

# Stockton

## 2016 STATUS REPORT



### **STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA 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.

Stockton 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

Stockton is unique among the six pilot sites for having an existing procedural justice training program. To further the city's commitment to procedurally just policing, the National Initiative worked with the Stockton Police Department to create a comprehensive, first-of-its-kind curriculum tailored specifically for Stockton.

All 400+ sworn officers in the Stockton Police Department (SPD) have completed this curriculum—which was developed with the Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School—and are now 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 and discuss its benefits, and tie back procedural justice practices to policing goals; review the present-day relationship between the police and the community; and help SPD 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 identify ways to institutionalize the curriculum into SPD's Training Academy, and sustain it as a core part of SPD's existing and future policies. Significant progress has been made on this front including:

- Inserting language into officer, sergeant, and Field Training Officer evaluations that requires documentation of procedural justice practices.
- Requiring supervisors to evaluate their officers' understanding and application of procedural justice in transfer requests and promotional examinations.
- Adding the tenets of procedural justice to the department's "Conduct Toward the Public" and "Conduct Toward Fellow Members" policies.
- Revising K-9 policy to be more civilian-friendly.
- Requiring sworn officers to receive annual mental health training and abide by new policies requiring officers to "make every attempt to mediate or diffuse the situation prior to a physical confrontation" with community members experiencing mental health crises.

Outside the department, SPD has become a local and statewide educator on procedural justice:

- The department is working with the Stockton Unified School District Police to train their of-

fficers in procedural justice, and to develop a Public Safety Academy for students.

- SPD is planning to hold procedural justice classes with representatives from the District Attorney's Office, probation, Stockton Peacekeepers (a street outreach group), the Community Engagement Director of the Office of Violence Prevention, mental health workers, and members of local activist and social services groups.
- Beginning in August 2016, SPD will help lead an initiative, headed by California Attorney General Kamala Harris, to train all California police departments in procedural justice.

### **Reducing the Impact of Implicit Bias**

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

SPD 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 SPD on a future 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 be 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 is working closely with SPD leadership to begin on-the-ground reconciliation work in Stockton in the months ahead.

### **Building trust as a central component of law enforcement**

SPD Chief Eric Jones' philosophy of "Principled Policing" incorporates trust-building as a central and complementary goal to traditional law enforcement. This effort is based around the Operation Ceasefire strategy, overseen and lead by Deputy Chief Trevor Womack and in coordination with the California Partnership for Safe Communities, which combines a three-pronged approach of strategical-

ly-applied enforcement, community partnerships reinforcing law enforcement's condemnation of violence, and an offer of help.

Ceasefire requires the department to focus on the small number of individuals most likely to be the victim or perpetrator of gun violence and deliver a respectful but firm deterrent message meant to keep them alive and out of prison. A \$600,000 grant, awarded by the California Board of State and Community Corrections, supports the robust community engagement and planning efforts of the strategy.

In addition to prevention efforts, Neighborhood Impact Teams canvas neighborhoods in the aftermath of serious violence to check on residents and make them aware of the trauma and mental health resources available to them.

Further, in the immediate aftermath of high-intensity law enforcement actions, officers are required to "make a deposit in the community bank account" by having at least one friendly, non-crisis interaction with a member of the public. Officers inform residents about the reasons for significant police operations in their neighborhoods, and officers and community members are given an opportunity to have a non-adversarial interaction.

Lastly, eight Strategic Community Officers have been assigned by SPD to some of the neighborhoods with the highest mistrust of the police in order to further expand the department's engagement with community members outside of calls for service.

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

The National Initiative team is designing and implementing trust-building interventions that address the following populations in Stockton: im-

migrants, youth, and LGBTQIA communities and victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

- Procedural justice trainers from SPD command staff have begun meeting regularly with at-risk youth, community members with histories of mental health issues, and formerly incarcerated adults to describe the procedural justice curriculum and other departmental efforts to build trust.
- Members of Chief Jones' Community Advisory Board take part in an ongoing conversation series on race and policing and have begun a series of small meetings with victims of community and police violence. These meetings engage some of the most difficult questions facing law enforcement, offering the honest discussions required for restorative interactions.
- In an effort to strengthen its relationship with immigrant communities, SPD's L.E.A.L.E.S. (Latino Education About Law Enforcement Services) program established a formal policy of non-inquiry regarding citizenship status, which contributed to a 16% increase in crime reporting, including robberies and aggravated assaults. L.E.A.L.E.S. also organized a campaign to help Latino residents, particularly migrant workers, sign up for bank accounts through the Mexican Consulate, without citizenship verification.
- SPD continues to conduct "Courageous Conversations"—a series of structured discussions between law enforcement and local youth—within the school system, in which both sides

openly discuss sources of mistrust, misunderstanding, and conflict.

- Stockton is also working with the Pride Center, a local community organization, to produce a 5-minute LGBTQIA sensitivity training video, which will be delivered department-wide once completed.

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

In fall 2015, the Urban Institute conducted a survey of residents in the Stockton 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 Stockton, and ultimately measure the impact of those interventions.

SPD 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 Stockton and their effects on building community trust and justice.

### **Looking to the Future**

With new curricula developed specifically for Stockton 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 Stockton, California.

The National Initiative commends SPD'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 institutionalization 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 Stockton Site Liaison, Lt. Jim Chraska, at [James.Chraska@stocktonca.gov](mailto:James.Chraska@stocktonca.gov) or (209) 937-8218. We look forward to hearing from you.

**National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice** | Learn more at [trustandjustice.org](http://trustandjustice.org)

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