

Moral Recognition Subcommittee Draft Recommendations

Scope of Moral Recognition subcommittee:

Our work is rooted in an acknowledgement that there is often distrust in the police, with deep historical roots, among African-Americans, people of color and their communities. We hope Connecticut's police departments will use our recommendations to repair and strengthen police-community relationships. We seek to create an opportunity for police departments to learn about, discuss and address the root causes of this present and historic distrust. Through reconciliation initiatives, diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings, and community conversations, we hope police departments will work to build more just, equitable, and effective police-community relationships, and address the past and present impacts of structural and systemic racism in law enforcement.

Recommendations

A. Reconciliation

[The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice](#) provides a framework for police community reconciliation consisting of the following five components, which they have utilized in a select number of cities. We strongly support efforts already underway by Connecticut's Office of Policy Management, via *An Act Concerning Police Accountability*, to task Central Connecticut State University's Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy ("IMRP") with coordinating the State's efforts around reconciliation. We further suggest IMRP collaborate with local organizations to develop and implement a reconciliation initiative using the following five components.

- **Fact-finding. Departments shall engage in a fact-finding process** in an effort to explore police departments' past harms (such as enforcing Jim Crow laws) and present harms maintained through policies and practices with detrimental effects on safety, equity, and justice.
- **Acknowledgment of harm.** Police leadership will deliver acknowledgments of harm that recognizes the police's past and present harms, as well as ongoing problems that fuel mistrust between the police and community.
- **Sustained listening.** Listening sessions shall be designed to be intimate and non-adversarial to encourage community members to share their experiences with and insights about law enforcement candidly.
- **Narrative collection and sharing.** Narratives captured community members' perceptions of police and the police's perceptions of communities.
- **Explicit commitments to changing policy, practice, and culture which continues the legacy of racial bias and discrimination.** Departments shall commit to make changes and improvements in areas identified through the listening sessions.

All police departments in Connecticut shall participate in this initiative.

Funding shall be used to compensate individuals, community members, and organizations for their time on developing and implementing the reconciliation initiative.

No funding shall be used to compensate individual officers for attending any aspect of the reconciliation initiative. Individual departments shall be required to compensate their officers from the department budget.

We believe that evaluators are storytellers, so it is important to capture the story of reconciliation by police departments in Connecticut. All reconciliation efforts shall be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Some metrics for evaluation might include: (1) number of departments participating each year; (2) number of listening sessions, including number of attendees and topics discussed; (3) new policies and practices implemented as a result of reconciliation; (4) changes in diversity of police departments. Participatory research processes include individual researchers with unique perspectives on the community or system being studied and may be indicated for this approach. Outcome measures may also include a reduction of police violence in the community as well as increases in community trust of police as well as increased community voice and representation to inform policy, procedures and practices.

B. Professional Development/Training

1. All Connecticut police departments shall work with local or national organizations and municipal leadership to identify, develop and facilitate Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Racial Justice, and implicit bias training curricula
 - Such trainings should be mandatory and offered to all police officers annually.
 - Departments may consult with the Connecticut State Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) as a resource for training and tracking methods.
 - At the completion of each training, each police officer will be required to complete an assessment earning a minimum pass rate of 80%. We also recommend regular assessments that measure incremental learning and attainment.
2. Trainings and professional development should be conducted by experienced DEI trainers
 - We recommend a blend of current and/or retired police officers and non-officer co-facilitating trainings
 - Trainers should comprise of individuals with diversity of identity, lived experience, experience/interaction with law enforcement and professional experience within the criminal legal system
 - All trainers must have experience with DEI training and facilitation
 - Trainings are best delivered in diverse cohorts, drawing from a variety of diverse communities and police departments. We strongly suggest this be accomplished in partnership with regional communities and police departments.
3. POST shall hire a full-time DEI coordinator/ trainer to identify appropriate evidence based/best practice models of DEI training
 - The coordinator should be experienced in and demonstrate expertise in:
 - i. DEI training - programs and models

- ii. Commitment to systems change
 - iii. Knowledgeable about law enforcement/law enforcement background
 - iv. Comprehensive education and expertise on Race, Systemic Racism, African-American History and the History of Policing
 - The POST Council Racial Justice Working Group (See Recommendation E. below) shall develop and conduct a hiring process for the DEI coordinator
 - The coordinator’s job duties shall include:
 - i. Engaging in methods of addressing cultural and historical practices within police departments, as it relates to DEI
 - ii. Identify training curricula in conjunction with POST leadership and community/non-profits groups with expertise and experience of working in racial justice
 - iii. Create or obtain training curricula
 - iv. Identify learning objectives, processes, and outcomes
 - v. Facilitate trainings and a Train-the-Trainer model
 - vi. Secure Trainers/Facilitators and/or Subject Matter Experts to provide training
 - vii. Participate in local community forums
 - viii. Coordination of trainings across communities and regions in the State
 - ix. Establish an Evaluation Process including quantitative and qualitative measures and data
 - x. Issue Annual Reporting
4. Increase annual training hours for officers from 20 hours to 40 hours
- Include a minimum number of DEI trainings hours per year (mix of mandated and electives)

C. Public Trust Assessment.

We acknowledge the yearning within the community, particularly communities of color, for healing with respect to its relationship with the police. For the purposes of this recommendation, the word “community” is not limited to individuals who reside in a particular geographic area served by a particular police department. Rather, we use this term to mean all individuals who reside, work, or travel to and through such geographic area for basic activities of human life such as recreation, worship, social and economic activities.

Police departments should receive regular and ongoing feedback regarding how police officers are regarded within the community, particularly among communities of color. Finally, the police training programs recommended in (B) above, must be assessed for their efficacy and impact within the community. For all of these reasons, it is important for members of the community to convey their thoughts and concerns about how their local law enforcement respond to the community’s needs and conduct themselves. One way to achieve this is for the public to know the police are held accountable for any and all acts of racial bias and discrimination. The POST Council Racial Justice Working Group (See Recommendation E below) shall oversee these efforts.

Every two years, the community shall have the opportunity to participate in a Public Trust Assessment, consisting of an electronic survey, as well as focus groups and community conversations, for the purpose of obtaining candid feedback from the community on public trust and confidence with the police department, with a particular focus on assessing the impact and efficacy of trainings and other DEI, cultural competence, public trust, and racial justice initiatives.

- a. The Public Trust Assessment electronic survey shall allow for the anonymous provision of feedback in aggregate form, and shall be broadly disseminated within the community. Such survey shall allow respondents to provide anonymous identifying information, including: demographic information such as age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, national origin, and sexual orientation; the geographic area where the respondent resides, works or otherwise connects with the municipality; and other appropriate data in order to determine response trends. The survey should allow for the provision of narrative, open-ended feedback as well as responses to standardized direct questions.
 - i. The POST Council Racial Justice Working Group shall retain an organization with appropriate expertise and experience to develop a standardized Public Trust Assessment Survey Toolkit, for implementation within each municipality.
 - ii. The Civilian Review Board, Police Commission, or similar governmental entity should coordinate the implementation of the PTA survey. The entity tasked with implementing the PTA survey within the community should ensure a broad variety of outreach methods, including community canvassing, electronic and social media. The results of the survey, in the aggregate, should be published in a report that is made broadly available to the public on the municipality's website.
 - iii. Such survey should include the following perspectives, but not limited to:
 1. The community member's views of the police (individually and as a system and arm of law enforcement)
 2. Views of police-community relationships
 3. Perceptions of crime and neighborhood conditions
 4. Willingness to partner with the police on crime control and prevention
 5. Perceptions of police response to calls and interactions in community
- b. In addition to the electronic survey described above, Police departments should hold regular and consistent community forums and listening sessions to hear from the individuals in the community they serve.
 - i. All police departments shall work with community groups and grassroots organizations to hold forums to hear from community members about their experiences with their local law enforcement.

- ii. These forums should be facilitated listening sessions, where police provide an intimate, non-adversarial forum for community members to share their experiences with and insights about law enforcement. These sessions will serve as a key mechanism for identifying narratives and informing specific changes to policy and practice that are then reported back to community members in subsequent listening sessions.
- iii. A reflective process should be established by which the forums are recorded and/or documented to include a list of attendees, speakers, summary, action steps and follow up and made available for public review.

D. All police departments should screen for racial bias and racial hostility

- We strongly urge police departments to implement tools at the time of recruitment and hiring to screen for racial bias, racial hostility, and racial animus.
- Develop a tool to assess biases for officers after hiring and certification. This assessment should be conducted annually possibly in coordination with the annual mental health assessment.
 - If an officer is identified to have such biases, the department leadership shall provide resources and take all necessary actions to eliminating such biases.
 - The department may also implement a professional development plan to address biases which may be having an impact on the officer’s perception in community or the officer’s perception of community. If the conduct is severe enough, then the department should implement the appropriate discipline.

E. POST Council Racial Justice Working Group

The POST Council shall form a Racial Justice Working Group to oversee and facilitate the implementation of recommendations B and C above. The Racial Justice Working Group shall consist of interested current members of the POST Council, as well as additional representative members as described herein. Appointing authorities who select members of the POST Council shall ensure that the overall composition of the POST Council, and the Racial Justice Working Group, reflects the demographic diversity of Connecticut.

To ensure the success of the Racial Justice Working Group, we recommend the addition of the following representative positions to the POST Council, initially as ad hoc members, and then as permanent positions as soon as feasible:

- A representative of an organization serving formerly-incarcerated individuals;
- A representative of a social services organization serving low-income communities in Connecticut;
- A representative of the Office of the Chief Public Defender;
- An individual with expertise in trauma-informed law enforcement practices;
- An individual with expertise in mental health and well-being;
- An individual with expertise in data collection and statistical analysis;

- Three representatives from community organizations advancing racial justice and equity in Connecticut's major metropolitan areas.
- Four representatives of faith organizations, including at least one representative of a faith organization based in one of Connecticut's major metropolitan areas.

In the next legislative session, Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-294b should be amended to include the individuals identified for the Racial Justice Working Group as full and permanent members of the POST Council.