

The BJA Executive Session on

# Police Leadership

2013

*The BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership* is a multi-year endeavor started in 2010 with the goal of developing innovative thinking that would help create police leaders uniquely qualified to meet the challenges of a changing public safety landscape.

In support of an integrated approach to creating safe and viable communities across America, the project directors recruited 20+ principals from a range of disciplines. The principals, in turn, led national field teams of practitioners focused on the work of policing and the organization of the future.

To gain new insights on leadership, the *BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership* engaged police chiefs in documenting their own paths and invited leaders to participate in various audio and video forums to tell their stories and discuss the future of policing and police leadership.

Please visit our website, <http://bjaleader.org>, to learn more about this project and to access a broad array of interactive, multimedia resources.

The principals are supported in their work by a team that includes project co-directors Darrel W. Stephens and Bill Geller, project strategist Nancy McKeon, and BJA Senior Policy Advisor Steve Edwards.

## Five Police Departments Building Trust and Collaboration

Innovations in Policing Clinic  
Yale Law School  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

What We Learned

by  
Jamil Jivani



## **What We Learned in Milwaukee**

The Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) historically has had difficulty building trust and collaborating with minority communities. Past police leaders in the city have been criticized for taking unilateral and top-down approaches to policing that left out community input. Prominent instances of violence between police officers and citizens fueled widespread distrust.

Things have improved in recent years, as the department has emphasized improvement in the following areas: (1) department morale, (2) community confidence in MPD, (3) minority relations, and (4) basic effectiveness of policing. Years of distrust will not be undone quickly, but Milwaukee has made important progress—including converting many long-time critics into supporters of the department.

## **Four Things the Field Can Learn from Milwaukee**

### *1. Police–Community Commissions can make a difference.*

- With the right structure and facilitator, a commission like the Milwaukee Commission on Police–Community Relations can be effective in opening dialogue between police and communities.

### *2. A credible citizen complaint process is important to restoring community faith.*

- Establish a strong citizen review board to administer a citizen review process that community leaders find credible.
- Allow community organizations to receive and file citizen complaints; this builds credibility for the complaint process.

### *3. Unleashing the district captain*

- Decentralize decision-making to district captains; this provides a geographic focus to policing strategies and community engagement.
- Decentralize authority so that community groups feel connected to centers of power.
- Increase foot patrol; this builds familiarity between residents and officers.

### *4. Visibility and crisis management matters.*

- Remain visible, including in negative situations.
- Community perceptions of police are often formed in moments of crisis. Thoughtful and strategic communication with media and community organizations is essential in these moments.

The Yale Law School Innovations in Policing Clinic is made up of Rebecca Buckwalter-Poza, Kyle Delbyck, Jamil Jivani (lead author for Milwaukee case study), Jeremy Kaplan-Lyman (lead author for Seattle case study), Jessica So, Trevor Stutz (lead author for High Point case study), Carolyn Van Zile (lead author for Charlotte-Mecklenburg case study), and Alyssa Work (lead author for Philadelphia case study).

.....

The principals on our team include John Crombach, Gail Christopher, Darrel Stephens and James Form.

*Cite as:* Jamil Jivani (2013) “Five Police Departments Building Trust and Collaboration, Innovations in Policing Clinic, Yale Law School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, What We Learned.” A paper of the BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice; and St. Petersburg, FL: Center for Public Safety Innovation, St. Petersburg College.

9/25/2015

<http://bjaleader.org>

This project was supported by Grant #2009-D2-BX-K003 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, to St. Petersburg College. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the SMART Office, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



“Recipient acknowledges that the Office of Justice Programs reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and authorize others to use (in whole or in part, including in connection with derivative works), for Federal purposes: (1) the copyright in any work developed under an award or subaward; and (2) any rights of copyright to which a recipient or subrecipient purchases ownership with Federal support. Recipient acknowledges that the Office of Justice Programs has the right to (1) obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data first produced under an award or subaward; and (2) authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for Federal purposes. It is the responsibility of the recipient (and of each subrecipient, if applicable) to ensure that this condition is included in any subaward under this award.”