



## Strong Cities Network Membership Application

COUNTY: Montgomery County, Maryland COUNTRY: United States

### MAIN POINT OF CONTACT

Name: Rev. Mansfield (Kasey) Kaseman

Position: Interfaith Community Liaison

Department: Office of Community Partnerships

Email: [mansfield\\_kaseman@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:mansfield_kaseman@montgomerycountymd.gov)

Phone: 240-777-2503

### Experience in the field, if any

Since his student days, the Reverend Mansfield "Kasey" Kaseman has been engaged in ecumenical and interfaith ministries aimed at creating the beloved community. Since moving to Rockville, Maryland in 1979, Rev. Kaseman revitalized Rockville United Church, incorporated Community Ministries of Rockville, and engaged the political, civic, religious and business sectors in meeting common interests. The Caregiver's Coalition of Rockville, Emergency Assistance, Elderly Homecare, Latino Outreach, Manna, Habitat for Humanity, and the Kaseman Health Clinic are among organizations he helped found and grow. Outside of Montgomery County, he served as Adjunct Faculty at Wesley Theological Seminary, Treasure of the National Community Ministry Network, and President of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. Rev. Kaseman's bio is attached.

Since 2012, Rev. Kaseman has served as the Interfaith Community Liaison for Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett. Under his leadership, the faith community in Montgomery County has been organized as the County Executive's Faith Community Advisory Council into three main committees: Faith Community Working Group, Religious Land Use Working Group, and Neighbors in Need Working Group. The Faith Community Working Group has developed a nationally recognized model for safeguarding local communities focused on establishing an early-warning system targeted towards the intervention and prevention of violent extremism that includes community policing, community awareness training, Emotional Spiritual Care Volunteers, and Faith Leaders Response Team. Rev. Kaseman has been asked by communities around the world to describe the Montgomery Model and how it was developed.

**SECOND POINT OF CONTACT**

Name: Bruce Adams

Position: Director

Department: Office of Community Partnerships

Email: bruce.adams@montgomerycountymd.gov

Phone: 240-777-2558

Does your city currently have a strategy document related to building social cohesion and resilience to violent extremism?

YES


Is this document publicly available?

YES

Would you be willing to share it with other members of the Strong Cities Network via the SCN Online and Exchange Hub?

YES

Note: a description of the Montgomery County Model is attached.

Date: December 4, 2015 Signature  Bruce Adams

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## THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY MODEL

**Background:** The Montgomery County Model (MCM) is an initiative developed by WORDE, in partnership with the Montgomery County Police Department and the Montgomery County Executive's Office of Community Partnerships. In furtherance of President Obama's *National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the US*, the MCM has a core focus on generating public awareness about the risk factors of violent extremists, and empowering the appropriate figures to intervene with vulnerable individuals before they choose a path of violence.

Our model is the first *community-led* effort of its kind across the country and involves a wide variety of stakeholders such as county agencies, nonprofit organizations, youth activists, gang prevention experts, as well as faith-based community organizations and clergy. The leaders of the program recently convened at the White House with Director of Community Partnerships, George Selim, who commended the program and offered the White House' support to further its implementation. In addition to being county-funded, the program is now funded by the Department of Justice, as part of the agency's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants program. WORDE's grant includes funding for the Police Executive Research Forum to develop training modules based on the MCM for its law enforcement members across the country.

A portion of the MCM is executed through the FCWG, which is an official body within the Montgomery County Executive's Office of Community Partnerships. WORDE is actively involved in the management and administration of the FCWG and its programming. WORDE President Dr. Hadieh Mirzadeh and Rabbi Batya Swinbof of the Jewish Community Relations Council are its Co-Chairs.

**Description:** The MCM is best described as an early-warning system targeted towards the intervention and prevention of violent extremism through four interrelated parts. First is engaging and convening a wide range of public and private stakeholders, which includes diverse faith community leaders, public officials, law enforcement officers, educators, social service providers, and county agencies. This inclusive approach is specifically designed to reduce the stigma on Muslim communities by including a broad spectrum of other partners.

Second, is educating this wider circle of trusted adults to recognize the warning signs of an at risk individual so they can refer him/her for an intervention before he/she turns to violence. This includes law enforcement training and community awareness briefings that identify the risk factors associated with violent extremism, and steps the community can take to intervene.

Third, the program is streamlining the process whereby the public and private stakeholders, as well as the general public, can refer at-risk individuals for an intervention. This includes not only cultural and spiritual centers associated with the FCWG, but also schools, social services organizations and county agencies that may come in contact with at-risk individuals. In addition, there will be a public contact protocol in place with the county's 911 and 311 information lines so they properly refer callers for an intervention, where necessary.

Finally, interventions to prevent violent extremism in vulnerable Muslim communities are carried out through WORDE's *Crossroads* program.

**Crossroads:** WORDE's Crossroads Program is a model for how community-based organizations can conduct interventions in this complicated field. The program is county and federally funded to provide free specialized care for Montgomery County residents from the Middle East, South Asia, and North/East/West Africa who are currently underserved by existing county programs and who may be vulnerable to violent extremism.

Crossroads uses a holistic approach by addressing the variety of risk factors associated with radicalization. The clinicians provide vulnerable individuals with culturally sensitive counseling and access to safety net services. Each client's individualized treatment plan is developed to reduce the ideological risk factors (e.g. intolerance, and extremist beliefs such as the justification of violence to address grievances), psychological factors (e.g. post-traumatic stresses and mental illnesses), economic factors (e.g. lack of employment and relative deprivation), and/or the sociological motivators (e.g. social alienation, marginalization, and acculturation difficulties) that lead to radicalization.

The program is uniquely focused on developing evaluation tools to ensure progress in decreasing the risk factors of violent extremism. This includes pre/post quantitative and qualitative assessments with scales that are validated from other studies (e.g. a scale to determine religious fundamentalism), as well as those partially validated by a study WORDE conducted with the University of Maryland on the relationship between radicalization and acculturation related stress.

In conclusion, the MCM demonstrates how a public-private partnership in preventing radicalization can be implemented, and also serves as a pilot study for how to scale and replicate such initiatives in other jurisdictions. The effectiveness of the MCM is being examined by a study funded by the National Institute of Justice and spearheaded by renowned terrorism expert, Dr. John Horgan, Professor at the University of Massachusetts, whose findings will be used to further enhance the program.