

POLICE PERSPECTIVES

BUILDING TRUST IN  
A DIVERSE NATION

No.1

# How to Increase Cultural Understanding



**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

**VERA**  
INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

POLICE PERSPECTIVES

BUILDING TRUST IN A DIVERSE NATION | NO. 1

# How to Increase Cultural Understanding

Edited by Caitlin Gokey and Susan Shah



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# Letter from the Director of the COPS Office

Dear colleagues,

As law enforcement agencies work hard nationwide to improve trust with their communities, policing in a diverse community can still be very challenging. Recent incidents have highlighted community concerns, and conversations about public safety priorities are often strained.

Recognizing the vital importance of trust to community cooperation, public safety, and national security, the Vera Institute of Justice worked with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to research and write *Police Perspectives: Building Trust in a Diverse Nation*. A three-part series dedicated to providing practical, real-life strategies for building relationships of mutual trust between law enforcement agencies and diverse communities, it highlights strategies that are consistent with the report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, which used building community trust as its foundation.

It is noteworthy that this first publication in the series, *How to Increase Cultural Understanding*, begins by exploring the history of conflict between police and African Americans. In doing so, it enhances the understanding that is vital to all relationships of mutual respect and reflects one of community policing's main tenets, which is the need to solve problems by addressing underlying issues.

By including the real-life experiences and practical advice of racially diverse law enforcement professionals, the guide also provides implementable strategies that have been developed by members of the communities they are designed to engage. The reader will find a wide variety of field-tested practices for building trust, enriching dialogue, and reducing tension after contentious incidents.

I commend the Vera Institute of Justice for the effort and dedication they devoted to developing what is sure to become an important tool for agencies seeking to build productive relationships with all members of their communities.

And I thank the police officers and others who contributed to this guide. The lessons to be learned from their experiences can be of great value not only to law enforcement but also to social services, health, education, and other caring professional organizations—as well as to communities throughout the country.

We are at a pivotal time in American law enforcement, when relationships between minority populations and police can be transformed. It will take commitment, perseverance, and time, but it can be done. The future of law enforcement and all Americans depends on it, and this guide can be of great help as we work toward that goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and the last name "Davis" clearly distinguishable.

Ronald L. Davis  
Director  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

# Letter from the President of the Vera Institute of Justice

Dear colleagues,

The face of America is changing as our nation’s population grows more diverse by the day and racial and ethnic minority groups spread beyond traditional urban settings into the surrounding suburbs and small communities beyond. And while this diversity contributes to the rich tapestry of American culture, we have seen that tragedies can result when law enforcement agencies and diverse communities see one another as adversaries.

A police agency’s commitment to community policing—building relationships with community members to foster an environment of trust between officers and the people they serve—can help officers meaningfully engage with diverse communities. In many law enforcement agencies, however, there has been little guidance on how to operationalize community policing initiatives.

Negotiating the cultural, religious, and language barriers that can exist between communities and law enforcement officers can yield significant benefits. Through regular meetings with residents, community-informed crime prevention strategies and programs, local partnerships, and an honest assessment of departmental strengths and weaknesses, police can gain a greater understanding of a community’s public safety concerns. Not only does this approach allow police to tailor their services and enforcement efforts to meet local needs, but it also fosters a sense of shared responsibility for public safety in the community.

The Vera Institute of Justice has a long history of developing and encouraging innovative ways to strengthen the ties between police and the community. We are pleased to have produced this guidebook series with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and are especially proud to have worked hand in hand with some of our nation’s finest. Law enforcement response to our initial solicitation was incredible, and we are proud to have worked so closely with so many talented officers, justice experts, and high-ranking police leaders. Each author eagerly offered lessons and strategies for cultivating community trust borne of their own experiences—both successful and otherwise. Through the essays, tips, case studies, and one-on-one interviews contained in this guide, their words reflect on the past, provide guidance for the present, and offer hope for the future of police-community relations in an increasingly diverse America.



Nicholas Turner  
President  
Vera Institute of Justice

# Letter from the National President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

*“Policing is one of America’s most noble professions. The actions of any police officer, in an instant, can impact an individual for life and even a community for generations. Given this realization, every police officer must be centered on what is important. Service, justice, fundamental fairness—these are the foundational principles in which every police action must be grounded.”*

— Dr. Stephen R. Covey

Over the year 2015, there have been several instances where a life was lost during seemingly routine police encounters—encounters that called into question the character of policing. As a result of these events, a palpable divide was created between law enforcement and the communities that we serve. And for some who reside in our more diverse communities, this divide was arguably expanded. All of these encounters, whether they occurred in a large urban city or in a small suburban town, had one thing in common—they all caused our country and government officials to reexamine and rethink the way that police engage with our communities.

The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) is proud to have played a central role in our nation’s efforts to improve the level of respect between police and citizens, by serving as a key member of President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and by working closely with the United States Department of Justice and its Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. NOBLE has sought to be a part of the discourse bringing a fresh look to how police can professionally engage with the communities they serve and how communities can respectfully engage with the police that serve them.

This commitment continues with our contribution to this important, timely work by the Vera Institute of Justice. As the policing profession goes through a much needed “organizational introspection,” this guidebook series, *Police Perspectives: Building Trust in a Diverse Nation*, will provide industry professionals with a critical addition to the ever-expanding portfolio of promising practices they can referenced in their efforts to “get it right” when engaging with and building trust within our nation’s diverse communities.

I’ve worked in the law enforcement and public safety professions for more than 30 years, and have often had the opportunity to work with the leadership and research staff from the Vera Institute of Justice. It is no surprise to me that they had the foresight to develop and compile this important work before the events of 2015, events that many believe will serve as seminal moments in the policing profession.

As an organization that prides itself on being the “Conscience of Law Enforcement,” NOBLE would like to acknowledge the men and women of law enforcement who contributed to the development of this guidebook series, many of whom are members of our organization. Their tireless efforts, combined with the wisdom and foresight of the Vera Institute of Justice, have created a one-of-a-kind training vehicle that provides promise for the hope of police officials reconnecting with and establishing strong ties within our nation’s many diverse communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory A. Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'G' and 'T'.

Gregory A. Thomas  
National President  
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

# Letter from the Founder of the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association

Dear colleagues,

The New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association is honored to have contributed to the Vera Institute's series of guides focused on building trust with diverse communities. The association's participation was robust, with several members contributing to the effort, including Laila Cristobal, sergeant, Passaic Police Department; Dennis Lam, retired lieutenant, Madison Police Department; Joseph Luistro, officer, Edison Police Department; Robert May, retired detective, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department; Samantha Oh, investigator, Bergen County Sheriff's Office; and T.J. Patel, detective, Piscataway Police Department.

The publication of these guides is timely and necessary, as the events of 2014 and 2015 necessitate a fresh look at the relationship between the law enforcement community and the public. These publications do just that. The association wishes to acknowledge the Vera Institute's efforts to seek out such a wide range of law enforcement professionals for this publication, including professional law enforcement personnel who happen to be of Asian-American background.

Sincerely,

Robert May  
President Emeritus and Founder  
New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association

# Acknowledgments

The editors would like to thank the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services for providing us with the opportunity to document current promising and field-tested practices for working with diverse communities. In particular, we would like to thank our Program Manager, Toni Morgan-Wheeler, for her consistent support throughout this project. We hope that this resource, developed for police, by police, will serve as a practical, operational tool for officers seeking to improve relations with the communities they serve.

Throughout the course of this project, a number of individuals contributed to crafting this guidebook series. We would like to thank the following people: Chris Munzing, Patricia Connelly, Mary Crowley, and Michael Mehler for their communications support; Jasmine Eshkar for her help identifying project partners and coordinating outreach; Jim Isenberg and Charlane Brown-Wyands for their guidance and advisement; the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Relations Service, the National Latino Peace Officers Association (NLPOA), the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA), and the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association (NJAALEOA) for helping us identify potential contributors; retired Detective Robert May of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department for his help organizing a focus group with NJAALEO members; and the International Association for Chiefs of Police (IACP) for hosting two focus groups with sergeants and executives on building trust with communities of color.

We wish to acknowledge the following experts and practitioners who actively participated in the peer review of the guidebook series:

- Charlane Brown-Wyands – Associate Chairman, Criminal Justice, Berkeley College; Retired Deputy Inspector, New York City Police Department
- Maurice Classen – Program Officer, MacArthur Foundation
- Dwayne Crawford – Executive Director, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- Alison Edwards – Deputy Director, Orange County Human Relations
- Jim Isenberg – Executive Director, North American Family Institute – New York
- Ray Kianes – Senior Police Officer, Austin (Texas) Police Department
- Anne Kringen – Assistant Professor of Criminology, University of New Haven
- Darrell Lowe – Lieutenant, Santa Monica (California) Police Department
- Robert May – President Emeritus and Founder, New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association
- Pradine Saint-Fort – Agency Attorney, New York City Police Department

Finally, we thank all of the police officials and other experts who contributed articles to this guidebook series. The lessons learned and best practices they share in this series are incredibly valuable, and our hope is that officers throughout the country can use this content to strengthen their work in connecting with diverse communities and communities of color. We are humbled by their dedication and passion for serving all members of their communities.

# Introduction

As first responders, law enforcement officers must be able to fairly and effectively engage with all communities in their jurisdiction. According to the 2010 Census, 37 percent of the U.S. population reported their race and ethnicity as something other than “non-Hispanic White alone.”<sup>1</sup> This group, commonly referred to as *people of color*, increased by almost 30 percent between 2000 and 2010.<sup>2</sup> In about one-tenth of all counties in the United States, people of color constitute 50 percent or more of the total population. The Census Bureau estimates that the population of people of color will continue to grow and by 2060 will be nearly 60 percent of the country. Therefore, in most areas across the United States, ensuring public safety for all requires that officers cultivate trust and collaboration with communities that may have different cultures and languages. Law enforcement officers must be equipped to use any encounter with the community as an opportunity to build trust and cooperation.

Since 2014, there has been a national focus on how police respond to contentious encounters, how and when they use force, and the disparate impact of policing on people of color. As part of the nation’s interest in fair and effective policing, the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing developed a national blueprint for improved community policing for cities and towns seeking to build trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.<sup>3</sup>

There is a need to bridge the gap between the policy recommendations and practices on the ground. Likewise, there is a need for informing law enforcement practice in a way that focuses not only on what law enforcement is doing wrong but also on what it is doing right. Police officers typically have a spectrum of encounters with people of color that range from extremely positive to highly contentious, and there is a need for a policing guide that accounts for this reality and fosters progress. There is an equivalent need to recognize that some members of policing agencies identify as individuals of color, have deep connections with communities of color in their jurisdiction, or both. These police personnel can serve as in-house resources who might understand the unique public safety needs and concerns of various communities.

This three-part series seeks to fill the knowledge and practice gap in effectively policing diverse communities by highlighting practical, field-informed approaches for building trust with various segments of our multiracial, multiethnic population. The majority of the contributions in this series are from law enforcement officers of color who, because of their personal and professional experiences, often have an especially nuanced and intimate understanding of the nature of community mistrust among communities of color, as well as what is needed to overcome it. Although the practices and strategies featured in this series may focus on building relationships between police agencies and specific communities, the majority of these insights are dynamic enough to be applied with multiple racial and ethnic groups.

The descriptions of programs and practices, together with multiple tips detailed in this guidebook series, are intended to be a resource for officers of all levels—from the patrol officer interacting with a specific racial or ethnic community to the police chief seeking to transform his or her agency into one that embodies community policing and facilitates community trust building at all levels.

This *Police Perspectives* series is divided into three companion guides, each of which covers multiple topics, agency practices, and recommendations for improving community trust in law enforcement on many fronts. Each guide also includes biographies for all contributing authors, as well as a user guide intended to help police officers of all ranks identify the articles that may be most relevant to their work. The three guides cover

- how to increase cultural understanding;
- how to serve diverse communities;
- how to support trust building in your agency.

This first guide in the series, *How to Increase Cultural Understanding*, recognizes that police officers may be unfamiliar with some of the communities they are responsible for keeping safe. Residents of these communities may have public safety needs and challenges that are difficult for police to understand. In order for officers to acquire the knowledge necessary to effectively perform their duties and build trust among community members, it is essential that they make an effort to understand the community's history, diversity, and concerns. This guide provides a brief historical perspective of policing, tips on community-informed policing and maximizing collaboration with communities of color, strategies for how best to build trust during contentious incidents, and information on trauma and community-informed policing strategies.

## Defining terms

This series uses the term “people of color” to refer to any and all peoples of African, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, Asian, or Pacific Island descent, and its intent is to be inclusive. The terms “communities of color” and “diverse communities” are used interchangeably, depending upon the preference of the individual contributor(s). Finally, this series also addresses effective policing practices with other groups that, like communities of color, have historically had their public safety and justice needs ignored or poorly served, such as youth, immigrants, and transgender people.

## Editorial methodology

Vera identified potential authors for this guide by issuing a solicitation through its law enforcement networks and contacts, as well as to the NLPOA, NOBLE, the HAPCOA, and the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service. Additional authors were referred to Vera by representatives of these entities.

Vera asked interested respondents to share their topic ideas for an article on building trust with communities of color and in limited instances directly approached people to write articles on particular subjects. Vera also invited respondents to submit excerpts of previously published work. Vera then grouped accepted articles into three topic categories (i.e., how to increase cultural understanding, how to serve diverse communities, and how to support trust building in your agency).

Vera edited each submitted article collaboratively with the author, who then responded to editors' feedback and signed off on the final version of his or her article. When multiple authors covered similar topics, Vera's editors paraphrased and combined their articles into a single piece. Each contributor to a combined article reviewed and approved the content and received credit.

# Acknowledging Our History

*Contributions by Roy Alston, Lieutenant, Dallas (Texas) Police Department; Lee P. Brown, PhD; Sophie Charles, PhD; Harold Love; Michael J. Nila; Barry Schwartz; Elsie L. Scott, PhD; and Kenneth Sharpe*

Understanding the history of policing—as well as the social, political, and economic factors that shape police institutions—can serve to benefit law enforcement in their efforts to build trust with communities of color. In this chapter, authors share a historical perspective on slave patrols and the urban uprisings of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the impact of these events on modern-day policing.

## The history of slave patrols

Racially punitive policing practices date back to the 17th century and the creation of slave patrols throughout much of the American South. Slave patrols were designed to control slave populations, catch slaves and return them to White slave owners, and preserve the safety of White slave owners in the South, particularly in regions where slaves outnumbered the White population. In this era, all White people had a civic duty to act as overseers, prevent slave escapes or transgressions, and intervene in the day-to-day movement of any African or free Black person. White people who did not comply with this social arrangement were subjected to fines and socially ostracized. Slave patrols and night watches were some of the earliest forms of state-sanctioned policing in the United States, making them significant to the assessment and understanding of modern-day policing in African-American and other communities of color.<sup>4</sup>

## The history of urban uprisings and police-community engagement in the 1960s

While the conflict between law enforcement and communities of color dates back centuries, the civil rights era stands out as one of the most contentious times in the history of the Black community's relationship with the police. During the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, police in the South received national attention for using their resources—human and otherwise—to support segregation and attack demonstrators and activists. During the mid- to late 1960s, violent uprisings took place in a number of northern and western cities, beginning with the Los Angeles riots in 1965. To investigate these nationwide uprisings and provide recommendations for improving relations between communities and police, President Lyndon B. Johnson established the 11-member National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (known as the Kerner Commission) in 1967. The Kerner Commission issued a report that unequivocally stated that “almost invariably the incident that ignites disorder arises from police action.”<sup>5</sup>

The commission recommended—among other things—that police adopt and enforce policies designed to do the following:

- Stop police misconduct
- Recruit and promote Black police officers
- Establish fair and effective grievance-redress mechanisms
- Develop programs to garner support for the police in “ghetto” areas
- Develop community service officer programs to attract inner-city youth to police work

Local officials reviewed, discussed, and implemented the commission’s recommendations and other measures in various forms and with various results. Some of the most impactful measures are reviewed here.

### *Police-community relations units*

In the 1960s, few police departments had systems in place to promote dialogue between police officers and citizens. The average African-American resident had only limited—and often negative—interaction with the police. The civil rights uprisings drove home the need for connections between law enforcement and the Black community. Accordingly, many police departments rushed to set up police-community relations (PCR) units. These units were often staffed with officers who came from inner cities and left other officers free to conduct themselves as they had previously. Citizens criticized the units for being public relations ploys designed to placate federal officials and community leaders. These citizens noted that PCR units did not address the fundamental problem of community disengagement, as only a few officers participated in these community engagement efforts. PCR units, however, set the stage for community policing, which started to gain traction as a valuable policing tool by the early 1990s.

## **Police Perspective: Respecting the Differences that Define Us**

*Harold Love, Retired Captain, Michigan Department of State Police*

As police officers, we are vested with an awesome amount of power and authority that must be used responsibly. In order to truly serve the public—while respecting and protecting its constitutional rights—we must proactively take steps to understand and respect various cultures within the communities we serve.

As an African-American man growing up in a large Midwestern city, I had many contacts with the local police, very few of which were positive. During my high school years in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I learned that the police were not our friends and that I should avoid contact with them on the streets, regardless of the fact that I was not doing anything wrong. I frequently witnessed older boys in the neighborhood being “roughed up” or taken away by police officers for standing on street corners, sometimes mere feet from their own front doors.

I saw that my actions prior to an initial contact with an officer sometimes had no bearing on how the officer would treat me. When I was 16, I had just driven away from the local playground with a friend after playing football when we were stopped by two young African-American police officers. Nervous and wanting to be respectful and compliant, I placed my hands on the steering wheel as the officers approached. One officer approached my window, used profanity, and ordered us out of the vehicle. They searched my vehicle for about 10 minutes before giving us back our licenses and driving away. When we returned to my vehicle, we discovered that its contents were strewn about and, in some cases, damaged. My perception of police officers was extremely negative for years after that incident.

As I grew into adulthood, however, I began to experience more positive interactions with police officers, both African-American and not. I remember one instance when my brother had parked his vehicle on the street facing the wrong way during a neighborhood game of horseshoes. Two local officers stopped and inquired about the owner of the vehicle. After speaking with my brother and confirming that it was his car and that he would move it, they stayed to play us in a game of horseshoes. After we won the game and my brother moved his car, they shook our hands and left the area laughing. I learned that the negative experiences I had with police officers in the past were with unprofessional individuals who happened to be police officers and that not all officers were bad. I also learned that officers can sometimes use their discretion in how they respond to nonemergency situations and that they can choose to handle a situation with positive interaction and respect.

This change in my perception of the police, along with the influence of certain police officers, led me to join the Michigan State Police in 1988. I wanted to improve the relationship between law enforcement and the community and positively change the perceptions of others who might have had negative experiences with police officers in the past. I vowed to always make a conscious effort to treat all persons with dignity and respect, even when I had to arrest or use physical force on them.

In my early years as a trooper, I worked in rural communities and found that developing professional relationships with members of various community organizations—attending their events and responding to requests for special appearances and speaking engagements—fosters a level of mutual trust and understanding that is extremely valuable during critical incidents, civil disturbances, and criminal investigations. Police officers are better equipped to resolve issues if relationships have already been established with community leaders and representatives.

Many officers, commanders, and agency heads contend that we represent the law and that the public can either obey it or face the consequences. However, I can tell you from my own experiences as a young man and a law enforcement official that this approach is short-sighted. Officers are called upon to handle many issues that cannot be resolved simply by enforcing laws and making arrests. By regularly and proactively connecting with residents and community stakeholders, police can foster a spirit of cooperation with the public that leads to healthier families, safer streets, and stronger communities.

### *Active diversification of police agencies*

The mistrust between Black residents and police officers in the 1960s was amplified by the few people of color who were employed as police officers, as well as the mistreatment Black police officers experienced in White-majority departments. In some jurisdictions, legal and policy barriers prevented or restricted the hiring of Black police officers, while in others, diversifying the police force was not considered a priority.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the legal system was used successfully to change the makeup of urban law enforcement agencies. The success of this strategy was supported by affirmative action policies adopted at the federal and local levels of government. The increase in Black and Latino officers and supervisors contributed to the implementation of community policing and improved communication with some communities. Yet recruiting officers of color remains a major challenge for many departments. Moreover, to diversify the executive ranks, police agencies need to focus on strategies to retain and promote officers currently employed. More information about the benefits of diversity in department leadership can be found in no. 3 in this series, *How to Support Trust Building in Your Agency*.

### *Monitoring police use of force*

Community mistrust of police has been aggravated by the failure to address unjustified and perceived unjustified police use of force, especially lethal force. Some of the high-profile police brutality cases in our past resulted in uprisings, demonstrations and other forms of protest. From the smaller cities of Burlington, North Carolina (1969), and Omaha, Nebraska (1969), to larger cities such as Miami (1982), police shootings and other officer-related deaths have resulted in uprisings among community members who felt that the force used was unjustified or excessive.

By now, most cities have adopted defense-of-life policies that state that police officers can only use their weapons to protect life. Some police leaders adopted these policies after community outcry. Other jurisdictions were compelled to change their policies after the Supreme Court's ruling in *Tennessee v. Garner* (1985) restricted the use of deadly force to situations where the suspect was an immediate threat to the officer or others or there was probable cause that the suspect had inflicted serious physical harm.<sup>6</sup>

Law enforcement agencies have adopted other policies to address this problem such as policies against chokeholds, cultural awareness training, and the authorization of less-than-lethal devices such as stun guns.

### *Formalized civilian reviews of police*

The handling of police misconduct complaints filed by citizens has been a primary concern of citizens and a source of tension with police agencies. Citizen review boards became a popular recommendation in the 1960s as citizen groups demanded more police accountability. Police executives did not support them, and police officers and police unions vigorously fought their implementation. Prior to the 1960s, only two major cities had civilian review boards: Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. One of the biggest fights over civilian review played out in New York City after the mayor implemented a civilian review board in 1966. The Police Benevolent Association (PBA) launched a successful \$500,000 referendum campaign to abolish the board, using racial images to incite White support for the campaign.

The civilian review boards that survived during the 1960s and 1970s were largely ineffective, as they suffered from inadequate budgets, lack of subpoena power, lack of cooperation from police departments, and weak leadership. Today, some form of civilian review exists in most large cities, varying in makeup, power, budget, support from the police department, and effectiveness.

## Spotlight On: Discipline as a Trust-Building Tool

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department created the Education-Based Discipline (EBD) pilot program in 2009 to change the behavior of officers through education and mediation rather than punishment. Since then, police departments throughout the country have successfully implemented EBD programs. In these programs, a professional mediator handles citizen complaints and discipline, meeting with the officer and citizen in a neutral place to discuss the circumstance of the complaint and reach an understanding.

In Kansas City, Missouri, officers can choose to be peer reviewed instead of facing formal disciplinary hearings. The peer review panel suggests behavioral changes that could minimize further complaints. In one case, the panel conducted a role-playing session showing that the officer intimidated people by violating their personal space. He followed their suggestions to move back a few feet and had no further difficulties with citizen interactions.

In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Police Department, the disciplinary procedures explicitly take into consideration the experience and the intention of the officer subject to discipline. Their guidelines state: "If an employee attempts to devise an innovative, nontraditional solution for a persistent crime or service problem and unintentionally runs afoul of minor procedures, the desire to encourage creativity in our efforts at producing public safety will carry significant weight in dealing with any discipline that might result."\*

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\* Darrel W. Stephens, "Police Discipline: A Case for Change," in *New Perspectives in Policing* (Boston: Harvard Kennedy School, 2011), 16, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/234052.pdf>.

## Police reforms in the 1970s and 1980s

In the wake of the civil unrest of the 1960s, police agencies were eager to find new ways to build trust with communities—particularly disadvantaged and African-American communities—and to improve law enforcement's ability to respond to community concerns.<sup>7</sup> Some of these new community-centered policing philosophies, many of which focused on embedding police officers into communities and increasing police-community contacts unrelated to complaints, are still prevalent today.

### *Team policing*

In 1965, President Johnson convened the 19-member Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice and tasked it with studying the American criminal justice system and providing recommendations for reform.<sup>8</sup> One of the commission's recommendations was team policing, which sought to restructure police departments, improve police-community relations, enhance police officer morale, and facilitate change in the police organization.

In team policing, police operations were divided by geographic boundaries, or community beats. A team of officers was assigned to a particular neighborhood and responsible for all police services in that area. Officers were to be generalists, trained to respond to all problems arising in their assigned areas. Team policing, however, ultimately lacked support from mid-level and senior police executives who felt they did not have control of the day-to-day actions and decisions of their beat officers. This lack of organizational buy-in contributed to the ultimate dissolution of team policing towards the end of the 1970s.

### *Foot patrols*

Prior to the advent of the automobile, police patrolled primarily on foot. Once officers were assigned motor vehicles for their patrol duties, police-community relations experienced a fundamental change. Officers were now primarily responding to calls to service and were no longer easily accessible by the community, making it more difficult to develop relationships with the communities they served. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, as law enforcement agencies began transitioning towards a community-centered approach to policing, foot patrols reemerged as a more common policing tactic, and many communities (such as Newark, New Jersey; Boston; and Flint, Michigan) even demanded it. Public perception surveys conducted in Newark by the Police Foundation, a policing research organization, found that having officers on foot patrol increased levels of community satisfaction with police service, reduced perceptions of crime problems, and increased perceptions of neighborhood safety.<sup>9</sup>

Although foot patrols were not in themselves found to decrease the incidence of crime, decreased fear of crime was reported throughout the United States.<sup>10</sup> Policing experts began to argue that public perception of safety was in fact the result of the police officers maintaining a "surface" order in neighborhoods.<sup>11</sup> Foot patrol officers provided a visible law enforcement presence; although foot patrols themselves did not reduce crime, residents in these neighborhoods felt more secure and were more likely to enforce the neighborhood's rules.<sup>12</sup>

## Responding to increases in crime and violence in the 1980s and 1990s

During the 1970s and 1980s, rates of crime and violence were high throughout the US. In response, law enforcement agencies developed a host of new policing tactics. In many ways, law enforcement was far better equipped than ever before to respond to community concerns because of advancements in technology and electronic data collection, increased levels of education and professionalism among police personnel, and, most importantly, a recognition of the value of community engagement.

### *Broken windows policing*

In the 1980s, a new theory known as “broken windows” policing came to prominence. Originally posited by political scientist James Wilson and criminologist George Kelling, broken windows policing suggests that, if left unchecked, minor crime and disorder—vandalism, public drunkenness, jumping subway turnstiles—will result in major crime and neighborhood decline.<sup>13</sup> In broken windows policing, law enforcement is tasked with policing neighborhoods with an eye towards preventing and responding to minor crimes on the theory that social disorder, even when not violent or criminal, leads to crime. Similar to the beliefs behind the foot patrols of the 1970s, broken windows proponents suggest that addressing disorderly conditions makes citizens ultimately feel safer in their communities. Wilson and Kelling posited that in communities where social and physical disorder become commonplace, law-abiding citizens will alter their behavior to prevent themselves from being victimized, thus creating more tense and insecure environments and leading to a breakdown of control that makes way for more serious crimes to occur.<sup>14</sup>

While proponents of broken windows policing often credit this tactic with major crime reductions experienced in the 1990s, policing scholars and criminologists have argued that this focus on low-level, “quality of life” offenses has been overbearing and unfairly targets people in low-income, African-American, and Latino communities.<sup>15</sup> Further, scholars argue that aggressive policing of such low-level offenses essentially criminalizes the poor and homeless.<sup>16</sup> These criticisms have led many to suggest that broken windows policing has inherent racial and ethnic biases and has contributed to strained police-community relations, particularly with African-American and Latino communities.

### *Stop, question, and frisk*

The broken windows theory served as a catalyst for various shifts in criminal justice procedures, including implementation of the controversial “stop, question, and frisk” (SQF) tactic used widely by the New York City Police Department (NYPD). SQF operates in the same sphere as broken windows policing by theorizing that minor crimes, if left unaddressed, will escalate into more serious crimes. SQF is a tactic whereby a police officer may stop, detain, and potentially search a pedestrian if that officer has a “reasonable suspicion” that a crime has occurred or may occur. Although SQF has been used in some form by NYPD since the early 1970s, this tactic gained greater traction in the 1990s with the implementation of Compstat (a well-known term for complaint statistics). Compstat is a management tool for making enforcement decisions and resource allocations and is employed widely throughout the

United States and abroad. Police agencies use crime data collected through Compstat to assist them in making officer deployment decisions, ultimately assigning more officers to neighborhoods with greater incidence of crime.

Advocates have suggested that Compstat has encouraged officers in high-crime neighborhoods to increase their use of SQF so as to meet unofficial quotas for citations and arrests.<sup>17</sup> Officers who face these unofficial quotas may end up focusing on the quantity, rather than the quality, of stops, leading to an overly aggressive approach to policing and the potential for strained community relations. A study of SQF practices in New York City found that from 2002 to 2015, the vast majority of SQF stops were of young men of color and that these stops rarely resulted in criminal charges.<sup>18</sup>

### *The national focus on community-oriented policing*

In the early 1990s, around the same time that the costs and benefits of broken windows policing were being discussed and debated by law enforcement professionals, police leaders began to consider alternative ways to use police resources to better serve their communities. The idea of community policing, which had evolved over three decades and built on the successes and lessons learned from initiatives such as team policing and foot patrols, began to emerge as a practical approach to strengthening police-community relations.

Community policing was a departure from the traditional reactive nature of policing and is characterized as a partnership between the police and community stakeholders to prevent crime, identify and arrest offenders, solve neighborhood problems, and improve the quality of life in the community. Instead of spending the majority of their time in patrol cars, waiting to be dispatched, officers were assigned to permanent beats—or foot patrols, as discussed earlier—and expected to engage with residents of these neighborhoods and become familiar with community concerns.<sup>19</sup> For more on community policing, please see “Integrating Community Policing” in no. 3 in this series, *How to Support Trust Building in Your Agency*.

In 1994, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services was created to further institutionalize community policing nationwide and provide resources to departments to enable them to hire and maintain community policing officers.<sup>20</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Law enforcement agencies must understand the history of policing in the United States, including the difficult truths about slave patrols, as well as the various iterations of the community policing model that have preceded modern day approaches to policing. Reflecting back on the evolution of law enforcement in the United States, significant progress has been made in many jurisdictions in strengthening police-community relations and moving law enforcement closer to a true community-centered policing model, but that progress has all too often not been sustained. Police leaders must recognize racial inequities that arise (or have arisen) in the application of specific law enforcement tactics and seek long-term solutions to building and sustaining community trust.

## Tips from the Field: Applying the Lessons of History

*Sophine Charles, PhD, John Jay College of Criminal Justice*

In their contact with African-American communities, modern-day police sometimes replicate the brutal tactics employed by earlier police forces, slave patrollers, and White citizens to control the slave population. Police executives play a critical role in determining how police officers execute their duties and are ultimately responsible for setting a tone of transformation in their departments. Police chiefs must recognize how injurious current policing tactics are to African-American and other communities, understand the impact of slave patrols on today's policing methodologies, and allow history to serve as a guide to end racially punitive police practices. Here are six key management considerations for law enforcement leaders that build up, rather than break down, police-community relations, thus ensuring that the present does not repeat the mistakes of the past:

1. **Evaluate racial performance outcomes.** Is your department able to diagnose whether it is engaged in biased police practices? Police administrators need to assess internal agency practices and performance outcomes to ascertain whether their departments are free of discriminatory practices, racial profiling, and policing tactics that disparately impact African-American and other minority populations.
2. **Assess deployment tactics.** Is there racial and ethnic equity in your department's deployment practices? Police deployment practices must be carefully examined to determine the best, most efficient, and most equitable use of an agency's human resources. While areas with high levels of crime may be used as a justification to flood predominantly Black and Latino communities with a heavy patrol presence, low crime statistics should never suffice as a reason to reduce patrol assignments or withdraw officers from predominantly White neighborhoods. Apart from the racial or ethnic composition of a district, any saturation of police in an area is likely to result in an increase in citizen contact, extra summonses, more arrests, and further quality-of-life enforcements. When there is racial equity in enforcement practices, an officer's performance (summons and arrest activities) is likely to be evenly applied across all communities.
3. **Strategically assign officers.** Does your department use an integrated approach to assign experienced and inexperienced officers to areas with varying levels of crime? The assignment of young and inexperienced officers to areas with higher levels of crime must always be accompanied by proper supervision, experienced peer coaches, and a full integration of community service mandates as indicators to fully evaluate and measure officers' performance. Without proper supervision, the practice of assigning new recruits to "high impact" crime areas may increase the number of negative, and fatal, police encounters.

4. **Communicate following police shootings.** What script is used to explain the shooting of a Black person when officers' actions were within legal guidelines? In the wake of numerous reports of police fatally shooting Black men, it is common for police chiefs to describe such shootings as "justified." The phrase "justifiable shooting," while a legal term to explain police action, is often viewed as insensitive, careless, and overused. It should never be articulated in the media because it minimizes the life of the deceased.
5. **Collaborate to address community concerns.** Does your department advocate for funding, after-school programs, educational resources, and recreational activities to engage youth in the district? It is no longer considered a best practice for police agencies to use punitive enforcement tactics as the primary strategy to address poverty, youth unemployment, deficits in after-school programs, and youth violence. Departments need a more integrated problem-solving approach that incorporates police-sponsored advocacy efforts to address these community issues.
6. **Include the historical perspective in all police trainings.** Does your department provide officers with training on the history of policing and police-community relations in your jurisdiction? Professional development and in-service training for all law enforcement personnel must highlight the precinct-specific history of police-community relations and conditions that negatively impacted police relations with communities of color. Knowledge of precinct and command history must be a mandatory new officer orientation policy, as this history may impact police-community relations in distinct or unexpected ways. Historical relations between law enforcement and the communities they serve have a direct impact on how, and if, the community is able to trust police and collaborate with them.

*The phrase "justifiable shooting," while a legal term to explain police action, is often viewed as insensitive, careless, and overused. It should never be articulated in the media because it minimizes the life of the deceased.*

— Dr. Sophie Charles

## **Police Perspective: Socialized Mistrust within Minority Communities**

*Roy Alston, PhD, Lieutenant, Dallas (Texas) Police Department*

In many communities, there is an historical mistrust between police and communities of color. In these situations, officers are constantly met with resistance, distrust, dishonesty, and even hostility because the individuals they are interacting with immediately view them as the enemy rather than as allies.

This is socialized mistrust.

Socialized mistrust does not always stem from the actions of current law enforcement personnel, but rather grows from the norms and beliefs developed by an individual or a community over time. With every negative encounter, every misconception, every distorted news story, the relationship between officer and citizen continues to deteriorate. Socialized mistrust makes it infinitely more difficult for law enforcement personnel to effectively serve and protect these communities.

For law enforcement agencies to be effective in combating socialized mistrust, they must first recognize that these barriers exist and then commit to repairing relations between the community and the agency. Many law enforcement agencies throughout the country recognize this as a priority and are developing programs designed to break down barriers between officers and communities.

The programs and their outcomes vary greatly, but improved communication between individual agencies and minority communities is a common goal shared across jurisdictions. The question now is how to take this need for increased effective communication and leverage it to reduce or eliminate the reality of social mistrust within minority communities.

Unfortunately, there is no single answer for this question because no two departments are facing the exact same issues. The seeds of social mistrust vary from community to community and hinge on the unique history of each department's interactions with the citizens it serves. There are, however, several proven strategies that can be tailored to meet the individual needs of a specific community. These strategies include the following:

- **Critical thinking training.** The reality of law enforcement is that no two situations are exactly alike. Therefore, it is important to train all officers on critical thinking skills and the importance of using reasonable alternatives to arrest when responding to police calls. The public demands that officers be able to think and respond to issues productively, based on the situation at hand, rather than resorting to a "by the book" approach to every case.

- **Tactical reviews.** Law enforcement agencies must engage in a critical review of all police tactics and of the police supervisors who deploy them. Each individual agency must evaluate whether or not the tactics they currently deploy on critical incidents are effective and transparent or work against their efforts to maintain community trust. This includes calculating how often such tactics result in the use of deadly force. An effective tactic allows a situation to be neutralized without resulting in loss of life.
- **Media relations training.** All officers who have contact with the media must be trained on how to effectively respond to community concerns. This means knowing the current issues facing specific minority communities and how each new media story will relate back to those issues. For example, officers must recognize that simply stating or repeating departmental policy in the aftermath of a police shooting is not enough; in fact, this does more to feed social mistrust than it does to eliminate it.
- **Examining the role of technology and social media.** Although law enforcement has always been scrutinized by the public, advances in audio and video technology have made it possible for community members to accurately document every word and action a police officer takes when engaging with community members and then spread that information through social media channels. The popularity of social media allows information, whether accurate or inaccurate, to be transmitted in real time to millions of people throughout the country. When a news story airs or is published that distorts the truth or uses false information when reporting on a police incident, the trust of the community is fractured. Law enforcement agencies must act quickly if they want to ensure an accurate representation of the facts is presented to the public from the outset. Police officers must recognize the power of technology and social media and use it as an opportunity to connect with the community, be transparent, and highlight appropriate police behavior.

Policies and procedures related to these four areas must be designed in a way that fits the capacities of the individual department. The overarching goal should be to increase instances of positive encounters between law enforcement and minority communities. With every positive encounter, positive relationships between police and community are fostered to repair historical socialized mistrust.

# Partnerships: Maximizing Collaborations with Communities of Color

*Contributions by Darlene J. Conley, PhD; Shaunita Grase; Leonard Hamm; John Hayes, Captain, Seattle (Washington) Police Department; Daniel White Hodge, PhD; and Christopher W. Ortiz, PhD, Deputy Chief, Glen Cove (New York) Police Department*

Developing police-community partnerships is essential to reducing crime and increasing public safety. Community groups and community leaders have their finger on the pulse of a community and can often serve as ambassadors to law enforcement agencies working to connect with the communities they serve. Although these kinds of partnerships may be time intensive and require commitment and nurturing from all stakeholders, the investment can pay dividends for years to come.

This chapter focuses on two types of partnerships that can complement collaborations with schools and neighborhood watch groups: working with faith-based organizations (FBO) and working with social service providers.

## **Tips from the Field: How to Build Partnerships with FBOs**

*Daniel White Hodge, PhD, North Park University*

Officers should consider the following four tips when working to build relationships with faith-based organizations.

1. Do your homework to learn about which FBOs are actively involved in community-building efforts.
2. Learn about youth programs offered by community FBOs and determine if there is a potential role for a law enforcement partner.
3. Set up an initial meeting with the FBO to hear about their programs, particularly their successes and challenges. See how you might be able to assist them in overcoming any challenges.
4. Discuss and set up parameters on how the partnership will function to ensure all stakeholders share the same goals of the partnership.

## Working with faith-based organizations

In communities around the country, FBOs work with law enforcement agencies to improve community safety. FBOs are typically not-for-profit, community-based, grassroots organizations affiliated or identified with one or more particular religions or faiths. Some FBOs are tethered to a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque, and many have unique focus areas, including sports, art, community outreach, organizing or activism, youth advocacy, after-school programs, tutoring, gang intervention, and self-help. These organizations often run on very small budgets and depend on people who are committed to improving their community.

FBOs are often easily accessible, well connected in the community, and able to help officers connect with diverse communities and gain the trust and confidence of the people they serve.

### *The benefits*

Partnering with FBOs can help law enforcement agencies prevent crime and deescalate tense situations by providing officers with valuable insight into community needs and issues, helping them understand the community's unique cultural and religious characteristics, building relationships with local leaders, and working jointly with organizations and people dedicated to protecting the community and its most valuable members. By partnering with FBOs, police may be able to

- gain insight into the needs of a particular community;
- have a community-based ally with whom police can work to prevent crime or deescalate tense situations within the community;
- gain access to and build trust with vulnerable groups in the community;
- better understand the culture and inner workings of the community they serve.

### **Spotlight On: Partnering with Faith Leaders in Northwest Pasadena**

In response to several gang-related shootings in late 2004, which led to increased violence and tension throughout the community, the police chief of Pasadena, California, held a community meeting during which he said that his officers would be taking a more aggressive stance against gangs in the community. This message caused tensions to rise in the community, and police-community trust to break down.

A local FBO alliance intervened, met with the police chief, and offered their assistance. The police chief took a risk, knowing that many members of the community and the media wanted a “get tough on gangs” response, and allowed the faith alliance to work with police officers. Within four months of the creation of this police-FBO partnership, violence in the community was significantly reduced.

As a result, the city decided to create a dedicated unit for community outreach and gang prevention, which would work closely with the faith community. Officers regularly approach faith leaders to address youth problems and look for alternatives to arresting the youth. When fights and scuffles arose between youth, community members were able to work with officers to curb situations that might have turned violent. When community members had concerns about arrests or racial profiling, community meetings were organized with this unit in an effort to maintain open dialogue and transparency. This partnership helped create a sense of trust between the community and the police and worked to strengthen community safety, an investment that continues to pay dividends to the Northwest Pasadena community today.

### **Collaborating with social service providers**

Today’s police officers are responsible for more than just responding to crime. They are increasingly tasked with responding to a variety of social problems—including homelessness, mental illness, and drug use—that fall outside the scope of their sworn duties. As a result, officers who lack the necessary training and skills to respond to these issues may find themselves in situations in which they are unequipped to provide necessary services.

By cultivating strong partnerships with social service providers, law enforcement agencies can employ a more holistic approach to crime response and prevention that better serves communities in need. Social service providers are governmental, nongovernmental, community-based, or grassroots organizations that provide benefits and public services—such as education, health care, housing, employment assistance, victim services, or food subsidies—that improve human welfare.

#### *The benefits*

Law enforcement agencies and social service providers often have a shared mission: to serve vulnerable populations and make communities safer. Partnering with social service providers helps clarify what the role of the police officer should be and allows these complex social problems to be addressed by trained individuals and organizations.

By partnering with social service providers, police may be able to

- better understand the intricacies of the communities in which they work;
- identify critical community resources for individuals in need;
- build legitimacy with vulnerable populations, who may be unwilling or unable to approach police for assistance;
- develop a referral network consisting of community safety stakeholders.

## Conclusion

By developing partnerships with community stakeholders, police are better equipped to respond to a myriad of social issues and to use their resources to respond to issues that are clearly police matters. Regardless of how connected a police officer or police agency may feel to the community they serve, community groups and social service providers offer a unique perspective on the needs of the community and can serve as helpful allies.



**Oxnard (California) Police Chief Jeri Williams meets with Olivia Piol-Ortiz, Green Valley Development, Inc. site supervisor, to discuss the importance of police-community partnerships, 2015**

## **Police Perspective: Nine Rules for Community Engagement**

*Leonard Hamm, Director of Public Safety, Coppin State University, and Retired Commissioner, Baltimore Police Department*

Following are nine recommendations for how police officers can effectively engage with the communities they serve.

1. Police officers must understand that they are public servants charged with helping the community solve its problems.
2. Officers must remove their sunglasses and show their eyes to the public. If officers keep their sunglasses on, this is an indication that they are afraid. If they wear them at night, it is an indication that they should be feared. Officers must show that they not afraid or intimidated by the community, nor should the community fear the police.
3. Police must stop assuming that they know what the community wants and needs. Instead, they should go to the community often and ask what it wants and needs from them. This is a building block of community trust and departmental transparency.
4. Officers must engage with the community and discuss their planned approach to enforcing the law and ensuring community safety. If the majority of the neighborhood does not support this approach, police must adjust their plan. Targeted enforcement must always be coupled with a focused community relationship-building campaign.
5. Officers must behave and communicate with decency. A positive attitude is everything. Behaving this way attracts people and enables them to begin trusting you.
6. Officers must admit when they get it wrong. Community members understand that police are human and make mistakes. If an officer treats someone badly or makes a mistake, he or she must admit the errors and ask for help from fellow officers.
7. Police officers must meet with community members in the community. Meetings at agency headquarters or local precincts are not as effective.
8. Officers must recognize that crime prevention is part of their job and in order to do this, they must connect with community service providers and help those who need services get access to them. This will prevent an unnecessary reliance on the justice system for their wellbeing.
9. Employ community members, particularly those who know the streets, who can engage with their peers on law enforcement's behalf.

## **Spotlight On: Collaborating with Service Providers in Seattle**

In an attempt to reduce crime and foster trust in communities of color, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) in 2004 created the Get Off the Streets (GOTS) program, which focused on providing social services to citizens suffering from substance use and mental health issues in the Central Area, one of the city's most high-crime neighborhoods.

GOTS began as an improvised outreach program. After hearing directly from community members and people who needed help finding housing, employment, and substance abuse and mental health treatment, the SPD began to provide a two-hour window once a week in this neighborhood, where individuals could come to meet with court and case workers without the fear of being arrested or harassed by the police. As the program became more formal, memoranda of understanding were established with agencies that provide vouchers for housing, alcohol and drug abuse, and mental health treatment.

One of the most successful components of the GOTS outreach program was its offer to run background checks for warrants for program participants. Fear of arrest can keep individuals from applying for a job or social services, including even checking into a homeless shelter. If a person was found to have a warrant, a community outreach worker from the municipal courts or a social worker set about negotiating or finding a workable solution. For instance, if a person had numerous parking or moving violation tickets, could the bill be negotiated down? Could a missed court date or appointment with a probation officer be rescheduled? Through these background checks, some people learned that law enforcement was not even looking for them. Others were able to negotiate reductions or payment plans, get their driver's licenses reinstated, and even secure employment and permanently get off the streets.

Communities that have experienced an intense and potentially harassing police presence for years seldom have the opportunity to see the police engaged in activities directly related to improving their lives. For this reason, GOTS proved to be a valuable strategy that helped transform the image of law enforcement from agents of oppression into professionals who demonstrated that they cared about improving community members' lives. The SPD's ability to "think outside of the box," suspend preconceived notions about the target population, and listen and learn from the target population contributed to the GOTS program's success.

## **Spotlight On: A Nontraditional Community Expert to Help Residents in Need in Baltimore**

*Leonard Hamm, Director of Public Safety, Coppin State University, and Retired Commissioner, Baltimore Police Department*

On working with nontraditional community partners:

As chief of the Baltimore Police Department, I hired a civilian to work with our Get Out of the Game program. His name was Benjamin “Eggy” Davis. Eggy was close to 70 years old at the time he was recruited to help us. All of his life, he was commonly known as a “street hustler.” He never worked a traditional 9-to-5 job, though he always seemed to have plenty of cash. Eggy did not commit violent acts. Most of his criminality centered upon tricking people out of their money. When I first met him, he had just finished a stretch in federal prison for property crimes violations. One hour after meeting Eggy, I knew he was the right person to help my officers with this program. Eggy’s role was to accompany my officers, identify residents in need, and make the initial pitch to residents to join our program. Once a client became receptive to the pitch, officers would then follow up. The officers would discern the client’s needs and then call service providers to make appointments for the client and ensure the client would keep the appointment. Secondary follow-ups were done by my officers to monitor the progress of the client and their connection to the service providers. With Eggy on our team, we experienced significant success in placing community members in jobs, drug treatment programs, and literacy programs.

# Dealing with Contentious Incidents

*Contributions by Jose Luis Lopez, Former Chief of Police, Durham (North Carolina) Police Department; Darrell Lowe, Lieutenant, Santa Monica (California) Police Department; and Jeri Williams, Chief of Police, Oxnard (California) Police Department*



Michael Cabezas

**Oxnard (California) Police Chief Jeri Williams speaks at a 2014 event honoring officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty**

Community building and community policing strategies may seem less applicable or practical for the beat officer who is engaged in a contentious encounter with a civilian. However, it is during these times that community policing and community-oriented problem solving can best serve law enforcement officials. While proactive trust building can benefit law enforcement when contentious incidents occur, opportunities to reactively build trust after a contentious incident can be equally impactful to a community.

This chapter provides information on trust-building strategies, including proactive and reactive strategies, as well as how to use town hall meetings as a forum to build community trust.

## **Tips from the Field: Proactive Trust Building Techniques**

*Jeri Williams, Chief of Police, Oxnard (California) Police Department*

Police officials can take proactive steps before a contentious encounter so that their response after a contentious encounter is less reactive and more thoughtful. To engage with communities to build trust and community partnerships, officers can use the following strategies:

- Get out of the car or office and meet with communities face to face to demonstrate the human side of law enforcement.
- Attend community events and bring your family. It shows you are more than a uniform.
- Treat all people with respect. Treat every encounter as though your job depends on it.
- Be receptive to meeting with all groups, regardless of whether or not you believe their group can benefit your police work.
- Be cognizant of cultural norms, such as the appropriate title to refer to someone or the community leader who must be approached before engaging with a particular community.
- Listen more than you speak. Answer questions. Have open discussions that allow the community to connect with you on a personal level.

### **Proactive and reactive trust-building strategies**

Contentious police incidents involving mass arrests or the use of excessive force by an officer often generate considerable attention from the media, community leaders, residents, and elected officials. Some of the attention can manifest itself as criticism of the action taken by individual officers or even of the agency as a whole. Members of any police agency—command staff and officers alike—are well aware of how painful this criticism can be and how it can damage officer perceptions, morale, and police-community relations.

Law enforcement agencies that are proactive in connecting with the communities they serve, rather than reactive when emotionally charged situations occur, rely on strong community partnerships to help them ensure public safety through community-oriented problem solving. Furthermore, when contentious incidents occur, those partnerships are already in place, allowing police officers and community members to work collaboratively to solve problems or address negative feelings that may occur as a result of the incident.



**Oxnard (California) Police Chief Jeri Williams meets with local residents at one of the Oxnard Police Department's National Night Out events, 2015**

## **Tips from the Field: Reactive Trust Building Techniques**

*Jeri Williams, Chief of Police, Oxnard (California) Police Department*

Contentious encounters between law enforcement and communities can damage established trust, so it is critical to respond in a way that maintains trust and helps police and the community move beyond the incident. Here are tips for how to build trust after a contentious encounter:

- Be open and honest and inform the public of the facts.
- Do not demonize the victim.
- Be open to community meetings, such as town hall events moderated by a neutral party, to discuss the incident. Follow these discussions with fact sharing and collaborative problem solving with the community. The police department should accept responsibility for any mistakes and pledge to address matters swiftly and equitably.
- Make the necessary changes and promptly inform the public of what has been changed and adjusted. Maintain transparency and open communication channels with the public.
- Senior management and fellow officers should support the officer(s) involved with the incident. Support can include offering leave time to process the incident, organizing informal discussions for officers to discuss what they experienced and feel, or making psychosocial counseling available.
- Officers should feel included in the public messaging after a contentious encounter, particularly when sharing information with the media. Focus messaging on accountability and responsibility while protecting the rights of the officers involved.

## Town hall meetings as a trust-building tool

Town hall meetings can be an effective tactic to proactively build trust or to repair community-police relations after a contentious incident. Town hall meetings or discussions with small community groups—neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, etc.—offer the opportunity for police officials to inform the community about adjustments to policy, practice, or officer training as the result of a contentious encounter. These meetings also give the public an opportunity to vent their frustrations and ask questions. Instead of relying on them solely after a contentious incident, schedule town hall meetings regularly. Establishing open dialogue with community members on an ongoing basis only serves to benefit the work of law enforcement. If done correctly, town hall meetings can increase community perceptions of agency accountability and organizational transparency.



Atlowise Love-Craighead

**Officers from the Philadelphia Housing Authority Police Department meet with a youth group before participating in a community basketball game**

## The basics: Town hall meetings

*Included here is information on who to include in a town hall meeting, some of the goals to keep in mind during the meeting, and suggestions on where to hold the meeting.*

**Who** *Initial meetings should take place with the chief or other high-ranking officials of a department. It is important that any introductory meeting with a community representative, particularly one who is critical of the agency, include senior representatives from the department. Once the initial rapport is established, delegate follow-up communications to other members of the department.*

*If the member of the community represents a particular racial, ethnic, religious, or other subgroup, it can be helpful to include someone from the agency who is familiar with this community, such as a community liaison already in place. This individual can share his or her insights about the community's perceptions and needs after the meeting and can maintain ongoing communication with these community members.*

**What** *View the initial interaction as an opportunity for the agency to hear the criticism and receive it fully. Police personnel will often be surprised to learn that outspoken critics from the community are typically open to a dialogue and can provide valuable information about the community's public safety needs, interests, and concerns.*

*Initial meetings should have three goals:*

- 1. Open the lines of communication so that police can hear criticisms directly and discuss their own perspectives.*
- 2. Begin to develop rapport with and support from community members.*
- 3. Understand where the police organization is weak or perceived to be weak and not meeting the expectations of the community.*

*It is important to remember that everyone in the agency is responsible for maintaining an organizational culture that welcomes the voices of all community members, including critics and naysayers. Open and honest dialogue can assist law enforcement in better meeting the needs of the communities they serve.*

**Where** *It depends. Informal interactions in community locations can often provide a more relaxed atmosphere for discussion. In some instances, however, it is important to invite community members into the police station to show that the criticisms are being taken seriously.*

*Everyone in the agency is responsible for maintaining an organizational culture that welcomes the voices of all community members, including critics and naysayers.*

*— Lieutenant Darrell Lowe*

## Conclusion

Community policing strategies serve to benefit officers at all times, and investing time and energy into these strategies helps build the community trust essential to weathering contentious incidents. Officers who make trust building with the community a key priority will have a better understanding of their community's needs and concerns and will be better prepared to handle difficult situations that arise.

### **Spotlight On: Communicating After a Contentious Encounter in Durham**

After a number of police-involved deaths—including the death of a Latino man who shot himself while handcuffed in police custody and the shooting of an armed Latino man who did not speak English—and accusations of systematic racial profiling, the Durham (North Carolina) Police Department has taken steps to rebuild public trust and implement policies aimed at building a more transparent police force. Former chief Jose Luis Lopez of the Durham Police Department shares some of his lessons learned here in response to questions about how information is shared with the community.

#### **What do police need to remember after a contentious incident?**

That community trust is invaluable. After a contentious incident, lawsuits may be filed against the department, and legal advice may recommend that police refrain from responding to the community. But the long-standing trust of a community has to carry a higher value than the possible future payout of an incident.

Law enforcement should proactively educate the public not only on crimes that occur but also on regular police duties and activities. The more the public understands about the role and duties of the police, the more they will trust our words and actions.

#### **How much information should be shared with the community, and when?**

Share all relevant information as soon as possible. Five days after a police shooting or a death in custody, the Durham Police Department provides a detailed report with information regarding the incident to the city council, which it then also shares with the media and community at large.

#### **How can working with community leaders help?**

Community leaders can serve as a conduit when reaching out to specific communities that may be disengaged or distrusting of the police. This becomes even more important when the racial makeup of the police force, particularly the hierarchy, does not mirror that of the community it serves.

**How can working with the media help?**

A productive working relationship with the media—and sharing information about police activities, police shootings, or deaths in custody—ensures that the most accurate information is shared with the community. Develop a strong social media presence to reach out to as many citizens as possible. If possible, hire a public information officer whose sole task is to relay information to the media and the community.

**How can working with government help?**

Local government officials—elected and otherwise—need to be informed and educated on the process that led to a contentious incident or disparities in traffic stops, searches, and arrests. Educating officials gives them the ability to speak to the community from a place of knowledge and confidence. Without this knowledge, these officials may unintentionally send messages that conflict with the truth and unnecessarily damage police-community relations.

# Trauma-Informed Policing

*Altovise Love-Craighead, Captain, Philadelphia Police Department*

For many crime victims and witnesses, a police officer is the first criminal justice official they encounter. In order to cultivate and sustain trusting relationships with these individuals and ensure effective and swift case processing, it is critical that police are able to recognize and address trauma.

Trauma results from physical and emotional harm; it impacts an individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. How a person responds to trauma often depends on what kinds of internal and external resources they have to help them cope.

Unaddressed trauma can lead to behavioral and physical health conditions, including mental health issues—anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress—and substance use, which can lead to contact with the criminal justice system. For law enforcement officials, trauma-informed policing practices that enhance officers' understanding of trauma and its effects can facilitate criminal investigations through a greater awareness of a victim's needs, reduce the potential recurrence of criminal behavior through early intervention and community trust in police, and connect traumatized individuals to appropriate community services and supports.

## What does trauma look like to police?

Law enforcement officers who are not educated about the effects of trauma can hinder investigation and decrease the chances of obtaining cooperation from the victim. Often, trauma in victims is mistakenly interpreted as non-cooperation, substance abuse, or mental illness. Officers may also incorrectly infer that the victim is responsible for his or her own victimization and is therefore not worthy of compassionate, professional law enforcement treatment. It is important for officers to know the following:

- Those affected by trauma can exhibit symptoms including nausea, flashbacks, trembling, memory gaps, fear, and anger. These same symptoms can trigger behaviors that police may interpret as not cooperating, appearing adversarial, or behaving in an aggressive manner.
- Traumatic experiences can cause someone to disengage or “tune out” and avoid interacting with the outside world. Traumatized individuals may feel numb and show no outward signs of distress, which can easily mislead police officers to believe that the trauma is not significant because the signs of stress are minimal.
- Traumatic experiences can also cause someone to be hypervigilant and come off as hostile.
- For teens, trauma can halt their development by interrupting their ability to create coping strategies to deal with difficult situations. How they are treated by others is very important as this can affect their perception of the world and may cause them to mistrust adults and authority figures.

## The basics: Trauma-informed policing

*Trauma-informed policing involves developing organizational policies that address and accommodate the vulnerabilities of trauma survivors and allow police services to be delivered in a way that will not cause re-traumatization. In practice, police officers must examine and adjust the way they routinely deal with traumatic situations and the aftermath of those situations.<sup>21</sup>*

*Officers should ask victims, “What has happened to you?” rather than, “What is wrong with you?” This immediately sets up a dynamic where the officer can be seen as an advocate for the victim rather than an adversary.*

*Law enforcement should be familiar with the signs of trauma and some of the reactions that traumatized individuals may exhibit. For example, victims of violence may be hypervigilant or jumpy, and they may appear irritated or impatient as a result of their experiences. This may lead officers to interpret their behavior as angry, difficult, or suspicious. As mentioned earlier, traumatized individuals may feel numb or may appear to be uninterested in things that formerly interested them. This can sometimes lead them to engage in risky behaviors.*

*Police officers, aware of the signs and reactions, should be able to use trauma information as a tool to aid criminal investigations. They can then distinguish reactions that are trauma-related from attempts to avoid assisting in the investigation. They can avoid re-traumatizing individuals by understanding that traumatic stress can be triggered unintentionally, especially by those in or perceived to be in positions of power and authority.*

*Officers should be taught basic crisis intervention techniques that will allow them to address victims’ safety and security needs, allow victims to vent their feelings without any judgment or conclusions by the officer, and identify information about the criminal justice system that will help victims prepare for their future. For example, in a situation with a domestic violence victim who refuses to leave the abusing spouse, the officer should listen to the victim without voicing any opinion about the victim’s decision but instead offering information about agencies and services available to assist and support the victim and the abuser. In addition, officers should ensure the victim is informed that police services will be provided should the victim have to call again, confirming that the victim understands that the police are there to provide assistance when needed.*

*The goal of this modified way of responding to traumatized individuals is to support and empower victims and also ensure that perpetrators receive services that address underlying issues that may be related to trauma.<sup>22</sup> Of course, this does not mean that perpetrators with a trauma history should be given special treatment, but public safety requires that even perpetrators of crime must have access to services that can help them heal.*

## What are the benefits of trauma-informed policing?

Trauma-informed policing benefits law enforcement and the community in a number of ways, including the following:

- Improving officers' investigative skills by teaching them to recognize trauma and to deal effectively and compassionately with traumatized people. This includes understanding that certain procedures, such as interrogation techniques designed for suspect interrogation, are counterproductive to working with traumatized victims.
- Gaining essential trust and reducing the likelihood of negative reactions from the public by being aware of victims' personal space, establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries, communicating clearly, and following through on promises made.
- Facilitating the development of trusting relationships in victims' communities by connecting traumatized people to community services and supports.
- Reducing retaliation through early intervention and trust building with the victim and by validating his or her safety concerns and instilling faith in the police and criminal justice system.
- Enabling law enforcement officers to identify their own trauma symptoms and seek professional services. This can reduce hypervigilance, which is a common trauma symptom and can lead to contentious incidents—such as police-related shootings—with the public.

## Conclusion

For law enforcement, taking into account the trauma that victims of and witnesses to crime have experienced—and using this information in their approach to an investigation—is a key component of cultivating and sustaining positive relationships with them and the community at large. It is important that all officers understand how trauma can affect victims and witnesses of crime, as doing so will help facilitate cooperation and make way for more just case outcomes.

## Tips from the Field: Common Crisis Intervention Techniques

Common crisis intervention techniques include the following:

- **Safety and security.** Address the safety and security needs of the victim by making sure his or her physical concerns are addressed.
- **Ventilation and validation.** Allow the victim to talk about his or her feelings about what happened. Validate the victim's experience and feelings by listening attentively with a nonjudgmental demeanor.
- **Prediction and preparation.** Tell the victim what will happen in the near future by explaining the subsequent steps in the processing of the case and the victim's likely role.

# Community-Informed Strategies

*Contributions by Jeffrey Blackwell, Former Chief of Police, Cincinnati (Ohio) Police Department; Fae Brooks; Adrian Diaz, Lieutenant, Seattle (Washington) Police Department; Dean Esserman, Chief of Police, New Haven (Connecticut) Police Department; Marcus Jones, Commander, Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Department; Guillermo Lopez; LaKera Tompkins; and Beverly G. Ward, PhD.*

High-profile deaths of unarmed people of color at the hands of police—and the resulting civil unrest in communities such as Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland—have shown the world what can happen when citizens and law enforcement view one another as adversaries instead of partners in maintaining community safety. Even when police and community members have the same objectives for ensuring safe and secure communities, a breakdown in trust between law enforcement and the community it serves can result in police officers and civilians working against one another rather than using their resources to uplift their community.

Law enforcement agencies must use community-informed strategies to increase their agencies' ability to build trust with diverse communities. This chapter provides information on a variety of these strategies, including asset mapping, mediation, police-community dialogues, and using Compstat to engage the community.

## Asset mapping

Asset mapping is an evidence-based strategy designed to help law enforcement break down barriers that may lead to conflicts between police and community members.<sup>23</sup> Asset maps are an inventory of a community's resources—individual by individual, association by association, institution by institution, and employer by employer. Not only do they serve as valuable community resources but their development also requires community outreach and relationship building, essential components of fostering trust in diverse communities.

The central tenet of asset mapping is that all communities have value, regardless of economic woes, lack of affordable housing, high unemployment, or problems with crime. Each community has its own unique history, resources, and assets, as well as residents, business owners, and neighborhood leaders with a deep understanding of the community's needs. What is often overlooked, however, are the community-based resources—including the connections, jobs, skills, talents, tools, etc.—that make it possible for communities facing severe economic and social challenges to survive.<sup>24</sup> Asset mapping has been used by law enforcement throughout the country, from rural areas to urban enclaves, to identify community resources that can help revitalization efforts.

In order to engage communities in this process, asset maps and the data used in these maps should be shared with community members to generate feedback or spark dialogue. Asset mapping is an ongoing process, so keeping maps current relies on continued public engagement. Engagement is necessary for information dissemination, data collection, and sustainability, as well the identification of local leaders, organizations, and institutions that have been lost, evolved, or emerged.

### **The basics: Mapping a community's assets**

*The following are a few tips on how to inventory the skills of various community stakeholders:*

*Community members*      *Include all residents of the community, such as professionals, parents, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and people who are unemployed.*

*Associations*              *Include formal and informal community associations. To learn about these associations, ask residents about their memberships in organizations or participation in various activities, such as quilting circles, weekend card parties, social media sites, etc.*

*Institutions*                *Include community service providers, such as schools, hospitals, human service agencies, houses of worship, civic groups, etc. These assets often have connections to city, county, state, or federal agencies that may also be utilized as community assets.*

*Employers*                  *Include formal and informal employers, such as people who offer childcare, senior assistance, home or auto repairs, etc.*

*The asset inventory should document the names, contacts, skills, functions, and capabilities of each asset into a simple computer spreadsheet. Use a spreadsheet to allow for searching, sorting, tracking, and managing the data.<sup>25</sup> Other tools that can aid in asset mapping include the following:*

- *Existing e-mail lists of contacts who live, work, or otherwise provide services in a specific community.*
- *Google Maps, which can be used to identify key institutions, employers, associations, etc., within a target area.*
- *Social media channels, which should be collected and documented as part of individual inventories for the purpose of information dissemination and data collection. For example, Instagram and Twitter users can collect data about neighborhood conditions, and police and other public service agents can receive text messages regarding non-emergency situations.*

## Spotlight On: Asset Mapping in East Tampa

Knowledge of community contacts, leaders, and relations helped the East Tampa community begin a multifaceted strategy to address youth violence in late 2010. This strategy began with a community meeting that brought together more than 150 residents, agency representatives, university faculty and students, and others to discuss the conditions that gave rise to an uptick in community violence and look for long-term solutions. Many of these stakeholders had been previously identified and engaged through the community's asset maps. Without this valuable community knowledge, police officials could have faced significant challenges in identifying and engaging those key players and working with community members to improve police-community safety efforts.

## Mediation

In the wake of a contentious incident or civilian complaint filed against an officer, mediation is one tool that can be used to foster dialogue between community members and police officials and ensure transparency in the resulting decision making. Mediation is a structured process in which the complainant, the officer, and a neutral facilitator engage in a dialogue or series of dialogues in an effort to resolve the conflict. Mediation has many benefits for police-community relationships, including giving both parties the opportunity to be heard, to understand why particular actions were taken, and to give feedback on how to prevent future conflict. This allows the complainant to regain confidence in the police and gives law enforcement an opportunity to collaboratively address disciplinary issues and examine certain policies or procedures that may have led to this conflict.

Mediation that employs reflection and reframing can transform resentment into lessons learned, allowing parties to think and to communicate their thoughts, expectations, and solutions.

### *Mediation as a policing tool*

To turn mediation theory into practice, consider hosting community forums that involve neutral facilitation by a mediator when highly charged incidents occur in the community. At the conclusion of mediation, the parties draft a memorandum of understanding that outlines their mutual agreements, including but not limited to formal apologies, follow-up meetings, or policy changes. Hold follow-up meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of the mutual agreements reached and determine the need for any modifications.

Police agencies around the country have implemented mediation programs in an effort to ensure more transparent and fair policing. The San Francisco Police Department has a longstanding mediation program administered by an independent office, the Office of Citizen Complaints (OCC). This program is a partnership between various entities, including the police commission, bar association, and OCC.

When complaints made against an officer are referred to the program, each party provides written consent to participate, two mediators hear the complaint—one attorney and one nonattorney—and an exit survey is then completed by all parties that outlines next steps or outcomes of the mediation. Similarly, the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, an independent agency, settles complaints made against police officers through a voluntary, face-to-face mediation process between the officer and the complainant. In both cities, if mediation is deemed successful, the police officer’s file is marked “mediated” and no further agency disciplinary proceedings are sought.

### *Overcoming challenges to mediation*

While mediation programs have proven beneficial in many situations, there are inherent challenges to this type of process. Since many mediation programs operate independent of the police, high employee turnover, insufficient funding, and the programs’ voluntary nature can hinder their success. For various reasons, mediation cannot realistically or practically resolve every complaint.<sup>26</sup>

To overcome these challenges, it may be beneficial to develop a referral process to help determine which cases may be appropriate for mediation. In addition, for mediation to be deemed a viable option for all parties, it will be necessary to develop community and police buy-in by explaining the process and its benefits to all stakeholders. This would require expanding the public’s, as well as relevant police stakeholders’, understanding of mediation and its benefits.

### **Police-community dialogues**

Providing police officers and community members with safe, nonadversarial opportunities to communicate with and learn from one another is essential to preparing a police force to serve a diverse community. Police-community dialogues have been used all over the world as conflict resolution and community trust-building tools.

### **The basics: Community dialogue as a training tool**

*Included here are details on who to include in a police-community dialogue, where and when to organize this type of dialogue, and other suggestions.*

*Who*                      *When organizing a police-community dialogue, vet all potential participants—including police officers—to ensure that they have a demonstrated open-mindedness and a willingness to cooperate. Community members with complaints about the police can be included so long as they see themselves as part of the solution. Dialogues should have at least one officer for every four to five community members. Be sure that participants represent the diversity of the community with regard to gender, age, race, ethnicity, etc.*

*Appoint or select coordinators—from both the police and community—who are trained in conflict resolution, how to build and sustain a team, how to run meetings, how to stay on track and not get “divided and conquered,” and other leadership skills. These coordinators must have the trust of their constituency, but they do not need to be the most senior member or in a formal leadership position.*

*Where* Initially, hold the meetings on neutral ground, such as community centers, fire station meeting rooms, convention center conference spaces, community college training rooms, or fellowship halls of a church. Then, after the relationship has been developed, you can explore moving the dialogues to a police station or neighborhood meeting place to share resources and knowledge.

*When* Dialogues can be held during the day or evening, any day of the week. Understand that many community members who want to participate are at work during the day, so scheduling flexibility helps build trust and demonstrates true partnership. Sessions should ideally be no longer than four hours. This helps agencies manage any overtime requirements for participation.

*How* *Attire:* Officers are encouraged to come in uniform as this helps community members become comfortable with the uniform and see officers as people. For officers, it is helpful to wear a uniform while performing these new engagement behaviors so that they can begin to internalize them as part of their professional role. Likewise, community members are encouraged to wear traditional, customary dress.

*Seating:* There should be no tables, as this tends to create divisions or barriers between the participants. The lack of tables also communicates that this is different from “typical” police-community meetings. In addition, remind officers not to huddle together or stand in a corner but to seek out opportunities to interact with community members in this non-stressful situation.

Following are descriptions of two unique dialogue programs—Living Room Conversations and Cops & Community Training—that focus on engaging police and adult residents. A related dialogue initiative for engaging youth can be found in no. 2 in this series, *How to Serve Diverse Communities*.

### **Spotlight On: Living Room Forums in Seattle**

Seattle’s South Park neighborhood has a population of 4,000 people, nearly half of whom are Latino. Located in one of the nation’s most diverse area codes, this low-income neighborhood experienced higher crime rates compared to other areas of Seattle in the early 2000s. In 2003 and 2004, South Park experienced multiple homicides that specifically affected Latino youth. Members of the Latino community were eager to address this violence but were wary of approaching police for assistance.

Although the Seattle Police Department (SPD) had an existing Latino Advisory Council (LAC) that was designed to hear the concerns of the community, residents and the mayor's office soon deemed it insufficient to address South Park's specific needs. An interdepartmental team created by the mayor's office began brainstorming ideas to reach out to the area's diverse communities using nontraditional methods of outreach. As a result of these efforts, the team created Living Room Forums (LRF) to help engage and build dialogue between police and community members. LRFs are a nontraditional police-community engagement tool used to reach out to community members who may be apprehensive about approaching police for assistance and to build dialogue between police and community. These forums take place in the community, often in a community member's home.

To organize an LRF, officers

- reach out to members of the community and ask for a volunteer to host a meeting in their home to discuss a particular community issue or point of conflict;
- ask the host to invite their friends and neighbors to attend the meeting;
- come to the meeting prepared to learn more about the issue and better understand the situation, hopefully identifying a community-based solution.

In order to connect with community leaders who may be willing to host an LRF, law enforcement should focus on three types of basic outreach:

1. Door-to-door outreach to connect with community members
2. Attending community events to reach out to specific populations or community leaders
3. Outreach through partnerships with community-based organizations

If the primary aim is to increase police-community engagement, there is no agenda for the meeting. The conversation can start by the police officer simply introducing him- or herself. Many community members want to know the police officer who could respond when they call 911, rather than the command staff with whom they never may come in contact. If the objective of the LRF is to solve a specific problem, work out an agenda with the LRF host and share it with invitees for feedback.



Allowise Love-Craighead

**Philadelphia Police Department Deputy Commissioner Kevin Bethel meets with a youth group before participating in a community basketball game**

### **Spotlight On: National Cops & Community Training Program**

The National Coalition Building Institute’s (NCBI) Cops & Community Training Program is a dialogue-based training that provides a relationship-building opportunity for law enforcement and the community.\* Recognizing that building strong community relationships is a process that requires commitment from all parties, police departments have engaged in this training program in an effort to develop strategic communication skills and community partnerships that will aid in making their communities safer. The training is offered in the following three parts:

1. Agency-wide customer service training and trust building with officers. Policing must be more about communication than physical ability. It is easier for an officer to talk someone into doing something than to physically coerce the individual. Officers are trained, however, to command and control. Starting interactions at a lower intensity and escalating that interaction only when necessary results in more productive community interactions. Officers must use appropriate language and let their guard down in those situations where officer safety is not a paramount concern. Showing empathy to members of the community will result in shared understanding and mutual trust.
2. Trust building with community. Conduct a “listening tour” among community members to learn about their public safety needs, interests, and concerns. It is important for them to have an opportunity to be heard by the police officers tasked with keeping their community safe.

3. Collective trust building and leadership development (series of conversations). Trust cannot be developed in one meeting. There needs to be a series of meetings during which officers and community members learn to understand each other's points of view in a nonconfrontational setting. Together, both can learn to lead meetings and address confrontational situations, as well as learn more about their similarities and differences.

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\* The National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) is an international nonprofit leadership training organization based in Washington, D.C. For additional information, see "National Coalition Building Institute," NCBI, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.ncbi-cops.org>.

### Using Compstat as a Community Engagement Strategy

Compstat is well recognized as a police innovation focused on crime reduction and resource management. By using geographic information systems, Compstat maps crime and identifies problems in a community. This process was first implemented by the NYPD and has been replicated worldwide. In weekly meetings, police officials meet with local precinct commanders to discuss the week's crime data and brainstorm potential approaches to addressing community issues. New Haven Police Chief Dean Esserman, an architect of Compstat, discusses how he has used Compstat as a community engagement strategy.

#### **You have talked about Compstat being more than a management tool—that it is a tool for accountability. What do you mean by this?**

It has been a journey with Compstat. It started with former NYPD Deputy Commissioner for Crime Control Strategies Jack Maple and me staying up all night putting the pins in the New York City map for Bill Bratton when he was leading the New York City Transit Authority. We say that Compstat came out of Jack Maple's mind, Dean Esserman's thumbs, and Bill Bratton's choreography. We were then a part of Bratton's transition team in 1994 when he became the new commissioner of the NYPD. The purpose of Compstat in the NYPD was to manage the "bear" of the agency and provide focus. We were hearing a cacophony and were trying to become conductors of a symphony. Bratton was the conductor and everyone in the NYPD was a different musician with a different tune.

After New York, everywhere I went, I replicated this work. I brought it to the MTA [Metropolitan Transit Authority] Metro North as chief in 1994; then Stamford, Connecticut, in 1998; then Providence, Rhode Island, in 2003; and most recently, New Haven, Connecticut, in 2011. As I've replicated Compstat, its role and purpose has evolved in my mind. It is not just an effort to transform a cacophony into a symphony; Compstat is also a communications tool, both internally and externally, and can be used to foster partnership and collaboration with the community.

**What is the role of the community in New Haven?**

We have a fully open Compstat. The doors are never closed. Community members; cops; ministers; local, state, and national government representatives; social service agency and community-based organization staff; and—most significantly—the press are invited to sit in. Different reporters come and go as they see fit. When something is secret and cannot be publicly broadcast, the press respects that.

**How does your agency involve the community in your weekly Compstat meetings?**

The community has multiple roles. They hear everything about our 10 districts from the district managers (we do not use the term commander), they participate in problem-solving discussions, [they] ask questions, and they can make presentations.

**Who in your agency organizes the community involvement in this process?**

Our assistant chief of patrol operations and I organize it and run the Compstat meetings.

**Why do you think many agencies do not involve the community the way you do?**

Years of tradition that have been unhampered by progress make this hard in many communities. Also, the fear of taking a risk. As Machiavelli once said, “There is no more delicate matter to take in hand, nor more dangerous to conduct, nor more doubtful of success, than to step up as a leader in the introduction of change.”

**How has the community helped your agency through this involvement?**

We have absolutely gained more than we have lost. Through showing respect and trust to the community, we have gained it back.

**Some people think community policing and Compstat are mutually exclusive. Where does Compstat fit in the larger community policing framework?**

Community policing is a philosophy, and in enacting this philosophy a police department can use many strategies and tools. Compstat is the best management tool I have encountered, and by opening it up we are strategically using it to build community trust and partner with the community in problem solving.

**How do you balance the need to move quickly on some enforcement initiatives with the need to educate the community and get their buy-in?**

We need permission and authority to do our work. Where does it come from? In the final analysis, it comes from the community we serve. Sure, there are times when we have to move rapidly with a particular incident. But for sustained efforts, we go to community first to get the permission and authority.

**Some community members have criticized Compstat for leading to the fudging of numbers. How would you address this criticism?**

We do not receive this criticism because the community participates and they see it. Of course, we may receive criticism. We allow this and frankly discuss their criticisms in the room.

**If other chiefs are looking to implement this Compstat model, what are some challenges they may encounter? How can they overcome them?**

You will almost certainly encounter challenges. It is inherent to bringing change to an institution. So you have to believe that it is worth taking the risk. I believe the benefits outnumber the risks; they have in New Haven.

### **Conclusion**

Developing effective community-informed strategies requires law enforcement to engage with their communities, understand community needs and concerns, and integrate that knowledge into their policing approach. Doing so requires police agencies to be proactive in developing police-community relations which, although potentially resource-intensive, will serve to benefit all aspects of police work.

## **Spotlight On: The Media and Compstat in New Haven**

The New Haven Police Department has been using Compstat as a community engagement tool since 2011. Paul Bass, editor at the *New Haven Independent* and frequent attendee at Compstat meetings, discusses the importance of this type of community engagement in local policing efforts.

### **How has the New Haven Police Department's approach in using Compstat to engage the community impacted trust between the department and the community?**

I have been covering crime and the police department in New Haven for 35 years. I remember when the doors were closed with Compstat. But the changes have been unbelievable. The community participates and trusts the police. The media does as well. And we agree to keep information private when it is necessary to protect public safety.

### **Can you share some examples of how the community has participated in problem solving around crime?**

The neighborhood leaders are engaged, especially with the local African-American community. Everyone sees what the problems are and joins in crafting the solution. There is great camaraderie between the cops and community. During these meetings, there is a lot of problem solving. For example, recently there was a problem with people recklessly riding dirt bikes illegally and one day a girl was almost killed. At the Compstat meeting, you see street outreach workers, cops, and neighborhood leaders jointly piecing together a strategy to deal with this. The same thing happens after there is a rash of robberies or car break-ins. Law enforcement and the community comes together to look at the pattern and come up with a strategy. It is fun to see them be creative with problem solving. Everyone is doing their job as part of one community.

### **What is most surprising to you as a member of the media?**

Every week, I see something that could never have happened if it wasn't for this type of Compstat. I also hear a lot of positive things that the cops are doing well that I would not hear otherwise.

## **Police Perspective: City and Suburban Police Collaboration**

*Jeffrey Blackwell, Former Chief of Police, Cincinnati (Ohio) Police Department*

The “demographic inversion” that is happening in a growing number of jurisdictions is a game changer for many police organizations. The growing diversification of many communities, particularly suburban communities, is going to impact the professional delivery of police services in the United States. First, it has implications for the cities where the complexions of the communities are changing because of gentrification and other socioeconomic forces. Second, the perimeter of our nation’s cities is changing. Some of these jurisdictions closely mirror what the city looked like 10 years ago, though they do not have the resources of a city agency. In the suburbs, the average police department has 20 sworn officers. Small agencies have never had to police a diverse population, and instantaneously they are seeing their constituencies change along with their public safety needs. Now, these small agencies must develop a platform for enforcement.

Cities could aid their suburban partners in developing their platform, but we must recognize that there is currently little, if any, collaboration between cities and suburbs beyond sharing equipment. City chiefs may not have all of the answers, but they can be partners in the developing solutions.

# Final Thoughts

Understanding the history of policing in the United States, as well as a particular agency's historic relationship with the community it serves, can only help officers seeking to implement community-informed policing strategies. All agencies should seek out opportunities for community collaboration: Doing so allows law enforcement officials an opportunity to recognize the history of police-community relations in their communities while demonstrating a desire to move towards a more community-informed policing model.

# Contributors' Biographies

*Contributors' titles may have changed since this series was prepared.*

**Roy E. Alston, PhD**, is a lieutenant with the Dallas (Texas) Police Department. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and has been with the Dallas Police Department since August 2003, where his current assignment is commander of the Community Engagement Unit and the Bexar Street Satellite Station. He previously served as in-service training coordinator and was responsible for developing, planning, coordinating, and delivering training. He is the author of three leadership books, including *The Leader's Compass for Law Enforcement Professionals: A Values-Based Approach to Influencing People, Accomplishing Goals, and Improving Your Organization*.

**Jeffrey Blackwell** is the former chief of the Cincinnati (Ohio) Police Department. He served in this position from 2013 to 2015. Before joining the Cincinnati Police Department, he served with distinction as a 26-year veteran of the Columbus Police Department, and has worked in Patrol, Traffic, Street Crime Enforcement, Internal Affairs, Cold-Case Homicide, and many other assignments during his 28-year career. He graduated from the Certified Law Enforcement Executive (CLEE) program in 2011, is a 2008 graduate of the Police Executive Leadership College (PELC), attended the Southern Police Institute-Internal Affairs School (SPI) as well as the Senior Management Institute for Policing (SMIP), and graduated from the Columbus Police Academy (OPATA certified). He holds a BA in Business Administration from Mt. Vernon Nazarene University.

**Fae Brooks** is the director of the National Coalition Building Institute. She retired after 26 years of service as Chief of the Criminal Investigations Division with the King County (Washington) Sheriff's Office, where she focused on building police-community relationships. She has served as a policy advisor to the mayor of the City of Seattle and trained police and community members in 14 states and in London, England, on policing for safer communities and customer service.

**Lee P. Brown, PhD**, is the author of *Policing in the 21st Century: Community Policing* (2012). He has had a career in public service dedicated to law enforcement for nearly four decades, holding various positions including Commissioner of Public Safety (Atlanta, Georgia); Chief of Police (Houston, Texas); and Commissioner of Police (New York City). In addition, he served as Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy in President Bill Clinton's Cabinet from 1993–1996 and as mayor of the City of Houston from 1998–2004. Brown is the former president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and a founder of the National Organization of Law Enforcement Executives and the Police Executive Research Forum.

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**Daniel White Hodge, PhD**, is the Director of the Center for Youth Ministry Studies and assistant professor of youth ministry at North Park University in Chicago. Hodge's research and community engagement work explores the intersections of faith, critical race theory, justice, hip hop culture, and youth culture. He is the author of *Heaven Has a Ghetto: The Missiological Gospel & Theology of Tupac Amaru Shakur* (2009) and *The Soul Of Hip Hop: Rimbs, Timbs, & A Cultural Theology* (2010). He is currently working on a book titled *The Hostile Gospel: Finding Religion in the Post Soul Theology of Hip Hop* (expected 2016).

**Marcus Jones** is a commander of the Montgomery County (Maryland) 3rd District Police Station in Silver Spring and a 29-year veteran of the department. Jones helped create an award-winning diversity training program, which he has presented to all sworn and civilian police department personnel and to all new academy classes. He is a former National Chairman of the National Black Police Association, which assists in bridging the gap between communities of color and police departments, and currently serves on the boards of directors for the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, the Task Force on Mentoring for Montgomery County, and the Thin Blue Line Bike Ride.

**Guillermo Lopez** is the Co-Director of the law enforcement division for the National Coalition Building Institute. Lopez has trained and consulted on diversity and organizational development for more than 20 universities in 14 different states and on two different continents. He has coordinated Cops & Community Training programs aimed at strengthening police-community relations in communities including Chester, Easton, Harrisburg, and Norristown, Pennsylvania.

**Jose L. Lopez, Sr.** is the former chief of the Durham (North Carolina) Police Department, a position he held from 2007 to 2015. Lopez was honorably discharged in 1980 from the U.S. Air Force, where he served as a law enforcement specialist. He has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in police science from John Jay College of Criminal Justice and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy 183rd Session, the Senior Management Institute for Police at Boston University, and the FBI National Executive Institute, Session 37.

**Altovise Love-Craighead** is a captain in the Philadelphia Police Department and has over 20 years of law enforcement experience. Love-Craighead is a co-victim of homicide, losing her brother to murder in 1997. She is the cofounder of the EMIR Healing Center, a center that provides holistic services to families affected by murder and violence.

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**Darrell Lowe** is a lieutenant with the Santa Monica (California) Police Department. Lowe has more than 23 years of experience in law enforcement and has served on numerous boards and commissions throughout his career. Lowe is a POST [Peace Officer Standards and Training] Master Instructor, FBI National Academy alum, collegiate educator, and promotional preparation consultant.

**Michael Nila** is the founder and Managing Partner of *Blue Courage*, a leadership development organization dedicated to enhancing the capacity of law enforcement professionals. He holds a master of business administration and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice management. Nila served in law enforcement for 29 years and retired as police commander with the Aurora (Illinois) Police Department. Nila refers to the policing profession as his vocation and believes that policing is the noblest of professions.

**Christopher W. Ortiz, PhD**, serves as deputy chief of the City of Glen Cove (New York) Police Department and as a criminal justice lecturer at the New York Institute of Technology.

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**Kenneth Sharpe** is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Political Science at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, specializing in ethics, public policy, foreign affairs, and Latin American politics. Sharpe is the co-author of *Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing*, and the co-author of *Drug War Politics: The Politics of Denial*. He lectures frequently on ethics, public policy, and practical wisdom.

**LaKera C. Tompkins, JD**, serves as executive director of Humble Visions of New Jersey, an organization she founded to provide youth development, crime prevention, and community renewal programming in underserved communities. Tompkins is a social justice advocate and certified mediator who has worked in juvenile justice administration, community reentry, and collateral consequences. Tompkins earned her JD from Howard University School of Law.

**Beverly Ward** works as principal and owner of BGW Associates, LLC, a company that assesses the impact of public policy decisions on disadvantaged communities. Her research focuses on the use of social impact assessments to understand the effects of decisions, policies, and extreme events on various populations. Ward has extensive community-based research experience and has completed various trainings and skill-building workshops on coalition-building, collaboration, conflict resolution, and coordination.

**Jeri Williams** serves as chief of the Oxnard (California) Police Department, a role she has held since January 2011. Williams previously served as assistant chief of the Phoenix (Arizona) Police Department's Southern Division. Throughout her career, she has been known for her community-based policing experience and has worked to establish partnerships with residents, businesses, and other community stakeholders. Williams holds a bachelor's degree from Arizona State University and a master's degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University, where she also completed her comprehensive examinations in pursuit of her PhD in educational leadership.

# User Guide

Chapter	Page number	Patrol	Patrol supervisor	Juvenile operations	Crime prevention and community involvement	Recruitment	Victim/wellness assistance	Policy development (specific policy implications) and enforcement	Agency leadership	Public information and media relations
Acknowledging Our History	4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Partnerships: Maximizing Collaboration with Communities of Color	17	x	x	x	x		x		x	x
Dealing with Contentious Incidents	24		x	x	x		x		x	x
Trauma-Informed Policing	32	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Community Informed Strategies	36	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x

# Endnotes

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16 Bruce D. Johnson, Andrew Golub, and James McCabe, "The International Implications of Quality-of-Life Policing as Practiced in New York City," *Police Practice & Research : An International Journal* 11, no. 1 (2010): 17–29, doi:10.1080/15614260802586368.

17 The *Floyd vs. City of New York* litigation alleged that NYPD officers unconstitutionally stopped and frisked individuals on the basis of race and/or ethnicity. A key argument of this litigation suggested that a quota system for stops or citations led to racial profiling by officers. For more on this litigation, please see *Floyd, et al. v. City of New York*, 959 F. Supp. 2d 540, <http://www.nysd.uscourts.gov/cases/show.php?db=special&id=317>.

18 "Stop and Frisk Data," New York Civil Liberties Union, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.nyclu.org/content/stop-and-frisk-data>.

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20 For additional information about the COPS Office, visit <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/>.

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# About Vera

The **Vera Institute of Justice (Vera)** is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit center for justice policy and practice with offices in New York City; Washington, D.C.; New Orleans; and Los Angeles. Vera’s research, projects, and reform initiatives, typically conducted in partnership with local, state, or national officials, are located across the United States. For additional information, visit [www.vera.org](http://www.vera.org).

# About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community police and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Another source of COPS Office assistance is the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance (CRI-TA). Developed to advance community policing and ensure constitutional practices, CRI-TA is an independent, objective process for organizational transformation. It provides recommendations based on expert analysis of policies, practices, training, tactics, and accountability methods related to issues of concern.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 127,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

The COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—can be downloaded at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov). This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

Recognizing the vital importance of trust to community cooperation, public safety, and national security, the Vera Institute worked with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to research and write this three-part series, which provides practical, field-informed guidance for creating positive, productive relations with all members of our multi-racial, multi-ethnic American population. To engage with their communities, law enforcement must understand their needs and concerns. This guide explores the history of law enforcement's relations with African Americans and offers strategies for overcoming past mistakes, building trusting relationships, and using mediation and other means for increasing dialogue and reducing tension after contentious incidents.



**COPS**  
*Community Oriented Policing Services*  
*U.S. Department of Justice*

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