

FOUNDATION FOR FREEDOM | CONSTITUTIONAL COUNTY TOOLKIT

SHERIFF OUTREACH GUIDE

Building a Constructive Relationship with the County Sheriff in the Constitutional County Strategy

2026 RESOURCE LIBRARY

RELATIONSHIP • EDUCATION • LISTENING • COOPERATION • CONSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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1. Purpose of Sheriff Outreach

The Sheriff is one of the Four Pillars of the Constitutional County strategy. Outreach should begin by recognizing that the Sheriff is an independently elected constitutional officer whose duties and authority are defined by the Constitution and laws of the state.

The purpose of the first meeting is not to demand that the Sheriff adopt the team's interpretation of a disputed legal issue. It is to build a professional relationship, understand the Sheriff's perspective, explain the Constitutional County initiative, identify areas of agreement, and discuss how constitutional rights, due process, public safety, and lawful county policy can work together.

Primary objective: develop a continuing working relationship with the Sheriff before a crisis, controversy, or ordinance-enforcement question arises.

2. Understand the Sheriff's Distinct Role

A County Commission and a Sheriff have different legal functions. A Constitutional County plan should respect those distinctions.

The Sheriff is not simply an employee of the County Commission.

The Sheriff exercises independent constitutional and statutory responsibilities.

The County Commission adopts county ordinances within its lawful authority; the Sheriff's responsibilities concerning enforcement are governed by applicable law.

Courts—not advocacy groups or individual officials acting alone—provide authoritative resolution of many disputed legal questions.

A sound Constitutional County strategy encourages cooperation without attempting to place one constitutional office under the improper control of another.

3. Research Before Contact

Review the Sheriff's official biography, public statements, policy priorities, and community programs.

Review public records and documented positions on constitutional rights, emergency powers, firearms, privacy, surveillance, immigration cooperation, public demonstrations, and due process where relevant.

Determine whether the Sheriff has previously supported Second Amendment sanctuary measures or other constitutional resolutions.

Learn how the Sheriff's office interacts with the County Commission, county attorney, state agencies, federal agencies, and municipalities.

Identify any existing relationship between the Sheriff and members of your team, local pastors, civic leaders, first responders, attorneys, or respected community members.

Separate verified information from rumors before discussing the Sheriff publicly.

4. Request the Meeting

Request a private introductory meeting of approximately 20–30 minutes. A relationship-based introduction from a trusted local resident or community leader can be helpful.

Suggested request: “We are county residents working on a Constitutional County initiative focused on constitutional rights, accountable local government, and preparation for future emergencies or government actions that may raise constitutional concerns. We would appreciate an opportunity to introduce the project, hear your perspective as Sheriff, and discuss how citizens and local officials can work constructively together.”

5. Who Should Attend?

Keep the delegation small—generally two or three people.

Include the County Team Director or Government Outreach Lead.

Include a respected local person who already knows the Sheriff when appropriate.

Choose representatives who listen well, remain calm under disagreement, and understand the initiative.

Avoid turning the first meeting into a public confrontation, media event, or surprise delegation.

6. Prepare the Sheriff Meeting Packet

One-page explanation of What Is a Constitutional County?

One-page Four Pillars overview

Constitutional County Strategy Overview

Concise explanation of the proposed ordinance or resolution

Relevant adopted county examples

Short legal-reference sheet addressing federalism, due process, anti-commandeering, and county authority

Contact information and invitation for follow-up

The goal is to provide enough information for meaningful review without overwhelming the Sheriff with a large binder at the first meeting.

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7. Suggested 30-Minute First Meeting

TIME	PURPOSE
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0–5 min	Thank the Sheriff, introduce the team, and explain your local connection.
5–10 min	Explain the Constitutional County concept and Four Pillars.
10–20 min	Ask the Sheriff questions and listen carefully to legal, operational, and public-safety concerns.
20–25 min	Discuss the model ordinance/resolution and areas where the Sheriff's input would be valuable.
25–30 min	Identify follow-up questions, additional materials, and the next appropriate contact.

8. Core Message for the Sheriff

Prepare Before the Crisis — Constitutional questions are easier to address when relationships, procedures, and legal understanding exist before an emergency.

Protect Rights and Public Safety — Constitutional protections and effective law enforcement should reinforce rather than undermine one another.

Respect the Office — The Constitutional County initiative recognizes the Sheriff's independent legal responsibilities.

Use Lawful Authority — The strategy should operate through actual constitutional and statutory authority, due process, lawful non-cooperation where applicable, and judicial remedies where required.

Build Local Trust — Open communication among citizens, the Sheriff, Commissioners, courts, and election officials can improve public confidence and accountability.

9. Questions to Ask the Sheriff

How do you understand the Sheriff's constitutional and statutory responsibilities?

What constitutional issues do you believe are most likely to affect our county in the next several years?

What lessons did law enforcement learn from emergency government actions during the COVID-19 period?

How does your office evaluate an order or enforcement request that raises a serious constitutional or legal concern?

What role does legal counsel play in those decisions?

How does the office handle requests for assistance from state or federal agencies?

What due-process protections are especially important when enforcement affects liberty or property?

What concerns would you have about the proposed Constitutional County ordinance?

What provisions would create operational or legal problems for your office?

What could citizens do to improve communication and trust with the Sheriff's office?

10. Constitutional Issues Worth Discussing

The specific issues will vary by county. Useful topics may include:

First Amendment speech, assembly, religious exercise, and petition rights

Second Amendment rights and applicable firearms law

Fourth Amendment search-and-seizure protections

Due process before deprivation of liberty or property

Emergency orders and the limits of emergency enforcement

Government surveillance and emerging technologies

Interagency information sharing and requests for assistance

Use of county personnel or resources in connection with federal regulatory programs

Property rights and enforcement procedures

Public-record transparency and citizen complaint processes

11. Anti-Commandeering: Use Precise Language

The anti-commandeering doctrine is an important part of the Constitutional County discussion, but it should be presented accurately. U.S. Supreme Court decisions such as *New York v. United States*, *Printz v. United States*, and *Murphy v. NCAA* recognize limits on the federal government's ability to command states or state officers to administer or enforce a federal regulatory program.

This principle does not mean a Sheriff or county may disregard every federal or state law with which they disagree. The applicability of anti-commandeering, preemption, state-law duties, constitutional rights, and other doctrines depends on the particular facts and law involved.

Best practice: when a specific enforcement question is disputed, identify the exact legal authority, obtain qualified legal analysis, preserve due process, and use the courts when authoritative resolution is necessary.

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12. Discussing Interposition

The Constitutional County movement may use the historic term “interposition” to describe the responsibility of officials to act within their lawful authority when citizens' rights are threatened. In a public-facing Sheriff discussion, define the term carefully.

Interposition should not be presented as unlimited personal authority to declare controlling law void. A more durable approach is to ask what lawful options are available to the Sheriff or county: declining voluntary assistance where the law permits, seeking legal review, protecting due process, challenging an action in court, requesting clarification, or using other remedies recognized by law.

13. The Sheriff and a County Ordinance

If the County Commission is considering a Constitutional County Ordinance, the Sheriff's input can be especially important on provisions that affect law-enforcement operations.

Ask the Sheriff to identify provisions that may conflict with existing statutory duties.

Ask how complaint referrals or enforcement requests would practically reach the Sheriff's office.

Clarify whether the ordinance creates criminal, civil, administrative, or advisory consequences.

Ensure definitions are objective enough for fair enforcement.

Preserve notice, evidence, hearing rights, and other due-process protections.

Do not draft the ordinance as though the County Commission can simply command the Sheriff beyond the Commission's lawful authority.

Coordinate legal review with appropriate counsel before adoption.

14. Common Concerns and Constructive Responses

“I enforce the law; I don't decide whether laws are constitutional.” Acknowledge the role of courts and counsel. Ask how the office handles situations where controlling precedent, a court order, or legal advice identifies a constitutional problem.

“The Commission cannot tell me how to run my office.” Agree that the Sheriff's independent authority must be respected. Focus on cooperation and on provisions that are actually within county authority.

“This sounds like nullification.” Explain that the 2026 strategy emphasizes lawful local authority, anti-commandeering where applicable, due process, legal review, and judicial remedies—not an unlimited power to void law.

“This could expose deputies to liability.” Treat the concern seriously. Ask counsel to review definitions, duties, immunities, penalties, training requirements, and due-process procedures.

“I don't want politics interfering with law enforcement.” Emphasize that the goal is durable constitutional principles and lawful procedures rather than partisan direction of individual cases.

“We already take an oath to the Constitution.” Agree. Explain that the initiative seeks to support that commitment with public education, preparation, communication, and clearly defined lawful procedures.

15. Topics to Avoid in the First Meeting

Demanding an immediate pledge to refuse enforcement of unspecified laws

Asking the Sheriff to prejudge a pending case or investigation

Making accusations based on unverified internet claims

Suggesting that the Sheriff is legally superior to courts or possesses unlimited authority

Presenting disputed legal theories as settled law

Threatening political consequences before meaningful discussion has occurred

16. Build an Ongoing Relationship

Send a concise thank-you and follow-up after the meeting.

Provide only the materials the Sheriff or staff requested.

Invite the Sheriff or appropriate staff to educational events when relevant.

Attend public Sheriff's office community meetings.

Keep the office informed when an ordinance proposal materially changes.

Ask for input before public hearings on provisions affecting law enforcement.

Maintain the relationship even when the Sheriff disagrees with the team.

17. Sheriff Outreach Tracking Sheet

ITEM	CURRENT STATUS	CONCERNS / NOTES	NEXT STEP
Initial contact			
First meeting			

Ordinance review			
Legal/operational questions			
Follow-up meeting			
Public hearing / implementation			

18. Sheriff Meeting Checklist

- ☐ Research Sheriff's official record and policies
- ☐ Verify facts and avoid rumors
- ☐ Identify trusted introduction if available
- ☐ Request 20–30 minute meeting
- ☐ Choose 2–3 representatives
- ☐ Prepare concise meeting packet
- ☐ Practice the three-minute explanation
- ☐ Prepare questions
- ☐ Listen and document concerns
- ☐ Identify legal and operational follow-up
- ☐ Send thank-you

- ☐ Provide requested materials
- ☐ Schedule appropriate follow-up
- ☐ Update the County Team strategy

19. Recommended Toolkit Resources

What Is a Constitutional County?

Constitutional County Strategy Overview

How to Organize a Constitutional County Team

County Commissioner Outreach Guide

Constitutional Compliance Committee Model

Citizen Constitutional Complaint Form

Petition for Redress Template

Model Constitutional County Ordinance

Educational & Legal Notice

This guide is provided for educational and civic-organizing purposes and is not legal advice. Sheriff's powers and duties vary by state and by the particular legal issue. Law-enforcement decisions may be governed by constitutions, statutes, court orders, binding precedent, collective bargaining agreements, agency policies, and other law. Proposed ordinances and enforcement procedures should be reviewed by qualified counsel before adoption or implementation.

BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP BEFORE THE CRISIS.

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