



**Police Review  
Commission**

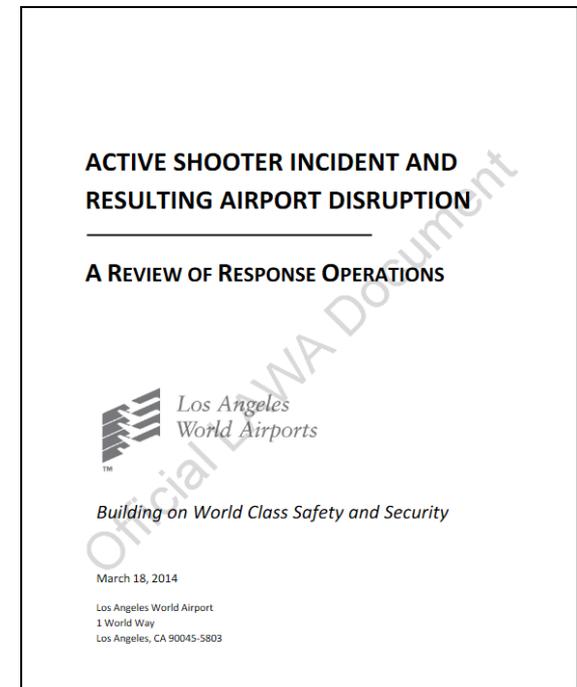
**Communications  
Subcommittee**

**June 8, 2015**

# Key Communication Issues

“The ability to **provide accurate, timely and actionable information** during a crisis requires **careful planning and redundant forms of communication** using available tools including **mainstream and social media**, as well as having the **cooperation of those directly involved** in managing the crisis to provide insight and perspective.”

*From the “LAX Active Shooter Incident and Resulting Airport Disruption: A Review of Response Operations” report, March 18, 2014*



# Breed Distrust

Want to breed public distrust of the police and law enforcement?

- Withhold basic information and let rumors run rampant in coffee shops and on social media sites.
- Appear unorganized and ignorant of basic protocols, such as which agency is actually in charge of public information.

# Breed Distrust

- Adopt a "nothing to see here" approach when the whole darn town knows (and sees) otherwise.
- Disregard state law, which states that agencies are required to provide information in these types of incidents, including a chronology of events as well as initial offense report information showing the offense, date, time, general location, officer and a brief summary of what happened.

# Setting the Stage

## Poor communications in Bathurst police shooting leads to the inevitable

The Bathurst police have handed over the investigation to the Nova Scotia RCMP, and this is where the communications gets worse. Rather than being definitive that all facts will come out once the investigation is complete, something that the public should be able to expect in a case like this, a spokesperson for the RCMP refused to say whether the results of the investigation would be made public.

So here's a situation where a man is dead by a police bullet, the police force is being investigated by another police force, neither force is saying much of anything, and the suggestion is out there that the public may never find out what happened.

If the police wanted to set the stage for innuendo and rumours to run rampant, this is certainly the formula.

*If the police want to set the stage for innuendo and rumors to run rampant, this is certainly the formula.*

**BissettMatheson**  
Communications

Most people are fair-minded. Most people realize it is early days and that the investigation will take time, and must be thorough. Most people don't rush to judgment. But in a case like this **people expect at least some basic information,** and assurances that in due course the truth will be known.

# Radically Transparent

*Police departments, particularly their internal investigations, should be **radically transparent**. Evidence audits, ledgers, and all internal communication — **all of it** — **should be subject to public review**. The police work for us, and they require our oversight.*

*From the National Review*

# Transparency is Key

**Post-Ferguson, are cops & civilians able to communicate on police shootings?**



ALEJANDRO A. ALVAREZ / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Tanya Brown-Dickerson's son, Brandon Tate-Brown, 26, was shot and killed by Philadelphia police officers during a traffic stop on Dec. 15. She wants access to surveillance tapes of the incident.

philly.com

In the wake of the controversial police-involved deaths of Mike Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y., every police-involved shooting has become suspect in the eyes of activists looking to expose systemic problems, according to one expert.

**Transparency is key**, said Robert Kane, professor and department chairman of Drexel University's Criminology and Justice Studies Department.

"Police departments do themselves a lot of damage when they circle the wagons and allow an activist public to begin controlling the conversation and essentially trying the police in the public realm," said Kane, author of *Jammed Up: Bad Cops, Police Misconduct, and the New York City Police Department* and *The Oxford Handbook of Police and Policing*.

# Transparency Praised

WBUR NEWS

March 31, 2015

## After Officer Shooting, Community Leaders Praise Transparency — And Call For More

Less than 24 hours after Friday's incident, in which Officer John Moynihan was shot in the face and Angelo West was shot and killed in Roxbury, Boston police met with several community leaders and local clergy to show them surveillance video of the shootout and answer questions.

Police Commissioner William Evans and community leaders were in communication shortly after the Friday shooting via text messages and phone calls, and a meeting was set up. On Saturday afternoon, community leaders and elected officials met with Evans, Police Superintendent-In-Chief William Gross and Boston police command staff at police headquarters.



# Prosecutors and Video

## IMPD Chief Rick Hite appears on CNN, discusses police transparency

POSTED 6:38 PM, APRIL 9, 2015, BY [KENDALL DOWNING](#), UPDATED AT 06:41PM, APRIL 9, 2015

“Here in Indianapolis, again, we have our prosecutors respond to many of our police action shootings to make sure it’s fair and impartial,” he said.

Hite told CNN video should be used as a tool to assess both an officer’s actions and the actions of any person involved in a police incident.



# Early Communications

HERALD EDITORIAL

Herald | MEDIA

## Shooting serves as reminder that early communication essential

September 20, 2014 10:00 pm

Friday's press conference by the Utah County Attorney's Office went a long way to helping ease tensions after a veritable blackout of information following the Sept. 10 shooting death of Darrien Hunt in Saratoga Springs.

By saying nothing and withholding information from the community insinuates -- for right or wrong -- that there is something to hide. And local agencies need to understand that in today's environment of immediacy, communication with the public cannot take as long as it has in this case.

We need more than prepared statements from the Saratoga Springs Police Department and investigators to help us understand what happened. An open dialogue helps restore the trust lost in the days immediately following the shooting, mostly caused by officials dodging questions and pointing fingers at the public and media.

The time of withholding information from the public is no longer an option. Agencies must understand that the public needs information

# Proactive Communications

## Understanding MVPD's Use Of The AR-15 Rifle

We are always looking for ways to improve our communication and relationship with those who live, work or otherwise enjoy our City, which is why we want to address questions around our use of the AR-15 rifle. Specifically, we want to clarify how and why AR-15s are part of our inventory, which we've had since 1995. This is especially pertinent given events in communities across the country and their current dynamics with their respective law enforcement agencies.



Proactive blog post as well as frequent commenting and answering questions to engage the public

Mountain View PD  
09/30/2014



@Geoff — Great point and thoughtful insight. They both possess unique benefits depending on, like you said, the situation.

[Reply](#)

# Be Personable

## [Cheeky] Faces Of Mountain View PD's Community Action And Information Unit

Law enforcement can — at times — be a bit stressful, so we try to offset some of that stress by injecting a bit of humor into our day-to-day interactions. As demonstrated by a recent photo shoot (below), the Community Action and Information Unit (CAIU) displays some humor through two very cheeky personalities, [Sgt. Saul Jaeger](#) and [Shino Tanaka](#)

### You are invited!

**Monday, April 27, 2014 // 8:45am to 9:45am**

Get your traffic related questions answered over your morning cup + enjoy good company + cool bikes.

*Children are more than welcome!*



#### Bonus?

Peet's has kindly offered 50% off coffee during the event. Just mention MVPD Mocha.

#### Joining us?

Tweet @MountainViewPD with #MVPDMocha.

Facebook  
posting is  
fun and  
engaging



If you've listened to any of our [podcasts](#), you already have a good sense of the behind-the-scenes banter that takes place between Sgt. Jaeger and Shino, as well as those highlighted within the department. Why does this matter? Because one of this Unit's goals is to demonstrate the depth and breadth of **your** department.

# Officer Involved Shooting

**The Dallas, Texas Police Department provides Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) Information on its website**

- To **provide greater transparency**, the Dallas Police Department looks to share any information available with the community when an officer is involved in a shooting.
- This process of **transparency begins at the scene** of an OIS shooting **with press briefings and social media communications** and **continues with additional updates** as information becomes available.

*We believe that this is an **expectation of the community** that **will increase trust and legitimacy** in OIS investigative process.*

[www.dallaspolice.net/ois/ois.html](http://www.dallaspolice.net/ois/ois.html)

# The Dallas Morning News

Opinion > Editorials

## Editorials

# Editorial: Why Dallas police shootings aren't prompting protests

Published: 26 August 2014 08:03 PM

Updated: 27 August 2014 02:06 PM

*Dallas, Texas Police Chief David Brown*



“We immediately informed the public in a news conference about all the facts as we knew them. We assured the public that a complete and thorough investigation would be done. We released the name of the person we shot and the name of the officer. We answered every question we could. ... Perhaps most important, we drew down the number of officers that were in the neighborhood.”





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## NEWS RELEASE

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Roberto A. Villaseñor  
Chief of Police

**Contact:** Pete Dugan  
Sergeant / Public Information Office  
520-791-4852  
On-call PIO: [tucsonpdpio@gmail.com](mailto:tucsonpdpio@gmail.com)  
<http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/police>

**Date:** 03/10/2015  
**TDD:** 791-2639

### OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING WEST CALLE RAMONA AND SOUTH 13<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE

On May 9, 2015, just after 10:00 p.m., officers from Operations Division South responded to the 300 block of West Calle Alford reference a fight between a male and female. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the complainant who advised that she witnessed the altercation between the couple, and that the male subject pointed a gun at her when she tried to intervene. Within minutes, officers located the male and female. As officers attempted to make contact, the male suspect ran and a foot pursuit ensued. During the pursuit, shots were fired and the suspect was struck multiple times. The suspect was armed with a handgun at the time of the shooting.

Officers immediately rendered first aid to the suspect using an IFAK (Individual First Aid Kit). He was then transported to a local area hospital with serious, but non-life-threatening injuries. No officers were injured during the incident.

Detectives from the Homicide Unit and the Office of Internal Affairs responded to continue the investigation. As is standard practice in all officer involved shootings, the Homicide Unit will conduct a criminal investigation into the incident. Additionally, the Office of Internal Affairs will conduct a separate and parallel administrative investigation to examine the actions of department personnel in response to this incident.

Additional details will be released as they become available. Anyone with information about this incident is urged to call 911 or 88-CRIME.

####

Initial  
release in  
less than  
24 hours of  
shooting

**Tucson Police**

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(VINE)

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# Media Releases

Title	Date
Officer Involved Shooting - W. Calle Ramona And S 13th Ave. - UPDATE2	16 May 2015
Homicide - 7001 South Tucson Blvd	16 May 2015
Buckle Up Arizona.Its The Law 0	15 May 2015
Know Your Limit	14 May 2015
Homicide - 800 Block Of West Calle Medina	13 May 2015
Officer Involved Shooting - W. Calle Ramona And S 13th Ave. - UPDATE	11 May 2015
Officer Involved Shooting - W. Calle Ramona And S 13th Ave <b>Initial Release within 24 hours of shooting</b>	10 May 2015



## News Release

Wednesday, May 6, 2015



### Officer-Involved Shooting in Newton NRF037-15

*May 11, 2015 NRF037-15ma*

#### UPDATE

**Updated:** The officer involved in the below incident has been identified as Police Officer III John Baker, Serial No. 37158.

**Los Angeles:** On May 5, 2015, around 11:50 p.m., officers from Metropolitan Division were conducting crime suppression in the area of Slauson Avenue and Broadway when they observed a male look in their direction, reach for his waistband, and run southbound on Broadway.

The suspect, described as a male Hispanic in his 20's, refused to comply with the officers' commands and fled southbound on Broadway toward a mixed residential/ business area. The officers temporarily lost sight of the suspect, but then spotted him on the rooftop of a building in the 5800 block of Broadway. The suspect pointed a handgun at the officers resulting in an officer- involved shooting (OIS). The suspect fled from officers and out of view.

Officers established a perimeter and ordered the suspect to surrender. The suspect complied with the officers' commands and was taken into custody without further incident.

Los Angeles Fire Department Paramedics transported the suspect to a local hospital where he was listed in critical, but stable condition. No officers were injured during this incident and the suspect's gun was recovered at scene.

Force Investigation Division investigators responded to the incident and will conduct a thorough investigation of the officer involved shooting. The investigation will ultimately be reviewed by the Chief of Police, the Office of the Inspector General and Board of Police Commissioners for compliance with the Departments Use-of-Force Policy, which states that an officer's use-of-force actions must be objectively reasonable. Additionally, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Justice System Integrity Division will conduct a comprehensive review of the facts of the OIS.

Anyone with information is asked to call Force Investigation Division at 213-486-5230. During non-business hours or on weekends, calls should be directed to 1-877-LAPD-24-7 (877-527-3247). Anyone wishing to remain anonymous should call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (800-222-8477). Tipsters may also contact Crime Stoppers by texting to phone number 274637 (C-R-I-M-E-S on most keypads) with a cell phone. All text messages should begin with the letters "LAPD." Tipsters may also go to LAPDOnline.org, click on "webtips" and follow the prompts.

Shooting occurred on May 5, 11:50 p.m.

News release issued on May 6

Release was updated five days later on May 11 with the officer's name and serial number

# Two Virginia Officers Wounded, Man Dead

BY MATTHEW BARAKAT ON MAY 19, 2015

SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS

**OFFICER.com**



*Police fatally shot a man in a northern Virginia apartment building Tuesday morning after they heard screaming upon arrival for a domestic-disturbance call.*

Shooting occurred on May 19, 2015

Numerous media stories on the shooting in Arlington Co., Va.

Home » News » Local » Virginia » Arlington » 1 dead, 2 cops...

## 1 dead, 2 cops injured in Arlington Co. shooting

**wtop** By WTOP Staff  
May 19, 2015 12:13 pm



## 1 dead, 2 officers hurt in Va. police-involved shooting

Debra Altarone and Peggy Fox, WUSA-TV, Washington, D.C. 12:58 p.m. EDT May 19, 2015



## BREAKING: Officer-Involved Shooting in Buckingham

by [ARLnow.com](#) - May 19, 2015 at 11:05 am

14,459 140 Comments

# No news release from Arlington County Police / Government – but PD did tweet three times

## Newsroom

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### Public Safety News



### Police

#### Resident Satisfaction High with Arlington County

May 19, 2015

Overall satisfaction with County services 32 percentage points above national average of 57 percent Overall satisfaction with County services generally the same across Arlington Street maintenance, traffic flow management key areas for improvement Residents continue to be highly satisfied with County government services, according to results from Arlington's fourth Resident Satisfaction Survey, conducted this spring [...]

Categories: [News Releases](#), [Public Safety](#), [Streets](#), [Transportation](#)

#### Click It or Ticket Campaign Starts May 18, 2015

May 15, 2015

Once again, the Arlington County Police Department is reminding motorists to Click It or Ticket. As part of the national seat belt enforcement campaign, law enforcement agencies around the country will be stepping up enforcement May 18 – 31, 2015, just ahead of one of the busiest travel weekends of the year.

Categories: [Police](#), [Public Safety](#)

#### TRAFFIC ALERT: 2015 Girls on the Run 5K

May 15, 2015

The 2015 Girls on the Run 5K will be held on Sunday, May 17, 2015. The following road closures will occur from approximately 8:00 a.m. through 10:30 a.m. on May 17, 2015.

Categories: [Police](#), [Public Safety](#)

#### TRAFFIC ALERT: 2015 Taste of Arlington Street Closures

May 15, 2015

The 2015 Taste of Arlington Event will be held on Sunday May 17, 2015. The following road closures will occur from midnight through 8:00 p.m. on May 17, 2015.

Categories: [Police](#), [Public Safety](#)

#### Police News

May 15, 2015

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May 15, 2015

##### School Resource Officers Announce 2015 Spring Initiative

The Arlington County Police Department's School Resource Officers (SROs) wish to inform the public of their 2015 spring initiative to prevent and reduce juvenile crime. This will include preventing drug and alcohol related offenses among both middle and high school students through saturation patrols and education.

#### Crime Reports

- Crime Report: May 18, 2015
- Crime Report: May 15, 2015
- Crime Report: May 14, 2015
- Crime Report: May 13, 2015
- Crime Report: May 12, 2015
- Crime Report: May 11, 2015
- Crime Report: May 8, 2015
- Crime Report: May 7, 2015
- Crime Report: May 6, 2015
- Crime Report: May 5, 2015
- Crime Report: May 4, 2015
- Crime Report: May 1, 2015
- Crime Report: April 30, 2015
- Crime Report: April 29, 2015
- Crime Report: April 28, 2015
- Crime Report: April 27, 2015
- Crime Report: April 24, 2015
- Crime Report: April 23, 2015
- Crime Report: April 22, 2015
- Crime Report: April 21, 2015

#### More Daily Crime Reports

**ArlingtonCountyPD** @ArlingtonVaPD · 20h  
Male subject involved in domestic incident sustained gun shot wound and succumbed to injuries at the hospital. Investigation is ongoing.

4

**ArlingtonCountyPD** @ArlingtonVaPD · 21h  
At this time, both officers remain under medical treatment at VA Hospital with non-life threatening injuries. 1 officer undergoing surgery.

11
 5

**ArlingtonCountyPD** @ArlingtonVaPD · 22h  
ACPD investigating a shooting. Media staging at 2nd Rd N & Thomas Street. PIO on scene.

24
 2

# Newsroom

## Timeline: Officer Involved Shooting on May 19, 2015

June 2, 2015

Since Tuesday, May 19, 2015, Arlington County Police Department have been investigating an officer involved shooting at 4219 N. 2nd Road, resulting in a male subject deceased and one officer sustaining significant injuries. Additionally, another officer sustained minor injuries as did a female party involved in the initial call for service. The following timeline provides an account of the incident according to officer and witness interviews. The investigation remains ongoing at this time and will be presented to the Commonwealth Attorney in the future.

### Timeline

10:51:44 – Initial 9-1-1 received by the Arlington County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) for a possible domestic disturbance. The reporting party informs the dispatcher they hear a female screaming from inside an apartment.

10:54:12 – Two officers are dispatched to scene by ECC for trouble unknown – possible domestic dispute.

10:54:31 – Call changed from trouble unknown to a domestic dispute, older couple in this apartment arguing loudly -possibly drinking

10:55:36 – First officer arrives on scene.

10:56:28 – Second officer arrives on scene.

# Arlington police identify officers involved in fatal shooting

By **Matt Zaptosky** June 6   Follow @mattzap

Shooting occurred on May 19

Arlington County Police identified officers on June 5 – but no news release posted online – only a news report from The Washington Post

Arlington County police on Friday identified the officers involved in a confrontation last month that led to the fatal shooting of a man at a Ballston apartment complex.

The officers were 1st Sgt. John Letos, Officer Michael Laird and Field Training Officer Joel Davis, police said.

Police would not precisely describe each officers' actions during the incident, which led to the death of Alfredo Rials-Torres, 54. They asserted that although their investigation continues and the commonwealth's attorney will eventually review the case, they currently believe that the officers' actions "were prudent, reasonable and within our established guidelines."

# The Press Conference



“Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer delivered **an almost perfect press conference** that should be studied by PR professionals as a terrific example of how to communicate in crisis.”

Source: [Mr. Media Training](#)

- **He Struck The Perfect Emotional Tone**
- **He Treated The Media As An Ally**
- **He Was Completely Open**
- **He Got In Front Of a Potential Controversy**
- **He Conveyed a Sense of Complete Competence**

# Civilian PIO or Uniformed PIO

- “It is difficult to ask someone that has been used to keeping information to themselves as they work a case, to then share it with members of the media.”
- “It is a completely different mind set. We thought it would be easier to train someone with a media background on police policies because they know exactly what other media outlets need as far as what information can be released. **I think it allows us to get more information out to the public.**”

Police Chief A.J. Gary, Conway, Arkansas Police Department

# Civilian PIO or Uniformed PIO

- “Prior ... we have had **three officers in this job in the past four years**, which is a lot of turn over. However, people get promoted or they are moved to different departments as they are needed, which means we are **training someone new every year.**”
- “She knows she isn’t going to be promoted to a higher rank or be re-assigned so it allows her to focus on getting information out so the public knows what is going on.”

Police Chief A.J. Gary, Conway, Arkansas Police Department

# Alexandria, Va.

- The Public Information Office (PIO) / Media Services Unit of the Alexandria Police Department are “dedicated and highly trained individuals who understand the importance of using the media as a valuable resource to keep the public informed of the Department’s activities.”
- The PIO is staffed by a civilian Commander and a civilian Public Information Officer with the help of three volunteers that work on a part-time basis.

U.S. Census Bureau population estimates (2014) for city of Alexandria: 150,575

# Columbia, Missouri

## Police department adds civilians to free up sworn officers

By [ALAN BURDZIAK](#)

Saturday, September 27, 2014 at 12:00 am [Comments \(7\)](#)

COLUMBIA DAILY  
**TRIBUNE**  
— COLUMBIA, MISSOURI —

With a civilian public information officer slated to start Monday, the Columbia Police Department continues its push to shift some duties to civilians that traditionally have been done by sworn officers. Civilian additions to the Forensic Evidence Team are up next.

Sgt. Bob Dochler said the goal is to lighten the load for sworn officers so they can focus more time on patrol or investigative work.

# Arlington County (Va.)

## Police Hire Civilian Public Information Officer

January 6, 2012

*MEDIA CONTACT: Media Office (703) 228-4331*



**ARLINGTON, Va.** – The Arlington County Police Department is pleased to announce the appointment of Dustin Sternbeck to the post of Public Information Officer for the department.

Dustin began his public safety career with Loudoun County's Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management in 2005. Early in his career with LCFR, Dustin worked in the Operations Division for several years. Upon receiving a Public Service Fellow Award, he was promoted to serve as the first uniformed Public Information Officer with Loudoun County.

More recently, he served as the Public Information Officer for Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and as the Crisis Communication Officer for the NOVA Police Department.

Dustin earned his Bachelor's degree in Communications from West Virginia University and his Master's degree in Public Administration from George Mason University's Public Service Fellows program. As part of his successful completion of graduate school, he co-authored *"Managing Ethical Dilemmas: A Response Guide for Administrators."*

Additionally, he currently is an active member of the Virginia Emergency Management Assistance Compact A-Team in the capacity of Public Information Officer.

The previous Public Information Officer, Detective Crystal Nosal, will return to the Patrol Division of the Operations Section of the Police Department.

# Open Data

- The Pew Research Center recently released a [report](#) that explores Americans' views of open government data.
- Many Americans hope that **increased data transparency** will aid journalists, **make officials more accountable** and improve decision making.

# Open Data

- Few think that government at the local, state, and federal levels are doing a great job of providing useful data.
- Only 5 percent of Americans say that the federal government and state governments are very effective in sharing their data. Local governments fared slightly better with 7 percent of Americans saying they are very effective in sharing data.

# Open Data

- Last December, President Obama launched the [Task Force on 21st Century Policing](#) to better understand specific policing challenges and help communities identify actions they can take to improve law enforcement and enhance community engagement.
- Many of the Task Force's recommendations emphasize the opportunity for departments to **better use data and technology to build community trust.**

# Open Data

- Local police departments and other participants are responding first to [recommendations](#) from the Task Force within two streams of work:
  - Using open data to increase transparency, build community trust and support innovation.
  - Better using technology, such as early warning systems, to identify problems, increase internal accountability and decrease inappropriate uses of force.

# Open Data

The [report](#) includes 60-plus recommendations within six pillars:

- Building Trust & Legitimacy
- Policy & Oversight
- Technology & Social Media
- Community Policing & Crime Reduction
- Training & Education
- Officer Wellness & Safety

The White House has also launched the **Police Data Initiative**, mobilizing 21 leading jurisdictions across the country to take fast action on concrete deliverables responding to the Task Force recommendations in the area of data and technology.

# Open Data

Police departments participating in the White House Police Data Initiative:



# Best Practices

- Provide accurate, timely and actionable information.
- Use redundant forms of communication.
- Communicate both good and bad news.
- Use multiple communication tools – both traditional media as well as social media.
- Get “buy-in” and cooperation from all levels of the Department to be transparent.

# Best Practices

- Commit to not withholding information.
- Control communications by being transparent with information.
- Provide key details and news – before being asked for it by the media.
- Make phone calls to key community leaders as soon as bad news breaks.
- Hold community meetings early and often.

# Best Practices

- Use text messaging to alert the public, as well as specialized groups for notifications and updates of officer involved shootings.
- Share news/details of ALL officer involved shootings in multiple ways – news conferences, media releases, text alerts, website postings, social media, etc.
- Have an officer involved shooting Web page explaining process, procedures, results, etc.

# Best Practices

- Issue an immediate news release (within 24 hours maximum) for any officer involved shooting with regular updates.
- Provide the name of the officer as soon as possible, if not in the first news release, as well as the name of the shooting victim, etc.

# Best Practices

- Public information / public relations office (functions) report directly to the Police Chief.
- Hire civilian public information officers to lead PIO offices.
- Create a “community engagement team” within the Police Department to respond to community concerns and manage programs that create community trust and engagement.

# Best Practices

- Have the Police Chief be the official spokesperson for officer involved shootings.
- All spokespersons should have media training.
- Use open data to improve transparency of Police Department actions.
- Study and implement recommendations of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

# Conclusion

- Discussion
- Questions
- Recommendations