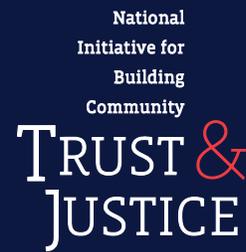


# Pittsburgh

## 2016 STATUS REPORT



**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA IS ONE OF SIX PILOT SITES FOR THE NATIONAL Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice**, a project to improve relationships and increase trust between communities and the criminal justice system and advance the public and scholarly understandings of the issues contributing to those relationships. In collaboration with the **U.S. Department of Justice**, the National Initiative is coordinated by the **National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College of Criminal Justice**, with partnership from the **Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School**, the **Center for Policing Equity at John Jay College and UCLA**, and the **Urban Institute**.

The National Initiative's work involves trust-building interventions with police departments and communities based on three pillars:

- Enhancing **procedural justice**: the way police interact with the public, and how those interactions shape the public's views of the police, their willingness to obey the law, and their engagement in co-producing public safety in their neighborhoods.
- Reducing the impact of **implicit bias**: the automatic associations individuals make between groups of people and stereotypes about those groups, and the influence it has in policing.
- Fostering **reconciliation**: frank engagements between minority communities and law enforcement to address historical tensions, grievances, and misconceptions that contribute to mutual mistrust and misunderstanding and prevent police and communities from working together.

The National Initiative also regularly evaluates its interventions to determine effectiveness, and is committed to building and sharing a knowledge and practice base for communities everywhere.

Pittsburgh was selected as a pilot site for its demonstrated willingness and capacity to engage in the National Initiative's research, intervention, and evaluation process, as well as its jurisdiction size, ethnic and religious composition, and population density. This status report describes the city's progress at the midpoint of the project's second year.

## Enhancing Procedural Justice

The National Initiative and the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police have created a comprehensive, first-of-its-kind curriculum on procedural justice tailored specifically for Pittsburgh.

All 900 sworn officers in the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police (PBP) are undergoing this curriculum—which was developed with the Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School—and will be equipped with the principles, understanding, and best practices necessary for procedurally just policing that emphasizes giving community members a voice, employing neutral decision-making grounded in transparency, demonstrating respect for citizens' rights and dignity, and increasing the police department's trustworthiness. Research shows that procedural justice can increase police legitimacy in the eyes of a community—regardless of whether police encounters end positively or negatively—and ultimately lead to greater public cooperation and compliance, increased safety, and reduced crime.

The curriculum features several modules that clearly define the concept of legitimacy and highlight ways to increase police legitimacy; define procedural justice, its benefits, and tie back procedural justice practices to policing goals; review the present-day relationship between the police and the community; and help PBP officers understand the role history—from the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 through the Civil Rights Movement—has played in hindering legitimacy in some communities.

It also features modules that thoroughly explore the real-life application of procedurally just policing principles and provides an in-depth package of discussion points, exercises, videos, and images that help officers recognize when, where, and how those principles should be applied.

The National Initiative team is working closely with departmental leadership to institutionalize the curriculum and sustain it as a core part of PBP's future policies:

- PBP hired a training consultant to identify opportunities for inserting procedural justice into trainings, internal evaluations, and supervision.
- PBP models procedurally just policing behavior during field training, and instructs its Field Training Officers to regularly look for and reinforce that behavior in every aspect of Daily Observation Reports. This allows PBP to approach procedural justice holistically and through multiple criteria.
- PBP has scheduled evaluations of every department policy over the coming year to look for similar opportunities to incorporate procedural justice principles.
- All PBP training presentations are being updated to ensure that any discussions of interactions with the public also includes a discussion about how to have the interaction, and whether or not the method of interaction adds to or detracts from the public's perception of police legitimacy.
- A PBP "Procedural Justice Committee" meets regularly to coordinate efforts and stay up-to-date on department progress.
- The National Initiative team, PBP, the Summer Institute, and the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems collaborated to teach a "Community Procedural Jus-

tice” class to approximately 70 members of the Pittsburgh community. The class will serve as a basis for future efforts to educate the community on the police department’s efforts and to receive feedback on ways to improve the procedural justice curriculum. This work supplements PBP’s collaboration with other law enforcement agencies to develop a ‘rights and responsibilities’ pamphlet for interactions with the police, and the 15-week Citizens Police Academy it offers twice a year.

- In 2017, after being certified by the Municipal Police Officers’ Education and Training Commission (MPOETC), PBP will train instructors from MPOETC to spread procedural justice training statewide.

### **Reducing Implicit Bias**

As part of the National Initiative’s work to address and reduce implicit bias, a new curriculum is being developed specifically for Pittsburgh.

PBP leadership and procedural justice trainers attended an extensive, three-day “train-the-trainer” program on the new curriculum, and the Center for Policing Equity is working with PBP on an early 2017 rollout to ensure that law enforcement is aware of the many factors that go into rapid human decision making; understands how police officers can make better choices when conscious of the biases and stereotypes that exist in the world; and mindful of the numerous challenges faced by police officers who actively try to reduce the effects of implicit bias.

### **Fostering Reconciliation**

Over the past 18 months, the National Initiative has developed an exhaustive reconciliation process

that draws out the many narratives underpinning mistrust on both sides of the police-community divide and builds a basis for informed, concrete policy and practice changes.

The process involves facilitated meetings between police department leadership and influential leaders from a variety of communities with histories of tension with the police. The meetings will describe the process to the assembled community members; allow police leadership to publicly commit to the process of reconciliation and acknowledge the importance of overcoming the present state of mistrust; and offer community members an opportunity to respond.

Next steps would include meetings between officers from all levels of the department and residents of communities; a fact-finding report laying out the historical and experiential basis for tension; collecting and sharing narratives from police and community members on their perspectives and experiences relating to police-community trust; and the establishment of a collaborative body charged with reviewing police policies, practices, and norms to improve trust and legitimacy.

The National Initiative team will be working closely with PBP leadership to begin on-the-ground reconciliation work in Pittsburgh in the months ahead, building on existing efforts by Chief Cameron McLay to engage with the public about the fraught history between communities and law enforcement and apologize for past injustices.

### **Enhancing Internal Procedural Justice**

A primary focus of the National Initiative team and PBP has been the development of “internal procedural justice”—structures and practices that lead to police officers believing that the depart-

ment treats them fairly and respectfully—which is key to officers’ willingness and ability to incorporate the principles of procedural justice in their interactions with the public.

As part of this effort, PBP has appointed an Employee Wellness and Resource Coordinator (EWRC) dedicated to the physical and mental health of officers by opening opportunities for professional development and officer feedback, and monitoring conditions that can impact officer wellness, safety, and job performance. The EWRC will offer safe spaces for PBP officers to constructively vent when facing difficult professional or personal situations, and ensure a direct line of communication between Chief McLay and the rest of the department to reduce misunderstandings.

Another resource, the Pittsburgh Member’s Assistance Program, supports officers in times of crisis or high stress; and a new Police Code of Ethics enshrines the department’s commitment to preserving life and serving compassionately, while also formally adopting tenets of procedural justice as part of the department’s mission.

### **Ensuring Public Safety and Building Trust for All**

The National Initiative team is designing and implementing trust-building interventions that address a variety of special populations in Pittsburgh, including youth, individuals with mental health issues and/or disabilities, victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, the homeless, and LGBTQIA communities:

- The National Network for Safe Communities has been working with PBP to implement the Violence Reduction Intervention (VRI), which is designed to reduce gun violence by focus-

ing on the people at highest risk for violent victimization and offending. A three-pronged approach involving law enforcement, community partners, and social service providers, VRI aims to improve public safety, minimize arrest and incarceration, foster police-community collaboration, and change the narrative in neighborhoods that may have felt unprotected from violent crime but burdened by over-enforcement of low-level offenses.

- PBP recently announced an “Interactions with Transgender Gender-Nonconforming Individuals” policy, the result of a Transgender Working Group involving police, city representatives, and members of the LGBTQIA community.
- With the University of Pittsburgh Law School, the PBP developed a Youth Police Advisory Committee that convenes Pittsburgh students and law enforcement to improve the relationship between the PBP and youth in four critical areas: dialogue, cultural literacy, positive interaction, and youth with disabilities. The committee, helmed by Chief McLay, meets monthly to discuss city-wide issues and develop “Closing the Gap Resolutions.”
- PBP conducts a recurring, eight-hour Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training with a specialized focus on youth. In July, CIT-certified officers from National Initiative pilot sites Minneapolis and Fort Worth attended this training as part of a peer learning opportunity.
- PBP continues to participate in citywide, multi-agency initiatives—including but not limited to My Brother’s Keeper, Cities United, and

the ‘Door to Door Safety Meetings’—to collaboratively improve service and outcomes for underserved youth, including those experiencing homelessness and LGBTQIA young people.

- PBP is working with the Allegheny County Jail to prevent LGBTQIA harassment in detention, seeking an LGBTQIA representative on the jail’s intake board, and coordinating a Transgender Sensitivity training by an LGBTQIA community organization for Allegheny County Jail staff.
- PBP is hosting a series of meetings with the American Disabilities Association to improve services for members of the public with disabilities, adopting technology to help police connect the homeless to services, and working with community organizations on a “Lethality Assessment Program” for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.
- Chief McLay and his team continue, on their own accord, to identify and develop projects aimed at building public trust—including the establishment of an “Office of Professional Standards,” increasing officer diversity through recruiting, and progressing towards an “Early Warning System” for officer misconduct.

### **Creating a Baseline for Evaluation**

In fall 2015, the Urban Institute conducted a survey of residents in the Pittsburgh communities most likely to have high levels of police contact and mistrust. The results confirmed that these communities have distrust and suspicion of law enforcement—but the results also demonstrated a significant willingness by residents to work with police to improve public safety, despite that divide. They

also provide a baseline from which the National Initiative will build new, or further tailor existing, interventions in Pittsburgh, and ultimately measure the impact of those interventions.

PBP is working with the National Initiative team to publicize the community survey results within the department and to the public in ways that highlight common ground and set the tone for further action and partnership.

And as part of the National Initiative’s evaluation efforts, the Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School will publish reports and scholarly articles on the results of the interventions in Pittsburgh and their effects on building community trust and justice.

### **Looking to the Future**

With new curricula developed specifically for Pittsburgh on enhancing procedural justice and reducing the impact of implicit bias; a police department with all of its sworn officers undergoing said curricula; a reconciliation process that will start frank engagements between communities and law enforcement to address historical tensions, misconceptions, and mutual mistrust; development and implementation of further trust-building interventions that address a variety of special populations; and development of a baseline for evaluation, the fundamental aspects of the National Initiative’s three pillars are well underway in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The National Initiative commends PBP’s strong leadership and commitment to the project, which has been essential to the significant progress detailed in this status report.

Over the remainder of the project, the National Initiative will continue the rollout and institutional-

ization of its new curricula; raise public awareness of its activities and increase public engagement; measure the impact of its interventions; and develop partnerships with local researchers to address any research gaps identified by its work.

If you are interested in getting involved, or have suggestions, questions, or comments about the National Initiative, please reach out to us at [info@trustandjustice.org](mailto:info@trustandjustice.org) or contact the National Initiative's Pittsburgh Site Liaison, Commander Eric Holmes, at [eric.holmes@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:eric.holmes@pittsburghpa.gov) or (412) 323-7814. We look forward to hearing from you.