



U.S. Department of Justice


Office of the Deputy Attorney General

The Deputy Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

November 16, 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM: Gary G. Grindler 
Acting Deputy Attorney General

SUBJECT: Guidance for Use of Community Outreach Resource Guide for Engagement with Local Arab and Muslim American Communities

The Department of Justice must engage effectively with all segments of American society. Our engagement efforts serve both the Department and local communities, as trusting and collaborative relationships benefit law enforcement and the public alike.

In light of the challenges that we face today as a Nation, it is particularly important that our engagement efforts with local Arab and Muslim communities across the United States are effective. Indeed, as the Attorney General has noted, "law enforcement must continue working to ensure that members of the Muslim and Arab-American communities are treated as no less 'American' than any other community. And my friends Muslim and Arab Americans must continue to work with us."

Accordingly, attached you will find a Community Outreach Resource Guide for Engagement with Local Arab and Muslim American Communities. The guide was developed as a resource for United States Attorneys in assessing effective types of outreach, and includes a list and descriptions of commonly identified issues of interest, including hate crimes and civil rights issues, charitable giving, immigration, border, and travel issues, remittances, and prosecutorial and investigative practices; guidance on how to begin outreach and how to coordinate with federal, state, and local partners; a list of potential challenges; a sampling of successful events; and a list of available resources.

The guide promotes engagement in a manner that appropriately mirrors Department interests in protecting our common security and our common values. Specifically, these interests are: 1) protecting national security; 2) preserving values that are reflected in the Constitution and laws of the United States such as respect for civil liberties, embrace of diversity, and commitment to religious freedom; 3) providing a forum for community concerns and for civil rights and anti-crime issues; and 4) improving understanding between law enforcement and communities to enable the development of the same type of trusting relationships and partnerships we seek with other diverse communities across the country.

Using the Resource Guide

Using the resource guide, a number of districts will enhance their engagement efforts during the next several months. In those districts,¹ United States Attorneys will begin by conducting discussions with their local FBI counterparts and surveying their resources. Subsequently, they will reach out to federal partners, coordinate with state and local government officials, reach out to civic leaders and community leaders, and conduct a period of enhanced outreach to Arab and Muslim American communities in their districts, identifying promising practices along the way. In reaching out to federal, state, and local partners, United States Attorneys will, in the initial stages, serve as coordinators, and are expected to convene at least one meeting per quarter with their partners.²

These United States Attorneys will keep the Department informed of their outreach activities and of experiences that might be beneficial to improving practices elsewhere. By February 1, 2011, each office will submit feedback, including a list of best practices and an assessment of the effective approaches to conducting an outreach program in the district moving forward.

Simultaneously, I am directing the remaining United States Attorneys' Offices to complete several steps to engage more effectively in the future. These districts will meet with their local FBI counterparts, survey their resources, and reach out to federal, state and local partners to discuss existing outreach activities and identify potential opportunities. Where feasible, these offices will thereafter reach out to community and civic leaders and engage with Arab and Muslim American communities, but in any event will submit feedback about what they learn by February 1, 2011.

Goals

Through this dual-pronged approach, the Department believes that we can sustain a thoughtful and long-term commitment to engagement with these communities. Using experiences from the first tier of districts engaged in outreach, and drawing upon the strong existing foundations in many districts where this type of relationship-building has occurred already, a more integrated and consistent approach can emerge.

The eventual leader of sustained engagement efforts at the local level will be decided district by district and will be based on local conditions. In some instances it may be most appropriate for the United States Attorney to take the lead on an ongoing basis, while in other districts, another federal, state, or local partner may be the most appropriate choice.

Regardless of the assigned leader of these local efforts, the Department's relationships with these communities can and should grow. The Attorney General has noted publicly that he has spoken with Arab Americans who feel discomfort about their relationship with the

¹ The Attorney General's Advisory Committee has identified the districts that wish to participate in this first group.

² As local groups meet and assess their circumstances and needs, the frequency of meetings may be adjusted.

government, and that too often "it feels like 'us versus them.'" Outreach and discussion with these communities alone cannot resolve those feelings entirely, but engagement can help facilitate a greater level of trust than currently exists. To those ends, we look forward to your reports on February 1, 2011.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office at (202) 514-2101 if you have any questions regarding this memorandum.