

# “Midland Simulation”



## A Table-Top Exercise on Leadership During Community Division and Civil Unrest

A Project of the Divided Community Project  
The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law

Other *free* resources developed by the Divided Community Project are available at <https://go.osu.edu/dcp>. Key resources include:

- The Bridge Initiative @ Moritz, providing free mediation services for communities facing crisis, <https://go.osu.edu/DCPbridge>.
- Community Resiliency Initiative Case Study Series (2018), <https://go.osu.edu/DCPcri>.
- Divided Communities and Social Media: Strategies for Community Leaders (2017), <https://go.osu.edu/DCPsm>.
- Planning in Advance of Civil Unrest (2016), <https://go.osu.edu/DCPpia>.
- Key Considerations for Community Leaders Facing Civil Unrest: Effective Problem-Solving Strategies that have been used in Other Communities (2016), <https://go.osu.edu/DCPkc>.

Significant financial support for the Divided Community Project is provided by the JAMS Foundation and The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and the college's Program on Dispute Resolution



Additional funding is provided by the Jacques M. Littlefield Foundation & the AAA-ICDR Foundation



The Divided Community Project Partners with the Kettering Foundation



Nextdoor, the Ohio State University Institute for Democratic Engagement and Accountability, Ohio State University Emeritus Academy and the Ohio State University Democracy Studies Program also support the project

Midland Simulation is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Information about this license is available here:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.



*Midland Simulation*, Divided Community Project at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law (February 2020).

*Warning: Some statements in this exercise are offensive or uncomfortable. These statements are based on real quotes and are not designed to offend. Rather, they are designed to reflect reality.*

## **General Instructions for All Participants**

The city of Midland has a population of 600,000, with a total of 900,000 in the metropolitan area, located in the middle of Midstate. A large immigrant population (23% of Midland's total population) lives predominately in the central area of Midland. In addition to Midland, four other cities and a small military base make up the metropolitan area: Northville, Southville, Eastville, and Westville. *The facts of this case are based on actual controversies but names and other details have been changed to respect confidentiality. As a result the facts, for example the name "Midland," do not apply to any specific U.S. community. Do not google "Midland Texas" or any other city to gather facts about the case.*

By Executive Order 13768 on January 25, the President adopted a stricter policy on illegal immigration enforcement, and the federal government is pressuring local governments through threatened elimination of federal funds to move more resources toward enforcing immigration laws. Many cities are grappling with what will be required to comply with the federal policy. Cities in this state have had various reactions. The Mayor issued the attached Executive Order concerning Midland's position on February 7.

Assume the truth of the following fictional events taking place during the past week:

1. Six days ago, Joey Rich, a local celebrity and host of a popular local morning radio show – The Scoop – claimed on air that “illegal immigrants” are responsible for 45% of violent crime in Midland and, per person, cost the city \$40,000 a year to house and support through public aid programs. Many groups that support the federal policy have repeated these statements as a centerpiece for their argument. The Mayor's staff researcher says that these figures are grossly exaggerated.
2. Five days ago, state Senator Smith, who is introducing several pieces of legislation designed to punish municipalities that refuse to fully comply with the federal policy, held a press conference. She announced that her bill “banning” sanctuary cities in the state is gaining traction with her colleagues in the legislature. She condemned any municipality that refused to enforce the federal policy, saying that "any city that illegally refuses to comply with the policy is carelessly disregarding the safety of our families and should be held legally accountable." She then blamed “radical Islamic terrorists" and their "culture" for committing crimes, including assaults and rape, and bringing in "sexually transmitted diseases."
3. Four days ago, several activist groups opposing the federal policy – namely Immigrant Rights Advocates (IRA), Students for a Free Society (SFS), and The Children's Justice Project (CJP) – organized a mass protest. The protest attracted about 2,000 people and culminated in a march on Midland City Hall that was so disruptive that it "shut down" the city council meeting.



4. During the protest which “shut down” city council, several members of Outspoken – a progressive agitator group – who were in attendance began yelling at the special duty officers by calling them “hateful pigs” and “closet skinheads.” So far, there have been no complaints about police responses to the demonstrations.



Peter Burka, [Black lives matter](#), Dec. 13, 2014, [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

5. Over the weekend on Youtube, a group of students from a Midland high school posted a video making fun of Muslim immigrants. In the video a handheld camera captures a group of students taunting a young female student wearing a hijab. In the video they call her a “camel jockey” and a “towel head” before removing her hijab. Once the students have taken her hijab they play keep-away with it, making the Muslim student cry. This video has gone viral and has garnered national attention.

6. Two days ago, there was a volatile student-led demonstration in Northville - the separately-incorporated suburb where Midland University is located. The student demonstrators were concerned about immigration but were joined by a group of Midland folks raising awareness of racial profiling regarding police in the suburb. There has been a history of complaints that the police stop persons of color disproportionately in that predominately white and wealthy suburb.



Victoria Pickering, [Emergency Immigrant Protest](#), Feb. 11, 2017, [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#).

These events have caused multiple hostile fights on social media. Many said that it is important to respect the diverse fabric of the community. Others said that the state and city needed the federal funds and our immigrant population is only causing a rise in unemployment and crime anyway. The posts contain insulting, even hateful comments about immigrants and law enforcement.

Although the Mayor’s office has received no word yet of any police use of force against protestors over the past week, there will be a strong media focus on that issue if any occurs. Last November, the local Fraternal Order of Police issued a public vote of no confidence in the Midland Mayor, City Council President, and Police Chief.

The Mayor has called together the city leaders to strategize for a press conference that will take place at the Near-North Recreation Center, in Midland—though near Northville—at 10:10 am, today. The press conference was announced three weeks ago in order for the Mayor to



announce his proposal to increase funds to support immigrants and refugees – the Mayor does not intend to cancel the press conference and must now consider how to address these emergent issues. The Mayor will also use the occasion to reiterate the attached Executive Order.

Given recent events, the police have reported that we should expect protestors from both Midland and Northville, and perhaps national groups. The Mayor has requested that the group work together to create bullet points for a message that will be delivered at the press conference (see attached email from the Mayor). The Mayor would like the group's suggestions in 40 minutes, so he has time to prepare. In addition to Midland officials, the Mayor has invited the County Prosecutor, the Mayor and Police Chief of Northville, the Superintendent of the Midland City Schools, and the Midland University Police Chief. Some invited participants will likely bring staff support. Support for the President's immigration enforcement policies seems stronger among Northville residents than among Midland residents.

The Mayor knows that it will be difficult to hear from all of the interested parties in this situation so he is considering breaking the meeting up into task forces or bringing in members of the community to speak to the group once they finish giving their initial recommendations to the Mayor.

Concurrent to the Mayor's meeting, the Midland Department of Neighborhoods convened a group of leaders of community organizations who have been meeting regularly about division within Midland. The following community leaders were invited to this conversation:

- The Assistant Director of the Midland Department of Neighborhoods.
- The Midland Urban League President.
- The Executive Director of the Midland Bar Association.
- The Chair of the Midland Inter-Faith Coalition.
- The Midland United Way Executive Director.
- The President of the Hispanic Coalition.
- The Executive Director of the Midland Chamber of Commerce

If you would like to talk with persons not listed here, please ask the facilitators, and they will provide a role player any person requested.

*Everyone will learn more in this simulation if you can stay in role. To facilitate this, when you need more facts, make up facts that are likely to be accurate in similar circumstances. Please treat this simulation as you would "improv" (improvisational comedy): go with what is being said and say things that would be consistent with the situation even if you do not have the specific facts in your background information. To help people remain in role, please do not break your role or refer to the simulation directions. If another person breaks role, please stay in yours.*



# EXECUTIVE ORDER

2020-01

## Reinforcing and Expanding City Immigration Policy for All Midland Residents

**WHEREAS**, Midland is America's Opportunity City and that means opportunity for all who reside here; and

**WHEREAS**, for over 200 years, the fabric of our city has been woven by immigrants and refugees from around the world; and

**WHEREAS**, Midland neighborhoods reflect the waves of migration and immigration throughout our history, and those neighborhoods make us stronger as a city; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the responsibility of municipal leaders to protect the well-being and safety of all people residing in their cities; and

**WHEREAS**, our city will be best served by reinforcing and instituting strong public policies that respect the rights of all individuals, regardless of national origin or immigration status, and promote strong police-community relations; and

**WHEREAS**, whether we are native born or New American, we all have a responsibility to actively engage in the success of our city; and

**WHEREAS**, Midland' future is big enough, bright enough, and safe enough for everyone; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, declare and institute this Executive Order in furtherance of the foregoing:

1. It shall be policy of the City of Midland to actively support, to the greatest extent practicable, the placement or settlement in this jurisdiction of aliens eligible to be admitted to the United States as refugees. City staff are hereby authorized and directed to cooperate to the greatest extent practicable with federal and state officials in such placement or settlement.
2. No city department or employee may use city moneys, equipment, or personnel for the sole purpose of detecting or apprehending persons based on suspected immigration status, unless in response to a court order. In furtherance of this policy, no city office or employee shall request information about or otherwise investigate or assist in the investigation of a person's immigration status unless a warrant exists, a criminal violation was reported, or an arrest was made.



3. No city department or employee shall deny equal access to city services based on immigration status unless required by law or court order. Such denial of access shall include, but shall not be limited to, soliciting immigration status in any application for city services; predicating the provision of services on the immigration status of any person; or delaying the provision of services based solely on immigration status.
4. It shall be the policy of the City of Midland to vigorously oppose any effort to require the use of local taxpayer resources for the enforcement of federal immigration policy.

This order shall be in full force and effect after my signature is affixed to this document.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set  
My hand and caused the Great Seal of the Mayor  
of the City of Midland, to be hereto  
affixed this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of February.

*Mayor "Middie" Midland*

---

Mayor



---

**From:** Mayor, City of Midland  
**Sent:** Sunday March 1, 2020 at 5:00PM  
**To:** <City Leaders Group>  
**Subject:** Strategy Meeting for Immigration Protests – Proposed Agenda

Hello All,

Good evening. I know the past few days have imposed a lot of pressure and coordination challenges on your offices. I would like to give everyone a chance to speak to each other before our press conference tomorrow afternoon. **We will meet tomorrow at 8:45 am – the press conference is scheduled for 10:10 am.** Here is a proposed agenda:

1. Provide bullet points that my staff can use to write the statement the City will issue at the press conference. Who/what agencies should be present at the press conference?

*\*I know there are important differences in opinion about the federal policy present in the meeting. These issues do not need to be decided today. Instead, we need to decide as a city what our unified response will be while we consider what we will do.*

2. How can we correct the misinformation that is being circulated by radio and social media?

In order to prepare for the press conference, I would like to have your thoughts (in bullet-point form) on these **first two issues within the first 40 minutes**. Once we've settled on bullet-points for the press conference, I'll send these out for my staff to work on drafting. I'd like to address these issues as well:

3. Whether to call in additional experts and/or stakeholders to help Midland officials in this crisis.
4. Street policing decisions – how should our officers respond to the current climate in Midland? Especially during protests.
5. Based on experience in other cities, we can expect public records request for the police body-cam videos from all demonstrations. How should we handle these requests?
6. How to hold this week's city council meeting and preserve the peace.

We will also discuss who will join me at the press conference. Please consider who you think should attend and whether they should give a statement.

The Midland Department of Neighborhoods has convened a group of leaders of community organizations – constructive individuals who care about Midland and want to help the members of the Midland community work together in an atmosphere of trust. I hope that you will find out what they can do to help.

Thank you all for your help and dedication to the City. We appreciate all you do. Please let me know if you have any questions. I will see you at the meeting.

Sincerely, Mayor, City of Midland

