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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

FACT SHEET: Creating Opportunity for All Through Stronger, Safer Communities

President Obama believes that in America everyone should be empowered by the country they call home, not limited by the zip code into which they are born. That's why the President's agenda is focused on expanding opportunity for all: restoring economic security to hard-hit American families; building stronger neighborhoods and communities; and ensuring young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Today, in Camden, New Jersey, the President will highlight innovative steps taken by a city that has struggled with one of the nation's highest violent crime rates to create economic opportunity, help police do their jobs more safely, and reduce crime in the process. Changes include increasing the number of police officer boots on the ground and changing the way their officers interact with the community. The Camden County Police Department has instituted a community policing initiative, and just last month, the city accepted the [My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge](#) and was separately designated as a [Promise Zone](#), representing the culmination of five years of collaborative efforts aimed at improving the quality of life for Camden children, youth, and families.

The President will also highlight how communities are adopting the recommendations of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing and will highlight new tools all cities can utilize to build and maintain the all-important trust between the law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line every day, and the communities they have sworn to serve and protect. These tools include:

- **A Blueprint for Improved Community Policing:** The final Task Force Report provides a blue print for cities and towns to utilize as they develop policing strategies that work best for building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve while enhancing public safety.
- **The White House Police Data Initiative:** Leading jurisdictions have joined technologists, community organizations and police associations to commit to use data and technology in ways that build community trust and reduce unnecessary uses of force.

- **Community Policing Grants:** The Department of Justice (DOJ) will begin taking applications for grants designed to advance the practice of community policing in law enforcement agencies through hiring, training and technical assistance, the development of innovative community policing strategies, applied research, guidebooks, and best practices that are national in scope.
- **A Body-Worn Camera Tool Kit:** Earlier this month, the DOJ announced a new pilot grant program that will help local law enforcement agencies develop, implement, and evaluate body-worn camera programs, and today, DOJ is releasing an online clearinghouse of resources designed to help law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve plan and implement body-worn camera (BWC) programs.
- **Partnerships with National Law Enforcement Focused Organizations to Implement Recommendations:** With support from the Department of Justice, nine law enforcement-focused organizations will develop national-level, industry-wide projects for several of the pillars outlined in the Task Force Report.
- **Equipment Working Group Final Report:** A federal interagency working group—led by the Departments of Justice, Defense, and Homeland Security – has now completed an extensive review of federal programs that support the acquisition of equipment by state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies. On the basis of that review, the working group developed a series of concrete steps to enhance accountability, increase transparency, and better serve the needs of law enforcement and local communities.

In addition, over the next few weeks, members of the President’s Cabinet will be traveling across the country to lift up best practices and highlight other cities where local leaders are partnering with federal agencies, foundations, private sector partners, and police departments to improve the quality of life in their communities on issues from healthcare to education to transparency in policing. Secretary Castro will visit Fullerton, CA, Kansas City, and St. Louis; Secretary Duncan will travel to Philadelphia; Secretary Foxx will travel to Charlotte; Secretary Perez will travel to Minneapolis, New Haven, and Pittsburgh; and Secretary Vilsack will travel to Memphis.

Additionally, Attorney General Lynch will travel to Cincinnati as part of a national Community Policing tour that will highlight collaborative programs and innovative policing practices designed to advance public safety, strengthen police-community relations, and foster mutual trust and respect. The tour will build on President Obama’s commitment to engage with law enforcement, local leaders, young people and other members of the community to implement key recommendations from the 21st Century Policing Task Force report.

The administration is deeply engaged with these communities and others across the country, showing what can be achieved when people from all walks of life come together to expand opportunity for all Americans.

The Task Force on 21st Century Policing

Last December, President Barack Obama created the Task Force on 21st Century Policing with a mission to identify best practices and make recommendations on how such practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust. The Task Force was chaired by Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey and George Mason University Professor

Laurie Robinson and included, among others, law enforcement representatives, community leaders, academics, and youth leaders. Over several months, the Task Force held public hearings across the country; took testimony from over 100 witnesses; reviewed hundreds of written submissions and thoughtfully came to consensus on 59 concrete recommendations. The Task Force presented their interim report, including recommendations regarding policies, training, transparency, accountability, technology and officer safety and wellness, to the President in March, and today the final report is available [HERE](#).

White House Police Data Initiative: Using Data and Technology to Build Community Trust

The Task Force Report emphasized the importance of data and technology in helping local law enforcement agencies excel in their work and build community trust. Even when local law enforcement agencies are willing to explore new ways to use and release such data, there are often technical and other impediments to doing so. To break down barriers, the White House, with assistance from foundations like the Laura & John Arnold Foundation, launched the Police Data Initiative (PDI) with police chiefs and municipal Chief Technology Officers from sixteen jurisdictions that we expect to be leaders in this space. Since the launch, five additional jurisdictions joined the effort. As part of the initiative, these jurisdictions are working alongside technologists, community organizations and police associations to implement multiple commitments to action that leverage open data to increase transparency and build community trust, better utilize early warning systems to identify problems, increase internal accountability, and decrease inappropriate uses of force. More information about the White House Police Data Initiative is available [HERE](#).

Jurisdictions taking part in the White House Police Data Initiative (PDI) so far include: Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX; Camden, NJ; Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC; Cincinnati, OH; Columbia, SC; Dallas, TX; Hampton, VA; Indianapolis, IN; Knoxville, TN; Los Angeles, CA; LA County, CA; Louisville, KY; Montgomery County, MD; New Orleans, LA; Newport News, VA; Oakland, CA; Philadelphia, PA; Richmond, CA; Rutland, VT; and Seattle, WA.

Below are some highlights of the work these police departments are taking with other PDI participants:

Open Data to Build Transparency and Increase Community Trust

- Twenty-one jurisdictions committed to release a combined total of 101 data sets that have not been released to the public. The types of data include uses of force, police pedestrian and vehicle stops, citations, officer involved shootings and more, helping the communities gain visibility into key information on police/citizen encounters.
- Code for America and CI Technologies will work together to build an open source software tool to make it easier for more than 500 U.S. law enforcement agencies using IA Pro police integrity software to extract and open up data.
- To make police open data easy to find and use, the Police Foundation and ESRI will build a non-exclusive police open data portal to serve as a central clearinghouse option for police open data, making it easily accessible to community groups and researchers to analyze and see trends.

- To help this newly released data come alive for communities through mapping, visualizations and other tools, city leaders, non-profit organizations, and private sector partners will host open data hackathons in cities around the country.
- The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department is working with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice to use open data to provide a full picture of key policing activities, including stops, searches and use-of-force trends, information and demographics on neighborhoods patrolled, and more. This partnership will build on a website and tools already developed by the Southern Coalition for Justice which provide visualization and search tools to make this data easily accessible and understandable.
- Presidential Innovation Fellows, through the U.S. CTO and U.S. Chief Data Scientist will release an Open Data Playbook that police departments can use as a reference for open data best practices and case studies.
- The International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Foundation, and Code for America have committed to help grow communities of practice for law enforcement agencies and technologists around open data and transparency around police/community interactions.

Early Warning Systems and Data Research

- While many police departments have systems in place, often called “early warning systems”, to identify officers who may be having challenges in their interactions with the public and link them with training, there has been little research to determine which indicators are most closely linked to bad outcomes. To tackle this issue, twelve police departments have committed to share data on police/citizen encounters with data scientists for in-depth data analysis, strengthening the ability of police to intervene early and effectively: Austin, TX; Camden, NJ; Charlotte, NC; Dallas, TX; Indianapolis, IN; Knoxville, TN; LA City; LA County; Louisville, KY; New Orleans, LA; Philadelphia, PA and Richmond, CA.
- The University of Chicago will provide a team of five data science fellows from the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Data Science for Social Good program to work with 3-4 police departments over a 14 week engagement, starting in late May to begin to prototype data analysis tools that will help police departments identify the behaviors most indicative of later problems.
- Today in Camden, NJ, the city will welcome a Police Data Initiative Tech Team. This volunteer team of technology experts and data scientists will spend two days with Camden PD. They will focus on key technology systems with a goal of helping the Camden police enhance analysis and gain greater insights on officer activity. The goal is for the Camden PD to begin developing the solutions that surface potential problems before they happen while pointing to best practices that other departments can follow.

Body-Worn Camera Initiative: Identifying Most Effective Practices for Body-Worn Camera Use

The Task Force recommended steps the federal government could take to encourage adoption of body-worn cameras (BWC), while also noting that such cameras pose privacy and implementation challenges. Earlier this month, DOJ announced a \$20 million Body-Worn Camera Pilot Partnership Program designed to respond to the immediate needs of local and tribal law enforcement organizations. Today, DOJ's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance launched the [National Body-Worn Camera Toolkit](#), an online clearinghouse of resources designed to help law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve plan and implement BWC programs. The toolkit consolidates and translates research, promising practices, templates and tools that have been developed by subject matter experts. Areas of focus include procurement; training; implementation; retention and policies along with interests of prosecutors, defense attorneys, victim and privacy advocates and community members.

Community Policing Grants: Helping Communities Implement Innovative Policing Strategies

The Task Force recommended that DOJ, through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) provide incentives for state and local law enforcement to adopt the recommendations. [Today](#), the COPS office will launch solicitations for grants and technical assistance that are closely aligned with the recommendations. Funding is available for local law enforcement agencies committed to implementing the recommendations and to adopting policies that build community trust, including through hiring, training, initiating pilot projects, and developing new guidance and best practices. Grants will be awarded this fall. For further information about how the COPS office is supporting for implementation of the Task Force recommendations click [HERE](#).

Partnering with National Law Enforcement Organizations to Implement Recommendations

With support from the COPS Office, law enforcement focused organizations including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Police Executive Research Forum, the National Sheriffs' Association, Major County Sheriffs, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Police Foundation, will develop national-level, industry-wide projects for several of the pillars outlined in the Task Force Report. Supported activities will range from the creation of positive and meaningful engagement opportunities between law enforcement and youth, identification of best practices for engaging the community in the mutual responsibility of public safety, exploration of the circumstances and causality behind documented line-of-duty injuries, and promotion of officer safety and well-being.

The Major Cities Chiefs Association will also be partnering with the COPS Office to host three roundtable convenings of member chiefs to discuss the implementation of selected recommendations from the Task Force Report. The discussions will explore experiences and lessons from agencies that may have implemented some of the recommendations, including associated challenges, and the role of senior leaders making the changes called for in the Task Force Report. Key ideas from the discussion will be captured and shared with the field through a report on the discussions. The first roundtable will take place in Nashville, Tennessee in June.

In addition, the International Association of Chiefs of Police has committed to building a National Center for Community-Police Relations (NCCPR) which will provide support to any local law enforcement agencies that wish to address the issues raised in the Task Force Report. Support will include: providing educational materials that will break down the Task Force recommendations for all levels of officer; on-site culture assessments to determine the strengths and weaknesses of local agencies relating to the report's six pillars; using the train-the-trainer model to create a national cadre of local agency officers who can train others on recommendation implementation; and leader-to-leader mentoring to allow leaders who have successfully implemented recommendations to work with those desiring to do so.

Helping Police Get People Needed Services

Since 2011, the Ford Foundation, with other foundations, has supported Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) in Seattle, an innovative arrest diversion program co-designed by police, prosecutors, public defenders, civil rights leaders and public health experts. This evidence-based program lets law enforcement officers directly divert people, whom they could arrest for low-level crimes, such as drug or prostitution offenses, to case managers, who assist with housing, treatment and other supportive services, instead of using jail and prosecution. An evaluation by the University of Washington, funded by the Arnold Foundation and released in March 2015, found that participants in the program had 58% lower odds of a subsequent arrest as compared to a control group. Equally important, it helps improve the relationship between the police and the people they encounter on the streets. Consistent with the Task Force recommendation that law enforcement agencies “emphasize . . . alternatives to arrest or summons in situations where appropriate,” the Ford Foundation plans to work with other foundations to provide technical assistance to jurisdictions around the country planning to implement LEAD. Over 30 jurisdictions nationally have expressed interest and will be invited to a convening to be hosted by The White House and the Ford Foundation in July.

Equipment Working Group Final Report

In addition to the work completed by the Task Force on 21st Century Policing, a separate federal interagency working group—led by the Departments of Justice, Defense and Homeland Security – has now completed an extensive review of federal programs that support the transfer of equipment to state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies. On the basis of that review, the working group developed a series of concrete steps to enhance accountability, increase transparency, and better serve the needs of law enforcement and local communities. The President has directed departments and agencies to put the working group's recommendations into practice and continue to partner with law enforcement and local communities during the implementation process. The working group report is available [HERE](#).

- The working group developed a unified list of prohibited equipment that may not be acquired under any of the various programs. This list includes tracked armored vehicles, weaponized aircraft and vehicles, bayonets, grenade launchers, and large-caliber firearms.
- The working group developed a unified list of equipment that law enforcement may acquire only in accordance with new and more rigorous controls. This controlled list

includes armored vehicles, tactical vehicles, riot gear, and specialized firearms and ammunition.

- **Uniform Acquisition Standards:** Across all programs, the transfer of equipment on the controlled list will require the consent of the appropriate local civilian governing body (e.g., City Council, County Council, Mayor) as well as a clear and persuasive explanation of the need for the equipment and the appropriate law enforcement purpose that it will serve.
- **Training and Protocols:** To receive such equipment, law enforcement agencies must commit to have in place “general policing” training standards, including training on community policing, constitutional policing, and community impact. Agencies must also agree to protocols on the appropriate use, supervision, and operation of such equipment.
- **Required Data Collection:** Law enforcement agencies must collect and retain certain information whenever such equipment is involved in a “significant incident.” Upon request or during a compliance review, the law enforcement agency must provide this information to the federal agency that supported the equipment’s acquisition. This information will also be made publicly available in accordance with the law enforcement agency's applicable policies and protocols.