



Better Agreements, Inc.

Got Conflict? Ask Us About Dispute Resolution!

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100 Community Peacebuilders Program

Reducing Gun Violence in Roanoke City requires all of us: government, agencies, faith communities and trusted neighbors who show up, speak up and intervene for those they care about. The 100 Community Peacebuilders Program will equip 100 Trusted Community Volunteers and Credible Messengers to serve as Community Peacebuilders to identify, de-escalate, relate, and intervene in the earliest stages of community conflict to reduce violence.

We aren't asking the Community Peacebuilders to run into a gun fight but to intervene in a positive way with those with whom they have influence. It may look like talking down a friend who finds out that his partner has been unfaithful or a neighbor who sees that his car has been scratched yet again by that same obnoxious neighbor and decides to send a strong message. Perhaps an aunt who intervenes when her niece decides to retaliate against someone who jumped her friend or even a bystander who can tell that some joking happening outside of a local business is getting out of hand. Angry people, like the ones in situations listed above, usually make poor decisions and often need influence from someone else to consider other possibilities. The presence of a trusted person, who has the skills and willingness to intervene can keep angry individuals from making poor choices that could have devastating impacts.

Here's how the program works

- Individuals complete an application at www.betteragreements.org OR calling (540) 552-1200. Qualified applicants will be trusted individuals who are already actively supporting their community. Preference will be given to individuals with connections to those statistically most affected by gun violence in the City of Roanoke. There are no other age, educational, or experience requirements.
- There is absolutely no cost for participants who are selected for the program. There will be supports for anyone needing help with transportation or childcare.
- Participants will be put into groups of approximately 20 people based on availability and each group will have at least 20 hours of training in conflict resolution, communication, and other relevant skills. Some groups may meet for a total of 5, 4-hour sessions during the week; some for 2 hours on Monday nights for 10 weeks; another group may meet for 3 hours on a Sunday afternoon. The groups will be schedule in such a way that the greatest number of people can participate
- There will be at least 1 group dedicated to individuals ages 14 to 18.

- The trainings will be highly interactive and discussion-based so that everyone is able to ask questions and participate. *This will help participants apply several skills with confidence regardless of their level of education.*
- After completing the 20 hours of training, participants will be encourage to put their skills into action and meet with their group at least once per month for the next 6 months. *This will allow participants to practice their skills and share victories or challenges and receive support and build their confidence.*

If you are interested or know of someone who would be a fit for this program, please contact Eddy Smart at (540) 552-1200 OR **complete the application at www.betteragreements.org.**

If you would like to support this program in other ways such as making a donation of supplies, meeting space, or meals for participants, please contact Eddy Smart. This is an opportunity for us to support and make an investment in the 100 people who will begin to make a difference in our community.

This program is made possible by a combination of funding from Roanoke City's Gun Violence Prevention Commission and a DCJS Gun Violence Intervention Program grant.