

**President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing**  
**Testimony by Chief Kim Jacobs**  
**Columbus Division of Police**  
**Training and Education**  
**February 14, 2015**



Ms. Robinson, Commissioner Ramsey, Mr. Davis and members of the task force, I am honored to have the opportunity to discuss a topic of great importance with you and the audience. The majority of my testimony will discuss recommendations that I believe will help educate our police supervisors, managers and leaders to make wise decisions that result in building trust in their communities and increasing the delivery of community-minded policing.

Aristotle said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." Excellent community policing requires continuous training yet, in late 2010, USA Today reported that nearly 70% of police agencies cut back or eliminated training programs. <sup>i</sup> Public officials and police chiefs must be consistent in their message, if they believe training is important, and I trust they do, they must support it financially. But I believe we can be more creative in finding training, funding it and sharing it. Our police officers and leaders face a myriad of demands each day, which requires specific skills and problem-solving capabilities in stressful conditions. Access to high quality training that builds competence, builds confidence. Training that includes coaching, builds credibility. Training that builds character, builds community-minded compassion. Progressive actions on police training can take us into the future where such training is more accessible and successful.

**Recommendation-Implement Training Model Policies or Accreditation Standards**

Chiefs have a duty to implement model training policies or standards that have been created by law enforcement and academic professionals with best practices in mind. These policies and standards require training and record keeping that ensures personnel are receiving training courses that are viewed as essential to successful organizations. Ethics, bias-based profiling, less-lethal weapons, self-defense tactics that are legally sound, all hazards training, legal updates are but a sample of the courses that must be offered. Chiefs who recognize the value of outside review and oversight of policies and procedures can seek accreditation or follow IACP model policies. Accreditation standards require data and proof that the agency, and its members, buy in to following those best practices, seek continuous improvement and are willing to impartially analyze many of its programs and systems.

### **Recommendation-Supervisory Training in Accountability Measures**

Chiefs must insist on supervisor and management training that informs police supervisors on current issues and practices, explains how to critically and objectively review and examine investigations of police actions and behavior (on and off duty) and to prepare comprehensive reports that are responsive to all stakeholders, including the media and citizens. Additionally, these leaders need to be educated in the value of technology that improves and monitors performance, systems designed for early-intervention with problem officers<sup>ii</sup>, and how to reduce errors and risks while preserving lives and increasing officer safety, such as close-call reporting<sup>iii</sup>.

### **Recommendation-Values Based Training**

All training courses offered internally by police agencies must explicitly emphasize how the material being taught aligns with the agency's values and guiding principles and how it will impact the community. For instance, when training on police pursuits, we discuss our respect for life and the dangers the pursuit presents to our citizens who may be engaged in either vehicular or pedestrian travel. Training officers to internalize empathy for the citizens they interact with can positively change the outcome of that interaction as well as the citizen's perception of the officer and the police in general. When officers are viewed by citizens to be fair and good-intentioned, trust is built and legitimacy is more readily perceived.<sup>iv</sup>

### **Recommendation-Integrating Communications Skills, De-escalation and Use of Force Training**

Training in de-escalation and interpersonal communications skills is as important as physical defense and firearms training but historically has not been given as much attention. Chiefs must insist on training for new and veteran officers every year that teaches and demonstrates (via reality based training) how techniques and tactics that slow things down, employ less aggressive actions, and force, have positive outcomes without sacrificing officer safety.

### **Recommendation-Help the Mentally Disturbed with more Crisis Intervention Training**

Crisis Intervention Training is nationally recognized as an effective training program that prepares officers to professionally and effectively deal with a significant public health issue in our communities. Each and every day officers are called to assist families and health care providers that need help with a mentally disturbed individual. The standard 40 hour CIT training many agencies utilize is difficult to provide to all officers because the trainers are community members in the mental health field. Thus the trainers are rarely available and class size is quite small due to its intensive training method. This course needs to be available on demand for any police agency that wants the training and as this is a public health issue, federal, state or university assistance should be sought in providing this vital training to more officers.

## **Recommendation-Specific Training Areas That Need Research**

Academic research in some vital areas can greatly impact police training, its costs and its effectiveness.

- Research to determine if a college education for new hires is the best practice to achieve performance outcomes that meet current and future policing philosophies and demands, and to determine the effect such practices would have on hiring sufficient numbers of officers locally and nationwide.
- Research that accurately identifies trainees, new and veteran, that are slow to comprehend or apply subjective training, who act out of unreasonable fear or biases, use poor discretion, act on emotion or because they suffer from trauma will allow Chiefs and trainers to pay special attention to those personnel, making training more efficient. Additionally, research to measure aptitude and commitment to community and constitutional policing ideals early on in a career is an area that will benefit police leaders.
- Officers who face dangerous people and situations involving weapons routinely handle them without the use of force or their weapons. This is due to good training, proper threat assessments and experience. However, not all use of force and defensive tactics training programs achieve optimal results because of variations in the trainers' skills, facilities and training models. Research on new training methods such as the "Suspect Threat Assessment and Response Training (START)"<sup>v</sup> must be further explored as perhaps a viable new approach to instruct officers when the constitutional use of force may be appropriate and how to apply it. *Graham v Connor* has brought consistency to rulings on police use of force but it is time to seek a national best practice which is supported by research and positive outcomes and clearly defines the ideal way to train officers to that standard. Such training practices will reduce excessive force, civil suits, ease community concerns, and justify budget expenditures for the necessary facilities and trainers.

## **Recommendation-Higher Education**

Tuition reimbursement for higher education will ideally be a part of all police agency budgets so officers have access to college and the benefits of that experience. Promotion to progressively higher ranks should include requirements for certain educational degrees or at minimum, high quality leadership training programs.

## **Recommendation-Access to regional high-quality training**

Establish a national resource, much like Angie's List or the Better Business Bureau, which provides police leaders a catalog of training programs offered throughout the country. The information will rate and describe the training and its reviews. Agencies with few training

dollars will not waste funds on ineffective courses or poor instructors, and can see what is available in their area. This will reduce high expenditures on travel to distant courses and allow more personnel to attend. There is little reliable information available about trainers that are boring, uninteresting or less than credible but those instructors tend to decrease the student's interest in seeking out more training. This catalog will improve access to highly-rated courses and superior instructors that effectively impart new knowledge for police personnel and leaders.

### **Recommendation-Mentoring for Chiefs**

Mentoring programs like the Major City Chiefs Police Executive Leadership Institute must be expanded and supported through public or private funding grants for Chiefs from all sized agencies. As a mentor for the MCC PELI program, I believe that it is beneficial when mentors and their "mentees" are from similarly situated agencies. IACP, PERF or even universities could serve as the coordinators for such programs. Some classroom instruction is very necessary, but even executive training programs such as the FBI National Academy, Southern Police Institute and Ohio's Certified Law Enforcement Executive program do not give a Chief all that she or he will need to know about managing a workforce of public servants whose responsibilities cover hundreds of critical areas and social issues. Mayors will be better served with Chiefs that have participated in such mentoring programs.

### **Recommendation-Learning from Experts**

Chiefs and other police leaders have a unique perspective that they must take the time to share with the leaders in their agencies and elsewhere. Though it may not be considered training, it most certainly is educating our staff when we share those "aha" moments and insights we have learned through our experience, our challenging assignments, the projects we have worked on, our mistakes, our colleagues, and our citizen contacts. Chiefs can teach other police leaders how to navigate political and critical situations as well as when to adapt policies and training to effectively preserve public favor and secure cooperation from the community. Though it takes time away from very busy schedules, sharing years of wisdom and experience, as demonstrated on this task force by Commissioner Ramsey and Chief Villasenor, is an important duty of police leaders everywhere and must be expanded. A nationally known resource that collates and advertises this leadership sharing, such as the BJA Executive Sessions on Leadership<sup>vi</sup> should be made available widely and free of charge, by our Federal partners.

### **Recommendation-Grants to Fund Leadership Training**

Grants from funding sources such as the DOJ COPS office, the NIJ (such as Coverdell) or state agencies should be obtainable every year to cover tuition, housing and travel costs to send police managers and supervisors to high-quality, but costly leadership schools. While COPS and

Byrne grants have been offered to help agencies hire more officers, it is important to ensure that police leaders have access to training programs that prepare them to lead their employees. Police Chiefs should also create or support police foundations that can assist with training costs. Additionally, more Police Chiefs must seek leadership training for their supervisors and managers from non-traditional trainers who are successfully used by corporations and universities to teach leaders on topics such as interpersonal communications, creativity, leading change, organizational improvement, cultural competency, and customer service. Training of this caliber is expensive but will better serve the police leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Recommendation-Community Outreach and Education**

Chiefs must do everything possible to inspire and achieve values-driven, ethical and constitutional behavior by their supervisors and officers. That dedicated work must then be shared widely with citizens to build trust and educate them about the noble efforts of the majority of the officers who work in their community. A lack of knowledge or fear of the police can be overcome with community outreach programs. Citizen Police Academies, which most progressive agencies offer, is but one very successful education program, though it does require an investment of time from the attendees. Chiefs need to make this training and other educational outreach programs more accessible, possibly doing the training in private workplaces that want to host it, or by utilizing YouTube or other social media that allows citizens to learn more about how officers do their jobs while in their homes or at their own pace, with opportunities for questions and answers via email or other means.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my recommendations with this task force and I am ready to answer any questions you may have.

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<sup>i</sup> USA Today, October 5, 2010, page 3A, "Budget knife falls on police training", by Kevin Johnson

<sup>ii</sup> National Institute of Justice, Research in Brief, July 2001; "Early Warning Systems: Responding to the Problem Officer", by Samuel Walker, Geoffrey P. Alpert, and Dennis J. Kenney

<sup>iii</sup> Ohio Attorney General Close Call Reporting Database; <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Law-Enforcement/Ohio-Peace-Officer-Training-Academy/Close-Call-Reporting-Database/Close-Call-Reporting>

<sup>iv</sup> "Can Different Training Make Police Officers Guardians, Not Warriors?", by Christopher Moraff, Next City, December, 2014

<sup>v</sup> "A Rational Foundation for Use of Force Policy, Training and Assessment", by John Klein and Ken Wallentine, 2014

<sup>vi</sup> <http://bjaexecutivesessiononpoliceleadership.org/>