

New Bedford Action Plan Agreement



ACTION PLAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

AND

**THE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER,
THE PUERTO RICAN AND LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE COMMITTEE,
THE NEW BEDFORD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,
THE NEW BEDFORD BRANCH OF THE NAACP,
THE NEW BEDFORD FAITH BASED COMMUNITY AND
THE UGLY GALLERY**

This Action Plan Agreement (Agreement) is consistent with the United States Department of Justice, Community Relations Service (CRS) congressional mandate as detailed in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §2000g). CRS provides assistance to communities and persons therein in resolving disputes, disagreements or difficulties related to conflicts and tensions based on race, color, and national origin. CRS also works with these parties to help communities prevent and respond more effectively to violent hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

This Agreement is the result of a facilitated community dialogue between area service and community representatives that included the Police Chief, President of the NAACP, Business Owners, School Committee Members, Youth Representatives, and Community Leaders.

The expressed intent of the parties to this Agreement is to allow the parties to demonstrate that they will work together to support initiatives to improve the issues and concerns that affect the quality of life and peace and safety of the community at-large, in the spirit of community solidarity and open communications between the City of New Bedford and its residents. All parties have voluntarily agreed to participate in this Agreement, requesting the services of CRS.

Issues of Agreement:

- I. Issues Identified:
 - A. The immigrant communities in New Bedford may not understand their civil rights.
 - B. The role of the New Bedford Public Schools in preventing negative interactions between youth and police could be better defined and potentially expanded.
 - C. Relations between the city's youth and the police need improvement.

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D. There is a lack of employment opportunities for both adults and youth.

II. Joint Solutions

A. The city of New Bedford agrees to conduct a review of existing programs and policies on civil rights and public safety issues serving immigrant communities in order to identify gaps and potential overlaps in services. This review will be co-led by the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) and the Puerto Rican and Latin American Culture Committee.

B. The New Bedford Human Rights Commission will extend membership to a Mayan representative of the New Bedford community.

C. New Bedford Public Schools will explore options for amending its discipline policies with an eye toward striking a balance between ensuring school safety and a positive learning environment and keeping students engaged in school.

D. The New Bedford branch of the NAACP will lead efforts in guiding and educating youth on proper interaction with police officers.

E. Select representatives of the Faith Based Community will work with the New Bedford school system and parent liaisons to revitalize the elementary and high school alternative school assignment room, detention program, and home visitations.

F. Select representatives of the Faith Based Community will explore the possibility of implementing cost effective vocational training programs, beginning in the fourth grade, with New Bedford public school officials.

G. The Ugly Gallery will communicate with the New Bedford police union regarding showcasing police artwork at the Third Eye Festival.

H. The City of New Bedford agrees to continue a dialogue on the issues and concerns that affect the quality of life and peace and safety of the community at-large, particularly focusing on: breaking down barriers between youth and police; outreach to the business community to discuss youth employment and recreational partnerships. CRS may be contacted, upon agreement of the parties, to facilitate further collaborative discussions on these issues.

III. Mutual education efforts

A. The City of New Bedford agrees to continue to educate the immigrant communities on their civil rights.

B. The City of New Bedford agrees to engage the schools and the broader community in a discussion about developing programs in schools which educate students on the consequences of life and behavior choices, and provide basic life skills instruction.

IV. Support Resources

A. Participating non-profit organizations will continue to explore ways to leverage resources.

Whereas, the Parties hereby agree in a spirit of mutual cooperation to work collaboratively to improve the issues and concerns that affect the quality of life and peace and safety of the City of New Bedford. The parties have combined efforts to build a

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relationship of openness and trust; they believe that their collaborative efforts will provide a significant impact beyond their individual organizations, to improve the quality of life and peace and safety in the City of New Bedford.

Voluntary Agreement and Ethics Disclaimer

This Agreement is the result of voluntary mediation between the parties and is not a result of duress, coercion, or undue influence. Nothing in this Agreement should be taken as an admission of wrongdoing by any party and the terms and conditions contained herein are non-contractual and create no independent contractual obligation and/or duties upon any of the parties hereto. It being distinctly understood and agreed that no party to this Agreement shall institute or prosecute any judicial or administrative proceedings of any kind or nature to enforce any of the terms and conditions herein.

Terms of Agreement

All of the aforementioned tenets of this Agreement shall be reviewed after five years from the date of signing. Signatory parties of this Agreement at that time may choose to amend, extend or dissolve the Agreement based on evidence of good faith, mutual compliance and benefits to the citizens of New Bedford, Massachusetts, resulting from this relationship.

It is also understood that the parties of this Agreement agree to work in earnest and convene themselves regularly during the term specified to uphold the tenets of the Agreement as described herein.

Dispute Resolution

In the event that the parties to this Agreement cannot reach agreement on issues before it, neutral dispute resolution will be sought to resolve their differences. The U.S. Department of Justice, Community Relations Service or other local dispute resolution service might be sought in this regard.

Party and Third Party Rights

Nothing in this Agreement is intended to create, or shall anything in it be construed as creating any rights in any third party entity or person that would not exist independently of this Agreement.

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Consummation and Ratification

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed and delivered this Agreement as of this _____ day _____ of, 2012 and the signatories hereto personally represent that this Agreement is executed pursuant to legal authorization by the organizations on behalf of which they are signing:

Honorable Jonathan F. Mitchell
MAYOR OF NEW BEDFORD

Corinn Williams
THE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Angie Vargas
THE PUERTO RICAN AND LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE COMMITTEE

Marcelina Pina-Christian
THE NEW BEDFORD HUMAN RIGHTS COMISSION

Rev. Mark Green
THE NEW BEDFORD BRANCH OF THE NAACP

Bishop Frank Lobo
THE NEW BEDFORD FAITH BASED COMMUNITY

Jeremiah Hernandez
THE UGLY GALLERY

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Witnessed By:

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