

Community Focus Statement D: Enhance public safety by improving communication and coordination with law enforcement.

Action Statement D.2: Establish new and enhance existing neighborhood watch programs that can be implemented and replicated throughout the communities.

D₂

Benchmarks: Neighborhood watch programs established in at least 75 percent of residential areas in Phelan and Piñon Hills that meets quarterly and meets Sheriff’s Department at least once annually.

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

Estimated cost: \$500–\$4,500



Neighborhood Crime Watch sign in Wrightwood, CA. Photo source: Michael Baker International

A neighborhood watch program is a strategy to help keep the area safe by involving local residents in Phelan Piñon Hills in crime prevention efforts. Participating residents in a program keep watch on their neighbors and the neighborhood, decreasing the opportunities for people to commit a crime without being observed, which in turn makes the area less desirable to potential lawbreakers. Community members 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 and locations where a crime could happen. While neighborhood watch programs do exist in the Phelan Piñon Hills area, there are opportunities to develop additional programs or to expand existing ones. The Sheriff’s Department could increase the number and reach of the neighborhood watch programs in the Phelan Piñon Hills area, but such programs may have a better chance of succeeding, particularly in the long term, if local residents start them.

There are many strategies to help make any new future or expanded existing neighborhood watch programs in the community more effective.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department can assist Phelan Piñon Hills residents in starting, maintaining, or expanding programs by providing critical resources and training for program participants. Existing community organizations 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 residents’ awareness of the program. Participants can host events such as cleanups, making areas nicer and more attractive, and making them less likely to be used for criminal purposes. People involved with the local neighborhood watch program can also raise awareness at existing community events, such as the farmers market and the Piñon Hills Senior Potluck. Neighborhood watch programs can also act with a unified voice to encourage local governments to take action and make communities safer, such as installing better outdoor lighting.



For neighborhood watch programs in the Phelan Piñon Hills area to be effective, they should involve members from all segments of the community. Studies have shown that neighborhood watch programs are best at reducing crime when they involve a wide spectrum of community members who are willing to make long-term dedications to the effort. This also helps the program to be more inclusive and representative of the entire community, making it seem more legitimate and valid. Involving children and teenagers, adults, and elderly residents helps ensure that more areas of the neighborhood are covered. New or expanded neighborhood watch programs in the Phelan Piñon Hills area should include members who speak languages other than English that are spoken in the area, including Spanish, Korean, and German, to improve the program's reach and to help communicate with a wider range of residents.



Action	Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Contact residents in areas without a neighborhood watch program, and recruit residents in these areas to serve on a neighborhood watch committee.	Champion	Months 1–3	CASE STUDIES Sonoma County Rural Neighborhood Watch Program https://www.sonomasheriff.org/neighborhood-watch
2. For each neighborhood where a program will be established, select a resident to serve as the neighborhood watch chair.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 4	Elk Grove Neighborhood Watch Program http://www.elkgrovepd.org/community/crime_prevention/neighborhood_watch
3. Establish lines of communication between all neighborhood watch committees in the community	Neighborhood Watch committees	Month 5	National Crime Prevention Council: Starting a Neighborhood Watch http://www.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/neighborhood-safety/nwstart.pdf
4. Solicit volunteers from the community to support neighborhood watch activities (for new programs, and if needed for existing ones).	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 5	
5. Conduct a start-up meeting to determine interest, assign volunteers, identify areas of concern in the community, and perform other appropriate start-up activities.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 6	US Department of Justice: Neighborhood Watch Manual https://www.bja.gov/Publications/NSA_NW_Manual.pdf
6. Establish partnerships with the Sheriff's Department for training, information sharing, and resources.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 6	San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department http://cms.sbcounty.gov/sheriff/home.aspx
7. Post signs notifying people of a neighborhood watch program.	Neighborhood watch committees	Month 6	San Bernardino County Public Works (for sign installation) http://cms.sbcounty.gov/dpw/home.aspx
8. Conduct regular training sessions, information sharing, and meetings including at local events.	Neighborhood watch committees	On-going	
9. Monitor the effectiveness of the neighborhood watch programs, and make revisions to program operations as needed.	Neighborhood watch committees	On-going	