

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

IACP National Policy Summit on Community-Police Relations:

ADVANCING A CULTURE OF COHESION AND COMMUNITY TRUST



Pre-Publication Final Draft- Executive Summary
Presented by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
To the White House Task Force on 21st Century Policing
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Executive Summary

Law enforcement executives recognize the importance of maintaining strong ties with all segments of their communities. Many have invested immeasurable energy and resources in building relationships through community policing efforts. It is also clear from recent events in Missouri, New York, and Ohio that strained community-police relationships continue to exist. Looking beyond those incidents to the entire American policing community, it is cause for concern when any segment of any community lacks confidence or trust in their local police. Wherever that mistrust exists, high-profile incidents between officers and citizens like those in recent months serve only to inflame emotions and erode trust. As we have seen, the aftermath of these incidents can lead to cycles of anger and civil unrest, further damaging the relationship between the police and the citizens they serve.

Law enforcement leaders across the U.S. strive daily to build strong, trusting community-police relationships. Although many departments have made great strides in community policing, it is clear that there is still more to be done. True change in the area of perceived or real social injustice will take time and commitment from the police profession and their communities. Recent events are a strong reminder that we must never be complacent in our efforts to sustain trust across police and the communities they serve. We must continue to re-evaluate, recommit, and renew our focus on sustaining trusting relationships with all segments of the community. This movement is not “revolutionary,” but rather, “evolutionary.” It is change that takes time, patience, and when successful results in the betterment of all. This is an

opportunity to lead for both police and community leaders that cannot go unattended.

In response to events in Ferguson (MO), New York City (NY), and Cleveland (OH), the IACP held a National Policy Summit on Community-Police Relations in October 2014 to open dialogue regarding ways to build and sustain trusting community-police relationships. The summit brought together police chiefs from around the nation, national leaders of community- and faith-based organizations, researchers, and representatives from nationally renowned and distinguished professional organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Leadership Council on Civil Rights, the Police Foundation, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) to discuss and debate this challenge. This document is the resulting summit report. It is a call to action for every police executive and every police agency to take stock and recommit to the principles of justice and freedom as set forth in the Constitution and its amendments. Each citizen’s safety and civil rights are at the core of the oath that police officers take at the outset of their careers.

The report is designed to serve as a roadmap for law enforcement, communities, and stakeholders to build meaningful, sustainable, trusting, and effective working relationships. Summit participants outlined three conceptual elements of building community-police relationships. The report defines those elements — communication, partnerships,

and trust — and provides recommendations for improvement in each.

In addition, the report outlines a series of tangible strategies and steps for law enforcement executives to begin to build trust in their communities. Those strategies include the following:

Recommended Strategy 1: Begin to redefine policing in a 21st century democratic society utilizing shared definitions of roles, responsibilities, and priorities. Understanding law enforcement’s role of enforcing rule of law, state laws/statutes, and municipal ordinances changes in the world we live in requires adjustments to our approach to policing. Law enforcement leaders must take the lead in working with the community to define innovative ways to police in the 21st Century.

Recommended Strategy 2: Strengthen and/or rebuild the capacity of police agencies to develop legitimate, sustainable relationships with their communities, and with unique segments within the community.

Recommended Strategy 3: Implement meaningful ways to define and measure success in community-police relationships as a community.

Finally, the report acknowledges that the challenges facing law enforcement with regard to developing relationships with the community were not created in a vacuum, and will not be solved by law enforcement alone. Instead, the solution lies in making progress in a number of areas, and requires coordination and collaboration at all levels. Therefore, recommendations for key stakeholders are also included in this report.