

## Lessons Learned in Bridgeport from RYASAP SafeStreets

It was important for us to provide a safe space for youth/adults to come share not just when violence occurs or during an election year but throughout the year. We did not want the press to be there. We did invite elected officials to sit in the audience and share their perspectives if they did not make it about them or political.

Here are some things we do:

1. It's important to provide a safe space for folks to express themselves.
2. Provide a meal or finger foods (not pizza)
3. Have a good panel
4. Have a good Moderator
5. Someone taking notes for next steps
6. Listen to the young people

I was intentional about picking our panel; I had a pastor that presides over a lot of funerals in the community, someone that does reentry work, a parent that loss her child to violence, a parent that lives in the housing complex where a lot of the violence occurs, and an ex latin king.

In the past the panel was made up of youth who are currently in gangs, selling drugs, others that are straight A students, plain clothes police officer, teacher, and emt worker.

At the end we ask the participants to write down questions they would like answered for the next session, we also ask what's something within reason that they would like to see happen in their community. One was a neighborhood cleanup and one Saturday we did that and after we provided lunch.