

Town Meetings: Responding to Racism, Police Violence, and Systemic Injustice

Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition

The Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Coalition (GCCHRC) formed in Cleveland through the help of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC) in 2011. The purpose of the Coalition is to help unite diverse communities to build power for social justice and human equality. The Coalition has been focused on racial profiling, criminalization of communities of color, and other systemic injustices confronting our communities. For more information on the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, see www.bordc.org. Contact Don Bryant don@immigrantsupportnetwork.org

The GCCHRC sponsored two "Town Meetings" on December 6, and 20, 2014 to poll approximately 200 participants regarding reform of the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) and the Cleveland city government.

Recommendations for Consent Decree

Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) shall reform hiring protocol including accountability for poor hiring practice. Hiring of officers should include:

- Obtain background history of prospective police officers when hiring and making transfers.
- Require higher education standards for prospective officers. Currently, CDP educational requirement is graduation from an accredited high school or an accredited general equivalency diploma (GED). This is unacceptable and we suggest that applicants have a minimum of an Associate's degree from accredited college or university.

Arlington, Texas requires a Bachelor's degree for all officers, and claim professionalism and cost savings have followed. http://www.police-association.org/library/articles/educate_elevate.html

- Stronger psychological evaluation is needed when hiring officers. (Recommendations for medical and psychological standards are forthcoming.)

CDP police force and personnel shall be diverse in race, ethnicity, and gender, to represent the demographics of the city of Cleveland.

Improve officer training.

- Implement sociological training and education for all CDP personnel to deal with interactions with public regarding race, gender, religion, disabilities, mental illness, and addiction.
- Train Crisis Intervention Teams to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to deal with non criminal interventions, domestic disputes, and issues that may involve subjects with mental illness, addiction, or other disabilities.

- Train all officers and police personnel to discern the difference between criminal and non criminal activities, especially when concerning subjects with mental illness, addiction, or other disability.

(Improve officer training cont.)

- Officers should be better trained to defuse situation, not escalate.
- Implement effective community policing with "bias free" policing.

Establish elected citizen review board with expanded powers to review citizen complaints, alleged infractions by police officers,

- Independent investigatory authority
- Subpoena witnesses, documents, and testimony
- Hiring and firing oversight
- Oversight of equipment being used by police
- with full access to emergency "911" calls
- review and alter all police protocols and practices

Improve reporting of excessive and deadly force incidents to comply with the recommendations of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) at a minimum. Review Seattle, WA consent decree agreement on classification of 'use of force,' weapons, use of force and reporting.

Track and publish all police encounters including reporting on information of subjects in regard to race, ethnicity, age, sex, and gender statistics

- Update and synchronize policy manuals continually

Implement Deadly Force Prevention

- Restrict shoot-to-kill policy
- Implement stronger guidelines and restrictions on firearm use

Response to Deadly Force incidents strengthened

- Outside investigation for use of deadly force cases
- Automatic trial for police use of deadly force
- Penalize officers who are charged with excessive use of force with loss of pension.

- Deploy prosecutor outside of Cuyahoga County in instances of police use of deadly force and other alleged felonious police violations of the law.

The CDP shall make public all complaints and judgments against all CDP personnel via website and other public formats.

Equip all police vehicles with dashboard cameras and maintain.

Body cameras must be strictly monitored:

- adhere to prescribed methods as outlined by the American Civil Liberties Union, to respect privacy of subjects being filmed

- officers that abuse body cameras, by turning off to avoid filming certain interactions that may implicate themselves; filming nonviolent participants within their right to first amendment protections; or other abuse, shall be removed from the force.

Limit police surveillance technology

Restrict sharing of information between federal and local police in regards to immigration enforcement and surveillance of the public, especially when engaging in first amendment expression.

<http://murray.seattle.gov/seattle-poised-to-be-leader-in-protecting-resident-privacy/#sthash.YWfVTHnH.dpbs>

Every police officer and CDP personnel must be tested for drug and alcohol abuse.

Implement random testing for drug/ alcohol use.

Police officers and CDP personnel shall receive psychological testing at time of hiring and periodically.

Psychological tests are needed because officers dealing with violence daily are prone to PTSD.

De-militarize Cleveland Division of Police Curtail Federal 1033 Program, including transparency, limits on weapons and equipment to non lethal capabilities only.

Public shall have right to speak at all Cleveland City Council meetings and all public city meetings.

