

VII. Enlist Guardians



**Anyone can be a Guardian
for Resilience.**

**You must always
be there to help.**

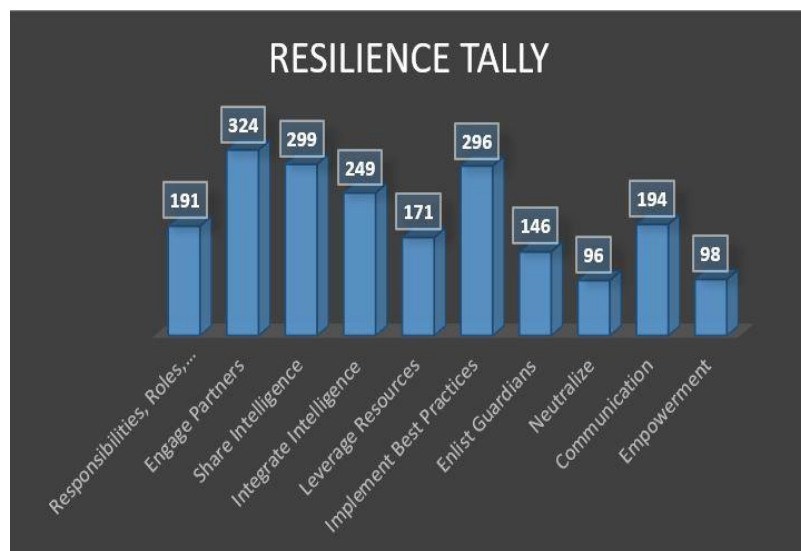
*“ONE OF THE BEST LINES OF
DEFENSE, THE FIRST LINE OF
DEFENSE ARE YOUR USHERS.”*

- JEFF RINGEL

About

The seventh pillar of the R.E.S.I.L.I.E.N.C.E model is “Enlist Guardians”. The main goal of this pillar is to utilize volunteers who need to encourage and regulate resilience within vulnerable communities, houses of worship, and organizations that seek to help them. This can be done by assigning them specific roles and responsibilities. Such people can range from an usher directing people or someone making sure if anyone is injured and needs care. Some can even be community citizens as first responders. Whether their role is either internal or external, guardians must always be available to protect their communities from violent extremism.

According to analysis of the 31 conducted interviews, “Enlist Guardians” has the 3rd lowest count of 146 mentions, as shown in the graph below. The difference between this pillar and the 2nd pillar, “Engage Partners”, is that it focuses more on who is responsible for building resilience within vulnerable communities rather than how resilience can be built and who else should be involved.



*“You need to have an established
relationship with your local chief
of police, the FBI join terrorism
task force, the Department of
Homeland Security, personnel
security, (and) protective
security advisor.”*

- Jim Hartnett

The Importance of Enlisting Guardians

The main goal of enlisted guardians is to protect vulnerable communities and houses of worship from violent extremism. They are first responders trained on how to respond to specific threats, emergencies, and aftermaths. Thus, it is important for them to leverage their expertise to these communities. This may depend on what organization or agency the guardian may be working for, but the more knowledge and practices they can provide, the better the preparation. They need to establish themselves as trustworthy and reliable figures who can help in creating a more secure and resilient community. If something goes wrong, these guardians need to be the ones to come and help.

“That is why the community will get together. That is why law enforcement and the community can develop a very robust action in dealing with an attack and the aftermath.”

–Ali Soufan

Enlisted guardians also need to coordinate and support other faith-based communities. One important aspect of violent extremism is that it involves an organized attack against a specific demographic; an attack against one is an attack against all! To prepare ourselves against such an attack, we need to be just as well organized and cooperative with one another. The more bonds we form, the stronger our resilience. Enlisted guardians are the right people to help bring us together and stand up against targeted violence. After all, no one is alone.



Responsibilities of Internal Guardians

There are many enlisted guardians from various organizations and their methods of assistance might depend on whether they work internally or externally. Internal guardians are those within a community who are trained to provide strategic guidance of best practices for others, including houses of worship. This can involve police officers, law enforcers, cybersecurity experts, etc. in congregations. For example, police chaplains are appointed to represent a religion and have meetings with local police to share intelligence and build relationships within a congregation. Some retired police officers who visit congregations can share their intelligence with

congregation members to ensure that it is safe area. Paramedics and firefighters are quick to act whenever an emergency occurs and prioritize the lives of citizens. Their experiences with these emergencies can offer insight on how to take courses of action. Such volunteering citizens are deputized to be the “eyes and ears” of law enforcement.

“Institutions should consider hiring security guards to be a deterrent to potential threats and to act as the first responder if an emergency or threatening situation arises.”

- Paul Goldenberg

It is important for enlisted guardians to provide vulnerable communities with the best security practices, along with plans to handle potential threats and emergencies. For example, security guards within a congregation or institution can stand at entrances and patrol the area during service. If any suspicious activity is spotted, they will be quick to respond. As for cyber experts, they can integrate useful cyber plans for congregations that use technology for services. One example of a cyber plan involves using secondary communication methods when primary methods are being hacked. The fourth pillar of the R.E.S.I.L.I.E.N.C.E model has established the importance of integrating intelligence and plans, so guardians need to fulfill this pillar and provide better security for communities that need it.

While implementing best practices, enlisted guardians also need to develop strong bonds and connections with houses of worship to provide them the protection and security they need. It is important for local law enforcers and police officers to engage with public leaders, especially faith based leaders, on a regular basis. Both can share information about safety and security issues within their communities or houses of worship. They can also discuss about potential assessments, plans, and protocols to face these issues. Also, police officers go through community policing to become educated about the community they work for; this allows them to understand what issues are happening and how citizens face these issues. They are expected to empathize with citizens, reassuring them that they each have an equal voice and is represented for who they respect. Forming pre-crisis relationships is a step for enlisted guardians to make sure the people they are protecting feel safe. However, they must keep in mind that they are forming institutional relationships, not personal. This makes it much easier for community members to contact enlisted guardians without any personal hardships intervening.



External Guardians

External Guardians are those outside of a community who are directly hired to provide protection and security. Like internal guardians, they are first responders but are from private organizations and agencies that provide a sufficient amount of leverage resources and best practices plans. These organizations, which are either local, federal, or international, can be reached out by anyone who seeks for their assistance.

At a local level, law enforcement agencies actively work to make sure which laws can ensure the safety and rights of a citizen. However, they need adequate experience and knowledge, especially in religion. As mentioned before, local law enforcers need to regularly engage with public leaders to share information about safety and security issues happening within the community and implement plans to face them. They can also go to schools to educate them about the new threat paradigm and prevent the youth from following extremist ideology.

As for local first responders, the Emergency Medical Security (EMS) can provide many beneficial resources regarding health and safety. Their main priority is to treat any injured patient who has called 911, so providing them with assessments, plans, and protocols can give them a sense on how to respond to a specific incident. All of these methods requires a strong amount of trust between the guardians and vulnerable communities. Developing strong bonds is a crucial key for external guardians to provide better protection and security. However, these relationships must be kept professional, so that community members can easily contact them without personal hardships.

Although local guardians are easily accessible, federal and international guardians are just as reliable for best practices. The Government is willing to fund and provide resources for federal agencies and organizations that help vulnerable communities. One example of a federal agency is the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which provides thorough investigations for any crime reports. It operates virtual command centers so that anyone can send reports of violent threats or hate speech, which will be investigated. Another is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which seeks to protect the United States against threats with various security plans. It helps with funding in security and providing PSA programs. If anyone were to reach out to these federal agencies, enlisted guardians must fulfill their responsibilities by providing them services with the protection and security they need. This also applies for guardians from international agencies and organizations, who can help even further by creating a sense of unity against the common enemy.

“I have to say that the Government was very welcoming to the idea, very willing to help, and showed love, trust and confidence in the process we would initiate.”

—Jonathan Biermann
