

An Introduction to 21st Century Policing

In the past several years, VLCT PACIF has seen a significant increase in the number and cost of liability, workers' compensation, and auto liability claims that are related to law enforcement operations. As a result, PACIF had to raise its law enforcement liability rate by 28.2 percent and its law enforcement workers' compensation rate by 33.6 percent for 2016. To help our members stem future increases, we are building a comprehensive law enforcement risk management program in line with the recommendations of *The Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*. VLCT Risk Management staff is currently working with PACIF members and outside law enforcement consultants to establish and deliver programs that will be useful to our member police departments.

In December 2014, Barack Obama established the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Comprising 11 professionals and academics in the fields of law enforcement (including Philadelphia's Police Commissioner, the Deputy Chief of Dekalb County, Georgia, and the Chief of the Tucson Police Department) as well as criminal justice, social justice, civil rights, and community action, this task force was charged with "identifying best practices and offering recommendations on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust." The task force heard testimony from more than 100 people from diverse stakeholder groups and also read many research articles and written testimony from other concerned individuals before issuing its report.

The report, released last May, begins, "Trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve is essential in a democracy. It is key to the stability of our communities, the integrity of our criminal justice system, and the safe and effective delivery of policing services." The body of the report is organized in six main topic areas (or "pillars"): Building Trust and Legitimacy, Policy and Oversight, Technology and Social Media, Community Policing and Crime Reduction, Officer Training and Education, and Officer Safety and Wellness. Each pillar is explained and has pointed recommendations with precise action items. Future issues of the *VLCT News* will provide information on each pillar.

According to Jim Baker, Director of Law Enforcement Operation and Support at The International Association of Chiefs of Police, "there is a way to control insurance costs by adopting the six pillars that were identified in *The Final Report of The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*. ... "Whether you like it or not, it's here to stay and will become the new way of policing in the future," he says. "Vermont will miss an opportunity if it does not sit down and measure itself against the six pillars."

To learn more, the 116-page Final Report (warning: it's 20 MB) is posted at www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf.

— Joe Damiata
Manager, Underwriting and Safety & Health Promotion