City officials guide to

POLICING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

NATIONAL LEAGUE of CITIES

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The National League of Cities (NLC) is the nation's leading advocacy organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. Through its membership and partnerships with state municipal leagues, NLC serves as a resource and advocate for more than 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans.

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Trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve is essential to the stability of our communities, the integrity of our criminal justice system, and the safe and effective delivery of policing services. City officials can play a significant role in fostering that trust and promoting transparency, equity, and safety within their communities.

FOREWORD

When it comes to governing a city, nothing is more important than protecting the public's safety. In a civil society, elected officials bear the responsibility of managing a city's public safety programs, including its police department. By accepting this responsibility and holding law enforcement accountable for their actions, local elected officials play a key role in building trust between police and the communities they serve.

The purpose of this guide is to inform elected officials about the relevant recommendations of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing and provide guidance on how they can work together with their city's law enforcement officials to implement the principles of community policing. This guide is intended to give an executive overview of the key recommendations of the task force report that relate directly to the management and oversight of policing functions.

Elected officials must work closely together with their city's law enforcement officials to ensure police officers have the support, resources and training they need to serve their communities with honor, integrity, moral character, and courage.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY POLICING?

Community policing is the concept that trust and mutual respect between police and the communities they serve is critical to public safety. It is a law enforcement strategy that emphasizes the systematic use of community engagement, partnerships, and problem-solving techniques to proactively address conditions that cultivate crime and social disorder. Community policing emphasizes a “guardians not warriors” mindset that can significantly benefit both police officers and the communities they serve. Collaborating with community members to identify needs, establish best practices, and provide feedback for law enforcement is common practice. Community policing requires cooperation among police, citizens, and local decision-makers in order to forge effective partnerships that combat criminal activity.

While cities have made tremendous progress through the adoption of community policing strategies for positive, proactive engagement with the public, there is much more to be done. Although it is down nationally, in many cities across the country crime continues to be a significant barrier to individual and family safety, quality of life, and social cohesion, particularly in racially diverse and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CITY OFFICIALS?

Cities and towns annually spend more than $64 billion on law enforcement operations alone. A majority of these funds go to employing more than 600,000 law enforcement professionals on a full-time basis.[1]

Local elected leaders must work together at all levels of government to bolster community-oriented policing programs in cities. This will require a challenging mix of research, policy reform, and political capital. In partnership with the federal government, cities need to be committed to evaluating police performance and taking all necessary steps to make our cities safer for all residents.

Local elected leaders have played an essential role in bringing together police chiefs, frontline officers, civic leaders, stakeholders, nonprofits, and associations to help develop effective policy to build trust between communities and law enforcement. Local officials also play an essential role in integrating the philosophy of community policing in every aspect of local government operations.

A common misconception is that community policing initiatives are exclusively targeted towards law enforcement agencies. On the contrary, many municipal agencies engage citizens through surveys and public forums to help identify which crime problems are priorities for citizens. City officials need to work closely with law enforcement executives to promote the philosophy of community policing by adopting a community governance model, which encourages partnerships among municipal agencies to best respond to and address citywide issues.

In addition to partnerships among municipal agencies, most city administrations already have access to existing partnerships with community stakeholders. By collaborating with the business community, faith- based organizations, nonprofits, victim service providers, and health service providers, cities and stakeholders have the ability to address policing and crime issues in a healthy and thorough manner.

PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING REPORT

On December 18, 2014, President Barack Obama signed an executive order establishing the Task Force on 21st Century Policing. The President charged the task force with identifying best practices and offering recommendations on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust.

There are a total of 63 recommendations in the Task Force's report. Most of the recommendations are directed at the approximately 18,000 state and local law enforcement agencies located throughout the country. The recommendations include promoting officer wellness and safety (by equipping them with individual tactical first aid kits and anti-ballistic vests, for example) and creating a "Blue Alert" warning system to enlist the public's help in locating suspects who have killed a law enforcement officer in the line of duty.

Other recommendations call for law enforcement agencies to put in place programs designed to promote positive interactions between police and communities; to foster the adoption and use of new technologies to enhance public trust and public safety; to provide opportunities for additional training on a range of topics, including leadership, for police at all levels; and to establish policies that prioritize de-escalation and avoid provocative tactics.

THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS, EACH WITH ACTION ITEMS, ARE ORGANIZED AROUND SIX MAIN TOPIC AREAS, OR "PILLARS." THEY ARE:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Building Trust and Legitimacy	Policy and Oversight	Technology and Social Media	Community Policing and Crime Reduction	Officer Training and Education	Officer Safety and Wellness

THE TASK FORCE REPORT ALSO OFFERED TWO OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS:

The President should support the creation of a National Crime and Justice Task Force to examine all areas of criminal justice and propose reforms;

The President should support programs that take a comprehensive and inclusive look at community-based initiatives addressing core issues such as poverty, education, and health and safety.

PILLAR ONE: TRUST

Pillar One seeks to provide focused recommendations on building trust among communities, local government agencies, and police departments. City leaders play a vital role in making sure the culture of law enforcement embraces a "guardians not warriors" mindset and works to build trust and legitimacy both within agencies and with the public. City leaders need to be part of the process in making sure law enforcement agencies adopt procedural justice[3] as the guiding principle for internal and external policies and practices that guide their interactions with rank and file officers and with the citizens they serve.

City leaders should aim to work with law enforcement executives to promote a culture of transparency and accountability that works to build public trust with police officers and other local government officials. They should also work together to develop community satisfaction surveys to measure the level of trust neighborhoods have with police officers.

City leaders also can play a significant role in working with their law enforcement executives to recruit a workforce that exhibits a broad range of diversity in race, gender, language, life experience, and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities. City officials also need to understand that policing is very dangerous and taxing, and puts a

considerable strain on officer's health, family, and mental state. It requires considerable commitment and dedication to serving the community and putting your life on the line. It is a generational and fraternal profession. It is also a profession that at times can be demoralized and vilified. To overcome these obstacles, city leaders need to work with law enforcement executives to change the culture of policing in their local departments and within their communities. Law enforcement agencies needs to be encouraged to attract candidates that might not fit the normal definition of police. Above all, the local leaders need to work to ensure the safety and well-being of officers by providing them sufficient training and getting new officers out of the patrol car and into the community.

PILLAR TWO: POLICY AND OVERSIGHT

Pillar Two emphasizes that established law enforcement agency policies must reflect the values of the community they are serving. Depending on the size of a city, different neighborhoods within that city may have a very different value system when it comes to interacting with law enforcement. To establish effective policies that serve all neighborhoods within a city, local leaders need to work with law enforcement executives to develop a process of collaboration with community members, especially in communities and neighborhoods disproportionately affected by crime. In collaborating with community members, and improving these relationships, law enforcement agencies should also work to develop policies and strategies for deploying resources that aim to reduce crime, increase community engagement, and foster cooperation. City leaders also need to work with law enforcement executives to ensure that all appropriate policies and aggregate data are public and transparent.

City officials must also be aware of local law enforcement agency policies on the use of force. They must work with law enforcement executives to ensure that officers are well-trained on methods of de-escalating incidents

Grand Rapids City Manager Announces Recommendations to Increase Police Transparency

In January 2015, the city manager of Grand Rapids, Michigan, announced several recommendations aimed at increasing transparency within the city's police department and ultimately improving the relationship between the police and the community. In an attempt to resolve feelings of mistrust between community members and the Grand Rapids Police Department, City Manager Greg Sundstrom laid out a 12-point plan to the city commission that proposed: revised hiring practices, enhanced training, development of body camera protocols, analysis of racial disparities in arrests and traffic stops, review of diversity and inclusion practices, and an educational campaign about the city's civilian appeal board, among other recommendations. Despite some hesitance from some of the city's officers upon hearing the details the plan, it was drafted with input and support from the city's chief of police. Since the plan's rollout in early 2015, the Grand Rapids Police Department has been working diligently to put the policy recommendations into action.[4 5]

before they get out of hand and leave officers with no choice but to use force to protect both the public and themselves. City leaders also need to fully understand how their law enforcement officers deal with mass demonstrations, paying special attention in particular to the appropriate use of equipment acquired from the military such as fully automatic weapons, sniper rifles, tear gas, and armored personnel carriers.

City leaders should ensure that their law enforcement agency policies and procedures are well-maintained, well-researched, and up-to-date by periodically reviewing them and conducting non-punitive peer reviews of critical incidents separate from criminal and administrative investigations. To perform these functions, many cities have established civilian oversight mechanisms within their communities. The decision to establish a civilian oversight board rests solely with elected or appointed officials.

To help cities develop effective law enforcement policy and oversight, the U.S. Department of Justice, through its Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and Office of Justice Programs (OJP), can provide assistance to jurisdictions. City leaders should work with their law enforcement agencies to determine what programs might be available to assist agencies in developing appropriate policies for serving the community.

PILLAR THREE: TECHNOLOGY & SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of technology can improve policing practices and build community trust and legitimacy, but its implementation must be built on a defined policy framework with clearly delineated purposes and goals. One example of the effective use of technology is requiring law enforcement officers to wear body cameras (BWCs) as they interact with the public. A recent 12-month study examining the use of BWCs by law enforcement found that officers wearing the cameras had 87.5 percent fewer incidents of use of force – and 59 percent fewer complaints – than officers not wearing the cameras.[6]

City leaders should fully understand the additional steps that need to be taken when requiring officers to use BWCs. These include:

- storing the data from the BWCs
- securing and restricting access to the data
- adhering to privacy rights
- properly redacting the data to comply with freedom of information requests by the public and news sources
- complying with state evidentiary and data retention requirements
- training officers on the use of the equipment

While the effective use of technology and social media can enhance community policing initiatives, there are often limits – and sometimes serious consequences – to using technology that could likewise put a city and its law enforcement agency at risk. City leaders need to fully understand both the positive and negative implications of using such technology before they authorize its use in order to foster transparency.

PILLAR FOUR: COMMUNITY POLICING & CRIME REDUCTION

Pillar Four focuses on the importance of community policing as a guiding philosophy for all stakeholders.

City leaders need to work closely with their law enforcement agencies to reach

Montgomery County Council Takes Steps Toward Improving Police-Community Relations

In mid-2015, Montgomery County Police Chief Tom Manger took the many tragic events that were occurring in cities around the country as a cue to meet with the Montgomery County Council for a discussion about police-community relations. The objective of the discussion was to prioritize building trust between the police force and the community. "What every segment of the community wants to know is, 'Are we listening to them?' 'Do we care about the service that we're providing them?'" said Chief Manger in an open meeting with the county's elected officials. He then expressed the police force's commitment to fairness, impartiality, and doing right by all members of the community. The Montgomery County Police Department is taking several steps to improve the police force's presence and skills. Officers are being trained to de-escalate situations as well as consider the socio-economic makeup and history of different neighborhoods, and a body camera pilot program was recently approved.[7]

out to community residents. Doing so can help to identify problems, foster a culture of collaboration, and implement solutions that produce meaningful results for the community. City leaders need to ensure their law enforcement agencies develop and adopt policies and strategies that reinforce the importance of community engagement in managing public safety.

Community engagement needs to focus on multidisciplinary, community-oriented team approaches for planning, implementing, and responding to crisis situations with complex causal factors. Law enforcement agencies should engage with other city agencies to develop a multifaceted approach to community governance. Communities should support a culture and practice of policing that reflects the values of protection and the promotion of the dignity of all community members - especially the most vulnerable, such as children and at-risk youth.

Communities need to affirm and recognize the voices of young people in community decision making, facilitate youth participation in research and problem solving, and develop and fund youth leadership training and life skills through positive youth-police collaboration and interactions.

PILLAR FIVE: TRAINING & EDUCATION

Pillar Five focuses on the training and education needs of law enforcement.

City leaders need to understand, support, and encourage law enforcement officers to receive training on community policing principles. Training programs in community policing should explore the dramatic shifts in society, technology, criminal trends, economics, and the very definition of "community" relative to law enforcement. Law enforcement officers need to understand problem solving tools, practice de-escalation methods, discover examples of successful police and community partnerships, and be educated about directly linking to numerous community-policing resources.

City leaders need to ensure their law enforcement officers are effectively trained to:

- de-escalate incidents before they become violent
- assist individuals in crisis or living with mental disabilities
- appropriately interact with people facing drug addiction
- avoid personal and implicit bias and prejudice
- understand and respect racial and cultural differences
- promote the principles of policing in a democratic society
- effectively implement procedural justice procedures
- develop effective communications, social interaction and tactical skills
- build strong and trusting relationships with the community they serve

PILLAR SIX: OFFICER WELLNESS & SAFETY

Pillar Six emphasizes the support and proper implementation of officer wellness and safety as a multi-partner effort. Every day, law enforcement officers face dangerous situations that can adversely affect their mental state and future actions, which in turn could affect how they respond to the next incident.

City leaders need to work with their law enforcement executives to ensure police officers are at their best both on and off the job. Law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to embrace injury reduction and mitigation practices, develop nutrition recommendations for law enforcement officers, ensure traffic safety (including the wearing of seatbelts and the proper use of cell phones while driving), develop skills for situational awareness, provide ongoing physical training and endurance programs, and, most importantly, support mental health treatment for officers and their families.

SAMPLE OF COMMON COMMUNITY POLICING STRATEGIES

For community policing to work best, these (and other) individual strategies should be linked by a broad municipal commitment to the community policing effort.

Community Partnerships	Organizational Change	Problem-Solving
Post crime information on police websites	Assign officers to specific geographic locations for extended periods	Conduct community surveys to identify problems and evaluate performance
Hold regular meetings with local businesses	Incorporate technology and data systems that make information more accessible to officers and the community	Examine and incorporate best practices from other agencies
Inform citizens about major police initiatives	Train all staff in community policing principles	Seek input from members of the community to identify and prioritize problems
Use foot patrol/bike patrol	Increase officer discretion and accountability for solving problems at their level	Encourage and enable officers to think about problem solving when responding to calls for service
Get feedback from partners about the nature and priority of community problems	Reduce hierarchical structures	Evaluate the causes for crime hot spots and develop appropriate responses based on underlying conditions
Brainstorm new solutions with stakeholders	Give officers latitude in developing innovative responses to problems	Gather information about repeat offenders to make future offending more difficult
Use partners to help implement responses to problems	Encourage officers to propose innovative solution to long-standing problems	Conduct surveys of the physical environment of problem locations to make places less susceptible to crime
Operate a citizen's police academy	Build community policing into mission/vision/strategic plans	Systematically document problem solving efforts in a database

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component within the U.S. Department of Justice dedicated to the concept that trust and mutual respect between police and the communities they serve is critical to public safety. This concept is the foundation of community policing and ensures that police and community stakeholders partner in solving our nation's crime challenges. Community policing is a law enforcement strategy that focuses on community partnerships, problem-solving and organizational transformation. The COPS Office mission is to advance public safety through community policing.

- The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides innovative leadership to federal, state, local, and tribal justice systems by disseminating state-of-the art knowledge and practices across America and providing grants for the implementation of these crime-fighting strategies. Because most of the responsibility for crime control and prevention falls to law enforcement officers in states, cities, and neighborhoods, the federal government can be effective in these areas only to the extent that it can enter into partnerships with these officers. Therefore, OJP does not directly carry out law enforcement and justice activities. Instead, OJP works in partnership with the justice community to identify the most pressing crime-related challenges confronting the justice system and to provide information, training, coordination, and innovative strategies and approaches for addressing these challenges.

- The OJP Diagnostic Center is a technical assistance resource designed to help state, city, county, and tribal policymakers and community leaders use data to make decisions about criminal justice programming.

- The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is a dynamic organization that serves as the professional voice of law enforcement. IACP addresses cutting-edge issues confronting law enforcement through advocacy, programs and research, as well as training and other professional services. IACP is a comprehensive professional organization that supports the law enforcement leaders of today and develops the leaders of tomorrow. Each year, since 1998, the International Association of Chiefs of Police Community Policing Committee has recognized the best practices of agencies around the world through its Community Policing Program. Entries are categorized by population, featuring innovative ideas utilizing the power of community policing, through collaboration and partnerships, to make local, national, and global communities safer from crime and terrorism.

- The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) serves as the conscience of law enforcement by being committed to the concept of "Justice by Action." NOBLE has nearly 60 chapters and represents over 3,000 members worldwide, including chief executive officers, command-level law enforcement officials from

federal, state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies, and criminal justice practitioners. The combined fiscal budget oversight of its membership exceeds $8 billion. NOBLE serves more than 60,000 youth through its major program components, which include Mentoring, Education, Leadership Development, and Safety.

- The National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) is a non-profit organization that brings together individuals or agencies working to establish or improve oversight of police officers in the United States. NACOLE welcomes people and organizations committed to fair and professional law enforcement that is responsive to community needs. NACOLE is dedicated to promoting greater police accountability through the establishment or improvement of citizen oversight agencies by organizing an annual training conference to increase the knowledge and skills of staff members and volunteers who work in oversight, providing technical assistance and advice to jurisdictions that are considering the creation or revitalization of oversight bodies, identifying best practices as they emerge from the experiences of members, encouraging networking, communication and information-sharing to counter the isolation inherent in the profession, and furnishing information to government officials and community representatives that will support their advocacy of oversight in their states, counties, cities and towns.

- The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) is a police research and policy organization and a provider of management services, technical assistance, and executive-level education to support law enforcement agencies. PERF helps to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership, public debate of police and criminal justice issues, and research and policy development.

- The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) is the world's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers, with more than 325,000 members in more than 2,100 lodges. It is the voice of those who dedicate their lives to protecting and serving our communities. FOP is committed to improving the working conditions of law enforcement officers and the safety of those they serve through education, legislation, information, community involvement, and employee representation.

- The National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) is a coalition of police units and associations from across the United States. NAPO was organized for the purpose of advancing the interests of America's law enforcement officers through legislative advocacy, political action, and education.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Justice offers funding opportunities to local governments to support a variety of law enforcement activities, provide training and technical assistance, and implement local programs that improve community policing practices and the overall criminal justice system.

Local governments can seek financial assistance from the Department of Justice to support:

- law enforcement training programs
- hiring additional law enforcement personnel
- prosecution and court programs
- prevention and education programs
- drug treatment and enforcement
- crime victim and witness support services
- planning, evaluation, and technology improvement programs, including body-worn cameras and bullet-proof vests
- smart policing initiatives for law enforcement agencies to develop and analyze innovative policing methods to address specific criminal problems or criminogenic circumstances
- programs to reduce gun and gang crime in communities by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing these programs with additional tools necessary to be successful
- programs that advance the practice of community policing in law enforcement agencies through training and technical assistance, the development of innovative community policing strategies, applied research, guidebooks, and best practices that are national in scope
- programs that provide training and technical assistance to judges, court administrators, lawyers and others who wish to experiment with the new models, including the implementation of drug courts and community courts
- programs that provide resources for law enforcement agencies interested in developing or enhancing a volunteer program and for citizens who wish to volunteer their time and skills with a community law enforcement agency
- programs that provide strategic, coordinated training and technical assistance to help communities plan, implement, and sustain youth violence prevention efforts

Annually, the federal government provides more than $2.5 billion to support state and local law enforcement activities and criminal justice programs. Thousands of municipalities have benefited from this assistance. Local leaders should work closely with their law enforcement executives and Congressional representatives to identify federal resources that could improve their community policing programs and help build trust between police and the communities they serve.[8]

CONCLUSION

The National League of Cities (NLC) has created this publication to address the importance of community policing and to outline the related issues that are relevant to local elected officials. Community policing is a comprehensive approach to public safety rather than a set of easily-implemented steps. Because it requires partnerships and a culture that actively embraces community engagement in policy-making and intervention, city leaders must often serve as champions of this approach and work in concert with law enforcement agencies and other decision-makers to underscore its importance and ensure that it becomes a part of the community's doctrine. Although community policing and the efforts surrounding it may look different in each municipality, there are several thematic take-away ideas from this publication that local elected officials should consider as they work to integrate its tenets into their local public safety cultures.

1 **Foster trust:** Trust between police and the communities they serve is perhaps the most critical component of the community policing concept. City leaders are central to cultivating that trust within their communities. They can encourage their local law enforcement agencies to embrace the "guardians not warriors" approach to public safety and to develop positive, trust-based relationships with all segments of the community they serve.

2 **Align policies with community values:** For a number of social and historical reasons, different neighborhoods have different value systems and experiences relative to engagement with law enforcement officials. Local elected officials should take notice of the established culture and value system pertaining to public safety and create policies collaboratively with community members that are practical and appropriate.

3 **Embrace new technologies:** New technological innovations, such as body cameras and the use of social media in community engagement, can offer opportunities to build transparency, trust, and legitimacy into day-to-day law enforcement operations. Use of these new tools must be carefully considered, and a clearly defined policy framework must be developed to underscore the purposes and goals of implementation.

4 **Prioritize community engagement:** City and law enforcement officials should take a "big picture," multifaceted approach to community governance. Much of this should center on building and sustaining the type of culture that is necessary for successful community engagement. This means working collaboratively with citizens to develop a culture and practice of policing that reflects the value of protection and the promotion of the dignity of all members of the community.

5 **Invest in training:** City leaders should advocate for adequate training for the law enforcement officers in their communities. Training programs should encompass the core values of the community policing philosophy, while also recognizing new trends and dramatic shifts in society, technology, crime, economics, and socio-political factors. Law enforcement officers should be oriented towards problem solving and de-escalation, and the practice should be guided by the numerous community policing resources available to them.

6 **Remember to cultivate the wellbeing of officers:** City leaders need to prioritize the mental and physical wellbeing of their community's law enforcement officers, ensuring they have the tools to be at their best both on and off the job. This includes embracing injury reduction and mitigation practices, developing nutrition recommendations for public safety officers, providing ongoing physical training and endurance programs, helping officers develop skills for situational awareness, and, most importantly, supporting mental health treatment for officers and their families.

Endnotes

1 http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/lpd13ppp.pdf
2 http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/TaskForce_FinalReport.pdf
3 "Procedural justice (sometimes called procedural fairness) describes the idea that how individuals regard the justice system is tied more to the perceived fairness of the process and how they were treated rather than to the perceived fairness of the outcome. In other words, even someone who receives a traffic ticket or "loses" his case in court will rate the system favorably if he feels that the outcome is arrived at fairly." (http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/09-2013/fairness_as_a_crime_prevention_tool.asp)
4 http://woodtv.com/2015/01/13/plan-proposed-for-better-grpd-community-relations/
5 http://woodtv.com/2015/12/08/grpd-community-relations-plan-still-in-progress/
6 Ariel Barak, William A. Farrar, and Alex Sutherland, "The Effect of Police Body-Worn Cameras on Use of Force and Citizens' Complaints Against the Police: A Randomized Controlled Trial," Journal of Quantitative Criminology 2014
7 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2HR2AohjCA&feature=youtu.be
8 http://www.justice.gov/business/grants

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