

# Creating a Safer Upstate

## Discovery Committee Recommendations



**Purpose:** To create a safer and more united Upstate Region where all law enforcement stakeholders work collaboratively with community leaders to foster a culture that respects and values the lives of officers and all residents.

**Strategy:** Leverage the collaboration and cooperation of the Ten at the Top Upstate Counties to establish a Safer Upstate Steering Committee to represent, support and communicate local efforts to improve relationships between law enforcement and community residents across the region.

**Goals:** The Safer Upstate Steering Committee will focus on the following goals:

1. Engage law enforcement officials, community leaders and residents to work together to build healthy working relationships that elevate mutual respect, value cultural differences, and acknowledge the roles and responsibilities that each play in creating safer Upstate Communities.
2. Provide regular opportunities for law enforcement and community leaders to convene to proactively discuss community issues and emerging law enforcement topics while exploring approaches that can be implemented across the Upstate Region.
3. Enhance public trust by identifying, sharing and implementing best practice approaches for developing a sustainable, healthy relationship between law enforcement officials and the greater Upstate Community.

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**Goal 1:** Engage law enforcement officials, community leaders and residents to work together to build healthy working relationships that elevate mutual respect, value cultural differences, and acknowledge the roles and responsibilities that each play in creating safer Upstate Communities.

### **Possible Action Steps**

- Encourage the appointment of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) officers in each local service area to be responsible for assessing and analyzing population demographics, law enforcement diversity statistics, and setting goals to increase the opportunity for law enforcement workforces to engage with and better reflect the demographics of the community population.
- Grow the law enforcement recruiting pool by fostering partnerships between law enforcement agencies and local community groups to identify and implement proactive strategies for recruiting, hiring and on-boarding law enforcement officers and staff.
- Identify effective DEI training and development opportunities that can be shared and leveraged across the Upstate Region.
- Encourage the increase in law enforcement engagement with churches, nonprofits and neighborhood associations to develop and share step-by-step approaches for creating and sustaining healthy relationships between law enforcement officers and residents.

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**Goal 2:** Provide regular opportunities for law enforcement and community leaders to convene to proactively discuss community issues and emerging law enforcement topics while exploring approaches that can be implemented across the Upstate Region.

### **Possible Action Steps**

- Encourage the establishment of a regional subcommittee to explore ways to continuously improve policies, procedures and accountabilities that enhance community trust and supports a law enforcement culture of transparency.
- Use convening opportunities to better educate the community on law enforcement procedures (to include differences between agencies) and why they are in place, and to make residents more aware of opportunities for them to play a role in creating safer communities.
- Create opportunities to engage the community in education about what it is like to be a law enforcement officer such as the Citizens Police Academy.
- Ten at the Top convenes annual Safer Upstate event to educate, report on progress, and work on current issues related to community and law enforcement topics.

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**Goal 3:** Enhance public trust by identifying, sharing and implementing best practice approaches for developing a sustainable, healthy relationship between law enforcement officials and the greater Upstate Community.

### **Possible Action Steps**

- Establish a regional platform for law enforcement stakeholders to share best practices on enhancing community trust, recruiting a diverse workforce, engaging community youth, and establishing unique partnerships that lead to a safer Upstate.
- Provide opportunities for officers, healthcare professionals and social workers to explore strategies to reduce the stigma that victims of sexual and domestic violence experience and to share safety protocols for engaging, restraining or arresting an individual with behavioral issues that may be related to substance abuse or mental health.
- Develop a law enforcement tool kit that can be used to educate the community about how law enforcement works and potential career opportunities.
- Encourage the development of healthy relationships between neighborhood associations and law enforcement officers to share key crime data, educate the community on emerging trends, and to build trust and transparency.