

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
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

What We Learned

by
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What We Learned

Over the past decade in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, an unlikely group of collaborators—police leaders, public defenders, district attorney’s office, the city Department of Human Services, schools, and faith leaders—developed and established forums and a training curriculum for officers to bring youth and law enforcement together.

This group holds youth–law enforcement forums in public schools, youth detention facilities, and facilities for court-adjudicated youth. It has also developed a one-day training program for police recruits at the Philadelphia Police Academy. The forums and trainings give youth and law enforcement strategies for defusing contacts that might lead to an arrest, allow them to speak frankly to each other about how they perceive each other’s actions, and change attitudes in ways that will change interactions on the streets of some of Philadelphia’s toughest neighborhoods.

Four Things the Field Can Learn from Philadelphia

1. *The power of collaborating with unlikely allies.*
 - When police, prosecutors, public defenders, and community groups decide to work together, change can be dramatic.
2. *Intervene early in an officer’s career. Then follow up.*
 - Reach cadets in the academy, before their perceptions of kids’ behavior have solidified.
 - The department could, and should, follow up with cadets on the training they receive to ensure that they receive repeated reinforcement.
3. *Perceptions matter—on both sides of the youth/police divide.*
 - How officers on patrol respond to youth behavior, and how youth react to police intervention in everyday life, are highly dependent on how each group views the others’ behaviors and motives.
 - Productive police–community relationships turn on letting police explain to teenagers how they are trained to respond to threats, as well as on allowing kids to describe how their previous interactions with law enforcement affect their actions.
4. *Include top brass in forums and trainings whenever possible.*
 - Trainings and forums have overwhelmingly been more effective when police leaders are present and/or participating. Their presence signals to line officers—and youth—that the leadership stands behind the project.

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).

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

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