

Meeting with local law enforcement about the Sanctuary Promise Act

This tool is for human dignity groups and community members who want to meet with local law enforcement to discuss how they are complying with the Sanctuary Promise Act (SPA). If you are looking for [more details on what the Sanctuary Promise Act is, or other ways to take action, check out more information at rop.org!](#)

Why meet with local law enforcement?

Everyone has the right to live safely in Oregon and that in order for that to happen, local law enforcement needs to follow our state's sanctuary laws. Human dignity groups have had conversations across the state revealing that many law enforcement agencies don't know how much the SPA changed our 1987 Sanctuary Law. [Some, including the Cottage Grove Police Department, have adopted policies they say comply with the SPA but actually violate it.](#)

When local police collaborate with federal immigration officials in violation of the SPA, it erodes community trust and tears families apart. People are less likely to call for help when needed, leaving everyone less safe. We can all play a role in making sure that the SPA is implemented by sitting down with local law enforcement to figure out their policies and practices.

Different human dignity groups have different relationships with local law enforcement. Your meeting could make them aware that their policies and actions are out of compliance, and that people are paying attention to whether they are following the law. Establishing or deepening relationships with local law enforcement could be important in convincing them to make changes needed under the SPA to protect immigrant community members. If your local department is already doing the right thing, collecting their policies as models for others can support efforts in neighboring counties.

Planning the meeting: Gather folks together for a prep meeting to make a plan!

1. What's your approach going to be?

- a. Does your group already have a working relationship with local police, the sheriff, the district attorney, or other government officials? Does it make sense to meet with that person or to use this as an excuse to build a new relationship? How could you most successfully learn more about their policies and practices?
- b. Or, maybe your approach is to hold up the Cottage Grove lawsuit as an example to show them that people are paying attention and that anyone can enforce the SPA themselves. You know your community best!

2. Who will be in the room that can speak from their perspectives as community members?

Examples might include local leaders who might already have a relationship with the police to build off of, teachers who are worried about their students' well-being, or faith leaders who can share how immigrant community members are afraid to show up to services and events.

3. Set an agenda. Check out the sample agenda below!

- a. **What roles will people play?** Who will kick things off, who will ask questions, and in what order? Who will take notes? See a list of possible questions below, and figure out what makes the most sense for your group.
- b. **What materials do you want to print out to share with them?** [Check out this SPA Explainer for Law Enforcement](#), and let ROP know if there are other tools you are looking for!

4. **Reach out to local law enforcement and set a time and place to meet.** Typically the sheriff or police chief will have a website with their contact info listed. Phone calls often work best but most have public email addresses too.
5. **Have a meeting!** Some groups like to meet up across the street or at a nearby coffee shop first so the group can clarify any last-minute questions and then go in all together.
6. **Follow up!**
 - a. It is always helpful to promptly follow up with an email or letter repeating back what you heard them say. What next moves came up? Will they be sharing their policies with you? Did they want more information? Include these front and center in your message.
 - b. If you receive their policies, share them with ROP! We're working with immigration lawyers who can help us understand and analyze them so that your group can figure out what next moves make sense! We'd also love to know how the meeting went! Contact your local organizer or reach out to us at emma@rop.org or 541-588-2053.

Sample Agenda:

Introductions: Make sure everyone has a chance to introduce themselves by name and share their connections to the community. E.g. "My name is ___ I have lived in ___ for 25 years and I am the Secretary of [Human Dignity Group] which is made up of ___ people in town."

Values: Have one person succinctly share why your group cares about this issue. Here are some examples of values-based statements that community members used in Cottage Grove:

- When local police collaborate with immigration officials:
 - It erodes community trust in police, making it less likely that people will call for help when needed, leaving everyone less safe and making it harder to know what is happening in the community and how to allocate law enforcement resources;
 - It tears apart Oregon families and fractures local communities.
- We want the City of Cottage Grove to follow the law. Everyone has the right to live their lives with safety and dignity in Oregon.
- We do not believe the City should be using our community's resources to help a multi-billion dollar federal agency do its job.

In Cottage Grove, one person shared with the police chief, "You and I, if we get a DUI, we maybe get written up and get a fine and that's it. But our immigrant neighbors are getting detained and having their families ripped apart. Doesn't that seem unfair?"

Concerns: Have one person succinctly share your concerns and offer this SPA Explainer for Law Enforcement. For example:

- In 2021 we passed the Sanctuary Promise Act, which expanded Oregon's existing Sanctuary Law to cover more law enforcement agencies and officers, increase the range of practices prohibited, and close loopholes. These changes are to make sure the federal government can no longer take local public resources away from local issues and use them to support federal immigration enforcement.
- Some law enforcement participation in immigration enforcement allowed by the former sanctuary law is now prohibited by the Sanctuary Promise Act. You may need to examine your own policies and actions to ensure they comply with the new law.
- Now we've heard that the Cottage Grove Police Department was not following the SPA and is being sued for it. Additionally, many other departments seem to be out of compliance just from a sheer lack of

information. We want to make sure your department is following the law and checking to see that everyone in the community feels safe accessing local public safety resources.

Questions: Then jump right in with your first question, without pausing for their thoughts. Below are some examples of questions. Depending on the approach you are taking to your meeting, consider reframing the questions to be more or less confrontational. Remember, the goal is to learn what their policies and practices are in relation to immigration enforcement, how you get there is up to you!

- How has your department updated its policies and practices to comply with the Sanctuary Promise Act? If they don't know what the SPA is, here are the main points:
 - All public bodies must [file reports](#) anytime they receive "a communication or request from a federal agency that relates to immigration enforcement, other than a qualifying judicial subpoena." How do you handle this within your department?
 - Police or state or local government cannot investigate or interrogate people or otherwise collaborate with federal authorities for immigration enforcement purposes. Do you follow this?
 - Sheriffs or state or local government cannot request, store, or share information about a person's country of origin or immigration, or citizenship status. Do you follow this?
 - State or local government officials cannot deny services, benefits, or privileges to a person in jail or on probation/parole because of immigration status. Do you follow this?
 - Local jails cannot contract with immigration authorities. Do you have a contract with any immigration authorities?
 - ICE cannot arrest someone on their way to or from a court, while at court, or without a warrant from a judge. What happens if immigration authorities show up in or around your courthouse or jail?
- Can we see your policies related to immigration enforcement? We hope to support neighboring communities in presenting model policies to improve how other law enforcement agencies run things.
- How have you trained your staff to understand and abide by the 2021 Sanctuary Promise Act?
- What should we do if we have concerns moving forward that the Sanctuary Promise Act is being violated by someone in your department?
- [If they seem to be following the law] Are you able to support our efforts to bring other departments into compliance with this new policy? If yes, how? Could you:
 - Offer your policies as an example;
 - Write a letter we can share;
 - Talk to your colleagues in other departments and report back?
- The Sanctuary Promise Act created a hotline for community members to report suspected violations of Oregon sanctuary laws. There is more information on the Oregon Department of Justice Website. Will you let your community know about the Sanctuary Promise Hotline?
(<https://tinyurl.com/SanctuaryPromiseHotline>)

Clarify anything you don't understand. No question is too small! This person is paid with tax dollars!

Closing: Thank them for their time, reiterate the next moves that they have agreed to, get clear on when they will complete those next moves, and let them know you will be following up in the next few days.

Debrief with your team, make a plan for following up with the person you met with, and **share** how it went with ROP by emailing emma@rop.org or calling 541-588-2053