

# Community Engagement Workshop

04.14.16



On April 14<sup>th</sup> the COCL-COAB hosted a Community Engagement Workshop, asking what we want the relationship between the Police and the Community to look like, and the individual responsibilities to be assumed by the Portland Police Bureau and Portland community members in realizing those visions. Below are the compiled notes from those discussions which involved both community members and Portland Police officers.

## The Three Big Questions

**Red Cards:** What do we want the **relationship between the police and the community** to look like?

- Respectful, two directions, see the humanity of each other, opportunities for police to hear about people's experiences, two way communication, get to know each other.
- Human to Human: a relationship that is trusting and respectful- free of fear with recognition of the power imbalance and a positive use of power and when to use it. Positive non-criminal interaction. Collaboration supported by community centered training. Acknowledge history, own the past, be accountable and respectful. Open honest communication that is direct and transparent. Events like this ongoing.
- Officers to admit they made mistakes. Trust. Want discipline of "bad cops" (both community and "good cops" want this). Maybe not so many "bad cops" but there are a lot of disrespectful cops. Need to change that. Discipline doesn't have to be punitive, coaching cops who need help, modeling. Cases of the mentally ill being victims are investigated and persecuted at a lower level, need to change – need to look at best

practices, peer support people are trained and wanted for jobs. Domestic violence support is (?) -stopped. Increase attention to safeguards – to help people who are being victimized. Open data.

- Mutual respect- needs to be training. Fairness: equal treatment under law. PC. Approach all people, don't make assumptions. How the conversation starts is important. Relationships: solid relationships with real people. People's perceptions breakdown when they get to know police! But we have limited number of officers out there and it's busy. Diversity in PPB is good and improving- use this to educate the community. Direct funding towards community engagement/relationship rather fancy technology and weaponry. Psychology: other as different, rather than other is bad. Culture: equal respect. Recognition between different groups in the community that all want more relationships with police. Where to go get more community feedback? Authentic (not sanctioned) engagement and change. Right now COAB is sanctioned. All part of Human Race, human beings. Sisters. Criminal justice- fair administration of justice. Community holds memories.
- Procedural Justice: 1) Listen to problem, 2) Possible solutions, 3) Possible investigations, 4) Closure. Police as facilitators of humanity. We're all members of the community. Hands location. Relationship building is important for my safety – PPB and community members.
- Important: personal interactions between officers and citizens; AND institutional change with the PPB. Be aware (PPB) of not giving wrong impressions- for example, the recent fundraiser at the training facility. PPB needs to communicate better with the community. Communicate better re: positive progress. Why don't we have more walking patrols in more neighborhoods?
- Building trust. Visible and integrated into community. There's a responsibility in the community to treat others (including police) with respect and for officers to treat the community with respect. Community engagement where police have time to develop relationships within the neighborhood! We want the relationship to be sustained, familiar, friendly, trusting, and respectful.
- Community plan that is drafted by community. Community needs the funding for the police to do what we need. To cooperate with one another community to community. To hold officers accountable.

Red Card Summary:

Overall, notes gathered for this question suggest community members want to be empowered, build mutual respect, trust, and to level the field between in order to make police officers members of the community. Three terms stood out the most- Mutual Respect, Honest Communication, and Trust. Community members want to build respect with officers through an open, trusting partnership. They not only want institutional changes, but a change in how the community interacts with PPB. It was suggested that community members and officers learn to recognize the power dynamics between them, and how to properly and positively use it. The community wants to be empowered with the tools and resources to not only police themselves, but to help the police understand the dynamics in every community. They want a relationship where officers are on more walking patrols, attending community events, and overall becoming community members, on a level field, together.

**Blue Cards:** What is the **Police Bureau's responsibility** to achieve that vision?

- PPB Responsibility: Recruiting process should factor in relationship skills, improved training at the Academy. In service training with assignments- including detectives. Early career field training in schools- they continue to build relationships with young people (i.e., the cadet program). Collaboration with mental health workers builds skills. Supervisors must model. Use opportunity of retirement- induced turnover to change culture.
- It is the bureau's responsibility to create the space that is conducive to respecting community members. Police and Community are equal. Equal responsibilities. Respect, etc.
- Communication- within bureau, between bureau and community. Personal interaction with people- body language, attitude- is this part of officer training? Needs to be. Recruiting officers- focus on recruiting from, rather than outside, the community. The vest filled with weapons is intimidating. What are the pros and cons of wearing all of it- authority, respect, fear, etc.
- Training: respect / fairness / relationship service. Understand YOUTH of new officers. Role play trainings using community resources in training. Recruitment: active look for diversity and sense of right and wrong. Community engagement: pay officers OT to be at community events.

- Police don't recognize the power they have- wearing all their weapons- need more training of power dynamics / gender. (Gil Martin- on "entitlement" – no training on [?] with community. Need more unilateral accountability. Scheduling procedure to traditional relationships. Number of living in Portland and owning the community. Officer safety surpasses.
- Gain community trust- say hello. Train officers to interact with all communities. Clear, bureau-wide expectations for working with communities. A willingness to consider and make changes in response to community voices. Customer service training. Remedial training for those not doing well. Promote / acknowledge / celebrate officers who demonstrate community engagement. Better training in de-escalation tactics.
- Support officers in building positive relations. Teach relationship building and make it an expectation. Staff appropriately so officers have turns. Provide opportunities for relationships- for officers to hear community perspectives. Value community perspectives as organization. Include in performance equal to show importance.

#### Blue Card Summary:

Community members envision a communicative, honest, and above all, a respectful relationship with police officers. As far as hiring, the community wants PPB to look for officers with good communication skills, personable behavior, and they should be focused on "recruiting from, rather than outside, the community." The community also wants to see not only an active search for diverse recruits, but for PPB to somehow train recruits with a sense of right and wrong as far as policing.

The community wants officers to be trained within the community as well as how to interact in a respectful way with community. For example, the community can provide early career field training in schools, where they can continue to build relationships with community members over their careers. Officers should be trained not only in better de-escalation tactics, but to work with people from all of the communities in our area. A particular issue that came up was power dynamics. Officers should be not only aware of those dynamics, but trained in recognizing and respecting them with appropriate use. One community member wrote that "the vest filled with weapons is intimidating. What are the pros and cons of wearing all of it- authority, respect, fear, etc."

An overall vision for how officers can be better community members can be broken down into two categories: creating a space to recognize and create an atmosphere of equality with mutual respect, and engaging with local communities as a part of policing. As one community member put it, "it is the bureau's responsibility to create the space that is

conducive to respecting community members. Police and Community are equal. Equal responsibilities.” With that, the most written on these notecards provides a layout for how officers can be engaged with the communities around them. For example, “clear, bureau-wide expectations for working with communities. A willingness to consider and make changes in response to community voices.” They want PPB to promote, acknowledge and celebrate officers who demonstrate a strong willingness and skill with working to build strong relationships in all communities. There should be “opportunities for relationships- for officers to hear community perspectives,” that help build positive relationships. It was even suggested that officers get payed overtime in order to engage in community events.

**Green Card:** What is the **Community’s responsibility** to achieve that vision?

- Engage more in own communities not just related to police. Individuals can pay more attention to what is happening around them- be involved, filming police when needed for accountability. Get involved.
- Communicate expectations of PPB and work with Bureau to make happen- collaborate. Help PPB with problem solving. Be aware of changes happening in PPB. Diminish stereotyping of police. Set up more opportunities for PPB- community interactions. Invite PPB to community events. Community institutions and agencies teach accountability for behaviors towards police- invite PPB to events.
- Model aspect of police as you want them to behave toward you. We have responsibility and accountability too.
- Follow procedure, protect. Relationship training. Proper use of power or authority. Accountability. Recourse for police. Take responsibility to see things through to create change.
- Urge young people to become Police. Be careful not to wrongly “profile” police. Acknowledge the positive interactions we have with police. Engage- in groups / dialogues. Speak out – about both rights and wrongs. Make sure youth are taught respect and manners. Make sure our children are not criminalized for NORMAL youthful behavior - by teachers.
- As a community, provide incentives for officers to live in Portland. Such as financial (i.e., help down payment, break on property tax). Be open to having the discussion and dialogue with the Bureau to improve policing. “Community” includes the business

community- that can have a huge impact. Training program of people from community who are out with officers – “community liaisons” in a sense, to help bridge the gap between police and citizens. Community based programs to do work that police aren’t training to do- mental health, houseless, etc. Community responsibility.

- Build trust through community projects with community most affected. 1) Variety of projects because one group doesn’t represent all groups. 2) Mentally ill have been recognized by DOJ as an affected community. Communities convene groups based on interest, develop community project then propose to PPB community outreach liaison. Begin dialogue- (generative/creative) with PPB to co-create a project to enhance trust and add value or recognize value already situated in our community.
- Individual accountability to raise youth with respect, self-control, responsibility, learn about officer’s lives. Extend boundaries to stop “othering” and expand community- help all community endeavors be successful and included. Promote neighborhood policing support- our city has a lot of activities to bring us together. E.g., pastors, police, citizens, going on walks together. Community accountability for community disparity that creates crime conditions, education, job opportunities, etc.

#### Green Card Summary:

The community visualized several ways to be responsible for creating a better relationship with police. They want to create opportunities for officers to easily engage with the community, and to be sure to invite officers to events throughout the community. The community should provide incentives to make it easy for officers to live within the communities they serve, such as help with a house down payment, and property tax breaks.

Community members should be aware of officers’ lives, and be respectful, and not to “profile” them. The community should also be trained to diminish stereotypes of police. This includes being open to having a strong, open, and communicative discussion with PPB around creating reforms and better community engagement programs. For example, one community member suggested creating a “training program of people from community who are out with officers – ‘community liaisons’ in a sense, to help bridge the gap between police and citizens.” They want community members to speak out about both good and bad actions concerning officers, and to communicate expectations to PPB while collaborating with them to solve problems in the community.

Community members also want to change and train themselves to be better problem solvers. Engaging more in their own communities to pay attention to what is happening around them, such as crime conditions, housing crises, joblessness, etc. in order to relate this

information to officers so that they are aware, and to begin finding ways to solve these issues. They should extend boundaries to stop “othering” and expand the community. One suggestion involved community members such as pastors, neighbors, etc. going on walks with police officers around neighborhoods.