

Joint Community Police Partnership
New Americans' Academy
Curriculum Summary



The New Americans' Academy consists of a series of classes for adult community members who want to learn more about police procedures, laws and personal safety. The class content is geared toward immigrants and refugees as it focuses on topics that have been identified as of interest to New American communities. The purpose of the Academy is to create a situation for positive, non-emergency, interactions between the community and the police, as well as to encourage community members to learn about local laws, how the police work and how to protect themselves.

The following document outlines the various aspects of the Academy as well as an explanation of the planning and scheduling process.

Preparation for Classes

Each participant is provided with a folder which includes the following:

- An agenda for the session (Appendices A & B)
- A few sheets of loose leaf paper
- The "Top 10 Things the Police Wish You Knew." This document was created through an informal Q&A with BPPD officers (Appendix C)
- The business cards for the Community Liaisons
- A typed name tent (See Appendix D)
- A pen

Other materials created/provided for the classes:

- A survey - Initially the survey was done at the end of each class to help us understand the likes and dislikes of the attendees for each class period. More recently it has been done only at the graduation ceremony as a reflection on the entire program. (Appendices E & F)
- A pre-test and post-test (Appendix G)
 - To indicate what the students knew when they came in, what they learned in the process, as well as what might still be unclear.
 - To aid in the evaluation of the New Americans' Academy as a part of the Joint Community Police Partnership for grant purposes.
- Graduation/Participation Certificates: for those who attended the majority of the classes (Appendix H). Certificates are also given the children who have been in attendance (Appendix I).
- Sign-in sheet
- Food: Water and a light snack

Sending reminder letters to Academy applicants has been found to be helpful in increasing attendance rates. The information in the letter includes the dates, time and location of the classes. Letters are sent to the following applicants:

- Those who registered more than a month in advance of the class.
- Those who recently registered, but did not attend the first session.

Recruiting

A majority of the recruiting for the New Americans' Academy is done through personal interactions between community members and the Community Liaisons. It has been found that a personal invitation is the most effective ways to achieve attendance. Providing specific examples of how the information learned in the Academy can be used also increases the likelihood that an individual will attend the classes.

While recruiting is done throughout the year, more concentrated recruitment is done in the month prior to the start of classes. It has been found that recruitment in the few *weeks* prior to the event nets the most applicants as well as a greater percentage of applicants who attend.

Some of the more frequent manners in which community members are recruited include:

- Attending an ELL class and informing the students about the Academy and the topics that will be covered.
- Having a booth at community events/resource fairs to promote the Academy and answer questions.
- Attending a service at a local ethnic church a few weeks prior to the start of the program.
- Speaking with individuals who come into the police department in need of assistance.

Other methods that have proven useful:

- Press releases to ethnic and mainstream media. Specific examples include a PSA done by Univisión in February 2008 and the "Community Events" postings on Channel 12.
- Mailing letters and brochures to past graduates asking for their assistance in recruiting.

Lastly, on the registrations we note where the contact was made. This way we are able to focus our efforts for future recruitment on those venues where we were most successful.

Location

The classes are held outside of the respective police departments. Currently at Zanewood Recreation Center, which is a neutral location, everyone has a sense of being on equal footing. The neutrality of the location also encourages those who have a fear of the police, and the police department, to attend.

The classes are currently held at Zanewood Recreation Center, a neutral location outside of the respective police departments. The neutrality of the location assures that everyone is on equal footing and serves to encourage those who are fearful of the police, and the police department, to attend the sessions.

Another purpose for holding the Academy outside of the police department is to avoid the need for background checks, as this would discourage a greater number of people from attending.

The graduation session of the Academy is held at the police department. After 6 weeks of establishing relationships with the attendees they are more comfortable with the police interaction and are interested in seeing the department. We have alternated the graduation ceremony between Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park Police Departments.

Timeline for classes

- Twice a year in the Spring and Fall.
- One night per week for 7 weeks (previously 6 weeks).
- 7pm-9pm: Classes are held later in the evening to accommodate community members who work later shifts.

Class Schedules

Classes consist of a combination of question and answer, presentation and demonstration. Specifics covered within each topic can vary depending upon the types of questions that attendees pose to the presenters, as well as recent events within the community. The Community Liaisons, at times, direct questions to the presenters to cover specific points that are brought up repeatedly in their interactions with community members. Attendees are encouraged throughout the sessions to ask questions whenever they have them.

If more than one topic is covered in a class period each topic runs approximately 1-hour in duration.

Week 1

Police Services-Intro to the police, role of the police, when to call 9-1-1:

- Presentation of the officer to the class: Where they are from, how long they have worked as a police officer, the various types of jobs they have had within the department.
- Description of the officer's belt, how much it weighs and when different tools are used.
- Introduction to the attendees: Where they were born, where they live now and how long they have lived in the US/Minnesota

The general introduction of the officer and the types of jobs they do tends to lead immediately to questions that carry us throughout the class period.

We have found that during this session many traffic related questions are raised. To answer some of these questions we play the Joint Community Police Partnership (JCPP)

video, *Police and Community Working Together*, which covers what to do during a traffic stop. Due to varying manners of interacting with police in different countries it is important to demonstrate what happens in a traffic stop in the U.S., and why it happens that way.

Purpose:

- Demonstrate to the attendees that the officer is a human being who is friendly and approachable, whose job is to be of assistance to those in the community and to uphold the “Protect and Serve” Model.
- Explain the role of the police and what they can and cannot do.
- Demonstrate how to interact with officers in general, but specifically during a routine traffic stop.
- Explain the importance of dialing 9-1-1 when you want an officer response.
- Explain what happens when you call 9-1-1.
- Introductions of the attendees make the class more interactive and show that the police are interested in learning about them as much as they want to learn about the police.

Week 2

Traffic Safety, DUI and Drivers’ Licenses

Many times this is a continuation of the first class, as students still have questions regarding speed limits and traffic stops. The officer continues to answer traffic related questions and touches on the following topics:

- The need to have a valid Drivers’ License and insurance on their car.
- What is a valid drivers’ license?
- International drivers’ licenses, their validity and related scams.

In the second hour we move to the topic of drunk driving.

- The *Last Call* video is shown providing real examples of the immediate effects, as well as the long term consequences, of drunk driving.
- Question and Answer session related to the video.
- Fatal Vision® goggles are used as an interactive, and often times entertaining way to look at how alcohol can affect one’s ability to drive, and to perform simple motor functions, after consuming alcohol.

Purpose:

- Create a greater understanding regarding traffic rules and regulations
- Help attendees become aware of the life changing consequences associated with drunk driving and distracted driving.
- To encourage safe driving practices.

Week 3

City Codes and Fire Safety

Presenters from Code Enforcement and the Fire Department are invited to present on their respective topics and answer any questions the attendees might have. Each topic takes approximately one hour of class time. Fire Safety is newly added to the curriculum as a result of a number of house fires that have occurred in the area as of late, and is being presented along with Code Enforcement due to their interrelated themes.

Code Enforcement:

- Photos are presented of homes in the area. Some of the homes may be in violation of city codes, others may not.
- Attendees are asked to give their opinions of the homes.
- Examine how the condition of the home affects a person's opinion of the property. It is helpful to represent that the manner in which one treats their property may have a direct affect on the crime rate in the area.

Fire Safety:

- Ways in which one can protect themselves and their property from fire.
 - Safety when cooking with grease.
 - Heating your home in the winter.
- Tour of a fire truck.
- Planning of escape routes and reunion points.

Purpose:

- Explain the reasoning behind various city codes and possible consequences for the community if these codes are not enforced.
- Encourage individuals to fireproof their homes and create plans of action in the event of a fire.

Week 4

Immigration and the Criminal Justice System

These topics were added this session as a result of questions that frequently arose when discussing other topics in previous Academies-specifically domestic violence and child abuse. An immigration attorney will be brought in to discuss immigration issues while the Community Liaisons-probation officers by trade-will elaborate on the criminal justice system. The timeline is yet to be determined.

Purpose:

- Increase awareness of the consequences of having a criminal record and how it may affect one's immigration status, and employment and housing opportunities.
- Explain the differences between the adult and juvenile justice systems, as well as the different degrees of criminal activity and the consequences.
- Stress how it is easier to get into the system than it is to get out.

Week 5

Crime Prevention and Personal Safety

This topic is presented by officers and/or Crime Prevention Specialists. Details include:

- Discussions of different types of scams; such as postal mail, phone, internet and door-to-door scams.
- Share ways to protect one's self, property and personal information.

Purpose:

- Make attendees aware of the most recent scams.
- Let them know what information people might be asking for and when it is okay to provide one's personal information.
- Provide individuals with the tools needed to protect themselves without being fearful of everyone/everything.

Week 6

Domestic Violence and Child Protection

Presenters are brought in from Hennepin County and domestic violence organizations to discuss the varying laws related to these topics. Attendees are informed about the investigation process as well as what might be considered abuse. The presenters often provide hypothetical situations to demonstrate the complexity of the issue. Childcare laws are also discussed. This topic tends to raise a lot of questions and we typically have to be aware of the time so that each topic does not run over its allotted hour. We allow time after the class for those who wish to stay and ask the presenters questions individually.

Purpose:

- Inform attendees about the complexity of the laws regarding domestic violence and child protection issues.
- Explain how these laws may differ from their home countries.
- Explain how accusations of abuse may affect one's immigration status.
- Stress the importance of cooperating with Child Protection.

Week 7

Graduation, Tour of the Police Department

The Graduation ceremony is held at the Police Department, alternating between Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park. Attendees have the opportunity to invite family members to the ceremony to meet the Chiefs of Police and tour the department. We provide pizza and cake for the event, as well as certificates for those who attended the majority of the classes. We also have the attendees complete surveys to determine which were their favorite topics and which topics they were not as interested in. We also ask pointed questions to help us improve the overall quality of the Academy.

Purpose:

- Allow the attendees to interact with the Chiefs and other police personnel. This also gives them an opportunity to ask questions and to get to know the police as people.
- Tour the Police Department.
- Learn which topics and aspects of the Academy were helpful and which were not helpful.
- Interact with community members on a personal level.

Miscellaneous Information

- The multicultural Community Service Officers and Cadets attend the classes when their schedules allow.
- We try to be respectful of everyone's time by beginning and ending the classes on time.
- We stay after class to answer other questions that individuals may have. They might be questions they did not have an opportunity to ask, or questions they did not feel comfortable stating in front of others.
- The presenters and organizers provide handouts related to the topics covered in class. Some examples include:
 - Large Parties and Gatherings brochure (from Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park)
 - Are You a Good Neighbor? (from Brooklyn Park)
 - Traffic Stop Guide-currently provided in Hmong, Spanish and English
 - Statistics on domestic violence (from Hennepin County)
 - Curfew Cards-provided in multiple languages
 - Limited Fines Schedule
 - DWI Penalties and Drivers' License Sanctions pamphlet
- At the end of the penultimate session attendees are given a reminder which states that the Graduation will be held at the Police Department the following week (Appendix J).
 - The day of the Graduation a similar reminder is posted at Zanewood Recreation Center. This flyer includes directions to the corresponding Police Department (Appendix K).