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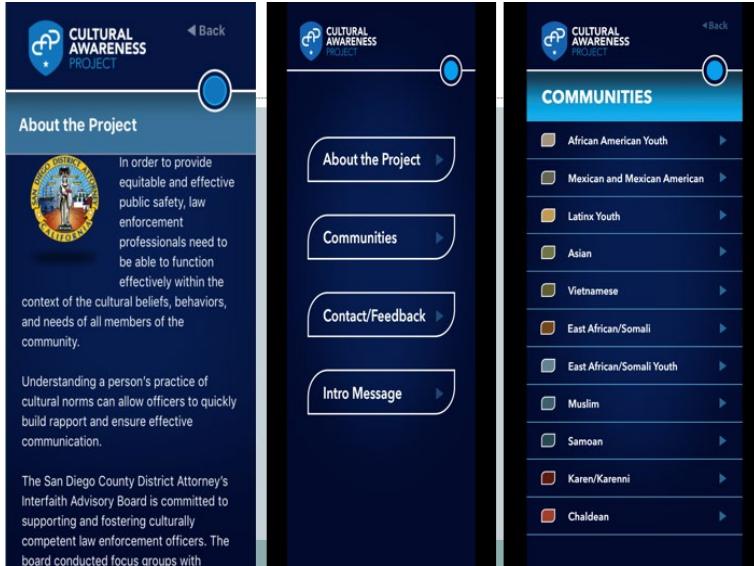
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New Cultural Awareness App Helps Police Interaction Respectfully with Diverse Communities

Cultural Sensitivity App Developed with Community Input

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan announced today that her office has created an [app](#) that provides key cultural knowledge about San Diego County's various, diverse communities to help law enforcement officers respond respectfully during non-emergency situations.

The Cultural Awareness Project (CAP App) was developed under the guidance of the DA's Interfaith Advisory Board, which conducted focus groups with various community



representatives to inform its content. The app provides information on cultural norms across 11 communities including African-American youth, Mexican/Mexican-American, Asian, Vietnamese, East African/Somali, East African/Somali Youth, Muslim, Samoan, Native American and more. For example, the app provides easy-to-read information on a group's traditions and beliefs, greetings, what to expect when visiting households, and what the group's historical experiences with law enforcement are.

"San Diego County is home to a variety of races, ethnicities, religions and cultural backgrounds," DA Summer Stephan Said. "Building law enforcement's understanding of our diverse communities helps to improve respectful and culturally competent communication. This new and innovative app has great promise to help advance trust between police and the communities they serve because it is a tool built by the community from the ground up. I want to



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thank the members of our DA Interfaith Advisory Board for devoting months of time gathering the pertinent information and making this app a reality.”

The San Diego Police Chiefs’ and Sheriff’s Association also embraced the app.

“Developing cultural competencies is an important part of modern policing,” Chief David Nisleit, said. “I want to thank all of the community groups for their collaboration on this project.”

The District Attorney's Interfaith Advisory Board was formed over a decade ago as a way of maintaining an open dialogue between the DA's Office and the various communities throughout San Diego County. Each month, leaders from a variety of religious organizations meet at the DA's CARE Center where they voice community concerns and work on solution-oriented initiatives to address the needs they identify as public safety issues. The Board has and will continue to provide cultural insight to law enforcement officials in non-emergency situations.

“Whenever there’s a job to do, you must have the right tools to accomplish the job,” said Dr. Gerald L. Johnson, Chairman of United African American Ministerial Action Council and member of the DA’s Interfaith Advisory Board. “All jobs are important, especially those of our professionals who are sworn to public safety. We will witness the importance of the CAP App as the testimonies are documented from the community and professionals alike sharing the same tool.”

Members of the Interfaith Advisory Board worked on the CAP App since the idea was conceived.

“It’s very important to have our local law enforcement officers equipped with the accurate information on the communities they serve and protect,” said Imam Taha Hassane, Director of the Islamic Center of San Diego and a member of the DA’s Interfaith Advisory Board.

Each of the 11 communities has four categories of information, and each category provides culturally based knowledge to guide interactions with members of that community:

Traditions and Beliefs

Every community shares different cultural/ethnic/religious traditions or beliefs of which law enforcement needs to be aware of to have effective encounter.

Greetings

This category reflects the appropriate manner of greeting in different cultures, including demeanor, non-verbal, body space, handshake, bow, male-female interaction, etc.

Visiting Households

The information provided under this category helps officers identify who is considered the head of the household in each culture and who should be addressed or acknowledged first.

Experiences with Law Enforcement

This section includes shared views, perceptions and past experiences with law enforcement in different cultures that reflect certain behaviors upon contact with the officers.



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The app is intended to help prepare law enforcement before encountering a member of the public from a different culture in a non-emergency situation. It is an easy and quick tool to navigate, before an interaction in the field, especially when conducting home visits. The app will also be helpful as a debriefing resource when an encounter has not gone well.

The CAP app is free and available and ready to download in the Apple and Android app stores under “Cultural Awareness Project.” The app does not have access to a user’s camera or contacts.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office

The San Diego County DA’s Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.

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