

A NEWSLETTER OF THE POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM



**Save the Date – PERF's 2019 Annual Meeting  
May 28-31, Miami Beach, FL**

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## PERF Was Busy in 2018....

PERF HAS WRAPPED UP ANOTHER EXCITING YEAR in 2018. We've worked with many PERF members to explore critical issues, held conferences in Washington, DC and across the country, and published more than a dozen reports. As always, PERF is grateful to our members for their continued support and engagement.

*Here are some highlights of PERF's 2018 activities:*

### The Changing Nature of Crime and Criminal Investigations

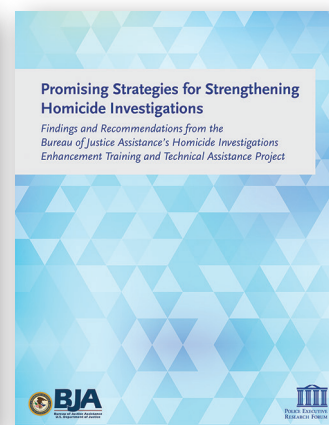
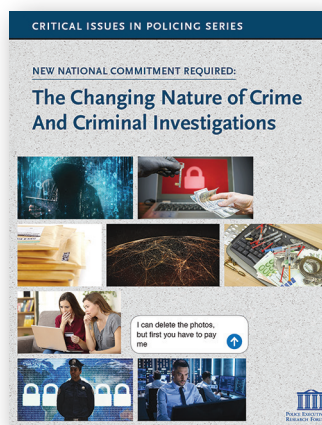
This report, released in February, details a PERF conference in which nearly 200 police officers and other leaders discussed how the work of police officers and detectives is changing.

Many of the changes involve using computers to commit old types of crime in new ways. For example, drug traffickers are ordering lethal drugs like fentanyl on the internet, having it delivered from China, and then selling it and shipping it to customers through the U.S. mail!

PERF's report,<sup>1</sup> which is part of the Critical Issues in Policing Series supported by the Motorola Solutions Foundation, includes guidance on specific steps that every police or sheriff's department should take to address these changes in how criminals are committing crimes.

### Promising Strategies for Strengthening Homicide Investigations

This report<sup>2</sup> documents the common challenges identified in five police departments where PERF conducted reviews of homicide investigation policies and practices (Baltimore, Cleveland, Houston, Miami, and Pittsburgh), and provides



33 recommendations for best practices in all agencies, in the following areas:

- Policies and procedures;
- Processes for selecting detectives and homicide supervisors;
- Training on how to conduct investigations;
- Staffing and caseload management;
- Supervision, accountability and oversight;
- Establishing a Cold Case Unit;
- Internal coordination of units within a police department that are involved in homicide investigations;
- Coordination with external agencies such as prosecutors, medical examiners, probation and parole offices, and external crime labs; and
- Digital evidence and crime analysis.

This project was supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

1. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/ChangingNatureofCrime.pdf>

2. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/homicideinvestigations.pdf>

## Promoting Excellence in First-Line Supervision: New Approaches to Selection, Training, and Leadership Development

This report,<sup>3</sup> published in October, documents PERF's April 2018 conference in Washington, DC that examined the changing role of first-line supervisors, and what agencies need to do to select, train, and develop their personnel to meet changing demands. Also part of the Critical Issues series supported by the Motorola Solutions Foundation, the report concludes with 11 recommendations, including the following:

- If civil service regulations or collective bargaining agreements limit your ability to conduct adequate testing of candidates for sergeant or to select the best candidates for these positions, look for ways to challenge these regulations or agreements.
- Use additional testing tools besides written tests, such as assessment centers, oral boards, and work history reviews.
- Provide comprehensive training that goes beyond state mandates, and give sergeants training before they hit the streets. Provide sergeants with scenario-based training, particularly on high-risk encounters.
- Keep officer-to-sergeant ratios down, so sergeants have more time to spend on the street.
- Provide sergeants with mobile digital technology that allows them to complete more administrative tasks in the field.

## Building and Sustaining an Officer Wellness Program: Lessons from the San Diego Police Department

With support from the COPS Office, PERF conducted a case study of the San Diego Police Department's officer wellness program, which is one of the top programs in the

country. This publication<sup>4</sup> offers policy and program recommendations, including the following:

- To create a culture of wellness and successful wellness programming, establish wellness-related training that engages new officers early and also reaches senior employees at important points in their careers.
- Include civilian department members in wellness services. Civilians experience their own unique stressors while working in a police department and also need support.
- Achieving acceptance and building trust takes time, and wellness programs succeed only if members of a department are invested in them. In San Diego, the Wellness Unit has pursued a strategy of visibility and persistence, while maintaining its reputation for discretion.
- When looking for employees to provide wellness services, recruit for skills and personality, rather than rank. Specifically, look for employees who are non-judgmental, compassionate, experienced, trustworthy, and who demonstrate wellness strategies in their own lives.

## Officer Safety and Wellness Technical Assistance

With funding from the COPS Office, PERF is providing technical assistance to agencies interested in improving their safety and wellness program. Project work has begun in the first two sites.

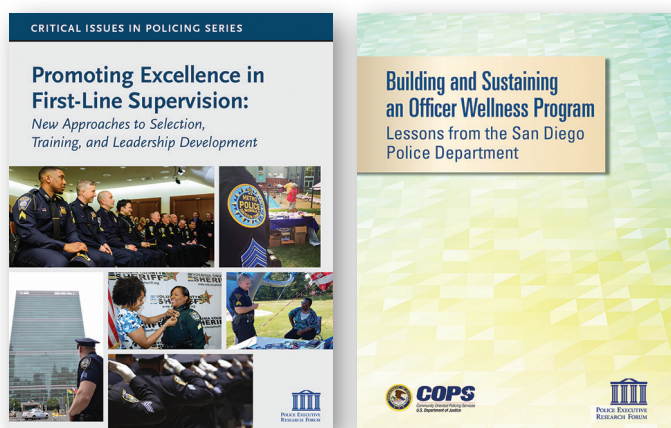
## NIJ Officer Safety and Wellness

PERF and NORC at the University of Chicago are conducting a nationally representative survey of law enforcement agencies' policies and programs regarding officer safety and wellness indicators. To date, we have received more than 1,000 agency responses and nearly 1,100 responses from individual officers.

## The Police Response to Homelessness

This 84-page report,<sup>5</sup> supported by the Motorola Solutions Foundation, was published in June and distributed to PERF members, federal agency officials, and others. The report summarizes a national conference that PERF held in January in Long Beach, CA, which explored the growing role that many police departments are taking to address homelessness in their communities. The report includes 11 steps that agencies can take to improve their response to homelessness in their communities. The steps include the following:

- Take a problem-solving approach to homelessness.
- Create a dedicated Homeless Outreach Team.

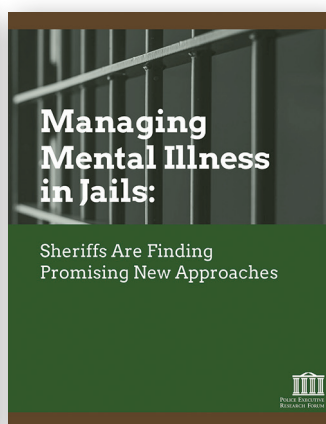
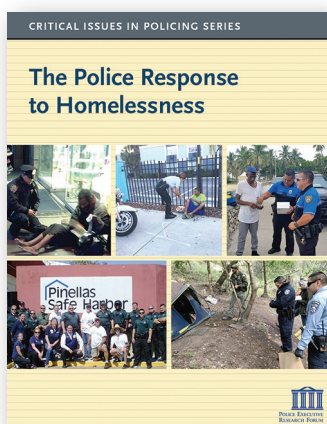


3. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/FirstLineSupervision.pdf>

4. Full report: <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/SanDiegoOSW.pdf>. Executive summary: <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/SanDiegoOSWESL.pdf>.

5. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceResponseToHomelessness.pdf>





- And work to identify and eliminate unnecessary, counterproductive barriers that prevent homeless persons from improving their lives. For example, eliminate fines and fees that the criminal justice system imposes for minor offenses.

## The Changing Dynamics of Policing and the Police Workforce

PERF conducted a survey of police executives and held a conference in early December to explore the changing dynamics of policing and the police workforce. Participants discussed the social, economic, and generational trends that are reshaping policing. For example, many of today's young people are not interested in staying in the same job or career for decades, and many place a high value on the "work/life balance" – spending more time with their families and pursuing interests other than their jobs.

Participants offered ideas about what law enforcement agencies can do to embrace these changes, including promising approaches that some agencies are undertaking to recruit and retain the next generation of officers.

PERF's conference, which was supported by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, was covered by the Washington Post.<sup>6</sup> A full report, including findings from a survey of

## PERF's conference on "Changing Dynamics of Policing and the Police Workforce"

PERF members on these issues, will be published in early 2019.

## Managing Mental Illness in Jails: Sheriffs Are Finding Promising New Approaches

This 40-page report<sup>7</sup> details findings from an April 2018 meeting that PERF convened in St. Petersburg, FL to examine promising practices for managing mental illness in jails. The meeting featured presentations from sheriffs who are demonstrating leadership in helping people with mental illness. Almost every program discussed at the conference involved some level of cooperation between sheriffs and community-based service providers, such as mental health care agencies and drug treatment providers. Diverting low-level offenders, especially those with mental health issues, away from the criminal justice system is also seen as a win-win approach.

This is the first major publication in a new PERF program, supported by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, for addressing the challenges facing America's sheriffs.

## Spotlight on Sheriffs

PERF's new "Spotlight on Sheriffs" newsletter is designed to highlight innovations in sheriffs' offices around the country.

**Polk County, FL:** The first issue,<sup>8</sup> published in July, focused on the Polk County, FL Sheriff's Office, which has streamlined its inmate booking process, reduced contraband by digitizing inmate mail, and improved its systems for helping persons with severe mental illness. Polk County also is planning to increase the use of drones to search for missing or wanted persons and to conduct perimeter inspections of jail facilities.

**Denver, CO:** The second issue,<sup>9</sup> published in December, highlights reforms made in the Denver Sheriff Department.

6. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/crime-law/2018/12/04/who-wants-be-police-officer-job-applications-plummet-most-us-departments/>

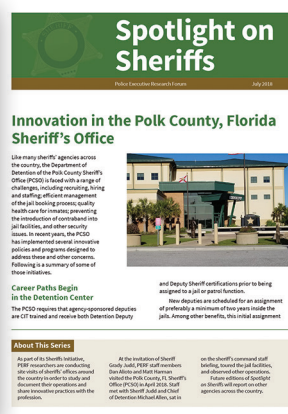
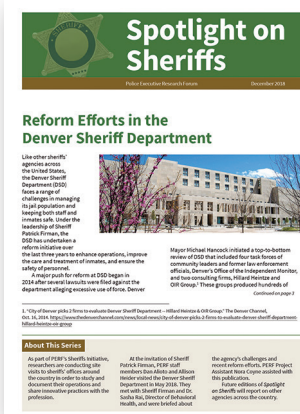
7. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/mentalillnessinjails.pdf>

8. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PolkCountySheriffsOffice.pdf>

9. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/DenverSheriffDepartment.pdf>



PERF President Scott Thomson, Board Member Chris Magnus, and former Board Member Kathy O'Toole taught at 2018 SMIP sessions.



## Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT)

ICAT is a use-of-force training program created by PERF to help law enforcement agencies manage a wide range of critical incidents, including encounters with persons who may be experiencing a mental health crisis or other condition that can cause them to behave erratically or dangerously. All ICAT materials are available without charge on PERF's website at [www.policeforum.org/icat](http://www.policeforum.org/icat).



PERF provided ICAT training or hosted ICAT train-the-trainer sessions in 2018 at the following agencies:

- Bureau of Criminal Investigations, Saint Paul, MN (two regional trainings)
- Portland, OR Police Bureau
- Coral Gables, FL Police Department
- Austin, TX Police Department
- Clemson City, Clemson University, and Easley Police Departments in South Carolina
- Mesa, AZ Police Department
- Louisville, KY Metropolitan Police Department
- Rutgers University Police Department (regional training)
- Johns Hopkins University Campus Safety and Security
- Watsonville, CA (regional training).

## PERF's Annual Meeting in Nashville

PERF's Annual Meeting was held in Nashville, TN in conjunction with the Major Cities Chiefs Association and the FBI National Executive Institute Associates. The Town Hall Meeting included discussions about crime reduction

In just three years, Sheriff Patrick Firman has implemented a wide range of initiatives, including new training; expanding the "direct supervision" model, in which inmates spend more time in open areas interacting with deputies and each other, rather than isolated in their cells; addressing staffing shortages; helping inmates with substance abuse problems, including providing medication-assisted treatment; and beginning re-entry planning for inmates as soon as they enter the jail.

## Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP)

2018 was another high point for the Senior Management Institute for Police, PERF's three-week educational program for mid- to upper-level police executives.<sup>10</sup> SMIP provides participants with an understanding of advanced management practices and effective leadership in the constantly changing policing profession. In 2018, 333 participants filled the four SMIP sessions, bringing the total number of SMIP graduates to nearly 5,500 over the past 37 years.

There were several additions to the SMIP curriculum and faculty in 2018, and based on student evaluations, the program was well received. The 2019 sessions are already full, but PERF is taking names for a wait list. If you are interested in sending members of your agency to SMIP next summer, contact Tony Narr at [tnarr@policeforum.org](mailto:tnarr@policeforum.org).

10. Additional information is available at <https://www.policeforum.org/snip>



**ABOVE:** PERF's Town Hall Meeting in Nashville  
**BELOW:** PERF's Town Hall Meeting at the October IACP Conference in Orlando

strategies, recruiting, responding to the opioid epidemic, marijuana legalization, and drones. The Annual Meeting also featured a panel discussion in which leading police chiefs discussed controversial immigration-related issues in their cities.

### Town Hall Meeting at IACP in Orlando

In October, PERF held its Town Hall Meeting in conjunction with the IACP conference in Orlando. Approximately 1,000 meeting attendees discussed a wide range of issues, including when to release body-worn camera footage, how to improve homicide clearance rates, how to implement officer wellness initiatives, and use-of-force policy issues.

### Executive Search

PERF assisted with executive search processes in the following jurisdictions in 2018: Charleston, SC; Baltimore, MD; Brookline, MA; and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

### FirstNet Public Safety Technology Forum

PERF is partnering with AT&T to establish the "FirstNet Public Safety Technology Forum." This initiative is providing national-level guidance and support to public safety agencies on the adoption of FirstNet and wireless broadband communications devices. PERF is working with a diverse team of subject matter experts and public safety leaders to identify and document best practices on FirstNet implementation and use, to develop in-depth case studies, and to disseminate timely information, technical assistance, and resources to the field.

The first event of this initiative was an "Early Adopters Forum," during which early adopters of the network met in Washington, DC, in November to discuss their experiences.

- Some of the critical areas for FirstNet adoption include network coverage, integrating Land Mobile Radio and LTE (mobile wireless) systems, bringing CAD and RMS data to mobile devices, and streaming video through body-worn cameras, dash-cams, drones and other devices.
- Governance issues are critical. The benefits of broadband communication



multiply if local agencies work together regionally, and if police, fire, EMS, and other departments within a given jurisdiction work together to plan improvements to their broadband services. Non-public safety agencies should be included, because public works agencies, public transportation, school systems, and other departments are often involved in responding to critical incidents.

- Law enforcement officials are seeing expanding roles for dispatchers and Real Time Crime Centers to assess situations and provide first responders with the information they actually need as they travel to the scene of a critical incident.

### Executive Guidebook: Practical Approaches for Strengthening Law Enforcement's Response to Sexual Assault

With funding from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), PERF and the Women's Law Project helped the police agencies in Chattanooga, TN; Fayetteville, ND; Salt Lake City; and Scottsdale, AZ to implement a



The FirstNet "Early Adopters" Forum

## Vera Institute of Justice

### *Serving Safely: The National Initiative to Enhance Policing For Persons with Mental Illnesses and Developmental Disabilities*

Serving Safely is a national initiative designed to improve interactions between police and persons affected by mental illnesses and developmental disabilities. Supported through a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the initiative includes leaders in the fields of policing, mental illness, intellectual/developmental disability, crisis intervention, peer advocacy, emergency medicine, technology development, and prosecution.

Together Vera, BJA, and the partners are developing

and managing training and technical assistance to enhance collaborative responses for people affected by mental illnesses and intellectual/developmental disabilities who come into contact with the police, to improve outcomes and the safety for all involved parties.

Free training and technical assistance opportunities are available for law enforcement agencies. To learn more about Serving Safely, visit <https://www.vera.org/projects/serving-safely/>.

comprehensive approach to improving their handling of sexual assault cases. PERF then hosted a national meeting with representatives from each of the sites, along with academics and other experts, to discuss promising practices. The final report,<sup>11</sup> an Executive Guidebook, was released in May.

### **Guidance on Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in the Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence**

Through another OVW-funded project, PERF is providing training and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies and their partner advocacy organizations as they implement the U.S. Justice Department's guidelines for identifying and preventing gender bias in the response to crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence. The implementation process will be documented in a final publication.

### **An Inclusive Approach to School Safety: Collaborative Efforts to Combat the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Denver**

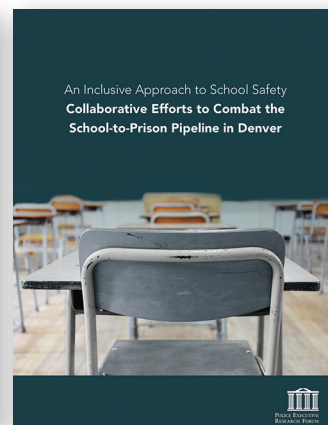
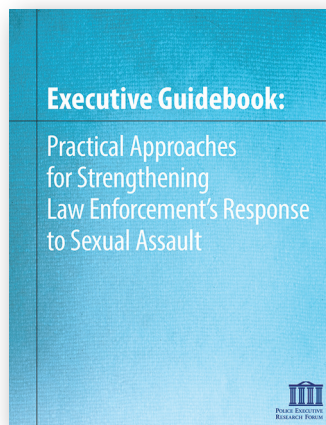
Youth advocates across the country have expressed concern that police officers in schools may inadvertently contribute to the "school-to-prison pipeline," in which minor behavioral issues in schools that would not ordinarily result in criminal charges are moved into the criminal justice system as a result of police involvement in managing student behavior. In this report,<sup>12</sup> which was supported by the COPS Office, PERF describes an innovative program in which the Denver Police Department, the Denver public schools system, and community organizations worked together to

improve outcomes for youths in the Denver area by offering services to students in need.

### **Strengthening Relationships between Police and Immigrant Communities in a Complex Political Environment**

With support from the Ford Foundation, PERF examined multicultural outreach and engagement programs spearheaded by the Seattle (WA) Police Department; the Hershon (VA) Police Department; and the Vail and Avon Police Departments in Eagle County, Colorado. This report,<sup>13</sup> released in December, offers recommendations based on the multicultural outreach programs developed by these agencies, including the following:

- When trying to build trust with immigrant communities, connecting with young people is a good place to start. Building relationships with children will lead to gaining trust of parents, and allow the police to extend their outreach to the larger community.

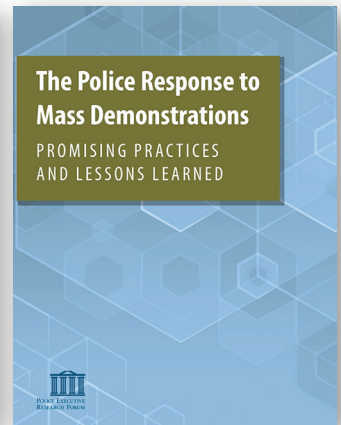
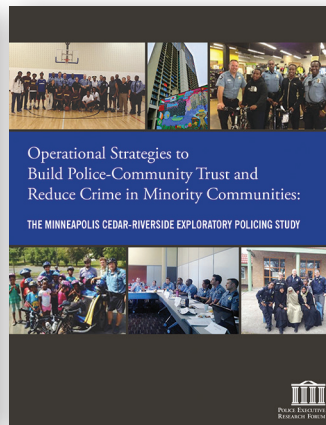
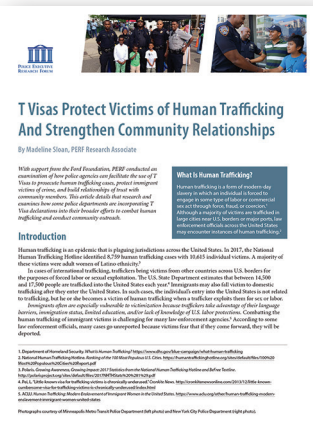
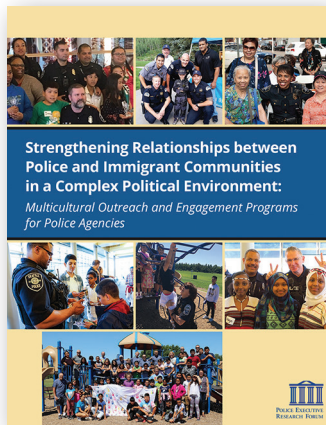


11. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/SexualAssaultResponseExecutiveGuidebook.pdf>

12. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/DenverSchools.pdf>

13. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceImmigrantCommunities.pdf>





- Outreach initiatives should be conducted at a location that is perceived as safe and accessible to the community. Rather than asking community members to come to a police department or municipal building, consider hosting events at familiar spaces in neighborhoods, such as schools, churches, or community centers, where residents already congregate and will be more comfortable.
- Police agencies should make an effort to recruit and hire from immigrant communities. Having a diverse police force sends a message of inclusion to traditionally marginalized populations.

## T Visas Protect Victims of Human Trafficking and Strengthen Community Relationships

The T Visa provides relief to immigrant victims of human trafficking by allowing them to stay in the United States, provided that they help law enforcement officials prosecute human traffickers. Local police play a crucial role in the T Visa process, because police agencies can provide federal authorities with a declaration explaining how the victim has assisted law enforcement, which strengthens the applicant's case for T Visa status. PERF's article,<sup>14</sup> *T Visas Protect Victims of Human Trafficking and Strengthen Community Relationships*, discusses the role of local police agencies in the T Visa process.

## Operational Strategies to Build Police-Community Trust and Reduce Crime in Minority Communities: The Minneapolis Cedar-Riverside Exploratory Policing Study

PERF, in partnership with the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance, worked with the Minneapolis Police Department on a project to build public trust in the justice system in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, a predominantly East African immigrant community just east of downtown Minneapolis. This community is geographically separated from the rest of the city, and fear of the police, in

addition to culture and language barriers, had made community members reluctant to engage with the police to reduce crime in the area.

This project focused on the entire justice system in Minneapolis, not just the police, because prosecutors, probation officers, and others can impact a community's trust in the justice system. PERF's report,<sup>15</sup> which was released in February, details the lessons learned from that work.

## The Police Response to Mass Demonstrations: Promising Practices and Lessons Learned

This report,<sup>16</sup> distributed in April, details the lessons and recommendations produced at a conference held by PERF with support from the COPS Office. In the past, large-scale demonstrations often were organized by national or regional civil rights groups or other organizations. But today's "leaderless" protests often occur more spontaneously. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram can spread the word about a demonstration to many thousands of people within a matter of hours. So police must be more nimble in staying aware of what is happening and making plans on short notice.

## Handling Large, Preplanned Events: Recommendations from Preparations for the 2016 National Political Conventions

To help the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) prepare for the 2016 Republican National Convention, the COPS Office awarded PERF a grant to provide technical assistance through its Critical Response Technical Assistance Program. In June 2016, a month before the Convention, PERF convened an executive briefing with CDP command-level officials and some of the nation's most experienced law enforcement executives, to discuss recommendations and lessons that have been learned from previous mass demonstrations, particularly in connection with past Democratic

14. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/TVisas.pdf>

15. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/MinneapolisCedarRiverside.pdf>

16. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceResponseMassDemonstrations.pdf>

and Republican national conventions. PERF's report<sup>17</sup> provides practical advice from the participants, and includes resources for further reading on related topics.

## Reducing Gun Violence: What Would Make a Difference

In June, PERF held a national conference in Washington, DC, to explore the nature of gun violence in America and what can be done about it, from the perspective of police chiefs and sheriffs. Approximately 175 people participated. The conference looked at gun violence in its totality: everyday street violence, mass shootings, domestic violence, and suicide.

At the meeting, PERF presented its "Key Findings and an Action Plan to Reduce Gun Violence."<sup>18</sup> The meeting was covered by the Washington Post.<sup>19</sup> PERF is finalizing a full report that will be published in January.

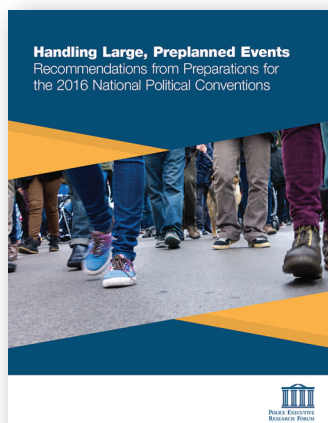
## Chicago Police Department Leadership Development

With support from the MacArthur Foundation and the Joyce Foundation, PERF has been working with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) to improve leadership development among its Command ranks. In 2017 and 2018, PERF held seven day-long training sessions covering topics such as systems thinking, ethical decision-making, strategic communications, and leadership styles and culture. PERF is now working to develop and pilot-test an executive development program for CPD sergeants who demonstrate potential for higher-level leadership positions in the agency.

## Management Studies

PERF's Center for Applied Research and Management contracts with individual city and county governments to conduct management studies of police and sheriffs' departments on a wide range of issues. The following are some of the management studies PERF conducted in 2018:

- **Volusia County, FL Sheriff's Office:** PERF conducted a review of VCSO's use-of-force policies, practices, and training. The PERF team interviewed members of the VCSO command staff, conducted focus groups with deputies, observed training sessions, and conducted a focus group with community members.



- **Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Active Shooter Review:** The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) requested PERF's assistance in reviewing the agency's policies, training, and processes regarding the response to active shooter incidents. The final report is available at <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PBSOActiveAttack.pdf>.
- **Mesa, AZ Use of Force Review and ICAT Training:** Following several high-profile use-of-force incidents, PERF was asked to conduct a review of the Mesa Police Department's use-of-force policies, investigations, and training. PERF also conducted ICAT training for the department in August.
- **Springfield, MA Police Department Internal Investigations Unit Review:** PERF has been studying the Springfield, MA Police Department's Internal Investigations Unit, including site visits and a review of relevant documents.
- **Denton, TX Police Department Assessment:** PERF has conducted a review of the core practices and functions, organizational structure and management systems, and organizational climate of the Denton, TX Police Department.

## NIJ Criminal Justice Needs

PERF was part of the winning group for the continuation of the NIJ Criminal Justice Needs project (with RAND, RTI International, and the University of Denver). The project is scheduled for five years. Project partners are using focus groups and quantitative methods to determine key needs for law enforcement, with a focus on new technologies.

## National Crime Statistics Exchange

Along with RTI International, IACP, SEARCH, and the Integrated Justice Information Systems Institute (IJIS), PERF has assisted in efforts to make the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) nationally representative. PERF fielded an initial survey in 2014 and subsequent case studies highlighting the current status of this transition, budgetary requirements, data-entry training, and lessons learned. PERF will be coordinating multiple meetings on National Crime Statistics Exchange-related topics over the next three years.

## Law Enforcement Core Statistics

PERF is working with RTI to field a series of institutional surveys for BJS. The first survey is the 2016 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics survey (LEMAS), a massive survey of more than 3,000 law enforcement agencies regarding agency expenditures, job functions of employees, demographic characteristics of officers, weapons and armor policies, education and training

17. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/HandlingLargePreplannedEvents.pdf>

18. <https://bit.ly/2xl9bmh>

19. <https://wapo.st/2Npw5mo>



requirements, special units, community policing activities, and other matters. LEMAS will be followed by the 2018 CSLLEA (Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies).

### **Cocooning and Procedural Justice Dialogs**

In a project funded by NIJ, PERF is working with the Prince George's County, MD Police Department to evaluate the impact of two evidence-based policing strategies. The first strategy, called cocooning, involves police officers conducting an extensive neighborhood canvass designed to alert neighbors of a recent burglary and ways to prevent future burglaries. The study will look to see if the strategy leads to a reduction in residential burglaries. The second strategy will examine procedural justice strategies that will be implemented by officers following up on burglaries in specific study areas. Citizen surveys will be used to determine if this procedural justice strategy improves a community's satisfaction with the police.

### **Critical Response Technical Assistance Program**

Through a COPS Office grant, PERF has provided Critical Response Technical Assistance (CRTA) to law enforcement agencies facing an immediate challenge or issue that threatened to impact police-community relationships. Through this program, PERF has provided a variety of technical assistance services to police departments in San Francisco;

Baltimore; Pasco, WA; Waterloo, IA; Cleveland; Baton Rouge; Standing Rock, ND; and Dearborn, MI.

PERF will also be using this grant to continue its work to address the opioid epidemic. During the next year, PERF will explore how opioids and related issues are impacting different communities in all regions of the nation. PERF is seeking input from police and sheriffs' departments on the current nature of the opioid problem, as well as promising practices and partnerships that agencies have developed in response. If you are interested in providing insights on current issues related to opioids in your jurisdiction, and programs or approaches your agency has implemented, please complete the brief contact form at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LFGTKTJ>.

### **Opioid Research Agenda**

In conjunction with NIJ and RAND, PERF held a two-day summit designed to examine the current opioid crisis and to develop a research agenda for studying and understanding the epidemic.

### **Law Enforcement Cyber Center**

PERF has worked with numerous organizations, including the National White Collar Crime Center, RAND, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and IACP, to produce reference materials and resources on the Law Enforcement Cyber Center (LECC) website: <http://www.iacpcybercenter.org/>.



## **...And PERF looks forward to 2019**

PERF's calendar is filling up for early 2019! Following are some of the events we are planning. Watch for PERF emails about events throughout the year.

### **ICAT Train-the-Trainer Sessions**

PERF will continue to hold ICAT train-the-trainer sessions to meet demand for the courses. The next session is scheduled for January 24th in Delray Beach, Florida.<sup>20</sup> For more information, visit [www.policeforum.org/ICAT](http://www.policeforum.org/ICAT), and keep an eye on that page for information about future train-the-trainer sessions.

### **Less-Lethal Force Options**

PERF, in conjunction with the Los Angeles Police Department, is planning a national symposium on January 31 to explore the state of the art in less-lethal technologies. We will bring together practitioners, technology engineers, and other subject matter experts to review the latest less-lethal technologies and to brainstorm on possible future applications. Click on the following

link for more information or to register for the meeting: [https://www.policeforum.org/index.php?option=com\\_mc&view=mc&mcid=72&eventId=551646&orgId=perf](https://www.policeforum.org/index.php?option=com_mc&view=mc&mcid=72&eventId=551646&orgId=perf)

### **Drone Use by Police Agencies**

PERF, with support from the COPS Office, is studying police departments' use of drones. PERF has fielded a survey to PERF members to determine the state of the field, to gather policies and case studies, and to identify issues and challenges. Details will be announced soon.

### **PERF Annual Meeting**

PERF's Annual Meeting will again be held in conjunction with the Major Cities Chiefs Association and the FBI National Executive Institute Associates. This year's meeting will be held May 28–31 in Miami Beach, Florida. Registration and hotel information will be emailed to all PERF members and available on PERF's website in the coming weeks.

20. [https://www.policeforum.org/index.php?option=com\\_mc&view=mc&mcid=72&eventId=550313&orgId=perf](https://www.policeforum.org/index.php?option=com_mc&view=mc&mcid=72&eventId=550313&orgId=perf)

# The Power and Art of a Police Apology

By Mike Masterson, Chief of Police, Boise, ID (ret.)

TWO POWERFUL WORDS – “I’M SORRY” (OR “I apologize”) – when spoken by today’s police leaders, are helping to repair harm and re-establish trust with our communities, particularly communities of color. Police leaders who want to build better relationships understand the emotional wounds that can be caused by police actions, and appreciate the healing power of these two words.

## Why should police leaders think about apologies, and why now?

There are three main reasons to think about apologies.

**First, we have a lot at stake with our communities.** We are tested by the erosion of trust and cooperation between police and citizens, particularly between police and all communities of color (including immigrants and others). Police need trust, respect, and support in order to operate fairly and effectively in a free society.

**Second, the safety of those we lead is the greatest responsibility of a police leader.** We should do everything in our power to keep officers safe and healthy. Establishing a culture of trust and legitimacy improves the overall environment where we send our officers to work every day. Apologies often lead to forgiveness and reconciliation.

**Third, it’s our responsibility and obligation.** In our history, the police have been called upon by elected officials to enforce laws or implement tactics that were unjust. That has left bruises and scars on society, and seemingly irreparable harm to specific communities. We can mend those injustices by taking a leadership role in admitting our faults and offering assurances that problems have been corrected.

## What should police apologize for?

There are three major categories of police actions that can result in a need for apologies:

### 1. Routine bruising caused by good police work

The nature of police work requires we inconvenience, embarrass, and sometimes offend people we contact.

**Example: Questioning a possible suspect.** Early in my career, a downtown bank robbery was committed by a well-dressed suspect. Officers arrived in an instant, found a man wearing a dark suit nearby, and ordered him to the ground. It turned out he wasn’t the suspect police sought.

When releasing potential suspects, officers should apologize for the inconvenience and thank them for their cooperation. That should be standard operating procedure *always*, and regardless of whether the persons were impolite or hostile to the officers.

**Example: Delays in responding to a call.** Officers have long known that it is a good idea to apologize for a

longer-than-expected response to a call for service. Officers take the time to explain how we prioritize calls from the public. Often, the officers receive a lukewarm reaction to their apology. But even if the apology offers little comfort to citizens who waited two hours for an officer to handle their complaint, the simple words “I’m sorry” lets them know that we acknowledge and understand their frustration.



### 2. Traumatic wounds and conflicts

Consider the family and friends of someone who has been killed in a police-involved shooting. A police leader seeks out the family members to express the department’s sorrow and regret that the incident happened.

This is not an admission of wrongdoing or fault. The leader is not weak, nor is the agency accepting blame. The leader may say that the details of the incident are not fully known and the investigation has just begun – and should be sure to say that the investigation will be thorough and the family will be kept informed. In the meantime, the police leader shares the family’s grief.

Apologies also help in less extreme cases that involve conflicts between police and community members. When I became chief of police in Boise in 2005, one of the things I inherited was a situation involving a troubled man named Mark Seeley, who had a bi-polar disorder and had been involved in a number of incidents with the police.<sup>21</sup> We knew that Mark was tormented by the loss of his father in the Vietnam war, and that he believed his father had been disrespected by a police officer.

A lieutenant suggested a plan that best met the needs of this troubled and agitated man. We met with Mark over a cup of coffee at a Starbucks. Initially, there was apprehension that Mark might cause a disturbance, but those tense moments faded when Mark realized we were there to apologize, and to present him with a certificate saying the following:

*“The Boise Police Department recognizes the sacrifice of your father, Captain John S. Seeley, on June 27, 1966, in the service and defense of his country while serving as a pilot in Vietnam. He is a true American hero to those of us*

21. “Citizen Mark: The Best-Known Man You Never Knew—The Tumultuous Life and Ultimate Redemption of Mark Seeley.” *Boise Weekly*. May 1, 2013. <http://www.boiseweekly.com/boise/citizen-mark-the-best-known-man-you-never-knew/Content?oid=2862440>



*in law enforcement who understand the dangerous work and risks inherent in our professions while protecting our great nation and city.”*

Mark’s relationship with police and attitude toward officers vastly improved over the years to follow.

### 3. Old wounds that have never healed

Increasingly, police chiefs are addressing old conflicts that occurred long before their careers began.

Who can forget the poignant moment in 2013 when Montgomery, AL Police Chief Kevin Murphy removed his badge and presented it to U.S. Representative John Lewis? Murphy was apologizing for the Police Department’s failure to protect Lewis and others against violent mobs in 1961, when the Freedom Riders were protesting Jim Crow laws.<sup>22</sup>

Later that year, Tulsa, OK Police Chief Chuck Jordan apologized to the citizens of his city for police involvement in the atrocities of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot, saying in a major speech:

*“I cannot apologize for the actions, inaction and dereliction that those individual officers and their chief exhibited during that dark time. But as your chief today, I can apologize for our police department. I am sorry and distressed that the Tulsa Police Department did not protect its citizens during those tragic days in 1921.”*<sup>23</sup>

Most recently, New York City Police Commissioner James O’Neill apologized to the survivor of a 1994 rape for the way NYPD handled her case:

*“The survivor of the 1994 Prospect Park rape case suffered a terrible ordeal when she was brutally violated. And there is zero justification for the additional trauma she endured when her word was doubted by authorities investigating her claim.*

*“I am deeply saddened by the rift this case created between law enforcement, brave survivors of sexual assault, and the LGBTQ community, with whom we work so closely each day. And I want to be clear: We take what happened to the victim of the brutal assault that night in Prospect Park, and to others every year, extremely seriously. But in this case, we fell short in an important area: Simple humanity.”*<sup>24</sup>

### Where to begin? What to say?

According to Dr. Guy Winch, a psychologist and author, a good apology includes five essential ingredients:

#### 1. An “I’m sorry” statement.

#### 2. An expression of regret for what happened.

#### 3. An acknowledgement that social norms or expectations were violated.

#### 4. A statement of empathy acknowledging the impact of your actions on the other person.

#### 5. A request for forgiveness.<sup>25</sup>

Here are a few additional suggestions to consider:

#### 6. Keep it short and avoid the word “but.”

When there is a “but” in an apology, that usually means there is an attempt at justification, which compromises your genuineness.

#### 7. The timing of an apology is important.

Before you can repair harm, you must de-construct and analyze what occurred, so you understand what exactly caused the harm. This can take some time. Good apologies require reflection and thought, so rushing it can make it seem insincere.

#### 8. Finally, there’s no guarantee that someone will forgive you.

Making atonement isn’t about obtaining forgiveness. It’s about showing respect and honesty to another person. Your goal is to make the other person feel better, not yourself.

### A Checklist of Steps to Take Before Making an Apology

Don’t offer an impromptu apology one day and be out of your job the next. It’s important to take a thoughtful, deliberate approach to apologies and expressions of sympathy, to ensure that your message is clear and is not subject to misinterpretation.


**Involve your people.** The people you lead should never hear of a public apology through the news media. Your officers should hear about it from you first.

**Involve your boss.** Make sure to establish an understanding with your mayor, city manager, or other “boss” about issuing statements of sympathy or apologies. Your apology is an official statement; you are not acting as a private citizen.

**Involve community leaders.** Reach out to community leaders you know and trust, and ask them to help you shape the content of your message.

**Consult with the person(s) to whom the apology will be given.** Ask if they would prefer that your apology be delivered in person, in a letter or phone call, via social media, in a public meeting, or by other means.

**Develop a clear policy for apologies throughout your agency.** Police officers have always offered apologies and expressions of sympathy. So it’s time to think about what guidance we should provide to officers about what is appropriate in expressing regret or sorrow to community members.

Two heartfelt words, “I’m sorry,” can help police chiefs and officers restore trust in their communities, increase perceptions of the legitimacy of the police, get closer to the people we serve, and demonstrate our humanity. 

22. “Police chief’s apology sows healing, friendship.” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 23, 2014. <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-c1-civil-rights-friends-20140923-story.html>

23. “Tulsa Police Chief Chuck Jordan apologizes for department inaction in 1921 Race Riot.” *Tulsa World*, Sept. 22, 2013. [http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-police-chief-chuck-jordan-apologizes-for-department-inaction/article\\_d95da515-fe21-5204-8012-6118ecd632c4.html](http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-police-chief-chuck-jordan-apologizes-for-department-inaction/article_d95da515-fe21-5204-8012-6118ecd632c4.html)

24. “Police Commissioner James P. O’Neill’s Apology to the Survivor of the 1994 Prospect Park Rape Case.” *NYC.gov*, October 28, 2018. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/news/s1028/police-commissioner-james-p-o-neill-s-apology-the-survivor-the-1994-prospect-park-rape-case>

25. “The Five Ingredients of an Effective Apology.” Dr. Guy Winch. *Psychology Today*, Nov. 21, 2013. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-squeaky-wheel/201311/the-five-ingredients-effective-apology>



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