

BUILDING BRIDGES

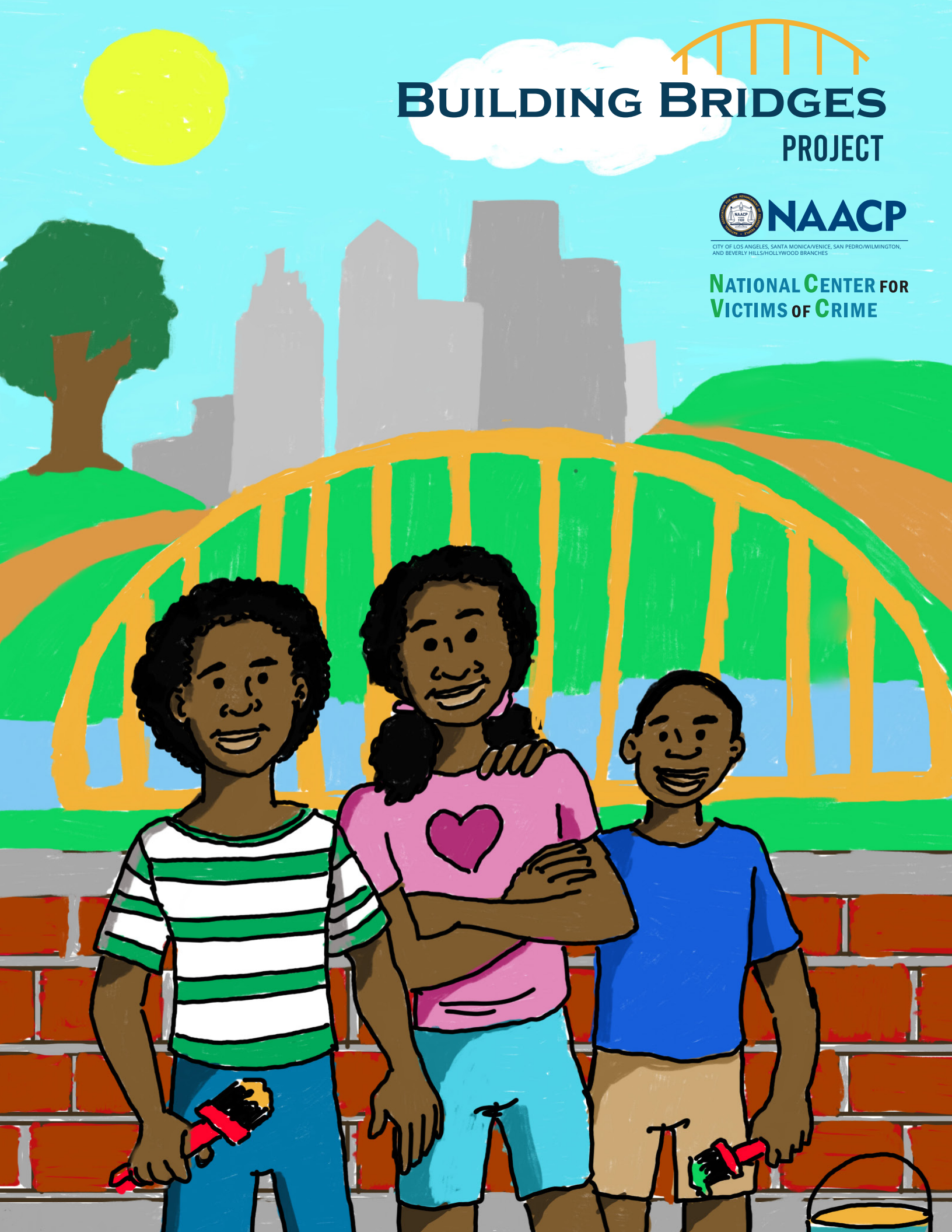
PROJECT



NAACP

CITY OF LOS ANGELES, SANTA MONICA/VENICE, SAN PEDRO/WILMINGTON,
AND BEVERLY HILLS/HOLLYWOOD BRANCHES

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR
VICTIMS OF CRIME**





Building Bridges Project Overview

Tensions, lack of trust, and differences in perception between many law enforcement officers and crime victims of color often adversely impact victim service delivery to underserved and marginalized populations. The National Center and four local branches of the Southern California NAACP are partnering together to address the impact that deeply rooted discrimination evident in our justice system has on victim services. This discrimination leads to unequal standards of care and availability of services for victims of color. This project, amply named “the Building Bridges Project (BBP),” will begin to bridge the gap between communities of color and law enforcement in order to improve victim services for communities of color.

This project works to ensure that law enforcement responses are accessible, culturally-relevant, and trauma-informed, mainly when serving historically marginalized communities. The National Center and the NAACP will collaborate with local organizations, community leaders, crime victims and survivors as well as law enforcement to establish a productive and healing dialogue about what law enforcement should know in order to achieve effective encounters with victims of crime from marginalized communities. An essential component of this project is it’s centering of community voices and survivors stories.

The Building Bridges Project can be separated into three sections:

1. building trust with the Los Angeles community and community partners
2. listening to the experiences shared by the community and first responders through a constructive dialogue,
3. filling the gaps that both parties have identified in order to make victim services culturally responsive and trauma informed for communities of color.

Building Bridges Project Timeline

Below is a brief timeline of the project. The project will change and grow in response to issues identified by Los Angeles communities of color and our community partners. BBP’s progress will be measured through surveys, roundtables and other forms of community discussions.

- The first step in this project is to work with the NAACP to identify local and national community organizations in the fields of faith, unions, health, victim services, mental health care, counseling, justice, advocacy and youth. We need to cultivate these partnerships and build trust in the community in order to have a strong foundation for the project.

- At the same time that this community outreach is occurring, the National Center is working with the NAACP to create a community-based needs survey. This survey asks the community to identify gaps in services, barriers to access and utilization and suggestions to administer victim services in more culturally appropriate ways.
- The NAACP and our community partners will then disseminate the survey to the community and begin to engage in a constructive dialogue about its findings.
- NCVC and the NAACP will work with our community partners to build a productive and healing dialogue about what police need to know to achieve effective encounters with victims of crime from marginalized communities.
- Following that dialogue, community supported actions and reinvestment will occur. Training, policies, and procedures will be designed to fill the gaps that community members have identified. Service delivery approaches may be modified to resolve some of the issues that have led to a history of negative and often harmful law enforcement-community interactions. This will be a crucial step to improve victim service delivery in communities of color.
- This project will develop deliverables that include guiding principles to enhance police responses to victims and survivors of crime from marginalized communities, and contribute to police/community relations improvements.
- This project will also reinvest funds and target efforts to improve victim services in these traditionally marginalized communities through our work with the community organizations.



These action steps will ultimately promote reconciliation and a deeper sense of trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve, and help us to “Build Bridges” and ensure that, in the aftermath of victimization, a survivor of color has access to the services that they need.

Building Bridges Background

Minority, marginalized, and underserved populations are more likely than predominantly white communities to view law enforcement with suspicion and distrust. The natural consequence of this distrust is consistently low crime reporting rates, less willingness to cooperate with law enforcement, and a lack of critical services for victims of crime in marginalized communities. Because of this, marginalized communities are denied the same justice afforded to predominantly white communities. Specifically, a 2019 Center for Victim Research study found that victimization “risk is highest among

persons who are younger, male, black, living in the poorest households, and living in urban areas.” However, boys and men of color are unlikely to report their victimization and often do not get the support they need and deserve. In addition, black, indigenous and other people of color experience police brutality at higher rates.

While historically marginalized communities include many different groups of people, our efforts may focus more on the black community, as they are disproportionately affected by violence in many forms. Black people make up 13.3% of the population, but 47% of homicide victims. In addition, each homicide victim has on average 7-10 surviving family members, and

African-Americans make up 75% of the survivor population. Despite this, the culture of homicide in these communities often involves shame, blame, stigma, and a lack of justice. Victims and survivors often do not receive the services that they need, due in large part to their fractured relationship with law enforcement and others in the criminal justice system.

Project Impact

Ruptured relations between police and communities they serve, particularly marginalized communities, are among the greatest challenges to reform. Crime victims of color are not immune to the disparate treatment found in other police interactions with residents of marginalized communities and reform is needed in this area of policing as well. Additionally, damaged police-community relationships make it more difficult for police to execute their most crucial responsibility: to protect public safety. This project will serve as a way to bridge the gap between historically marginalized communities, the criminal justice system, and law enforcement.

