Community-Based Identification Cards Give Immigrants a Sense of Belonging and Trust in Local Police

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Police Executive Research Forum

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Contents

Letter from the Executive Director of PERF

Dear colleagues:

Having a reliable form of photo identification is something that many of us take for granted. For U.S. citizens and immigrants with legal status to live in the United States, obtaining a driver's license or state identification card is not particularly challenging. But for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States, obtaining a photo ID is often fraught with obstacles.

Although some states and municipalities issue identification cards to residents without regard to immigration status, it is not always a viable option for undocumented immigrants who may be hesitant to share personal data with government agencies. To address this need, FaithAction International House—a nonprofit organization based in North Carolina that assists immigrant families—worked with the Greensboro, NC Police Department to develop a community-based identification card that would be accepted by local law enforcement agencies, doctor's offices, schools, and other organizations and services.

These ID cards do more than just prove immigrants' identity. They provide the cardholder with a sense of community and help to reduce fear of interacting with police.

This report examines how community-based identification programs like the FaithAction ID Program, and others based on this model, can help police agencies build trust with community members, especially undocumented immigrants.

This project would not have been possible without the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which has provided PERF with longstanding support in the area of policing and immigration. I am especially grateful to Geri Mannion, Program Director for the Strengthening Democracy Program and Special Opportunities Fund, for the idea to explore this particular topic. Special thanks also go to Program Officer Andrew Geraghty for his support. We are grateful to both Geri and Andrew for being invaluable allies to PERF over all these years.

The Carnegie Corporation has supported numerous PERF projects regarding policing and immigration, including:

- *Building Trust with Immigrant Communities: Best Practices for Law Enforcement Agencies in Smaller Cities and Towns* (2020)[1]
- *Inventory of Promising Practices and Programs for Immigrant and Refugee Outreach* (2020)[2]

1. Police Executive Research Forum (2020). Building Trust with Immigrant Communities: Best Practices for Law Enforcement Agencies in Smaller Cities and Towns. https://www.policeforum.org/assets/BuildingTrustImmigrantCommunities.pdf.

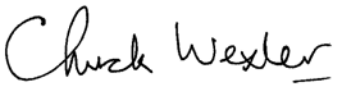
2. Police Executive Research Forum (2020). Inventory of Promising Practices and Programs for Immigrant and Refugee Outreach. https://www.policeforum.org/immigrantrefugeeoutreach.

- *Community Policing in Immigrant Neighborhoods: Stories of Success* (2019)[3]
- *Refugee Outreach and Engagement Programs for Police Agencies* (2017)[4]
- *Local Police Perspectives on State Immigration Policies* (2014)[5]
- *Voices From Across the Country: Local Law Enforcement Officials Discuss the Challenges of Immigration Enforcement* (2012)[6]
- *Police and Immigration: How Chiefs Are Leading their Communities through the Challenges* (2010)[7]

Carnegie recognized PERF's immigration work in its newsletter, *Carnegie Results*.[8]

I also want to thank everyone who contributed to our research, in particular the police agencies and organizations that provided information that served as the foundation for this report: the Greensboro, NC Police Department; the Burlington, NC Police Department; the Albemarle County, VA Police Department; the Ames, IA Police Department; and the Marshalltown, IA Police Department. Special thanks to all the officials we interviewed for this project, who were generous with their time and expertise, especially Rev. David Fraccaro, Executive Director of the FaithAction International House, whose community ID program serves as a model for cities across the country.

Finally, credit is due to PERF staff members who conducted research, interviewed practitioners, and helped write and edit this publication, including Deputy Director of Technical Assistance Lisa Mantel, Research Assistant Hyla Jacobson, and Director of Communications Craig Fischer. Lisa was the lead author of this report, and graphic designer Dave Williams produced the document.



Chuck Wexler
Executive Director, Police Executive Research Forum

3. Police Executive Research Forum (2019). Community Policing in Immigrant Neighborhoods: Stories of Success. https://www.policeforum.org/assets/CommunityPolicingImmigrantNeighborhoods.pdf.

4. Police Executive Research Forum (2017). Refugee Outreach and Engagement Programs for Police Agencies. http://www.policeforum.org/assets/refugeeoutreach.pdf.

5. Police Executive Research Forum (2014). Local Police Perspectives on State Immigration Policies. https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Immigration/local%20police%20perspectives%20on%20state%20immigration%20policies.pdf.

6. Police Executive Research Forum (2012). Voices From Across the Country: Local Law Enforcement Officials Discuss The Challenges of Immigration Enforcement. https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Immigration/voices%20from%20across%20the%20country%20-%20local%20law%20enforcement%20officials%20discuss%20the%20challenges%20of%20immigration%20enforcement%202012.pdf.

7. Police Executive Research Forum (2010). Police and Immigration: How Chiefs Are Leading their Communities through the Challenges. https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Immigration/police%20and%20immigration%20-%20how%20chiefs%20are%20leading%20their%20communities%20through%20the%20challenges%202010.pdf.

8. Carnegie Results (Fall 2011). Police Executive Research Forum: Freeing Local Police from Immigration Enforcement. https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer_public/75/b8/75b8dad6-e49f-4ecf-a9db-5001dcea6a8a/ccny_cresults_2011_police.pdf.

Executive Summary

Overview and purpose of this report

This report examines how community-based identification programs increase trust between undocumented immigrants and local police agencies. The FaithAction ID Program and Network, which is based in Greensboro, North Carolina, is one model in which local police agencies facilitate the ID application process. The report explores how the FaithAction ID Program and other programs based on this model have served as a key part of community policing efforts in communities in North Carolina, Virginia, and Iowa.

Through the ID application process, police agencies in these areas educate and engage with vulnerable groups of people, including undocumented immigrants, who may fear interacting with police.

The purpose of this report is to explain why community-based identification programs are needed, how the application process ensures the security and integrity of the ID cards that are issued, how the ID cards benefit police agencies, and key recommendations to consider when implementing an ID program.

Identification is a basic need

The ability to prove your identity with a photo ID card is a fundamental need that provides the cardholder with access to basic services, including housing, healthcare, education, banking, and employment. For instance, people are asked to show identification when they rent an apartment, apply for utility service, and register children for school. People are also asked to show identification when they seek medical care or fill certain prescriptions. Not having a suitable form of photo ID can prevent people from obtaining these services.

For example, although identification is not required to receive COVID-19 vaccines, immigrants have been turned away from some pharmacies or other vaccination sites after being asked to show their driver's license, Social Security card, or health insurance cards.[9]

Identification is also necessary when interacting with police or emergency services. An identification card allows police and medical professionals to quickly and accurately identify individuals if they are incapacitated or otherwise unable to communicate.

9. Johnson, Akilah, "For immigrants, IDs prove to be a barrier to a dose of protection," *The Washington Post* (April 10, 2021). https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/04/10/covid-vaccine-immigrants-id/.

Identification for undocumented immigrants

There are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States. Only 16 states, the District of Columbia, and one U.S. territory allow undocumented immigrants to apply for a driver's license or state identification card. In addition, there are at least 20 cities that issue identification cards to their residents regardless of citizenship.

For undocumented individuals living outside of these areas, obtaining a verifiable form of photo identification is riddled with obstacles.

Even in cities or states that provide ID cards to undocumented immigrants, these immigrants may be hesitant to apply for a government-issued ID card, because they fear that federal immigration authorities will have access to the personal identifying information included in the application, making them vulnerable to deportation.

Community-based ID programs are a viable alternative for individuals unable to obtain traditional forms of identification. Community ID cards are not a substitute for driver's licenses, and they do not grant the cardholders any rights that they are not entitled to, such as the right to vote. But the ID cards are an important tool, not only to provide proof of identity, but also to give the cardholder a sense of belonging.

Community ID cards are beneficial for other vulnerable populations as well, including individuals reentering the population after incarceration, people experiencing homelessness, elderly persons, and people with expired forms of identification.

The FaithAction ID Program

The FaithAction ID Program is the most expansive community-based ID program in the United States. It is run by FaithAction International House, a nonprofit organization that primarily supports immigrants with limited legal status. Based in Greensboro, North Carolina, the FaithAction model has expanded in recent years to other cities in North Carolina and to additional states, including South Carolina, Florida, Virginia, Iowa, Ohio, and Oregon. The nonprofit organizations and faith-based organizations in these communities make up the FaithAction ID Network.

The ID Program grew out of FaithAction's work in building connections between newcomers and longtime residents of Greensboro. Immigrant communities expressed a need for a form of identification that would be accepted by local police. Undocumented immigrants living in the area were often arrested for not having proper ID, which increased their chances of being deported. The inability to obtain identification, combined with the fear of being arrested and deported, led to frustration among undocumented individuals. To address this gap, FaithAction worked with the Greensboro Police Department to develop the FaithAction ID card.

To receive a FaithAction ID card, applicants must participate in what is called an "ID drive," during which they:

- Attend an orientation where they learn the benefits and limitations of the ID card;
- Provide proof of identification using an acceptable form of documentation (e.g., an embassy ID, a foreign passport, a national ID card);
- Provide proof of address (e.g., a utility bill, lease agreement).

FaithAction ID Network partners in other cities follow the same "ID drive and dialogue" model as in Greensboro. During the "dialogue" portion of the event, applicants engage with police officers and other service providers and learn about the various resources available to help integrate newcomers into the community. For example, attendees learn how to call 9-1-1 to report a crime, what to do if they are stopped by the police, and how to obtain essential services, such as health care and education.

The card costs a nominal fee, generally $10 or less, and must be renewed every year or two, depending on the requirements of the issuing organization.

Security features of the card

Police officers sometimes express concern about the potential for fraud with community ID cards not issued by government agencies. But the reality is that community-based ID cards are not more likely to be fraudulent than traditional forms of identification, such as driver's licenses.

To protect against fraud, the organizations that run the ID drives warn card applicants that they will be banned from using a FaithAction ID card (or network partner ID card) if they are caught using fraudulent documents when applying for the card. The staff and volunteers receive training and are very familiar with the types of documents used to verify identifications. The types of documents used to prove identity and residence are established in cooperation with local law enforcement partners. To date, officials have encountered fraudulent documents only a handful of times since the program began in 2012.

Benefits to police agencies

The FaithAction ID card and similar community ID cards based on the same model offer several benefits to law enforcement agencies, beyond the essential function of providing identification for people whom police encounter.

First, as part of the process, police officials engage with community members to answer questions and talk about how the card can and cannot be used. Through this engagement, the police and community members are able to talk to one another in a safe, neutral setting. This interaction helps police build relationships with the community.

The ID drives also help to build relationships with the organizations that run the ID drives. Nonprofit and faith-based organizations that have developed relationships of trust with local police are more confident in telling their clients that they can trust the police. By creating more open lines of communication, members of the community, especially undocumented immigrants, become more comfortable interacting with the police and reporting crime.

Community ID cards can also improve the efficiency of police work. Witnesses and victims of crime are generally more willing to talk to the police if they have an ID card that they know the police will accept. Additionally, the ID cards can prevent misidentification if someone is unable to communicate. A valid ID card can also reduce unnecessary incarcerations. For example, in the case of a minor offense that would normally result in a citation, police may have no choice but to jail a suspect who has no identification. A community ID card can provide the police with a way to avoid unnecessary, costly, and time-consuming arrests in these situations.

Key recommendations

Community ID cards can serve as a key part of a police agency's community policing program. Below are 11 recommendations for considering whether to bring a community ID program to your jurisdiction:

1. **Learn from the experts.** Contact experts, such as members of the FaithAction ID network, to learn more about how community ID programs operate. Ask questions. Attend an ID drive in another city to understand the application process and observe the community engagement firsthand.

2. **Engage with your community.** Work with community members to learn what would make them feel safer. A community ID card is one way to build trust, but there are other strategies as well for engaging with the community, such as town hall discussions, and use of social media platforms that are popular with various groups in your community.

3. **Develop partnerships with nonprofit and faith-based organizations.** Work with leaders in the faith community and nonprofit organizations that may be interested in sponsoring an ID card program or providing volunteer support. Developing a close working relationship can keep lines of communication open and help avoid misunderstandings.

4. **Educate other government agencies and businesses in the community.** To increase awareness and acceptance of the ID card, be transparent and share information about the program with community and government services and businesses, such as libraries, health clinics, pharmacies, school districts, and utility services. Consider inviting representatives of these organizations and businesses to an ID drive to learn about the program.

5. **Establish clear requirements to obtain the ID card.** Work with the sponsoring organization and other community partners to establish clear guidelines regarding the types of documents that can be used to prove an applicant's identity and residence. A well-defined vetting process, and strict compliance with the requirements, can help validate the community ID card as a tool that police officers can trust. Consider obtaining legal advice to ensure that the cards are in compliance with state or local laws.

6. **Involve line officers in the creation of the ID card.** Incorporate patrol officers in the development of the ID program. Because patrol officers are most likely to come across persons with community ID cards in the field, they have a strong interest in ensuring the integrity of the program. Involving officers at the beginning can help encourage acceptance of the ID cards among department personnel.

7. **Educate department personnel about the ID card.** To help dispel myths and encourage acceptance of the card, educate officers and other department personnel about the purpose and goals of the ID card, including how the card can and cannot be used. Show officers what the ID cards would look like and explain how it will benefit policing and promote public safety in the community.

8. **Choose the right officers to participate in the ID drives.** Select officers who are comfortable engaging with individuals who may be undocumented immigrants, or who may be fearful of the police or have limited English proficiency. Consider officers who:
    - Are immigrants or have family members who are immigrants.
    - Are bilingual.
    - Have established relationships within immigrant communities.

9. **Police chiefs and other top leaders can build confidence by participating in the ID drives.** Police leaders can apply for a community ID card for themselves, to demonstrate the legitimacy of the program to both the public and to police personnel.

10. **Incorporate the ID card into your agency's policy.** Update your agency's policies to state that the ID card is an acceptable form of identification. Make sure that officers understand that they should recognize the card program as legitimate – and that they have the authority to investigate if a card appears fraudulent.

11. **Make adjustments when necessary.** After each ID drive, debrief with volunteers to find out what went well and what may need improvement. Learn from mistakes and refine the process as necessary.

Introduction

With support from the Carnegie Corporation, PERF conducted an examination of community-based programs that provide undocumented immigrants with identification cards, and in the process build trust between immigrant communities and local police.

This report details that research and explores how one particular model—the FaithAction ID Program and Network—integrates local police agencies into the ID application process. These efforts help police to conduct education and outreach to members of the community, fostering trust with vulnerable populations.

What is a community ID card?

A community ID card is a photo identification card issued by a nonprofit organization, often in cooperation with local government, business, and community groups (including social service agencies and financial institutions). Community-based ID cards are driven by the needs of the community. Their purpose is to provide the cardholder with a verifiable form of photo ID.

In addition to the practical benefits of giving community members a trusted way of identifying themselves, these ID cards give people a sense of belonging to a community.

Unlike driver's licenses or other forms of identification issued by a government agency, community ID card programs do not collect personal information about cardholders in government databases. The data collected about applicants is typically retained for only as long as it takes to process the ID card application.

For many Americans, getting a driver's license is a rite of passage as a teenager. It is also one of the most common means of obtaining a photo identification card. For people who do not drive, a passport or non-driver government ID card are the primary alternatives to acquiring photo identification in lieu of a driver's license. In addition to authorizing a person to drive a car (in the case of a driver's license) or verifying a person's country of citizenship (in the case of a passport), the primary purpose of photo identification is to serve as proof of one's identity.

Obtaining one or more of these common forms of identification is fairly straightforward process. The requirements vary from state to state, but to receive a driver's license or state-issued ID card, a person must typically provide proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful presence (such as a birth certificate or U.S. passport), proof of residency, proof of identity (such as another government-issued photo ID), and their Social Security card. To obtain a U.S. passport, a person must provide proof of U.S. citizenship and a government-issued photo identification card (such as a driver's license), along with a completed application.

But for many vulnerable populations, especially the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States, obtaining a photo identification card can be difficult or impossible. Only 16 states, the District of Columbia, and one U.S. territory permit undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses.[10] With no clear path to citizenship for this segment of the population, there are few options for undocumented immigrants to obtain a verifiable form of photo identification. This presents a significant challenge when these individuals are asked to provide proof of identity.

The Importance of Identification

A photo ID card does more than simply prove one's identity. It allows people to access a wide range of services. For example, people are asked to show identification for many purposes, such as:

- Applying for a job
- Registering children for school
- Applying for a loan
- Opening a bank account
- Obtaining a library card
- Accessing municipal services
- Filling certain prescriptions
- Obtaining utility services
- Visiting a doctor's office or health clinic[11]
- Interacting with law enforcement.

10. State Laws on Driver's Licenses for Immigrants (April 2020). National Immigration Law Center, https://www.nilc.org/issues/drivers-licenses/dlaccesstoolkit2/#map.

11. Johnson, Akilah, "For immigrants, IDs prove to be a barrier to a dose of protection," *The Washington Post* (April 10, 2021). https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/04/10/covid-vaccine-immigrants-id/.

Identification for Undocumented Immigrants

There are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States. In many cases, these individuals are unable to obtain traditional forms of identification because they are unable to show proof of legal residence. Individuals who reside in the United States without authorization have limited options to obtain photo identification. Depending on where they live, undocumented immigrants may be able to obtain one or more of the following types of ID:

- Consular ID cards
- State-issued driver's licenses
- Municipal identification cards
- Community-based identification cards.

Consular ID Cards

Consular identification cards are documents issued by a consulate to identify citizens who reside in a foreign country.[12] These cards serve as a verifiable form of identification and provide the cardholder with access to many financial institutions across the United States. While the requirements to obtain a consular ID card vary depending on the country issuing the card, they typically require proof of nationality (e.g., a passport or birth certificate), proof of identity (e.g., a government-issued photo identification card), and proof of residence (e.g., a utility bill).[13]

Consular ID cards include a unique identification number, as well as the cardholder's photo, address, place of birth, and an expiration date.[14] However, they do not demonstrate proof of legal residence, nor do they serve as authorization to reside in the United States.

Mexican citizens who live in the United States often use consular identification cards as a form of ID. Called "matrícula consular," these cards have been available to Mexican citizens who reside outside of Mexico since 1871.[15] Mexican nationals who wish to obtain a matrícula consular must apply in person at their local Mexican consulate, pay a fee, and provide proof of Mexican nationality, proof of identity, and proof of local address.[16]

12. Consular ID Cards, Consumer Action, https://www.consumer-action.org/downloads/english/ConsularIDCards.pdf.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Basic Facts About the Matricula Consular (December 2015). National Immigration Law Center, https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Basic-Facts-about-the-Matricula-Consular.pdf.

16. Consular ID Cards, Consumer Action, https://www.consumer-action.org/downloads/english/ConsularIDCards.pdf.

More than 50 percent of undocumented immigrants in the United States are Mexican nationals. An estimated 15 percent are from Central America, and 14 percent are from Asia.[17] Not all consulates issue consular ID cards. Thus, this form of ID is not an option for many undocumented immigrants seeking to obtain photo identification.

State-Issued Driver's License

One of the most common forms of photo identification is a state-issued driver's license. However, only 16 states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, allow undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license.[18]

Table 1: States That Offer Driver's Licenses Regardless of Immigration Status

• California	• New Jersey
• Colorado	• New Mexico
• Connecticut	• New York
• Delaware	• Oregon
• District of Columbia	• Puerto Rico
• Hawaii	• Utah
• Illinois	• Vermont
• Maryland	• Virginia
• Nevada	• Washington

Benefits of Unrestricted Driver's Licenses

There are many benefits to expanding access to driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. Requiring drivers to obtain a license promotes public safety and accountability, because drivers must pass a test to ensure they know and understand the rules of operating a motor vehicle on the roadways.[19] Unrestricted driver's license programs have also been shown to reduce alcohol-related crashes, traffic fatalities, and the number of uninsured motorists.[20]

17. Rosenblum, Marc R. and Ariel G. Ruiz Soto. "An Analysis of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States by Country and Regions of Birth" (August 2015). Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/analysis-unauthorized-immigrants-united-states-country-and-region-birth.

18. State Laws on Driver's Licenses for Immigrants (April 2020). National Immigration Law Center, https://www.nilc.org/issues/drivers-licenses/dlaccesstoolkit2/#map.

19. Toolkit | Access to Driver's Licenses: Benefits of Expanding Access to Driver's Licenses. National Immigration Law Center. https://www.nilc.org/issues/drivers-licenses/dlaccesstoolkit3a/#benefits.

20. The Benefits of Allowing All Immigrants Access to Driver's Licenses (January 2018). Colorado Fiscal Institute. http://www.coloradofiscal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/IDrive-Brief.pdf.

Concerns About Driver's Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants

Individuals residing in the U.S. without legal authorization may be hesitant to obtain a driver's license, even if they are eligible to do so. Applicants for driver's licenses must apply in person and provide personal information that is retained in a government database. Some individuals may fear that federal immigration authorities will have access to that information, thereby increasing the chances of being located and deported. For example, in Maryland, where more than 275,000 driver's licenses have been issued to residents without legal status since the program began in 2013, officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) reportedly have been allowed to search driver's license photos using facial recognition technology without state or court approval.[21]

In response to concerns about data privacy, New York enacted the "Green Light Law," which allows individuals without legal status to obtain a basic driver's license (not a REAL ID or "enhanced" license), and provides privacy protections to prevent federal immigration authorities from routinely accessing the state's database for these licenses.[22]

Individuals without legal status may also be concerned that an unrestricted driver's license may identify them as being in the United States unlawfully. Driver's licenses issued to undocumented immigrants do not comply with the 2005 REAL ID Act, which requires specific standards for state-issued forms of identification used for federal purposes (e.g., boarding a plane or entering a military base).[23] States that offer unrestricted driver's licenses have therefore developed different tiers of licenses (i.e., those that are REAL-ID-compliant and those that are not).[24]

New York, for example, offers its residents three different types of driver's licenses:

1. A standard driver's license (which is not REAL-ID-compliant);

2. A REAL ID driver's license (which is REAL-ID-compliant); or

3. An Enhanced driver's license (which is REAL-ID-compliant and permits the cardholder to cross the U.S. border from Canada, Mexico, and some Caribbean countries).[25]

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21. Harwell, Drew and Erin Cox. "ICE has run facial-recognition searches on millions of Maryland drivers" (February 26, 2020). *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/02/26/ice-has-run-facial-recognition-searches-millions-maryland-drivers/.

22. Driver licenses and the Green Light Law. New York Department of Motor Vehicles, https://dmv.ny.gov/driver-license/driver-licenses-and-green-light-law.

23. REAL ID Factsheet, https://www.tsa.gov/sites/default/files/resources/realid_factsheet.pdf.

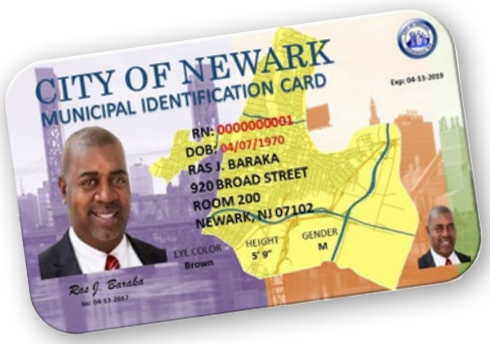
24. Basic Facts About REAL ID (January 2016). National Immigration Law Center. https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/REAL-ID-Basic-Facts-2016-01.pdf.

25. *Which ID is right for me?* New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, https://dmv.ny.gov/driver-license/which-id-right-me.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued guidance indicating that non-compliant driver's licenses must clearly state that such licenses are not acceptable for official federal purposes.[26] However, noncompliant cards do not necessarily indicate that the cardholder is undocumented, because people might obtain a noncompliant card for reasons wholly unrelated to one's legal status.[27] Thus, one should not assume that a person in possession of a non-REAL-ID-compliant driver's license is an undocumented immigrant.

Municipal ID Cards

In 2007, the City of New Haven, Connecticut developed the first-of-its-kind municipal identification card. Called the Elm City Resident Card, the card provided a means of identification for residents who were unable to obtain other forms of identification, such as a driver's license. Since then, at least 20 cities have developed similar types of municipal identification programs for residents,[28] including:



Sample City of Newark municipal ID card

- Detroit, MI
- Chicago, IL
- New Haven, CT
- New York City, NY
- Northfield, MN
- Oakland, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Richmond, CA
- Hartford, CT
- Los Angeles, CA
- Asbury Park, NJ
- Trenton, NJ
- Princeton, NJ
- Mercer County, NJ
- Poughkeepsie, NY
- Providence, RI
- Newark, NJ
- Johnson County, IA

Municipal ID card programs are typically created through local legislation such as a city ordinance, which outlines the details of the program and specifies the required documents needed to obtain an ID card.[29] The ID cards include the cardholder's photo, address, date of birth, and an expiration date. Some cities include additional identifying information such as gender, allowing transgender individuals to obtain an ID card that matches their gender identity.[30]

26. REAL ID Frequently Asked Questions, https://www.dhs.gov/real-id/real-id-faqs.

27. Ibid.

28. "Municipal ID Card Programs Take Hold in U.S. Cities" (March 2019). GovTech. https://www.govtech.com/gov-experience/Municipal-ID-Card-Programs-Take-Hold-in-US-Cities.html.

29. The Center for Popular Democracy. "Building Identity: A Toolkit for Designing and Implementing a Successful Municipal ID Program" (November 2015). https://www.populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Municipal-ID-Report_WEB_Nov2015_0.pdf.

30. Ibid.

Benefits of Municipal ID Cards

While municipal ID cards are available to all residents of the jurisdiction that issues the card, they are most beneficial to underserved populations such as undocumented immigrants, individuals experiencing homelessness, elderly persons who do not drive, and previously incarcerated individuals. The specific benefits of municipal ID cards vary depending on the city, but the cards generally allow individuals to:

- Open a bank account
- Apply for a job
- Register children for school
- Visit a medical clinic
- Access city parks
- Cash a check
- Obtain food assistance
- Fill prescriptions
- Obtain discounts at local businesses
- Obtain discounts at local museums and other cultural establishments.

In addition to these benefits, the ID cards provide the cardholders with a sense of belonging to the community. The cards can also improve trust between undocumented immigrants and the police by making interactions with police less worrisome. Undocumented individuals are often afraid to report crime to the police because they fear they may be asked about their immigration status and reported to federal immigration authorities. When a portion of the community is afraid to report crime, it reduces the police department's ability to measure, prevent, and solve crimes, and causes an entire community to feel less safe.

In New Haven, Connecticut, for example, the Elm City Resident Card was launched because undocumented immigrants, who were believed to carry large amounts of cash because they could not open bank accounts, were becoming regular targets of robberies.[31]

Being stopped by police without identification could also lead to being arrested, jailed, and having one's immigration status checked through federal databases. Because most municipal ID programs are managed by a local government agency, the police (as well as other city departments) are generally aware of the ID card and have received training to ensure that the card is accepted as a valid form of ID.

Limitations of Municipal ID Cards

Municipal ID cards are often created with the intent to protect undocumented immigrants by providing them with a valid form of photo identification, but there are limitations to these programs. Municipal ID cards are not a substitute for federal or state-issued identification, and they are not compliant with the REAL ID Act.[32] They

31. The Center for Popular Democracy. "Who We Are: Municipal ID cards as a local strategy to promote belonging and shared community identity" (December 2013). https://www.populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/municipal%20id%20report.pdf.

32. The REAL ID Act of 2005, P.L. 109-13, Div. B, § 202, 119 Stat. 312-315 (May 11, 2005).

do not grant the cardholder legal status in the U.S., they cannot be used as a driver's license, and they cannot be used to enter certain federal government facilities.

It is important that cardholders without legal status understand these distinctions. For example, in New York City, a pizza delivery man who was in the United States without authorization was detained at an Army base in Brooklyn after presenting his New York City ID card.[33] A month later, a man and a woman were arrested and detained by U.S. Border Patrol agents when they presented their New York City ID cards at an Army base in upstate New York while trying to visit their son.[34] The couple were undocumented immigrants who had lived in New York City for more than 20 years. When they were told that they needed another form of ID, they presented their Mexican passports, and military security eventually called the Border Patrol.

Another drawback to municipal ID programs is the cost to implement and manage such programs. Depending on the size of the city, the cost to implement and run a municipal ID program can range from a few thousand dollars to more than several million dollars. On the lower end, the budget for New Haven's Elm City Resident Card program, which is supported by application fees and private funding, was approximately $150,000.[35] The start-up and maintenance costs for ID programs in large cities is much higher. For example, the initial cost of Chicago's CityKey card was $1 million,[36] while startup costs for New York's idNYC card was $8 million, with an additional $5 million allotted after many more residents applied for cards than expected.[37]

Community-Based Identification Cards

Unlike consular ID cards, driver's licenses, and municipal ID cards, which are issued by a government agency, community-based identification cards are issued and managed by local nonprofit organizations. As a community-driven initiative, the main purpose of a community ID program is more than just providing residents with a valid form of identification; it is building trust between the public and the agencies and organizations that serve the community.

33. Greenberg, Zoe. "The IDs Were Meant to Protect Immigrants. Are They a Liability?" (July 10, 2018). *The New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/10/nyregion/idnyc-fort-drum-silva-barrios.html.

34. Ibid.

35. "Building Identity: A Toolkit for Designing and Implementing a Successful Municipal ID Program" (November 2015). The Center for Popular Democracy, https://www.populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Municipal-ID-Report_WEB_Nov2015_0.pdf.

36. Malagon, Elvia. "Big demand for Chicago's new municipal IDs surprises officials" (May 7, 2018). *Chicago Tribune*, https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-met-first-week-chicago-municipal-id-cards-20180507-story.html.

37. "Building Identity: A Toolkit for Designing and Implementing a Successful Municipal ID Program" (November 2015). The Center for Popular Democracy, https://www.populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Municipal-ID-Report_WEB_Nov2015_0.pdf.

Differences Between Municipal ID and Community ID Programs

Municipal IDs:

- Program budgets typically run from tens of thousands to millions of dollars for large cities.
- The card is issued and managed by the local government.[38]
- The card is governed by a county or city ordinance.
- The card is available to residents of the municipality.
- The card is often free or available for a nominal fee.

Community IDs:

- Program budgets typically run from a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars.
- The card is issued and managed by a local nonprofit organization.
- The card is available to those who live or work in the community, not only to residents.
- The card is typically available for a nominal fee, which may be waived for economic hardship.

The Benefits of Community-Based Identification Cards

Community ID cards generally offer similar benefits to cardholders as municipal ID cards. Community ID cards provide cardholders with a verifiable form of photo identification that can be presented to police and used at financial institutions to open a bank account or cash a check. Cardholders can use their community ID card to obtain government services, register children for school, fill prescriptions, or visit a health clinic. Community ID cards can also provide cardholders with discounts at certain businesses and cultural institutions.

Community-based ID programs may be a viable option in cities and towns that do not have the political resolve or support to develop a municipal ID card. Even in states that allow undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses, a community-ID card may be useful. Because community ID card programs are managed by a local organization rather than a government agency, immigrants who do not intend to drive may perceive them as less risky than a driver's license. Unlike driver's licenses, personally identifiable information used to obtain a community ID card is typically not retained in a searchable database.

38. One exception is the municipal ID card program in Mercer County (NJ), which is run by the Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund (LALDEF), a local community organization. https://laldef.org/community-cards/.

The FaithAction ID Program: A Model for Success

Overview

One of the most expansive community-based ID programs in the country is the FaithAction ID Program.[39] Based in Greensboro, North Carolina, the program is run by FaithAction International House,[40] a nonprofit organization that primarily helps immigrants with limited legal status. The staff and volunteers at FaithAction International House help newcomers with basic needs, such as food, housing, and emergency aid, serving over 3,000 families each year. The organization also provides help to individuals and families as they integrate into the community, including referrals for legal services, legal assistance for immigration matters, training and education, and identification cards through the FaithAction ID program.

From Strangers to Neighbors: How the FaithAction ID Program Began

Many cities and towns across the country are experiencing dramatic shifts in the demographic makeup of their communities, as they become more racially and ethnically diverse. In North Carolina, at least 38 percent of state residents are persons of color (i.e., Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, or multiracial).[41] Many of the immigrants settling in Greensboro come from Latin and West African countries, and more than 130 languages are spoken in the Greensboro community.

Recognizing these changes, FaithAction wanted to build bridges between longtime residents of the Greensboro community and the newcomers to the area. In 2011, Rev. David Fraccaro, executive director of FaithAction, began hosting "Stranger to Neighbor" trainings and dialogues,[42] which were designed to integrate members of the immigrant community with the larger community, while bringing together new residents and representatives from area businesses, health care providers, and city government agencies, such as the police department and schools.

39. FaithAction ID Program, https://faithaction.org/faithaction-id-program-and-network/.

40. FaithAction International House, https://faithaction.org/.

41. North Carolina's Changing Population Dynamic (July 2020). North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management. https://files.nc.gov/ncosbm/documents/files/Population-Dyanmic-2020Report.pdf.

42. FaithAction International House Stranger to Neighbor Programs, https://faithaction.org/stranger-to-neighbor-programs/.

The Stranger to Neighbor events involve four steps:

- **Education** – Participants learn about the culture, history, traditions, and values of their newest neighbors, which helps expand their knowledge and promote respect.
- **Exchange** – Participants build relationships with their new neighbors through events involving food, dance, storytelling, and other cultural activities, and by identifying mutual beliefs and concerns.
- **Faith in action** – Participants assess what they have learned during the first two steps and work together to build safer, healthier, more inclusive, and united communities for all.
- **Storytelling** – Participants reflect on this experience and share stories throughout the community about the benefits of strangers becoming neighbors.

Through these trainings and events, FaithAction heard from several undocumented individuals that they did not feel welcome in the community, and they were especially fearful of interacting with police and federal immigration authorities. Many undocumented immigrants have had negative experiences with police in their home country. As a result, some immigrants tend to "live in the shadows." Adding to this anxiety, negative rhetoric directed towards undocumented immigrants has intensified in recent years.

Consequently, undocumented immigrants are often fearful of contacting police, even when they are victims of crime.

> "The reality is that for urban police agencies, there are undocumented people in our communities. Our job is to keep everyone safe, not just those with legal status. We can't allow violence and victimization to grow in any population."
>
> *—Deputy Chief Mike Richey, Greensboro Police Department*

Bridging the Gap with the Greensboro Police Department

In response to the community's concerns, the Greensboro Police Department partnered with FaithAction and held a series of community meetings at local houses of worship. The goal was to improve the Police Department's relationship with immigrant neighbors and learn about their fears and concerns. Approximately 300 community members attended each meeting.

The meetings were facilitated in such a way to promote dialogue, storytelling, and information-sharing. The officers explained that their mission was to serve and protect all residents of the community regardless of citizenship. The officers also educated newcomers about the differences between federal and local law enforcement. As the relationship grew, the participants began to confide in the officers, reporting crimes that

were previously unknown. At one meeting, an officer disclosed that members of his own family had lived in the United States without legal status. Sharing this information helped to lower barriers and build greater trust and cooperation between the community and the police department.

One of the issues that surfaced during these events was the lack of identification for newcomers with limited or no status to the United States. Undocumented individuals expressed frustration that it was difficult to build trust with the police when officers did not believe who they were without identification. Individuals without legal status were often arrested for not having proper ID, which increased the likelihood of being deported. "Overwhelmingly, the most important issues were the need to belong to the community and the lack of identification," recalled Deputy Chief Mike Richey.[43]

The immigrant community wanted to be able to obtain driver's licenses, but many did not understand that the police department was not responsible for issuing such identification. In response, FaithAction worked with the Greensboro Police Department to create the FaithAction ID Program, and began issuing its identification cards to community members in 2012.

FaithAction ID Card Requirements

- Attend an "ID drive" to learn about the benefits and limitations of the card, and sign an MOU acknowledging receipt of this information.
- Provide proof of identification (e.g., a foreign or domestic passport, embassy ID, or driver's license or national ID card from their country of origin).
- Provide proof of current address (e.g., a utility bill, bank statement, health records, rental agreement).

ID cards cost $10 and must be renewed each year.

How to Receive a FaithAction ID Card: The ID Drive and Dialogue Model

To receive a FaithAction ID card, applicants must attend an "ID Drive." During these events, participants go through an orientation process during which they learn about the benefits of the card, as well as its limitations. Participants are required to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) acknowledging receipt of this information. Participants must also demonstrate proof of identity and proof of address. The types of documents that qualify to meet these requirements generally include foreign identification (e.g., a passport or embassy ID) and documents that include the applicant's current address (e.g., a utility bill or rental agreement).

43. The titles listed throughout this document reflect officials' positions at the time of PERF's interviews with them in November-December 2020.

The "ID Drive and Dialogue Model" builds on FaithAction's Stranger to Neighbor program by encouraging conversations between card applicants, police officers, and other community partners in attendance. As a key feature of the program, card applicants communicate with police officers and other service providers during the waiting process and learn about a variety of topics designed to help integrate the newcomers into the community. For example, attendees learn how to call 9-1-1 to report a crime, how to engage with officers during a traffic stop, and how to interact with other government agencies and social services, such as healthcare facilities, domestic violence service agencies, and local schools.

Following the vetting process, applicants pay $10 in cash. The card is mailed to their residence and expires after one year (it may be renewed by attending an abridged ID Drive).

How Secure Is a FaithAction ID Card?

Ensuring the integrity of a community-based ID card and safeguarding against fraud are often the main concerns from law enforcement officials when considering whether to begin a community ID card program. FaithAction implemented several security measures to thoroughly vet applicants and validate the documents used to prove identity.

First, applicants are warned about using false documents during the orientation process. If they are caught, they will be banned from using the ID card. The presence of police officers at the ID drives also provides a deterrent effect.

Sample of a FaithAction ID card

Second, the list of approved documents used to prove identity and residence are agreed upon by local law enforcement partners in advance. The potential for fraud is always a possibility, even for traditional forms of identification such as a driver's license. Still, officials report that they have detected fraudulent documents only a couple times since the program began in 2012.

Third, the staff and volunteers who check the documents are trained and familiar with the types of foreign documents that are frequently presented at the ID drives. At FaithAction, an immigration attorney or paralegal is available to review documents if questions of authenticity arise. A staff member who is certified by the U.S. Department of Justice to provide immigration legal services is also present. With more than 20 years of experience serving the community, FaithAction knows where a majority of its clients are from. They maintain copies of sample documents to compare and ensure the validity of documents presented by applicants.

Finally, the FaithAction ID cards are mailed to the applicants at the address provided to show proof of residency and must be renewed after one year (though some communities using the FaithAction ID model have extended the expiration date to two years). Recognizing that populations are transitory, FaithAction wanted to make sure that the IDs are current. Individuals seeking to renew their ID cards must attend an abridged ID drive, which ensures that the dialogue and education between newcomers and service providers continues. Police officers are present during the renewal process.

Expansion of the FaithAction ID Program

Based on the success of the FaithAction ID program in Greensboro, FaithAction expanded to additional cities throughout North Carolina and across the country, including South Carolina, Virginia, Iowa, Ohio, Florida, and Oregon. FaithAction provides trainings to organizations and city agencies interested in developing a community-based ID card. The training includes the purpose, logistics, and impact of a community-based ID program, as well as practical advice about how to conduct an ID drive.

The FaithAction ID program has been successful in part because of the collaboration between local police agencies and FaithAction network partner organizations. "We prefer to expand to communities where there is existing cooperation with law enforcement," Rev. Fraccaro said. Police agencies in the communities where the cards are accepted have seen the benefits firsthand.

The FaithAction ID Program in Burlington, North Carolina

Developing the ID Card

In late 2014, community members in Burlington, North Carolina, launched a grassroots effort to bring a community ID program to Alamance County. Community members shared information about the FaithAction ID Program with the chief of the Burlington Police Department (BPD), Jeffrey Smythe. Chief Smythe was unfamiliar with the program, so he traveled to Greensboro, where the program originated, to observe a FaithAction ID drive. After witnessing the community engagement that occurred during Greensboro's ID drive, Chief Smythe began the groundwork to bring the program to Burlington.

The Burlington Police Department partnered with FaithAction, the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, which offers Sunday services in Spanish, and with El Centro Hispano, which is the largest Latino-serving nonprofit in North Carolina. "The Catholic Church is the driving religion in Central and South America, where most immigrants in the area are from, so it's a natural fit to partner with them," said Lieutenant Mark Yancey, who oversees BPD's Community Relations Division.

Together, the group, along with bilingual volunteers, hosted an initial test run of the ID drive in May 2015. The goal of this first effort was to evaluate the program and identify areas for improvement. Following the test run, Chief Smythe and the other volunteers

worked to gain additional support from other churches and police agencies in Alamance County, eventually forming a task force to oversee the ID program. Father Paul Lininger of the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church collected $15,000 in donations from the Franciscan community to purchase ID card printers and other supplies.

The first official public ID drive was held in November 2015 at the Catholic church. Members of the community began lining up outside the church at 2:00 a.m. on the morning of the ID drive. By 6:00 a.m., there were more than 150 people waiting in line. "It brought tears to my eyes to see the level of turnout for the ID cards and to realize how important having an ID card was to the community," said Chief Smythe.

To publicize the program, BPD created a Spanish-language Facebook page. El Centro also helped with outreach. Word spread throughout the community, and Spanish-language newspapers also shared information about the ID drives.

ID Drives

The ID drives operate in a similar fashion to the ID drives in Greensboro. Father Paul (as he is known in the church) gives a presentation to explain the required paperwork and answer questions about the card. He assures applicants that their information will not be shared with BPD or other law enforcement agencies without a subpoena. Lieutenant Yancey speaks next and begins by introducing himself and asking where everyone is from. He is joined by BPD Officer Jerlhey Bonilla, who interprets for the Spanish-speaking applicants. Together, they talk to the applicants about the other police agencies in the area that recognize the ID cards and explain how the ID card can and cannot be used. For example, while the card can be used to identify yourself during a traffic stop, it is not a driver's license. Additionally, police explain that if someone receives a ticket, they need to either pay the fine or go to court to contest the ticket. If they do not show up for court, an arrest warrant may be issued.

Volunteers help applicants complete the paperwork, and they check and validate the documentation to prove residency and ID. Successful applicants have their picture taken, and then the ID is mailed to the applicant's address within a few days.

Benefits of the ID Card

The ID drives do more than just provide participants with ID cards. They serve as a learning opportunity and a chance for police and community members to engage with each other in a non-enforcement setting. "The program is really a way to bring the community together. Many of the volunteers have ID cards themselves. People also now understand the difference between a police officer, a sheriff's deputy, and a state trooper, since they don't have those different distinctions in their home countries," said Father Paul.

Adjustments During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Before the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, BPD and Blessed Sacrament Church held monthly ID drives, alternating between Saturday mornings and Wednesday evenings in order to accommodate different work schedules. However, due to the COVID restrictions preventing large gatherings, the ID drives have been paused. In lieu of the ID drives, the church has been processing applications for ID cards on an as-needed basis by appointment.

The Charlottesville, Virginia Area Community ID Program

Developing the ID Card

In March 2017, community members in Charlottesville, Virginia, formed a task force called Welcoming Greater Charlottesville (WGC) with a mission to create a more welcoming community for immigrants and refugees.[44] WGC sponsors a variety of initiatives to educate residents and highlight the contributions of immigrants and refugees, including supporting an annual celebration of the community's diversity.

In addition to these activities, WGC wanted to do something more tangible to support members of the community. So in 2018, WGC began researching how to develop a community ID program. Rev. David Fraccaro, executive director of FaithAction, traveled to Charlottesville and provided training to volunteers. Fraccaro explained that obtaining support from the local police agencies was critical to the success of the community ID program. Russ Linden, who serves as the Task Force Chair of WGC, then reached out to the Albemarle County Police Department, Charlottesville Police Department, and the Albemarle County Commonwealth's Attorney. "WGC asked if we were willing to endorse the [community ID] program," said Major Sean Reeves of the Albemarle County Police Department. "We got involved because it aligned well with our existing community relations work within the Latino community."

The Charlottesville Area Community ID (CACID) Program was officially launched in March 2019 with two other sponsoring organizations—the Hinton Ave. United Methodist Church and the New Beginnings Christian Community. The program was funded by local grants, including assistance from the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation. "One of the reasons this program has worked well is that we formed a leadership team with pastors at the two churches, a pastor at a local church where many Latinos attend, and volunteers with a Latino advocacy organization," Linden said. "We meet monthly and we all volunteer at the ID drives."

44. Welcoming Greater Charlottesville, https://www.wgcville.org/.

ID Card Requirements

To obtain an ID card, applicants must attend an ID drive (described in further detail below) and provide proof of identity and proof of residence.[45] Applicants experiencing homelessness can provide a temporary address where they can be reached (e.g., a homeless shelter), and a shelter volunteer can vouch for the person's identity by submitting a signed and notarized statement.

The card costs $10 in cash and it expires after one year, at which time it must be renewed. The ID card includes the applicant's photo, name, address, date of birth, and the name of the sponsoring organization. It also states that it is not a government ID.

To maintain integrity and increase trust with the immigrant community, the application data is retained for no longer than three months in a secure location at the Hinton Ave. United Methodist Church. "We have a disclaimer in our presentation that if you lose your ID card, you have to sit through the entire presentation again, because we will not hold, sell, or retain your information," said Virginia Osterman, Program Coordinator for the CACID Program.

More than 90 percent of the applicants are immigrants, including many from El Salvador and Honduras.[46] However, the ID cards are not only for undocumented individuals. Some cardholders are U.S. citizens whose IDs have expired. "The ID cards are an important tool for anyone in Charlottesville," Osterman said.

ID Drives

The Charlottesville area ID drives follow the same model as the FaithAction ID drives in North Carolina. Applicants attend an orientation where they learn about how the card can and cannot be used. They learn that the ID card is not a driver's license, and it does not provide the cardholder with any government services that the cardholder is not already eligible to receive.

Organizations that assist during the ID drives include Sin Barreras[47] (a local Latino advocacy organization), the two sponsoring churches (Hinton Ave United Methodist Church and New Beginnings Christian Community), and the Church of the Incarnation in Charlottesville. Trained volunteers from these organizations help validate foreign documents used by

45. The Charlottesville Area Community ID Card website shows the specific types of documents that meet these requirements. https://www.cvilleid.org/required-documents.

46. Seventy-five percent of applicants are Latino, 12.5 percent are African American, and 12.5 percent are non-Hispanic White.

47. Sin Barreras. https://www.sinbarrerascville.org/.

applicants to prove identity (e.g., foreign passports). The volunteers have familiarity with a wide range of documents, but also rely on sample documents from countries most frequently represented by applicants. To date, the CACID Program has not come across any fraudulent documents.

To encourage participation in the program, ID drives have been held at churches that offer Spanish-language services. Additionally, the ID drives often feature representatives from city services agencies or community organizations that provide services to immigrants and refugees. For example, a Spanish-speaking coordinator from the Albemarle County Police Department's Victim/Witness Assistance Program has accompanied Major Reeves at the ID drives and provided applicants with information about their services. And the University of Virginia's Latino Health Initiative has provided health screening to applicants during the ID drives.

The CACID program conducted a rehearsal drive in February 2019 and issued ID cards to all the volunteers, and the first official ID drive for the public was held the following month. Although the session began at 9:00 a.m., residents began lining up outside the building before 6:00 a.m. Approximately 70 residents received an ID card at the first ID drive. Since then, nearly 750 residents have obtained ID cards.

Benefits of the Charlottesville Area Community ID Card

For residents who may not be able to obtain a government-issued ID, the community ID card provides them with a photo identification card that can be used to obtain certain social services, sign a rental agreement, request utility service, and enroll children in school. Cardholders also have access to free or discounted tickets to cultural events such as the Virginia Film Festival, area theaters, and museums.

The ID card also provides residents with intangible benefits, including a sense of security and sense of community. "The purpose of the ID program is two-fold: one, to make our community more welcoming by providing verifiable ID cards for those who express the need; and two, to promote and increase trust and positive relations between local law enforcement and the entire community," said Russ Linden of Welcoming Greater Charlottesville.

Osterman has also received positive feedback from cardholders. "Overall, the biggest success is that people feel a sense of community. We are building trust across languages. We are seeing this pan out and being relayed back to us in their own words. The card makes people feel safer and part of the community," Osterman said.

Building Trust Between Immigrant Communities and Police

The ID drives are an opportunity for applicants to ask questions and engage with the police in a safe environment. During the ID drives, Major Reeves or another police official talks about how the local police do not enforce federal immigration laws, and that their mission is to make all residents feel safe where they live and work. "The ID program allows residents to see law enforcement in a different light—they are there to help and

serve the community. [Major Reeves] does a wonderful job of relating to the applicants. You can see in their body language a sense of relaxation and relief," said Linden.

These positive interactions can help promote public safety. When residents feel safe calling the police, they are more likely to report crime or cooperate as witnesses to crime. "During the ID drives, people ask legal questions or report drug activity or other crimes in their neighborhood," said Major Reeves.

The ID cards also benefit the police because officers can have confidence that cardholders are who they say they are. To educate officers in the department, Major Reeves shared a two-page guide that shows what the card looks like and how it can and cannot be used.

Initially, there were misconceptions among some officers regarding the legality of the card, but once they learned that it was not a substitute for a driver's license, the card was accepted as a form of identification.

ID Drives During COVID-19

In March 2020, the ID drives were temporarily paused when the COVID-19 pandemic began. For several months, the CACID Program only issued ID cards on an emergency basis. However, since November 2020, the CACID Program has held "ID Drive-Ins," where applicants can receive cards on an appointment basis through a curbside service. During the ID Drive-Ins, applicants watch a video of the orientation on a tablet and complete the paperwork in their car. Once the paperwork is filled out, the applicants come inside the building to verify their documents and have their picture taken. The applicants and volunteers follow strict COVID-19 precautions.

The Central Iowa Community ID Card Program

Developing the ID Card

A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS)[48] is an interdenominational community-organizing group comprised of 35 member congregations and advocacy organizations across central Iowa. Following the 2016 presidential election, AMOS sought ways to become more involved with the immigrant community in Story County, Iowa. To learn more about the needs of the immigrant community, Rick Exner, a volunteer with AMOS, formed a County

48. https://www.amosiowa.org/

Coordination Committee,[49] which included representatives from local religious institutions, health care organizations, community groups, the Story County Sheriff's Office, and the City of Ames Police Department. The Committee members learned that there were many people in the community who lacked traditional forms of identification, such as a driver's license or government-issued ID card. And this problem was not limited to the immigrant population; individuals experiencing homelessness, elderly persons, and people with mental illness also struggled to obtain identification.

After learning about the FaithAction Community ID Program through a news article, Mr. Exner contacted Rev. Fraccaro to obtain more information and learn how to replicate that model in Iowa. The County Coordination Committee spent about a year developing an ID program, meeting with faith leaders and congregants in Spanish-speaking churches and gaining consensus from the Story County Sheriff's Office and Ames Police Department.

Once the County Coordination Committee was ready to move forward with the FaithAction ID model, Exner contacted Joa Laville, Co-Coordinator of Immigrant Allies of Marshalltown in neighboring Marshall County. Though smaller in population, Marshall County is home to a much larger percentage of Hispanic residents than Story County (23 percent versus 3.7 percent).[50] Census figures show that the foreign-born population in Marshall County is 13.5 percent, and more than 20 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home.[51]

Exner knew that if advocates wanted the ID card to reach more people, they needed to widen the program to both counties. "Story County has a dispersed immigrant community because rents are so expensive and they don't have packing plants," he said. Although more immigrants live in Marshall County, Exner wanted to ensure that Story County residents also had the ability to apply for an ID card locally.

Immigrant Allies formed the Marshall County Community Response Coalition to support immigrant and refugee families in Marshall County. As part of this work, the Community Response Coalition runs the ID program in Marshall County. In Story County, the program is run by the County Coordination Committee. When finalizing the details of the ID card, it was important that the name of the card not be exclusive to the county where it was issued. Organizers decided on the "Central Iowa Community ID Card" to send a message to the community that the card was for surrounding counties, and not just Story or Marshall Counties. "We wanted the name of the ID card to show it has coverage of the area and the potential to grow even beyond Ames or Marshalltown," said Joa LaVille. Eventually, Exner and LaVille hope the card will be accepted across the state.

49. https://sites.google.com/view/communityid/home/WhoWhoWeAreandSupporters

50. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/marshallcountyiowa,storycountyiowa/PST045219

51. Ibid.

Although each organization runs its own program to authorize and distribute the cards to community members in the respective county, there is a single website for the ID card, and, aside from minor stylistic differences, the IDs look nearly identical, regardless of where they were obtained.

ID Drives

The Marshall County Community Response Coalition and the County Coordination Committee have autonomy in how they plan their individual ID drives, but they keep each other informed when scheduling the ID drives. The organizations also share equipment, resources, and volunteers.

The first ID drive in Story County was held in March 2019, and in Marshall County, the first ID drive was held in June 2019. Chief Michael Tupper of the Marshalltown Police Department was surprised at the large turnout for the first ID drive. "We had morning and afternoon sessions and didn't have enough resources to serve everyone that day," said Chief Tupper.

Unfortunately, both counties were only able to host a few ID drives before having to pause them in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Until that point, the two organizations had issued nearly 700 ID cards combined.

ID Card Requirements

The ID card is available to people age 16 and older, costs $8 cash, and is valid for two years. The ID is meant to benefit several groups in the community, including refugees and immigrants; the elderly; persons experiencing homelessness; and people reentering the community after incarceration.

The application process follows the same model as the FaithAction ID program in Greensboro, NC. Applicants provide the necessary documents, including proof of identity and proof of physical residence, and complete the application paperwork. All applicants attend a mandatory orientation where they watch a presentation on the benefits and limitations of the ID card and learn about their local law enforcement agencies and available community resources. Volunteers review the applications and supporting documentation provided by the applicant. Lastly, applicants have their picture taken for the ID card, which is mailed two weeks later to the address provided by the applicant. To protect cardholder data, applicant information is not retained by the organizers.

Role of Law Enforcement

The Ames Police Department, Marshalltown Police Department, and Iowa State Police were key supporters of the ID program during the planning process. "The department prides itself on being a relationship-building and problem-solving department, so the ID program felt like a good opportunity to further these objectives," said Commander Jason Tuttle of the Ames Police Department.

A representative from each police agency attends the ID drives to educate community members about local laws and explain how the ID card can be used.[52] For example, the police discuss:

- What to expect during a traffic stop;
- The limitations of the ID card (i.e., it is not a driver's license);
- Potential scams to watch out for;
- How to report crimes such as domestic violence, harassment, and assault; and
- The differences between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement.

A Spanish-speaking officer is always present at the ID drives to translate the presentation for the Latino community members. Many immigrants are fearful of police, so the ID drives are a way to break down barriers and interact with the community in a non-enforcement setting. In Ames, for example, volunteers set up a table where children could draw and use crayons while their parents applied for an ID card. Following the orientation process, the police mingle with attendees and answer questions, often taking their picture with applicants and providing them with their business cards. "Our department puts a lot of effort into community outreach. The ID drives are another tool in our toolbox. They are a great opportunity to build relationships," said Marshalltown Chief Tupper.

Commander Tuttle of the Ames Police Department echoed this sentiment. "The police department would not have these face-to-face interactions with this segment of the population if not for people coming to the drives," he said. "We have reached so many people. The ID drives also help the department understand what the community is going through when they tell us their fears and opinions on how immigration issues are being handled nationally."

Community Impact

The Central Iowa Community ID Card Program provides cardholders with a sense of security and belonging they would not otherwise have, especially if they are stopped by the police. "The level of fear that undocumented people feel when they get pulled over by the police is lessened if they have their ID," said Joa LaVille. "It makes people feel more comfortable in general. Living in an environment of fear is never good for a community. We do not want people living in the shadows."

In addition, the ID card can be used as a valid form of ID to access a variety of services. For example, the ID card can be used to apply for a library card, register children for school, and see a doctor.

52. The Ames Police Department and Iowa State Police attend the ID drives in Story County, and the Marshalltown Police Department attends the ID drives in Marshall County.

Recipients of the Central Iowa Community ID Card are not the only beneficiaries of the program. Being involved in the planning and creation of the ID card has also improved the relationship between the area police departments, leaders in the faith community, social services providers, and community organizations. The collaborative process has fostered a sense of trust and opened lines of communication between the police and the many community groups responsible for launching the ID card program.

How Community ID Cards Benefit Police Departments

The FaithAction ID card and community ID cards based on the FaithAction model offer numerous benefits to law enforcement agencies.

Building Relationships with the Community

First and foremost, community ID cards help police to develop relationships with their communities. The process of obtaining an ID card through the ID drives offer the police and community members an opportunity to engage with one another in a safe, non-enforcement setting. The police interact not only with the card applicants, but also with the community organizers and other volunteers present at the ID drive. Through conversations and education, the ID drives serve as a way to connect with people in the community and see past the labels of "police officer" or "undocumented immigrant."

The willingness to engage in dialogue increases as the community learns more about the ID drives. Eliazar Posada, Director of Advocacy and Civic Participation at El Centro Hispano, has seen this firsthand. Posada runs the FaithAction ID program in several cities across North Carolina, including Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and other communities in Orange, Wake, and Durham Counties. When he first attended an ID drive, he could tell by some of the participants' body language that they were reluctant to talk. But as more people learned about the drives, they felt more comfortable talking to the officers and asking them questions. "People now come to the ID drives ready to engage with police," Posada said. "They approach the officers and express their concerns. There are people in our communities who renew their ID cards every year."

The same level of openness was observed in Greensboro. "We open up the floor for questions, and we also talk with people privately one-on-one," Deputy Chief Mike Richey said. "People ask us all sorts of questions. This has been the foundation of trust right there. The ID program has been a great success because people feel comfortable calling us."

Officer Jerlhey Bonilla of the Burlington Police Department echoes this sentiment. Having immigrated to the United States from Nicaragua as a child, Officer Bonilla brings a unique perspective. "The community ID program has been extremely positive," he said. "As an immigrant myself, I understand what it is like to not know the language, and I appreciate what Burlington Police Department has done to build a bridge with the community."

> "These small relationships you build with a population that has historically been frayed or timid about speaking with law enforcement really pay off. The ID is just the connector for these relationships."
>
> *— Lieutenant Mark Yancey, Burlington (NC) Police Department*

Building Partnerships with Community Organizations

Community ID programs also help the police build relationships with the organizations that run the ID drives, including houses of worship, neighborhood coalitions, and nonprofit organizations. Some organizations may have trepidation in working with police, but this work helps to open lines of communication and create a productive and rewarding relationship.

In North Carolina, for example, FaithAction International House and El Centro often serve as connection points between the Latino community and the police. "Because we have an established relationship with FaithAction International House, they are able to tell their clients that they can trust the police," said Deputy Chief Richey.

Through his work with the FaithAction ID program, Eliazar Posada with El Centro has been able to cultivate strong relationships with area law enforcement agencies. He communicates regularly with local police and sheriffs and serves on a number of advisory boards, including the Reimagining Public Safety Council. Posada also works with the Raleigh Police Department as an advisor on their policies.

Having these open lines of communication allows Posada to relay information quickly between community members and the police. For example, if Posada hears from a client that federal immigration authorities are in the area, he can text the police chief to determine whether or not that information is accurate and dispel fear if the rumors are not true.

Facilitating the Reporting of Crime

As community members increase their comfort level in interacting with the police during the ID drives, officers have noticed that people feel more comfortable reporting crimes that would otherwise go unreported.

In Greensboro, for example, crimes have been reported to police at every ID drive. "During the ID drives, we explain to the attendees how they can report a crime and assure them that we will not ask about their immigration status when they do. People have reported everything from burglaries to robberies to missing children at the ID drives," said Greensboro Sergeant Victor Sanchez.

Human trafficking and domestic violence are also commonly reported crimes at the ID drives. "We have had higher reporting of crimes, especially through FaithAction," said

Deputy Chief Richey. "We have investigated at least three human trafficking cases as a result of information garnered from people with the FaithAction ID card."

Improving the Efficiency of Police Work

Community ID cards can improve the efficiency of police work for several reasons. First, witnesses of traffic crashes and victims of crimes are more willing to communicate and cooperate with the police when they have an identification card that they know the police will accept. And the ability to identify a person eliminates time-consuming searches through police databases.

Second, the ID cards can help to prevent misidentification. In Burlington, for example, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers were searching a specific area for a wanted individual. One of the residents was willing to show the immigration authorities his community ID card to prove that he was not the person being sought.

Third, the IDs provide police with an alternative to arresting a person and taking them to jail under certain circumstances. A common example is during a traffic stop. If the driver does not have a driver's license but has a community ID card, the officer has the option to write a citation instead of taking the person to jail. Writing a ticket lets the officer return to patrol in about 10 minutes, while booking a person into jail could take as much as two hours. "Officers see this as a net positive because they understand that it saves them time," said Greensboro Deputy Chief Richey.

Educating Police Officers About the ID Card

When implementing a community ID card program, it is important to educate all officers in the department, as well as other professional staff who may encounter individuals with the ID, such as records clerks and dispatchers. The two most common concerns that officers have regarding community ID cards are: 1) how to protect against fraud, and 2) whether the cards undermine federal immigration laws or state driver's license requirements.

To address these issues, agencies should educate officers early in the implementation process. Explain the requirements to obtain a card, so the officers understand the security measures that are in place to prevent fraud.

In Greensboro, for example, the police department worked with FaithAction to develop what the card would look like and the requirements to obtain the card, which mirror the requirements to obtain a state-issued ID (e.g., provide proof of identity and proof of residence). An additional safeguard is that the cards are mailed to the applicants. Participants at the ID drives are also encouraged to report instances of fraud; they understand that using counterfeit documents would undermine the purpose of the ID card.

Explain to officers that the ID cards are not a substitute for a driver's license, and they do not confer legal status regarding a person's presence in the United States. "Allowing people to obtain an identification card is a separate issue from a path to citizenship," said

Lieutenant Yancey from Burlington. The police department does not issue the ID cards, nor does it retain the data used to apply for a card.

Agencies should train officers about the ID program and share what the card looks like, so officers know what to expect when they see one. Several chiefs and other top police officials have obtained ID cards themselves to show their officers, so they can better understand the process of obtaining a card. Explain the purpose of the card and that it is a verified proof of identity.

Agencies have also incorporated the ID cards into their policies. "We included in our policy that the ID is an acceptable form of identification, but officers have the right to investigate if they believe the ID is fraudulent," said Deputy Chief Richey with Greensboro.

Below are suggested ways to share information with officers about the community ID program:

- Develop a short training presentation or video message to train officers during roll call or in-service training.
- Incorporate the ID card into your agency's policies, indicating that it is an acceptable form of identification.
- Encourage officers to attend and participate in an ID drive, so they can observe firsthand the benefits of this type of community engagement.
- Incorporate the ID program into your agency's field training program, so new officers learn about the program when they are first employed by the department.

Most importantly, highlight the benefits of the ID card to officers to encourage acceptance. Explain that the ID drives serve to promote other community engagement programs sponsored by the police department. In Burlington, for example, officers share information about their Community Academy program during the ID drives and encourage participants to take part in ride-alongs with officers.

Making an Impact

Since beginning the program in 2012, FaithAction has issued approximately 13,000 ID cards in Greensboro alone, with an additional 7,000 ID cards issued by network partners across North Carolina. Outside of the state, there are approximately a dozen nonprofit and faith-based organizations that coordinate their own community ID programs based on the FaithAction ID model. Each organization follows the ID drive and dialogue format, but has autonomy in how they manage and issue the identification cards. These partner organizations participate in monthly calls to share program updates and best practices.

To gauge the impact of the ID card, FaithAction interviewed more than 250 people who have had the ID card for more than a year. More than 95 percent of cardholders stated that the card was "very useful." Respondents indicated that they felt safer and more willing to contact police, now that they had an ID card.

Key Recommendations and Lessons Learned

PERF has identified the following recommendations and lessons learned for police agencies interested in starting or supporting a community ID program in their own jurisdiction:

- **Do your homework** – Reach out to experts, such as members of the FaithAction ID network, to ask questions and learn about how community ID programs operate. Attend an ID drive in a different jurisdiction to better understand the application process and observe the interaction between police and members of the community.
- **Involve the community** – Ask community members what would make them feel safer. Do not assume that a community ID card is the only answer. Engage with community members through a variety of methods (e.g., virtual or in-person town hall discussions, social media) to obtain input from a wide array of sources.
- **Obtain support from other services and businesses** – To increase acceptance of the ID card, share information about the program with community services and businesses, such as health clinics, pharmacies, school districts, utility services, and other local businesses. Consider inviting representatives of these organizations and businesses to an ID drive to learn about the program.
- **Work with trusted community partners** – Develop a close working relationship with leaders in the faith community and nonprofit organizations that may be interested in sponsoring an ID card program or providing volunteer support. Establishing open communication between all organizations at the beginning of the process can challenge assumptions and help avoid misunderstandings.
- **Establish clear requirements for obtaining an ID card** – Work with the sponsoring organization and other community partners to establish clear guidelines on how to obtain an ID card, including the types of documents that can be used to prove an applicant's identity and residence. Establishing a clear vetting process and ensuring compliance with those requirements help validate the community ID card as a tool that police officers can trust.
- **Obtain legal advice** – Some states may have specific legislation regarding law enforcement and immigration. Consult with attorneys to ensure that participation in a community ID program would not violate any state laws.
- **Involve line officers in the creation of the program** – Patrol officers are the most visible members of the department and are most likely to come across a community ID card when interacting with the public. Involving officers in the creation of the program will help encourage acceptance of the ID cards among department personnel.

- **Educate agency personnel** – Educate officers and other department personnel about the ID card program. This will help to dispel myths and encourage acceptance of the program. Explain how the ID card will benefit policing and promote public safety in the community.
- **Be transparent** – To eliminate confusion or misconceptions, be transparent—both internally with agency personnel and externally with members of the community—about the purpose and goals of the ID card program. Share the benefits of the card, describe how it can and cannot be used, and explain that it does not confer any rights upon cardholders that they are not already entitled to.
- **Select the right officers to participate in the ID drives** – Be selective about the officers who attend the ID drives. Choose officers who can meaningfully engage with individuals who may be undocumented immigrants, or who may be fearful of the police or have limited English proficiency. Consider officers who:
    - Are immigrants or have family members who are immigrants.
    - Are bilingual.
    - Have established relationships within the immigrant community.
- **Incorporate the ID card into your agency's policy** – Revise your agency's policies to state that the ID card is an acceptable form of identification. Share a sample of what the card looks like and make sure that officers understand that they have the authority to investigate if a card appears fraudulent.
- **Lead by example** – Chiefs and other police executives should consider applying for a community ID card to demonstrate the legitimacy of the program to both the public and agency personnel.
- **Learn from mistakes and refine the process** – After each ID drive, debrief with volunteers to find out what went well and what may need improvement.

Conclusion

A valid form of photo identification is something that many people take for granted. People are asked to show identification for numerous reasons, whether at a doctor's office, signing a lease agreement, or registering children for school. U.S. citizens who have a U.S. passport or state-issued driver's license do not think twice about being asked for ID in these situations. But for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States, they may not have an acceptable form of identification because they are unable to show legal residence.

Some states and municipalities have addressed this concern by offering driver's licenses or municipal-based identification cards to undocumented immigrants. While expanding driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants has been shown to improve public safety, individuals without legal status may be reluctant to obtain a driver's license because of privacy concerns and the potential for federal immigration authorities to access their personal data.

A community-based identification card can be a viable alternative. Community-based ID cards, such as the FaithAction ID card and other programs based on this model, provide residents with a verifiable form of identification as well as a sense of community and belonging. Community ID card programs are generally less expensive to operate than municipal-based ID card programs, and organizations have greater autonomy in how they run the program.

One of the hallmarks of community ID card programs is how they help build trust between police and immigrant communities, especially through the informal engagement during the ID drives. Undocumented immigrants often avoid the police because they fear being deported and separated from their families. This lack of trust can make communities less safe, because if immigrants fear the police, they may refuse to contact the police when they are a victim of or witness to a crime. Community-based ID programs can counter this narrative. The ID drives offer the police and community members an opportunity to engage with each other in a safe, non-enforcement atmosphere. These interactions can help break down barriers and develop relationships of trust, which are necessary elements of successful community policing. A community ID card can serve as a powerful tool to help police agencies achieve their mission of making all residents feel safe, while also providing residents with a sense of unity and belonging.

About PERF

The **Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)** is an independent research organization that focuses on critical issues in policing. Since its founding in 1976, PERF has identified best practices on fundamental issues such as police use of force; developing community policing and problem-oriented policing; using technologies to deliver police services to the community; and evaluating crime reduction strategies.

PERF strives to advance professionalism in policing and to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership, public debate of police and criminal justice issues, and research and policy development.

For example, in March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic was upending nearly every aspect of how police departments operate, PERF began a series of "Daily COVID-19 Reports" that provided original research about how the pandemic was affecting law enforcement. Each report addressed a specific issue, such as strategies for protecting officers' health and safety, engaging the community while social distancing, budget cuts resulting from the COVID recession, the response by agencies in cities with extreme spikes in COVID infections, jail operations affected by the pandemic, how COVID affected homeless populations, the police role in enforcing mask mandates and other regulations, vaccine distribution to officers and the public, and other issues. These reports continued for one year, until March 2021.

And in the summer of 2020, when the death of George Floyd resulted in unprecedented demonstrations and reform efforts across the United States, PERF created a series of "Daily Critical Issues Reports," which presented interviews with police chiefs and other original research on issues such as "defunding" police agencies, various reform measures, police disciplinary processes, recruiting in an era of COVID and police reforms, violent crime increases in many cities, and the crisis in police staffing and recruiting.

Other PERF reports are available online at https://www.policeforum.org/publications.

PERF's previous work on immigration-related issues includes:

- *Inventory of Promising Practices and Programs for Immigrant and Refugee Outreach* (2020)
- *Building Trust with Immigrant Communities: Best Practices for Law Enforcement Agencies in Smaller Cities and Towns* (2020)
- *Community Policing in Immigrant Communities: Stories of Success* (2019)
- *Refugee Outreach and Engagement Programs for Police Agencies* (2017)
- *Responding to Migrant Deaths Along the Southwest Border: Lessons from the Field* (2016)
- *Local Police Perspectives on State Immigration Policies* (2014)

- *Voices from Across the Country: Local Law Enforcement Officials Discuss the Challenges of Immigration Enforcement* (2012)
- *Police and Immigration: How Chiefs Are Leading their Communities through the Challenges* (2010)
- *Police Chiefs and Sheriffs Speak Out on Local Immigration Enforcement* (2008)

In addition to conducting research and publishing reports on our findings, PERF conducts management studies of individual law enforcement agencies; educates hundreds of police officials each year in the Senior Management Institute for Police, a three-week executive development program; and provides executive search services to governments that wish to conduct national searches for their next police chief.

All of PERF's work benefits from PERF's status as a membership organization of police officials, who share information and open their agencies to research and study. PERF members also include academics, federal government leaders, and others with an interest in policing and criminal justice.

All PERF members must have a four-year college degree and must subscribe to a set of founding principles, emphasizing the importance of research and public debate in policing, adherence to the Constitution and the highest standards of ethics and integrity, and accountability to the communities that police agencies serve.

PERF is governed by a member-elected President and Board of Directors and a Board-appointed Executive Director. A staff of approximately 30 full-time professionals is based in Washington, D.C.

To learn more, visit PERF online at www.policeforum.org.

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