

# Building Lasting Relationships with Refugees and Police

Partners: Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, Samaritas

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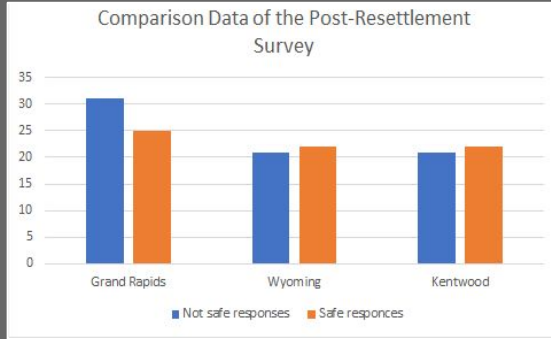
## Problem

Many refugees who come to the US have a pre-existing fear of police. This causes for strained relationships between our police and local refugee populations.

## Stories of Refugees

1. "In my home country, when you are pulled over, you are supposed to reach into your pockets and give the police officer any money you have. When I came to America I was not informed the laws were different. The officer drew his gun at me and threatened to take me to jail." - Story of an Anonymous refugee from Bhutan

2. "Where I am from, when you are pulled over it is a sign of respect to speak softly, do not make eye-contact and approach the officer. I was not aware that in America that is dangerous. The cops drew their guns and attacked me." - Story from anonymous refugee from Vietnam



## Findings

Upon the review of the literature and our interview, the Community Outreach Programs, CQ trainings, "know your rights" teachings and inclusive mindset by police have been proven to be effective in fostering a positive relationship between the two populations.

## Implications

1. Our findings confirm that the strained relationship between refugees and police officers have been improved through community outreach programs as seen in the existing literature.
2. Police officers may require more cultural competence trainings to work with refugees with more understanding and compassion.
3. Refugees need proper orientation about the laws, policies and regulations of their resettlement community to prevent wrongful accusation/arrest.
4. Community Outreach programs between police and refugees can foster trust building and respect between both groups.
5. Implementing community outreach programs can improve the safety of refugees in places like Grand Rapids with higher refugee insecurity.

## Limitations

1. Limited data due to lack of interest from some PD and refugees in the selected areas.
2. Limited resources and time to test-run community outreach programs in the areas of study.
3. Conflicting safe and not safe responses for GRPD.

# References

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