investigations following a “lethal use of force” incident
--Access to information following a “lethal use of force” incident

While we believe that it is important to plan and prepare for a specific focus for the meeting, it is also important for the organizers to be flexible enough to recognize and adapt when the meeting participants are more interested in other issues. (See the discussion below concerning the “independent facilitator” meeting format.)

We also know that sometimes it is better to have a meeting where there is no detailed agenda – the meeting purpose in that case would be to provide a safe space where people can speak and be heard. Or, it may be that the meeting purpose is to have fun, while at the same time give community and law enforcement personnel a chance to be together without any agenda at all. For instance, a social gathering, such as a reception or a picnic, during which community members can interact informally with law enforcement personnel, may be a good first step in relationship building.

• Identify Target Audience/Participants

You will also need to think about your audience. Do you want to cast a wide net to include all community members with an effort to bring out a true “grass roots” population? Do you want to engage community leaders (sometimes referred to as “grass tops”)? Do you want to encourage participation by younger people? As we discuss further below, determining your desired audience or community participants will likely influence other planning decisions.
Select Meeting/Program Format Type

Just as there is a number of different reasons to hold a community meeting, there are also a variety of meeting formats. In each of the community meetings facilitated by Georgia Appleseed, we were actively engaged in presenting the findings and recommendations of the Report and in talking with the meeting participants. Though these three meetings all shared a similar purpose (to share information and receive feedback), we used three different formats.

Format Type 1: Independent Facilitator

One meeting reflected a very structured format and took advantage of the services of an independent facilitator to help plan and run the meeting. Georgia Appleseed made a presentation on the Report and law enforcement officers from the cooperating department discussed their commitment to community policing. The facilitator then employed electronic devices (note: cell phone audience feedback/polling “apps” are also available for a reasonable fee) to poll the participants as to the issues of most interest. The issues were then ranked and breakout sessions were held to allow for more detailed small group discussion on the issues of most interest. The participants then reconvened to report on these discussions.

While this approach can be highly effective, keep in mind there is typically a fee associated with this sort of facilitation. Therefore, the engagement of an independent facilitator may not be feasible for your organization unless you have funding for this expense. But do not give up on this format. Be sure to ask all the members of your organization for their connections with a professional meeting facilitator who might be willing to volunteer his or her services. The volunteer must have excellent meeting facilitation experience. Audience members often have great emotion around the topic of police/community relations; an experienced facilitator will know how to promote positive, constructive sharing of ideas and will also know how to keep the communication flowing so that no one person “takes over the microphone” to the exclusion of everyone else.

The “independent facilitator” approach may present a challenge if the meeting attendance is so large that you need to have small group discussions to increase the opportunities for everyone to participate. In that case, in addition to the overall meeting facilitator, you will also need volunteers to facilitate the small group discussions. If you have many volunteers who are able and willing to facilitate these break-out sessions, then this could be a good format for you. If your organization is small, then you may need to have limited registration to keep the numbers manageable for your facilitator.
Finally, this approach may be “too structured.” At the meeting where we employed this format, it was apparent that the community members were very interested in discussing community policing efforts with the law enforcement representatives present. This discussion was a good use of time, but took time away from other items on the agenda, so that rest of the meeting felt rushed. As we mentioned earlier, we suggest that the need to retain the flexibility to “read the crowd” and respond accordingly should be considered before selecting this structured approach.

Format Type 2: Law Enforcement Lead

In another meeting, the chief of a municipal police force of a suburban community made a brief presentation (about 20 minutes) about his department and about the reforms he was putting in place to respond to community needs. Then he opened the floor to questions from the community members present on any issues they wished to discuss. No topics were off limits. The conversation was positive and respectful, and the event was considered a success, but the chief did have to have a high degree of confidence in his own relationship with his community to embrace this community meeting format. Not every local Chief of Police or local Sheriff will feel comfortable in leading such an open-ended conversation, but if you live in a community where local law enforcement offers to take the lead in the conversation, you are encouraged to take him or her up on the offer, at least for the first meeting.

Format Type 3: Community Panel

The third format used in our community meetings was that of a community panel. This meeting was held in partnership with the public safety department of a Metro Atlanta area college. Working with Georgia Appleseed, the college police chief enlisted several community members to serve on a panel. The panel members included law enforcement personnel from the college and nearby police jurisdictions, students, a faculty member with expertise on African American studies, and a pastor from a local church. Each panel member made a brief presentation. The floor was then opened for questions and comments.

• Tips for an Effective Meeting/Event

This could be a great opportunity to start authentic communication, but all participants must be advised, at the beginning of the meeting, in the presence of all in attendance, that authentic, civil conversation is to be the goal and that one side cannot monopolize the microphone to the exclusion of others in the room. Further, all participants need to commit to
certain “ground rules” to insure that all have a chance to be heard and respond to the issues raised. Common ground rules include the following:

- Listen respectfully
- Speak one person at a time
- Keep comments brief
- No personal attacks
- Turn off cell phones (or turn to vibrate mode)

• Select Location/Venue

The next step is to identify the location of the planned meeting. As community members, you will likely know what options are available for these types of meetings. You will want to have an estimate in mind of the number of people you expect will attend so that you can identify a site that can accommodate that number. The meetings can be held, for example, in a local faith community's fellowship hall, in community centers, or in college or high school auditoriums. Generally, such meeting space is available at low or no cost, but you should check with the venue’s administrator to confirm this.

Plan on arriving at the meeting site at least 60 to 90 minutes before the scheduled start time on the day of the meeting to be sure it is set up properly . . . or to handle the set up yourself. You need to confirm that you will have access to the room that far in advance of the start time. Will the door be unlocked? Will someone be there to let you in? You will want to understand how and when the meeting room will be set up if it is not an auditorium style facility. Will the location’s staff handle room set up or will you be responsible? If food is being provided, where can it be served? If audio visual (AV) equipment is necessary, is it available at the venue or do you have to bring your own microphone/computer/slide screen/PowerPoint projector/etc. If so, does the site offer (require) the services of its AV technician?

A few further words about food. Try to have it! Being able to advertise that refreshments (or a meal) will be offered often provides a remarkable boost to attendance. While there can be a cost involved, this is a great opportunity to engage local businesses in this important topic by seeking in-kind donation of food and/or beverages.

It is important that your venue be accessible to everyone, regardless of their ability to get around. All members of the community/audience must feel comfortable in the location you select for your meeting.

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It is also important to note that, while we have presented the foregoing steps as separate and independent, they are actually closely related. In other words, the meeting’s purpose, format and location are all dependent on the selected target audience. The reverse is also true. For example, you may want to engage a broad cross section of the “grassroots” members of the community in the meeting, which will likely drive certain decisions about meeting format and location. You may, on the other hand, want to engage leaders of certain community groups (“grass tops”), which might drive different organizational choices.

• Select Tentative Date/Time

We recommend that the planning process for a community meeting begin at least 90 days before the anticipated meeting date to allow time for planning and adequate marketing/publicity.

Again, community organizers probably know the best days of the week and times of day to assure the greatest number of attendees. The work group and the law enforcement partner will need to decide on the length of the meeting depending on the purpose and format decisions.

In identifying the tentative timing, the organizers should confirm the availability of the selected site and also carefully check school and community event calendars so that the meeting does not conflict with other events likely to draw heavy community participation.

• Confirm participant/panelist availability & audiovisual needs

Once the tentative date is selected, the organizers should check with participating law enforcement partners and also with identified panel participants (if the panel format option has been selected) to confirm availability. If you are trying to confirm several people’s schedules, one easy-to-use and free online scheduling tool is called Doodle: www.doodle.com.

During this conversation, the organizers should also determine if the participants plan to use a Power Point or other presentation format that will require AV support on the day of the meeting.

• Finalize Date/Time

The organizers can now communicate the confirmed meeting details to the meeting participants and begin the process of publicizing the event.

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PUBLICITY

• **Save the Date**

If you know the details of your event early, you may want to send out a brief “save the date” notice. You can do this electronically, by email or social media, or you can send the “save the date” to local churches, synagogues, mosques, or other organizations to ask them to add it to their own newsletters or bulletins.

• **Basic Notice/Invitation**

Examples of meeting notices/invitations used by Georgia Appleseed for its community meetings are attached in Appendices B and C. The notices should, of course, inform the recipients of the date, start time, duration and location of the meeting. Directions to the meeting site and instructions about parking are important. If food is being provided, that information should be included.

In addition to this important basic information, you should also try to “set the tone” for the meeting as one where collaborative crucial conversations will take place. All participants should be urged to be candid and you should certainly anticipate that views will often be expressed with passion. You should encourage participants to be willing to listen to and respect the views of all who are in the meeting.

To help increase attendance, you may want to ask that participants register in advance. Preregistration can be by telephone, by email or by use of an online registration form. (Options are available to view in Appendix D.) If you explain that preregistration will help organizers be sure to have enough food/snacks/beverages on hand, then the public will probably cooperate with your request.

You should be aware, however, that often many individuals who register do not attend and many in attendance do not register in advance.

• **Electronic Communication/ Social media**

The easiest, most popular and most cost effective method for getting the word out about your meeting is through electronic communication including e-mails and social media outlets (i.e., Facebook and Twitter). The community organizations engaged in planning the meeting as well as the cooperating police agencies will likely have email lists that can be used to inform
potential participants of the event. Other community organizations and local churches, synagogues, and mosques will also often be willing to “spread the word.” Be creative when it comes to letting the community know about your event. You want them to know it will be important that they make the time to be there, but be sure you keep the tone of your communications about the meeting consistent with the tone you expect to maintain throughout the meeting.

• Other Publicity Vehicles

While electronic communication is important, you should employ other ways of communication to encourage participation. After all, not all members of your potential participants may have ready access to the Internet. If your organization has lots of contacts with houses of worship in your community, you might consider if members of your work group might ask for a few minutes during “community prayers” to let the congregation know about the upcoming event and ask for their attendance. Or you may see if the local parent/teacher meeting has time to allow you to personally extend an invitation to all parents to join in the community meeting. You know your community best and know all the different ways to reach out. All we recommend is that you use your creativity to make sure that as many people as possible know about this opportunity to hear and be heard.

Local Print and Broadcast Media

You probably know which local newspapers may be willing to publish information about community events. While the major metropolitan dailies may not be readily accessible, local weekly newspapers, or neighborhood online publications such as “The Patch,” may be more than happy to do a story on an upcoming event.

In addition, organizers (or perhaps their teenage children) will know what local radio stations are popular with community members so that they can be approached about public service announcements.

Local Community/Outdoor Signage

Many local municipalities maintain signs on key access roads or near city government centers that can be used to advertise community events. Also, your selected site may have outside signs that you could use.
Local places of worship may be willing to include a notice of the meeting in their printed bulletins for a week or two in advance of the meeting. Even more effective is a direct call from the pulpit encouraging parishioners to attend.

**PRE-EVENT: “WEEK OF” ACTIVITIES**

- **Remind Panel Members/ Speakers**

  About 10 days before the community meeting, you should reconfirm participation with all of the panel members (if that format option is chosen) or other speakers reminding them of their agreement to participate in your community meeting and all the meeting details. If any are planning on making an electronic presentation, they should send a copy to the organizing team by email or by delivering a “thumb drive.” This way, you can be sure that all presentations are loaded onto the computer and are “working” before the event, which should minimize “technical difficulties” that could delay your meeting.

- **Venue Visit**

  Unless your organizing team is very familiar with the site for the community meeting, it will be important for the organizers to arrange for a visit to the site a few days before the meeting. This will allow the team to be familiar with the room size and shape and confirm the desired seating set up. This will be especially true if you have requested participants to register so that you have a reasonable estimate of the anticipated turnout. You can also determine where food and beverages may be served and become familiar with the parking options, rest room locations, etc. If the building offers any special access routes for disabled participants, you should make note of that so the greeters may direct individuals to those locations.

  If AV equipment is to be used, it is important to work out the necessary details during this site visit. If microphones and speakers are necessary, make sure that such equipment is available and working at the venue. Note that if the meeting group is large, it will be very helpful if multiple wireless microphones are available so that questions and comments from participants are easily understood by all. If wireless microphones are not available, standing
hard wired microphones can be placed at various location in the room so that participants can speak from those locations.

If panel members or other speakers intend to use PowerPoint or similar electronic presentations, it will be important to know what equipment is available at the venue to support this effort. Is there a projection screen available? Is there a projector available? (How about extra bulbs?) Does the facility have a dedicated lap top on to which the presentations can be loaded? If your team must provide any or all of these materials, it will be important to have them all at the time of the site visit so that you can have a “dry run” to confirm that the system will be functional. Remember to bring/have access to sufficient lengths of electrical extension cords as well as all necessary computer connecting cables. It is often helpful to use a remote, that accompanies the projector, so that the speaker can control the presentation without being tied to the computer.

Reconfirm with your contact person at the site that the space will be open and accessible early (as discussed below) and that any of the site’s staff who will be working the event will be there.

• *Confirm food quantity and delivery time*

If you are providing food and beverages, you should be able to confirm with the provider the desired quantity and the details with regard to location and delivery time.

• *Confirm materials to distribute to attendees*

Panel members or other speakers may have fliers or other information they would like to distribute to the attendees. Confirm if this is the case, and if they will be brining copies for the attendees. If you wish, you may distribute the Georgia Appleseed Report; we recommend the four-page executive summary, which can be downloaded from the Georgia Appleseed website ([https://gaappleseed.org/media/Executive-Summary.pdf](https://gaappleseed.org/media/Executive-Summary.pdf)).
**“DAY OF” ACTIVITIES**

*Arrive Early*

Your organizing team—at least 2-3 people—should be on the site 60-90 minutes before the starting time for the event. This will allow you to accept delivery and assist in setting up the food and beverage area as well as to confirm that the room set up is as requested. In addition, you should double check that the required AV equipment is in place and functioning.

We recommend you have nametags for your team members. You may also wish to have adhesive or other nametags for the attendees.

*Greeters*

The organizing team should assign a number of “greeters” to welcome all participants as they arrive and to facilitate pre-meeting networking.

*Sign in*

To help with follow up activity, you may wish to request participants to “sign in” and provide contact information. An example of a sign up form is included in Appendix E. You should have multiple sheets available so that people do not get delayed waiting to sign in. Remember to bring a number of pens for people to use. Bring Sharpies® if you wish to have people hand-write nametags.

*Meeting Evaluation*

You may wish to ask the participants about the effectiveness of the community meeting. The results of such an evaluation can be helpful in planning other meetings. In addition, participants in general appreciate being asked to weigh in and provide their reaction to such events. An example of an evaluation form is provided in Appendix F. You should provide any evaluation form to the participants when they arrive. They should be reminded to fill them out as part of any closing remarks by the individual running the meeting. (Remember to have a supply of pens for people to use in filling out the evaluation.)
• **Clean Up**

Even if the event location includes janitorial services, it is good for a few of the meeting organizers to stay after the event to help straighten up and dispose of trash appropriately.

**POST-EVENT: FOLLOW UP & “Continuing the Conversation”**

“What’s next?” “Where do we go from here?” These may be questions from the community meeting participants that the organizers will need to be prepared to answer.

The answer may be that the meeting was designed only as an opportunity for community members and law enforcement representatives to exchange views and that no specific follow up activities are planned. In that case, increased understanding and opportunities for relationship building triggered by the meeting will themselves be valuable outcomes of the meeting.

On the other hand, the organizers and the participating police agencies may have built follow-up activities into the meeting planning process. For example, if the meeting focused on community policing, follow-up could include inviting meeting participants to engage in “ride along” opportunities, with another meeting in the works to allow participants to talk about what they experienced. If the idea is to keep the conversation going, then meeting organizers need to be ready with a proposal for future meeting dates. The community participants could also be challenged to help organize similar meetings with other organizations with which they are involved.

It could also be that the potential for follow-up activities may come about based upon issues that were, perhaps unexpectedly, raised during the course of the meeting. This is an example of the necessary flexibility that the organizers must show discussed above.

No matter the “next step,” the organizers should send a prompt, brief message to all participants thanking them for their engagement.

**WHAT IS NEXT FOR GEORGIA APPLESEED?**

Georgia Appleseed is working on a three-year plan (through the 2018 General Assembly legislative session) to increase justice through law and policy reform as a continuing part of its Race, Law Enforcement & The Law project. If your organization or community is interested in learning more about Georgia Appleseed’s activities in this area, please see our website at [www.gaappleseed.org](http://www.gaappleseed.org) or call us at 404-685-6750.
SEEKING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY: 
FOSTERING CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE, LAW ENFORCEMENT & THE LAW

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Premise--All Georgians should live in communities that are safe and where we engage each other with the highest level of mutual dignity, respect and responsibility without regard to race or ethnicity. The recent highly publicized incidents of police encounters with citizens -- most often men and women of color -- nationally and in several Georgia communities (and the unrest that often followed) set the stage for crucial conversations and collaborative action. Such action must be designed to ensure that such tragedies are avoided to the fullest extent possible and that, if they do occur, the ensuing investigation and charging decision process is fair.

Our Process--In the Spring of 2015, the Georgia Appleseed Center for Law & Justice (“Georgia Appleseed”) began a process designed to seek the views of community members throughout Georgia---law enforcement personnel; prosecutors, defense lawyers, neighborhood associations, faith leaders, political leaders, nonprofits and others---to help in assessing the nature of police-community relations in our state and to seek recommendations for changes to law as well as policies and practices that could improve or enhance them.

Georgia Appleseed brought to this effort a firm commitment to objective, data driven assessment, a deep respect for the extraordinarily difficult, important and oftentimes dangerous service that law enforcement personnel provide to our society and an abiding belief that all of Georgia’s citizens must be afforded the rights to which they are entitled under the federal and state constitutions.

Preliminary research identified critical issues to be addressed based upon recommendations made by law enforcement community relations experts from around the country. These issues encompassed two broad areas of concern. First, what changes to law or policy would most likely improve law enforcement community relations in ways that would significantly reduce the likelihood of future encounters resulting in death or severe bodily harm to community members? Second, what law or policy reforms may be necessary to assure that investigations and criminal charging decisions triggered by any such future incidents are fair and also are perceived to be fair by the community?

Detailed legal and factual research was undertaken to understand the current state of law, policy and practice in Georgia in the identified critical issue areas. Approximately 140 individual stakeholder interviews were carried out to obtain the views of a broadly diverse group of Georgians on these critical issues. A stakeholder forum was held to foster further crucial conversations on these topics.

The research efforts and stakeholder input were compiled in a comprehensive report published on https://gaappleseed.org/initiatives/race-law-enforcement-and-the-law.

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● Standard Operating Procedures (“SOPs”): The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (“GACP”) and other collaborating law enforcement agencies manage the voluntary Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program, which includes a requirement for adopting and maintaining compliance with a wide range of SOPs. However, only a relatively small percentage of Georgia law enforcement agencies have sought and obtained certification.

The General Assembly should assess the extent to which Georgia law enforcement agencies have in place SOPs that are substantially equivalent to those recommended by the GACP. To the extent that it is determined that a significant number of agencies do not have adequate polices in place, the General Assembly should consider options designed to ensure that such deficiencies are corrected. This could potentially include mandating participation in the Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program.

● Public Access to SOPs: The General Assembly should enact legislation requiring each law enforcement agency that maintains a website to provide public access to copies of all standard operating procedures on such website. To the extent that a department does not maintain a website, the law should require that such department make copies of its SOPs available at a public location such as a public library. The law should allow departments to withhold from public access those operating procedures the disclosure of which may put the safety of law enforcement personnel or the public in jeopardy.

● Clarifying Use of Force Law: Each Georgia law enforcement agency must have a clearly articulated policy on the use of deadly force. The GAPC Sample Policy on this topic and the individual departmental use of force SOPs that we have reviewed employ different language but the basic thrust of the policies is the same--deadly force may only be used if the police officer reasonably believes that the officer or a third party is immediately threatened with death or serious bodily injury.

Code Section 17-4-20(b) dealing with suspected felons, however, authorizes the use of deadly force in broader circumstances. In addition, Code Section 17-4-20(d) prohibits law enforcement agencies from adopting “…any rule, regulation, or policy which prohibits a peace officer from using that degree of force to apprehend a suspected felon which is allowed by the statutory and case law of this state.”

The General Assembly should evaluate Code Section 17-4-20(b) to determine if such a statute is necessary in light of the existing “self-defense” statutory provisions. If the General Assembly concludes that such a law is necessary, then we recommend that amendatory language be developed to clarify the scope of this law so that it does not authorize the use of deadly force except in circumstances when the officer reasonably believes that the suspect poses an immediate threat of death or great bodily injury to the officer or others.

● Officer Training Curriculum Review and Revision: While having comprehensive modern SOPs is very important, it is even more critical that police officers receive the necessary level of training in implementing these procedures.

The General Assembly should enact legislation directing the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council to review and revise the basic and annual law enforcement required training to
assure that the course content and educational delivery methods will assure that Georgia’s law enforcement officers will be trained to meet the challenges critical to modern policing while assuring officer safety and wellness. Focus training topics should include, but not be limited to (1) use of force including utilizing modern interactive simulation tools, (2) conflict management and de-escalation techniques and (3) implicit bias and cultural responsiveness. The legislation should also create a multidisciplinary advisory council similar to the Crisis Intervention Training Advisory Council to participate in the assessment process. The review should be completed promptly so that any revised training requirements will be in place and effective as soon as practicable.

- **Expanded Collection of Detention Information:** Internal management oversight and external accountability for law enforcement agencies are critically dependent upon the use of accurate performance data. Substantial arrest data is currently being collected and reported. Incidents of concern, however, can often be an outgrowth of detentions that are short of arrest. In addition, there is worry that these detentions may have adverse impacts on community relations if they are, or are perceived to be, disproportionately imposed on minority men and women.

Recognizing that there may be logistical and cost challenges associated with expanding requirements for detention related data collection and reporting, we recommend that the Criminal Justice Reform Council assess the feasibility and cost of expanding law enforcement data collection requirements to provide for a more comprehensive collection and reporting of -and public access to- demographically disaggregated data on citizen detentions.

- **Reporting Incidents of Concern:** All law enforcement agencies prepare “use of force” reports on incidents in which community members suffer death or severe bodily injury ("incidents of concern"). No current law requires that this information be compiled and reported on a state-wide basis.

The General Assembly should enact legislation mandating immediate (effective 7-1-16) monthly reporting, including detailed data on all incidents of concern and require the publication of reports of such incidents on a state-wide basis and for each individual department every six months with the first report (for July-December 2016) due on or before February 1, 2017. The data could be collected and reported by GCIC, by the Administrative Office of the Courts, or another entity as determined by the General Assembly.

- **Department Demographics:** The existence of a diverse police force does not guarantee positive community trust and engagement. A wide discrepancy between a police department’s diversity and that of the community it serves, however, has the potential to generate mistrust.

The General Assembly should enact legislation requiring that each law enforcement agency annually report and make publically available personnel demographics (age, race/ethnicity and gender) for the department as a whole and for senior leadership beginning by no later than December 31, 2016.

- **Disclosure of Incident Information:** Effective community engagement is vitally important in the immediate aftermath of an incident of concern. Prompt and transparent disclosure of information to the public can on the one hand foster trust in the fairness of the investigative response. On the other hand, premature disclosure of information can lead to charges of an unwarranted “rush to judgment.”
We suggest that the GACP consider developing a model policy for the certification program that outlines best practices for disclosure of critical incident information to the public as well as to the family of the deceased or injured community member. Engaging prosecutors, representatives of the media and community members in the discussion could greatly enhance such an effort.

- **Independent Investigations and Charging Decisions:** We recognize that police departments can objectively investigate incidents of concern involving one of their own officers. We also recognize that local district attorneys can be capable of making objective charging decisions involving law enforcement officers that serve the prosecutor’s jurisdiction. We are convinced though that the community perception of an inherent conflict of interest in these situations poses too much of a risk of undermining the necessary trust that community members should have in our justice system.

The General Assembly should enact legislation requiring that incidents of concern be investigated by an independent, uninvolved law enforcement entity and that charging decisions in these cases be made by an independent special district attorney.

- **Peace Officer Grand Jury Participation:** Georgia is the only state that provides extensive grand jury participation rights to peace officers charged with a crime allegedly committed in the course of duty. The stated rationale for this expansion of grand jury participatory rights is the potential for frivolous charges which could embarrass the officer and the officer’s family.

The purpose of the grand jury is to decide whether there is probable cause to believe that a crime has been committed so that the accused must face trial on the ultimate question of guilt or innocence. The current law essentially can convert the grand jury proceeding into a proceeding in which the accused peace officer can powerfully assert innocence in the last words the jurors hear before deliberations without being subject to cross examination or rebuttal. We must conclude that any risk of a high volume of frivolous prosecutions (especially for incidents of concern) is so remote that these concerns and those of potential personal embarrassment cannot today justify providing these unique grand jury participatory rights to peace officers. Accordingly, we recommend that the General Assembly repeal Code Section 17-7-52.
SEEKING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY: A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

You are invited to join in the first of a series of crucial conversations on race, law enforcement and the law. This is an opportunity for all participants to engage in constructive dialogue on these critical issues.

The Commons, First Congregational Church, UCC  125 Ellis St, Atlanta, GA 30303  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2016  
Registration & continental breakfast begins at 9:00 A.M.  
9:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.  
Participants are asked to stay for the entire session. Lunch & breakfast free of charge

Please RSVP by calling (404) 685-6710 or at http://rlel-community-conversation.brownpapertickets.com   
RSVP by FEB. 24th

Representatives of the following organizations will participate in this session:

Georgia Appleseed Center for Law & Justice-  
Presenting findings and recommendations based on a year-long study of ways to enhance police community relations.

J.W. Fanning Institute of Leadership Development of The University of Georgia-  
Guiding the participants through meaningful, respectful dialogue.

Atlanta Police Department-  
Discussing community engagement efforts.

MARTA & Parking Information

If taking MARTA rail, your destination is the Peachtree Center MARTA station.

If you are driving, parking is available at 2 locations: The Commons-125 Ellis St. (limited spaces in back; no cost)

First Congregational Church lot--105 Courtland St. NE (entrance is on John Wesley Dobbs-GPS address: 140 John Wesley Dobbs Ave. NE, limited spaces; $6.00)

This event is made possible through the generosity of a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta.
Seeking the Beloved Community: Community Conversation

You are invited to join in one of a series around Georgia of crucial conversations on race, law enforcement, and the law. This is an opportunity for all participants to engage in constructive dialogue on these critical issues.

City of Hiram Community Center, 217 Main St., Hiram, GA 30141
Saturday, April 2
12:00 PM to 3:00 PM
Tickets are free, seating limited.
Tickets available – Eventbrite.com

Representatives of the following organizations will participate in this session:
Georgia Appleseed Center for Law & Justice
Presenting findings and recommendations based on a year-long study of ways to enhance police community relations
Hiram Police Department
Discussing community engagement efforts

This event is made possible through the generosity of grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta
Online Registration Options

(This information/pricing is based on product information available as of Oct. 2016)

Brown Paper Tickets
www.brownpapertickets.com
“With no fees to sell tickets and live 24/7 phone and web sales, Brown Paper Tickets is the smartest way to sell tickets for your next event! Ticket buyers pay just $0.99+3.5%, including delivery and credit card processing! Post your event for free and experience the power of Brown Paper Tickets!”
- No charge for basic services for free events

Eventbrite
www.eventbrite.com
“It’s free for organizers to use Eventbrite as long as you’re not charging for tickets! There are no monthly charges, enrollment costs, or set fees—and Eventbrite gives you access to powerful reporting and promotional tools, mobile sales and box office features, and 24/7 customer support. If you’re charging for ticket sales on Eventbrite, we charge 2.5% of the ticket prices plus $0.99 per ticket, plus a 3% payment processing fee in U.S. dollars. If you see tickets on-site with our Eventbrite Organizer mobile app, only the payment processing fee applies.”
- No charge for free events
- Nonprofits can get a discounted rate- instead of the 2.5% service fee, it is 2%

Survey Monkey
www.surveymonkey.com
Users can utilize the standard survey to collect registration information for free events. The Basic Free plan includes 10 questions, 100 responses, and standard email support. Different plans are available. The Gold Plan ($300/yr) includes unlimited questions, unlimited responses, and data exports and reports, which can also be used for post-event evaluations.
- $26/month for access to export results

Little Green Light (LGL) Forms
http://www.littlegreenlight.com/forms
“LGL forms is a powerful form builder that lets you design, build, and publish web forms to accept online donations, capture event RSVPs or ticket sales, collect membership information and dues, and a whole lot more!”
Little Green Light is an online donor/constituent relationship management system. Pricing ranges based on the number of constituents in the database (up to 2,500 is $39/month). LGL Forms is included free of charge with the LGL account, however there are charges for accepting payments. An account must be set up with either ProPay (Annual fee of $14.95, transactions fees range from 2.35% to 2.95% plus $0.30) or Stripe (no annual fee, transaction fees range from 2.2% to 3.5% plus $0.30), and the LGL fee is 1% per successful transaction, capped at $50 per month.
- Should you sign up, you may use Georgia Appleseed’s referral link & receive $75 off your cost: http://www.littlegreenlight.com/?lglc=wkartjfk&lglr=web
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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## Appendix E: Sign Up Form

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## EVALUATION FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree/Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned ways to strengthen the relationship between Law Enforcement and my community</td>
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<td>I learned about laws and policies like “Use of Force” and “Standard Operating Procedures”</td>
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<td>I learned what Law Enforcement in Hiram is doing to strengthen relationships with my community</td>
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<td>I learned about Georgia Appleseed’s efforts to pass legislation to addresses law enforcement and loss of life</td>
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<td>The location for the conversation allowed for open honest discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>This Community Conversation was a good use of my time.</td>
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What was **most** valuable about this workshop?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What was **least** valuable about this workshop?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>African American, Black, Caribbean, African</th>
<th>Hispanic, Latino</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Native American/Indigenous</th>
<th>Caucasian, White, European</th>
<th>Mixed Heritage, Multi-racial</th>
<th>Age: 10-18, 19-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65+</th>
<th>Prefer not to answer</th>
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Comments:

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