

Procedural Justice: Building Trust

Voiceover

00:00

This is *The Beat*—a podcast series that keeps you in the know about the latest community policing topics facing our nation.

TeNeane Bradford

00:09

Hello and welcome. My name is TeNeane Bradford and on behalf of the COPS Office, I would like to introduce to you, Maurice Classen, a program officer with the MacArthur Foundation that is responsible for work on public safety, justice, police reform, municipal and neighborhood growth, and policy issues. Prior to joining the MacArthur Foundation, Maurice was a Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in King County in Seattle Washington. As a prosecutor, he handled cases ranging from gang homicide to domestic violence; and managed 75 cases before a jury. In the last three years of his work, he specialized and led programs that used focus deterrents and community advocacy to reduce crime rates and to develop alternative sanctions to incarceration. Prior to attending law school, Maurice spent two years on the staff of a U.S Senator. Today, Maurice is here to discuss the MacArthur Foundation and its work around policing and procedural justice. Welcome Maurice!

Program Officer Maurice Classen

01:10

Well thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate it. It's great to talk to you guys this afternoon.

Bradford

01:15

Can you tell us a little about the MacArthur Foundation in relation to policing in the United States?

Classen

01:22

Our interest in policing really comes out of our decades of work in the city of Chicago really in the neighborhoods and the health of the city. We over the course of the last 10 to 15 years invested over 100 million dollars in health of neighborhoods and throughout that, really learned or actually, probably just relearned how important public safety and violence reduction leads to the health of the community. Through that, we also funded various programs through the Chicago Police Department to help alleviate problems of violence and be able to develop new and innovative ways of looking at communities and violence reduction to the police department and its relationship with the community. In the last couple years, we have funded programs with the Chicago Police Department to help with the John Jay College supported Violence Reduction Strategy as well as the Police Executive Research Forum reform efforts or managing the reform efforts for Superintendent Gary McCarthy a lot which is related to procedural justice. And over the last few years what we've learned from that is how much a little investment can actually have in terms of reducing violence and also helping it improve the health of a community and to

know we've begun to look at policing on a broader, national scale which brings into play a lot of the issues the COPS Office deals with related to violence deterrents and procedural justice.

Bradford

02:43

So what is the MacArthur Foundation doing around procedural justice specifically?

Classen

02:48

Well first, we're funding the Police Executive Research Forum as we said earlier to help facilitate some of the reforms that Superintendent Gary McCarthy has undertaken in the last three to four years. When Superintendent Gary McCarthy joined the Chicago Police Department, he made it a point to implement a series of procedural justice reforms including a across the board training of over 7,000 line officers Principles of Procedural Justice as outlined by Professors Tracey Meares and Tom Tyler at Yale University and PERF helped facilitate that reform and we're also paying for the evaluation of that reform from North Michigan University and UCLA. We're also funding a two way community survey from Northwestern University by Professor Wesley Skogan to set out through community surveys over the course of several years an understanding of where the community thinks the police made a good job and an understanding of police procedural justice reforms and if they think they are actually having an effect so that will be in the field in 2014 and then again in 2015 or 2016. So it's actually a two way survey of understanding what is going on with the reforms and are they having an impact on the community level. And from that we've started, as I said earlier, to think about what we might be able to do on a national level so were actually hosting a convening next month of leading academics and practitioners and policing to see what are the next stage of innovations and procedural justice and legitimacy that we might be able to help nationally.

Bradford

04:21

So then why does the foundation believe procedural justice is an important concept for policing?

Classen

04:27

I think there's two things. First of all, Chicago is a city that has a long and fraught history with its police department and its communities and we see procedural justice reform and legitimacy training as a way of addressing particularly within the city of Chicago, its long standing history of issues between the communities and policing. Effectively, we see it on a broader level, as actually, having a major chance of influencing nationally the way that communities and police interact. We've seen, on the literature side, that deterrent theory, classical deterrent theory, which is that people follow the law simply because they're afraid of penalties, is increasingly failing at an explanation for the relationship between police and the court system and citizens. And in fact, we're starting to take hold of these ideas from Yale and other places related to procedural justice that say, no, actually one of the major reasons that citizens follow the law is simply because it's legitimate. And so whatever the police can do to make their actions

in step with that legitimacy training or that legitimacy acts that can actually not only help a community heal its wounds related to the police community relationship, it can also help decrease crime by helping communities actually police themselves and work better with police. On a personal level, when I was a prosecutor, I saw dozens if not hundreds of times, the downside of communities that do not trust the police and do not believe in the legitimate act in terms of witnesses who do not want to participate, individuals who are victims and don't trust the system; all of that I believe and the foundation believes can be influenced and changed by proper training, legitimacy training and just procedural justice reforms of police agencies nationally.

Bradford

06:15

Thank you so much for your input and your expertise sharing today. The field will continue to explore these areas and utilize the information that is shared through the podcast series to improve and legitimize the way they practice their profession on a daily basis.

Classen

06:36

Well thank you for the time. I really appreciate it and I thank you for all the work that you guys do.

Voiceover: *The Beat* Exit

06:41

The Beat was brought to you by the United States Department of Justice, COPS Office. The COPS Office helps to keep our nation's communities safe by giving grants to law enforcement agencies, developing community policing publications, developing partnerships, and solving problems.

Voiceover: Disclaimer

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