

Community Focus Statement A: Improve the overall safety of the community.

Action Statement A.5: Develop a neighborhood watch program.

A5

Benchmark: Neighborhood watch programs exist in at least 75 percent of Helendale’s residential areas. Meet regularly (at least once a quarter) and meet with representatives from the Sheriff’s Department at least once annually for at least five years.

Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

Estimated cost: \$300–\$4,000



Neighborhood watch sign installed in a neighborhood. Photo source: National Neighborhood Watch

A neighborhood watch program is a way to keep Helendale safe by involving local residents in crime prevention efforts. Participating residents keep watch on neighbors and the neighborhood, reducing crime by decreasing the situations where people are able to commit a crime without being observed. This type of program can be particularly effective in a mostly residential community such as Helendale, where there are residents in all parts of the community who can participate. Neighborhood watch participants also promptly report suspicious activities to law enforcement officials, who can intervene and potentially stop a crime

from occurring. The goal of a neighborhood watch program is not to catch criminals or to change their behavior, but to reduce the number of situations where a crime could happen. The programs only succeed if initiated and maintained by local community members.

Many strategies are available to help make a future neighborhood watch program in Helendale more effective. The San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department can assist the community in starting and maintaining a program by providing critical resources and training for program participants. Existing community groups such as the Silver Lakes Association can provide a framework for neighbors to get together and communicate to organize and grow a neighborhood watch program. Signs posted around the community can deter potential lawbreakers and raise resident awareness of the program. Participants can host events such as cleanups, making areas nicer and more attractive, and less likely to be used for criminal purposes. Neighborhood watch programs can also act with a unified voice to encourage local governments to take action and make communities safer, such as through the installation of better outdoor lighting.

Studies show that neighborhood watch programs can be effective at reducing crime, but members from all segments of the community must be involved and willing to make long-term commitments to the effort. The Helendale neighborhood watch program should involve children and teenagers, adults, and elderly residents, creating a program that is more representative of the community and helps ensure that more of the neighborhoods are covered. Similarly, the community’s program should include participants speaking languages other than English,

such as Spanish, German, Chinese, and Korean. The inclusion of non-English-speaking members will help improve the program's reach and facilitate communication with a wider range of residents.

Action	Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Hold a Neighborhood Watch informational meeting with Sherriff's department to educate the community members. Start signing up volunteers.	Champion with Sheriff's Department	Month 1	National Crime Prevention Council: Starting a Neighborhood Watch http://www.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/neighborhood-safety/nwstart.pdf
2. Reach out to neighborhood residents and recruit them to serve on a neighborhood watch committee.	Community groups, Silver Lakes homeowners association	Months 1-3	US Department of Justice: Neighborhood Watch Manual https://www.bja.gov/Publications/NSA_NW_Manual.pdf
3. For each neighborhood where a program will be established, select a resident to serve as the neighborhood watch chair.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 4	
4. Establish lines of communication between all neighborhood watch committees in the community.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 5	San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department
5. Solicit volunteers from the community to support neighborhood watch activities.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 5	San Bernardino County Public Works (for sign installation)
6. Conduct a start-up meeting to determine interest, assign volunteers, identify areas of concern in the community, and other appropriate start-up activities.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 6	Helendale Community Services District
7. Establish partnerships with the Sheriff's Department for continued training, information sharing, and resources	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 6	
8. Post signs notifying people of a neighborhood watch program.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 6	
9. Conduct regular training sessions, information sharing, and meetings.	Neighborhood watch committees	Ongoing	
10. Monitor the effectiveness of neighborhood watch programs, and make revisions to program operations as needed.	Neighborhood watch committees	Ongoing	