



Community-Centered Pilot Program Framework

Measuring what Matters to Your Community



“To recognize always that the power of the police to fulfill their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behavior, and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect.”

- Sir Robert Peele, 1829



Core Principles for Ethical Pilot Programs

Fundamental Requirements

1. No Service Reduction: Pilot programs must never provide lesser service than baseline standards
 2. Community Consent: Affected communities must be genuinely engaged and provide informed consent
 3. Transparent Process: All aspects of the pilot must be open to community scrutiny
 4. Immediate Safeguards: Rapid response protocols for any negative impacts
 5. Equity Assurance: Programs must not create or exacerbate existing disparities
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Phase 1: Community Engagement and Co-Design

Pre-Planning Community Involvement

Stakeholder Identification

- Primary Stakeholders: Residents, business owners, community organizations in pilot area
- Secondary Stakeholders: Advocacy groups, city council members, school officials
- Internal Stakeholders: Officers who will implement, supervisors, union representatives
- External Experts: Academic researchers, policy experts, similar agency experiences

Genuine Community Engagement Process

Timeline: 3-6 months before pilot launch

Month 1-2: Community Listening Sessions

- Host multiple sessions at different times/locations
- Provide childcare, translation services, accessible venues
- Focus on understanding community priorities and concerns
- Document all feedback with attribution permission

Month 2-3: Co-Design Workshops



- Present proposed pilot concept for community input
- Modify program design based on community feedback
- Establish community oversight committee
- Develop shared success metrics

Month 3-4: Formal Agreement Process

- Present final pilot design to community
- Secure documented community consent (not just leader consent)
- Establish community withdrawal mechanisms
- Finalize oversight and communication protocols

Month 5-6: Implementation Preparation

- Officer training with community input on training content
- Community education about what to expect
- Launch communication systems
- Final safety protocol review

Community Consent Framework

Informed Consent Elements

- Clear Purpose: Why this pilot is needed and what problems it addresses
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- Detailed Description: Exactly what will change and what will stay the same
- Duration and Scope: Specific timeline and geographic/operational boundaries
- Potential Risks: Honest assessment of what could go wrong
- Safeguards: Specific protections and response protocols
- Exit Rights: How community can end pilot if needed
- Evaluation Process: How success will be measured and by whom
- Reading Levels: Consider the reading level of your audience, not your research term; consent can only be given if clearly understood

Consent Documentation

- Community meetings with documented attendance and feedback
- Written agreement signed by representative community coalition
- Ongoing consent verification through regular check-ins
- Clear revocation process that communities can invoke

Phase 2: Pilot Design and Safeguards

Program Structure

Geographic Selection Criteria

Avoid These Problematic Approaches:

- Selecting only "cooperative" neighborhoods

- Choosing areas based solely on crime statistics
- Using economically or racially homogeneous areas
- Picking locations for agency convenience only

Recommended Selection Approach:

- **Community Request:** Prioritize areas where community has requested specific interventions
- **Representative Demographics:** Ensure pilot area reflects broader community diversity
- **Baseline Comparability:** Select areas that allow meaningful comparison with similar non-pilot areas
- **Infrastructure Readiness:** Ensure area has necessary resources for pilot success
- **Community Capacity:** Verify community has organizational capacity for genuine participation

Service Enhancement Model

Pilot Program = Baseline Services + Enhanced/Modified Approach

Examples of Appropriate Enhancements:

- ✓ Additional community policing officers in pilot area
- ✓ New technology deployed with extra training and support
- ✓ Enhanced mental health crisis response team

- ✓ Expanded community engagement activities
- ✓ Modified patrol schedules based on community input

Inappropriate Approaches:

- ✗ Reduced patrol presence to test response times
- ✗ Different arrest policies that might compromise safety
- ✗ Experimental use of force protocols
- ✗ Testing unproven technology on vulnerable populations

Multi-Layer Safeguard System

Tier 1: Real-Time Monitoring

- **Daily Dashboards:** Key safety and service metrics updated daily
- **Community Hotline:** Direct line for immediate concerns or complaints
- **Supervisor Oversight:** Enhanced supervision during pilot period
- **Officer Feedback:** Regular check-ins with implementing officers

Tier 2: Weekly Review Process

- **Community Advisory Check-ins:** Weekly calls with community representatives
- **Performance Metrics Review:** Analysis of service delivery data
- **Incident Assessment:** Review of any concerning events or complaints

- **Resource Adequacy:** Ensure pilot isn't straining other areas

Tier 3: Monthly Comprehensive Assessment

- **Community Forums:** Public meetings to discuss pilot progress
- **Data Analysis:** Statistical review of outcomes and impacts
- **External Evaluation:** Independent assessment of pilot progress
- **Adjustment Protocol:** Process for making mid-course corrections

Emergency Response Protocols

Trigger Events for Immediate Review

- Any serious incident involving pilot program elements
- Community safety concerns reaching threshold level
- Significant negative community feedback
- Resource strain affecting baseline services
- Officer safety concerns related to pilot

Response Hierarchy

Level 1: Program Adjustment (Minor concerns)

- Modify specific procedures or training
- Increase supervision or support

- Enhanced communication with community

Level 2: Program Suspension (Serious concerns)

- Temporarily halt pilot while addressing issues
- Conduct thorough review and community consultation
- Implement additional safeguards before resumption

Level 3: Program Termination (Major safety/trust concerns)

- Immediately end pilot program
- Comprehensive review of what went wrong
- Community healing and relationship repair process

Phase 3: Implementation and Ongoing Management

Launch Strategy

Soft Launch Approach

Week 1-2: Limited Implementation

- Start with most experienced officers
- Focus on easiest/least controversial elements
- Intensive monitoring and feedback collection

Week 3-4: Gradual Expansion



- Add more officers and program elements
- Begin community engagement activities
- Expand monitoring and evaluation systems

Week 5-8: Full Implementation

- Complete program rollout
- All monitoring systems active
- Regular community feedback mechanisms operational

Communication Strategy

- **Pre-Launch:** Community education campaign about what to expect
- **During Launch:** Regular updates through multiple channels (social media, community meetings, local media)
- **Ongoing:** Monthly community reports on pilot progress and outcomes

Community Ownership and Participation

Community Oversight Committee Structure

- **Composition:** 7-9 members representing different community segments
- **Authority:** Can request changes, access all pilot data, recommend suspension
- **Support:** Agency provides administrative support and data access
- **Meetings:** Monthly meetings with quarterly public reports

Resident Participation Mechanisms

- **Community Advisory Panels:** Rotating panels of residents providing regular feedback
- **Neighborhood Liaisons:** Resident volunteers serving as communication bridges
- **Feedback Systems:** Multiple ways to provide input (online, phone, in-person, anonymous)
- **Regular Surveys:** Quarterly community satisfaction and safety perception surveys

Phase 4: Evaluation and Decision-Making

Comprehensive Evaluation Framework

Quantitative Metrics

- **Safety Outcomes:** Crime rates, incident types, response times
- **Service Quality:** Complaint rates, commendations, community contacts
- **Officer Performance:** Training completion, policy compliance, job satisfaction
- **Resource Impact:** Costs, efficiency measures, spillover effects

Qualitative Assessment

- **Community Satisfaction:** Surveys, focus groups, individual interviews

- **Officer Feedback:** Structured interviews about implementation challenges and successes
- **Stakeholder Perspectives:** Input from schools, businesses, social services
- **Unintended Consequences:** Systematic review of unexpected impacts

Decision Framework for Scaling

Criteria for Success

Minimum Requirements for Continuation:

- ✓ No negative safety impacts
- ✓ Community satisfaction maintained or improved
- ✓ Officer acceptance and competent implementation
- ✓ Cost-effectiveness demonstrated
- ✓ No serious unintended consequences

Additional Criteria for Expansion:

- ✓ Measurable improvement in targeted outcomes
 - ✓ Strong community support for continuation
 - ✓ Replicability in other areas demonstrated
 - ✓ Long-term sustainability confirmed
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Scaling Decision Process

1. **6-Month Preliminary Review:** Initial assessment of basic functionality and safety
2. **12-Month Comprehensive Evaluation:** Full analysis of outcomes and impacts
3. **Community Input Period:** 60-day period for community feedback on continuation
4. **Independent Evaluation:** External review of pilot outcomes and methodology
5. **Scaling Decision:** Leadership decision with public rationale and community input integration

Specific Pilot Program Examples

Example 1: Enhanced Mental Health Crisis Response

Community Engagement

- Partner with mental health advocacy groups and families affected by mental health crises
- Co-design response protocols with community mental health providers
- Establish community advisory panel including people with lived mental health experience

Program Design

- Deploy mental health professionals with officers on crisis calls
- Enhanced training for all officers in de-escalation and mental health awareness

- Community education about when and how to access crisis services

Safeguards

- Track all mental health-related calls and outcomes
- Monthly review with mental health advocacy community
- Independent evaluation by mental health professionals
- Clear protocols for when traditional police response is still necessary

Example 2: Community-Directed Problem Solving

Community Engagement

- Neighborhood meetings to identify top 3 community-defined problems
- Resident-led committees to help design intervention strategies
- Community volunteers trained as problem-solving liaisons

Program Design

- Dedicated community problem-solving officer assigned to work with residents
- Resources allocated based on community priorities, not just crime statistics
- Regular public meetings to report progress and adjust strategies

Safeguards

- Traditional patrol services maintained at baseline levels
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- Monthly community forums to assess progress and concerns
- Quarterly review of resource allocation and outcome measures
- Protocol for addressing problems that require traditional enforcement

Example 3: Technology-Enhanced Community Policing

Community Engagement

- Community input on technology deployment and privacy safeguards
- Resident education about technology capabilities and limitations
- Community oversight of data collection and use policies

Program Design

- Body cameras with community-requested features (e.g., automated activation)
- Mobile apps for non-emergency community communication
- Data sharing protocols developed with community input

Safeguards

- Privacy audit by independent experts
 - Community access to aggregate data reports
 - Regular review of technology use and community satisfaction
 - Clear policies for data retention and access
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Best Practices and Lessons Learned

What Makes Pilot Programs Successful

Process Elements

- **Authentic Community Voice:** Not just consultation, but genuine shared decision-making
- **Flexible Design:** Ability to modify program based on community feedback and emerging issues
- **Adequate Resources:** Sufficient funding and staffing to implement properly
- **Leadership Commitment:** Sustained support from police leadership and city government
- **Officer Buy-In:** Extensive training and support for implementing officers

Outcome Factors

- **Clear Success Definition:** Community and agency agree on what success looks like
- **Realistic Timelines:** Allow sufficient time for implementation and assessment
- **Communication Systems:** Regular, accessible updates to all stakeholders
- **Conflict Resolution:** Processes for addressing disagreements and concerns
- **Sustainability Planning:** Early consideration of long-term funding and implementation

Common Pitfalls to Avoid



Process Pitfalls

- **Tokenistic Engagement:** Going through motions without genuine community input
- **Rushed Implementation:** Starting before proper community engagement and safeguards
- **Inadequate Communication:** Failing to keep community informed about progress and challenges
- **Ignoring Negative Feedback:** Dismissing community concerns or criticism

Design Pitfalls

- **Overpromising Results:** Creating unrealistic expectations about outcomes
 - **Insufficient Safeguards:** Not having adequate monitoring and response systems
 - **Resource Strain:** Undermining baseline services to fund pilot programs
 - **Scope Creep:** Expanding pilot beyond original community agreement
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Conclusion

Successful pilot programs in policing require intensive community engagement, robust safeguards, and a genuine commitment to shared decision-making. They should enhance rather than replace baseline services, maintain community trust through transparency, and be designed with community input from inception through evaluation.

The goal is not to conduct experiments on communities, but to carefully implement promising practices with extensive safeguards, community ownership, and immediate response protocols for any concerns. When done properly, pilot programs can build community trust while advancing evidence-based policing practices that genuinely serve community needs.

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