



**Law Enforcement  
&  
Community Relations**

**T a s k F o r c e**



*A grassroots initiative making Anderson's future brighter.©*

## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### Summary:

- The program began as a grassroots effort led by City Council Member Dr. Beatrice Thompson.
- The purpose was to ensure positive relationships, starting in minority neighborhoods, as a buttress to violence.
- Police department officials quickly appreciated the value of the effort, joining forces to create the *Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force*.
- The City provided the sustainable structure for the program to thrive under the direction of Police Chief Jim Stewart.
- *Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force* engaged 4000 citizens at 63 events in its first year.



Anderson, South Carolina

## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### Challenge:

- Community leaders felt burdened by violence and protests involving law enforcement and citizens across the country.
- Realizing that Anderson was not immune to such occurrences, City leaders saw the need to make a concerted effort to strengthen and enrich relationships between law enforcement and the community.
- They began a proactive effort to address potential misconceptions that can lead to conflict.
- African American pastors, realizing their capacity to influence at-risk neighborhoods, and the Anderson Police Department (APD) united to spread confidence among the broader citizenry through education and relationship building.



Anderson, South Carolina

## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### Planning Process:

The first step was to convene a group representative of the APD, City management and the African American Ministerial Council. We held several open-forum meetings, encouraging frank and sometimes uncomfortable discussions, to uncover hopes and fears from all perspectives. This process allowed us to develop trusting relationships and grow into a cohesive unit.

We built a plan to:

- Draft written goals and a shared vision
- Move slowly and accept incremental progress
- Invite others to the table
- Study best practices
- Reach into the community with a presence at existing events



# Anderson, South Carolina

## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### **Mission:**

Strengthen and enrich relationships between law enforcement and the community.

### **Vision:**

Balance effective crime control with an appreciation of how citizens are treated.



Anderson, South Carolina



*“We believe we are planting seeds for mutual respect by listening to each other.”*  
*Dr. Bea Thompson*



Anderson, South Carolina

## Strategic Plan Goals/Results:

### **Communication:**

- *LECRTF* 25 members, 44 meetings
- Forums: 4 (500+)
- Events: 42 (3500+)
- Media coverage/Social media presence

### **Education:**

- Strategic Plan
- Engaging youth/best practices (12 sessions)
- APD weapons training simulator (18 participants)



## Strategic Plan Goals/Results:

### **Build Respect:**

- School forums (120 student leaders)
- ***“Ice Cream with a Cop”*** church programs (1000+)
- APD mascot, coloring books/child IDs (700+)
- Programs for needy (food/clothing 300+)

### **Increase Accountability:**

- APD transparency - training, policies, disciplinary actions
- Members share outcomes with constituents





## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### Key indicators:

- City of Anderson Total Crime Index down 16.2% in one year
- Stated trust in the APD increased from 20% among African American leaders to 100% in one year
- Low cost: Because a key strategy of the group was to tie-in to existing events and pool recourses, the actual cost was low



Anderson, South Carolina

## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### *Public Involvement:*

Each interaction is a chance to listen and learn from constituents to address questions or concerns, to build trust and to influence policy. More than 4000 citizens were involved in programs in 2015 including:

- 11 Schools (discussion forums and education)
- 12 Churches (bible schools and fall festivals)
- 5 Community Center Summer programs
- 10 Non-Profit organizations (educational event tie-ins)
- 4 Training classes
- 4 Public forums (neighborhood committees)
- 5 Civic Clubs (guest speakers)
- 4 projects for needy



Anderson, South Carolina

## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### Partners:

Partners have a voice to improve our community and affect policy.

#### **Original partners:**

- APD Command Staff
- African American pastors
- City of Anderson Administration

#### **Partners attracted since inception:**

- School District
- Solicitor's Office
- Westside Community Center
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Reach One Teach One
- Phenomenal Women
- Men at Work
- Neighborhood Action Groups



Anderson, South Carolina

## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### *Unique Because:*

The *LECRTF* is unique in membership, scope and outcomes. It was born of an organic movement and blossomed with the resources of a determined, effective municipality.

Making a long-term difference in Anderson, it is:

**Inclusive:** The “powerful and the powerless” are permanently at the table

**Proactive:** Training and education net prevention

**Specific:** Written mission/vision/goals guide actions

**Efficient:** Tie-ins to existing events allow broad reach

**Personal:** One-on-one connections yield depth

**Enduring:** Long-term bonds serve the future



# Anderson, South Carolina

## Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

### *Best Practice:*

The *LECRTF* stands as a “best practice” example that communities of any size can replicate. We suggest the following:

- Choose a leader to convene a core group of citizens/law enforcement
- Rely on the group to invite a broad spectrum to the table (youth and underserved)
- Follow the *LECRTF* model to establish personal relationships first, then reach out to the community with a presence at existing events
- Create written goals
- Be slow and deliberate: mindful that incremental success toward long-term goals is worthy of celebration
- Be inspired by the statistical and anecdotal success in Anderson: ask for our assistance



Anderson, South Carolina

Merci!

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