



Collaborating to Address Key Challenges in Policing



COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice



POLICE EXECUTIVE
RESEARCH FORUM



Collaborating to Address
Key Challenges in Policing

This project was supported by cooperative agreement number 2014-CK-WX-0015 awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

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Recommended citation:

Police Executive Research Forum. 2015. *Labor and Management Roundtable Discussions: Collaborating to Address Key Challenges in Policing*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

ISBN: 978-1-935676-85-0

Published 2015

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Letter from the Director of the COPS Office

Dear colleagues,

It goes without saying that the most effective police force is one that is mentally and physically fit, well trained, and highly motivated. Though these characteristics are critical to the safety of both police and the public, labor unions and law enforcement managers are often at odds on how to acquire them. For too many years, they've disagreed on disciplinary actions, compensation, working conditions, and many other issues.

But good will on both sides is now bringing these groups together with municipal executives to resolve disputes and find common ground in many areas. In the forefront of the efforts to encourage this collaboration is the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), which recently hosted a series of roundtables that brought labor leaders and police executives together to explore strategies for building trust and promoting cooperation. As you will see in the following pages, much was accomplished at these meetings, including agreements about seat belts and body armor that will save many lives.

Whether you're a city manager, a police chief, a labor lawyer, or a union representative, I believe you will find this report of great value. In addition to practical ideas for achieving consensus and promoting cooperation, it details five principles for forging strong relationships between labor and management—strategies that can be effective in overcoming any challenge involving groups with conflicting interests.

Though police officers are the focal point of this report, the issues discussed here have a direct bearing on the quality of life for us all. Officer wellness and safety, for instance, is critical to the ability of the police to do their job. In fact, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing highlighted the importance of officer wellness and safety to community policing and identified this issue as one of the report's six pillars.

Equally important is the community's perception that officers who violate their constitutional rights are appropriately disciplined. Hiring practices are another example of issues with far ranging ramifications. Benefits and compensation affect recruitment and retention; and a workforce that reflects the ethnicity of the people it serves greatly enhances community relations.

Progress in all of these areas can only be achieved with the mutual support of municipal, union, and law enforcement leaders. And it is our hope that this roundtable report will serve as a blue print for productive communication and collaboration among these groups.

At PERF's roundtables, labor, management, and government executives almost always approached issues from different directions but more often than not found common ground for agreement. The reason for this was simple but very compelling: they were all motivated by the same goals—the safety, wellness, and effectiveness of our police and public. I believe you will read this report for the same reasons.

Sincerely,



Ronald L. Davis, Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Letter from the Executive Director of PERF

Dear colleagues,

When we talk about improving policing, too often we neglect one critical area—the relationship between labor and management. This is a serious oversight, because the quality of the relationship between police executives and labor leaders can affect whether a police agency is effective in carrying out its mission to protect and serve the community.

Historically, labor and management relations have been characterized by conflict rather than collaboration. Many police unions were created in response to poor practices and working conditions that existed in police departments, and even as unions continued to grow, management often made changes to policy without labor's input. Labor organizations often responded by openly opposing changes, and the cycle of distrust and suspicion continued.

Because of this history, leaders on both sides have often viewed one another as the enemy. They have battled over compensation and disciplinary issues, leading to divides between officers and management. They have often struggled over policies and working conditions that would have improved officer job satisfaction and performance. And by constantly waging public wars against one another, labor and management have often failed to earn the trust of their communities.

Fortunately, this way of thinking has begun to change. Many forward-thinking leaders have realized that this outdated approach to labor and management relations is counterproductive and have instead turned to a new model that emphasizes collaboration and finding common ground.

Over the past year, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), with support from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), held a series of roundtable discussions that brought together police executives and labor leaders to explore ways they could collaborate better. This publication documents these discussions and describes promising strategies for addressing common challenges in a productive way. At our roundtable meetings, participants found common ground on issues like protecting officer safety and increasing the diversity of police departments.

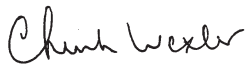
As this publication will demonstrate, much can be accomplished when labor and management work together. At our November 20, 2014 roundtable discussion, labor and management leaders reached a groundbreaking agreement that calls upon all law enforcement agencies to adopt mandatory policies requiring officers to wear body armor and seatbelts. By sitting together and working through the issues that had prevented such a consensus in the past, labor and management leaders were able to take an important step towards protecting officer safety. Due to this unprecedented agreement, lives will be saved.

At the roundtable discussion held on February 2, 2015, labor and management leaders reached another important agreement that resulted in a statement of key principles for building trust and collaboration. This statement was included as part of PERF's recommendations to President Barack Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, and we call upon all management and labor leaders to adopt these principles in their own interactions with each other. As you read this publication, you will see more examples of how these principles have led to more collaborative relationships between labor and management.

You will also read success stories from places where police executives and labor leaders have worked together to create meaningful change within their police agencies. From the “Arrive Alive” driving safety program in Prince George’s County, Maryland, to peer support programs for officers in Philadelphia and Houston, to successful contract negotiations in Baltimore and Camden, these stories demonstrate the progress that can be made when labor and management collaborate.

Labor and management leaders will not always agree on everything. But they can commit to focusing on finding common ground, to having open communication, and to treating each other with respect even when they disagree. By doing so, they can overcome the negativity of the past and move forward—together—toward the goals they share: building safer communities, improving the effectiveness of police departments, advancing diversity in recruiting and promotions, increasing officer professionalism and job satisfaction, and strengthening relationships not just between labor and management but also between police and their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chuck Wexler".

Chuck Wexler, Executive Director
Police Executive Research Forum

Acknowledgements

PERF would like to extend our appreciation to the COPS Office for supporting this effort to bring labor and management leaders together through a series of roundtable discussions. These meetings were held at the suggestion of former U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., and we appreciate his commitment to improving policing and protecting officer safety. We are especially grateful to COPS Office Director Ronald L. Davis for his effective leadership and for recognizing the importance of building trust and collaboration between labor and management. We would also like to thank Rob Chapman, Helene Bushwick, and Billie Coleman at the COPS Office, who offered support and assistance in coordinating the roundtable discussions.

Thanks are also due to Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) President John McNesby for hosting the November 20, 2014 roundtable discussion at the FOP Lodge in Philadelphia. He and his staff were gracious hosts, providing us with excellent accommodations for the meeting.

We would also like to thank the police executives, labor leaders, and other professionals who participated in the roundtable discussions (see appendix C for a full list of participants). These leaders were readily willing to engage in candid discussions, both at the roundtable discussions and during multiple interviews with PERF staff members. We appreciate their thoughtful and frank assessments regarding labor and management relations. We are especially grateful to Executive Director James Pasco and National President Chuck Canterbury of the FOP, along with Executive Director William Johnson from the National Association of Police Organizations, whose leadership was critical in reaching the groundbreaking agreement on mandatory body armor and seatbelt wear policies.

Finally, credit is due to PERF staff members who coordinated the roundtable discussions, conducted interviews, and helped write and edit this publication, including Jessica Toliver, Lindsay Miller, Matthew Harman, Balinda Cockrell, Jacob Sena, and Craig Fischer. Lindsay Miller deserves special credit for drafting this report.

Introduction

Since the early part of the 21st century, changes within the field of policing have created new challenges on multiple fronts. For example, today's law enforcement executives must become experts on a wide variety of advances in technology, such as the proliferation of social media and the use of body-worn cameras. Recruiting, training, and retaining a qualified and diverse workforce has become more complex for many reasons, such as changes in the attitudes of young people about making long-term commitment to a single employer or even a single career. And as managers are being asked to do more with less, they must pay close attention to the impact this has on officer safety and wellness.

In light of these new challenges, it is more important than ever for police executives and police labor leaders to work together. Although labor and management in policing historically have viewed one another with suspicion, fortunately that way of thinking is beginning to change.

The new model for labor and management relationships emphasizes finding common ground and working together to achieve shared goals. Many of these common goals are about protecting and serving the community; promoting officer safety and wellness; and building strong, diverse police departments.

“When labor and management stand together, we have a stronger police department. In many ways, building a good relationship between labor and management is almost like a marriage. It’s about trust, it’s about communication, and it’s about respecting each other, even when we may not always agree.”

—Mark Magaw, Chief of Police
Prince George’s County (Maryland) Police Department

To examine the role that labor and management relationships play in this new era of policing, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), with support from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), convened three labor and management roundtable discussions in 2014–15.¹ At each meeting, between 30 and 70 police executives, labor leaders, and other experts from across the country came together to discuss how labor and management can build stronger relationships and work together to address common challenges.

As an example of what can be accomplished when labor and management work together, at the November 2014 roundtable discussion, police and labor leaders reached a groundbreaking agreement that calls upon all law enforcement agencies to adopt mandatory policies requiring officers to wear body armor and seat belts.² The agreement is conditioned upon the guarantee that “mandatory wear” policies will not prevent payment of death or disability benefits in cases where officers were not wearing body armor or seat belts—a concern that had posed an obstacle to reaching consensus on mandatory wear policies in the past. This agreement represents a critical step in protecting officer safety and reducing needless deaths.

1. The first roundtable discussion was held April 24, 2014 in Washington, D.C.; the second was held November 20, 2014 in Philadelphia; and the third was held February 2, 2015 in Washington, D.C.

2. *In Support of Mandatory Body Armor and Seatbelt Wear Policies: November 20, 2014* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 2014), http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Web_Uploads/body%20armor%20and%20seatbelts.pdf. The statement is also located in appendix A to this publication.

At the February 2015 roundtable discussion, police executives and labor leaders reached another important agreement that resulted in a statement of key principles for building trust and collaboration between labor and management.³ These principles, along with other findings that emerged from the roundtable discussions, were incorporated into the recommendations of President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.⁴

“A good police chief and union president are never going to agree on everything, but if they spend all day drawing lines in the sand, they will be doomed to failure. On the big issues, like promoting officer safety, we should be able to find common ground. And by focusing on that common ground, we can build a foundation for working through the issues where there is disagreement.”

–James Pasco, Executive Director, Fraternal Order of Police

The goal of this publication, which is based on the discussions that occurred at the three roundtable meetings and on individual interviews with participants, is to provide promising strategies for how labor and management leaders can work together to address the key challenges they face.

The first chapter of this publication, “Principles for Building Strong Relationships between Labor and Management,” discusses the key concepts for strengthening trust and collaboration between police executives and labor leaders, as defined in the February 2015 statement. These key principles are (1) focus on finding common ground, (2) engage in open communication and seek input from one another, (3) handle disagreements with respect and professionalism, (4) understand and respect each other’s roles and responsibilities, and (5) work together to promote officer safety and wellness.

3. *A Statement on Behalf of Police Executives, Police Labor Leaders, and Mayors and Other Local Officials on Principles for Building Trust and Collaboration: February 23, 2015* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 2015), <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/buildingtrustcollaboration.pdf>. The statement is also located in appendix B to this publication.

4. President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/TaskForce_FinalReport.pdf.

The second chapter of this publication, “Working Together to Address Challenges in Policing,” shows how labor and management leaders can cooperate on key issues, including (1) increasing body armor and seat belt use among officers; (2) recruiting and retaining a strong, diverse workforce; (3) promoting officer mental and physical wellness; and (4) developing workable social media policies.

The third chapter in this publication, “Promising Strategies for Collaboration between Labor and Management,” provides a comprehensive, user-friendly list of the strategies identified in the first two chapters.

The strategies and examples included in this publication come from the police executives, labor leaders, and other experts who participated in the roundtable discussions.⁵ A complete list of participants is located in appendix D to this publication.

“I think we sometimes underestimate the value of a good relationship between management and labor. This is especially true when it comes to strengthening officer performance and promoting better behavior among our officers. One side can’t do it alone.”

–Scott Thomson, Chief of Police
Camden County (New Jersey) Police Department

5. The titles listed throughout this document reflect officials’ positions at the time of the April 2014, November 2014, or February 2015 roundtable discussions.

Chapter 1. Principles for Building Strong Relationships between Labor and Management

Although collaboration between labor and management is critical to improving policing services, building strong labor/management relations is an area that has often been neglected. Historically, labor and management relations have often been fraught with contentiousness. In many cases, leaders on both sides have taken an “us versus them” approach and refused to cooperate or seek input from one another.

Fortunately, many forward-thinking police executives and labor leaders have begun to realize that the old model for labor/management relations has been counterproductive. These leaders have found that much more can be accomplished when labor and management communicate, find common ground, and collaborate to develop workable solutions to problems.

“The days of labor and management screaming and yelling at one another are over. To find solutions to problems, you have to work with each other, not against each other.”

—John McNesby, President
Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #5

When police executives and labor leaders collaborate, they can better achieve the goals they share: protecting and serving the community, promoting the safety and well-being of officers, and strengthening policing services. As participants at the roundtable discussions pointed out, everyone benefits—police departments, front-line officers, and the community as a whole—when labor and management work together.

“You cannot have a strong community without strong and just law enforcement, which requires effort from both sides of the equation—the management side and the labor side,” said Roy Austin, Jr., Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice, and Opportunity at the White House Domestic Policy Council, at a PERF roundtable discussion.

At the February 2015 roundtable discussion, police executives and labor leaders agreed on a statement of key principles for building trust and collaboration between labor and management.⁶ The statement and other findings that emerged from the roundtable discussions were included as part of the recommendations to President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

The five key principles for strengthening labor and management relations are as follows:

1. Focus on finding common ground.
2. Engage in open communication and seek input from one another.
3. Handle disagreements with respect and professionalism.
4. Understand and respect each other’s roles and responsibilities.
5. Work together to promote officer safety and wellness.

This chapter will discuss these key principles and provide examples of ways in which police executives and labor leaders have applied them successfully to make progress towards common goals.

6. A Statement on Behalf of Police Executives (see note 3).

“We are all here to create safe communities. We have that in common. To create safe communities, labor and management have to collaborate. We have to actively look for opportunities to find common ground and represent ourselves as the professionals that we all want to be. In doing so, I think we can move policing ahead in a very positive way.”

—Darrel Stephens, Executive Director
Major Cities Chiefs Association

Principle 1. Focus on finding common ground

Labor and management are often working toward similar and interconnected goals: protecting public safety, strengthening police-community relationships, improving officer safety and wellness, advancing professionalism across the department, and building a police department that reflects the diversity of the community so it can effectively carry out its mission. By focusing on these shared goals—rather than on their differences or individual interests—leaders can find common ground on which to build collaboration and trust.

“We may see things differently sometimes, but ultimately we all want what’s best for the department, the officers, and the community. If you remember that you have those things in common, it can help you work through any conflicts that may come up.”

—Charles Ramsey, Police Commissioner
Philadelphia Police Department

“Most of the time, labor and management are going to want the same things,” said Brent Meyer, Vice President of the Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC). “When you agree 90 percent of the time, why put your energy into fighting? I have found that we can get a lot more accomplished when we focus our energy on what we have in common.”

This approach is taken by labor and management leaders in Prince George’s County, Maryland. They enjoy a strong working relationship in part because they choose to build upon their commonalities and publicly stand together even when they disagree on specific issues. They believe that this approach has led to a stronger department.

“We make a conscious decision to get along,” said Prince George’s County Police Chief Mark Magaw. “We have the same views about where the department needs to go. During contract negotiations I asked our union president, ‘What do you need for rank and file?’ Then I worked to try to get those things done, because I agreed with what he said.”

“The key is to stay engaged and present a united front. We are going to agree on most things, and that is what we should focus on. Then during the few times when we disagree, we’ll be in a better position to work together and hash things out.”

—Dean Jones, President
Prince George’s County, Maryland,
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 89

When labor and management leaders seek out common ground, they are often more likely to reach reasonable compromises that benefit everyone. This is especially true when it comes to negotiating contracts. For example, in Camden, New Jersey, the police chief and union president successfully negotiated the first contract under the reorganized Camden County Police Department. Police Chief Scott Thomson and Camden Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) President William Wiley said that they were able to avoid arbitration by focusing on shared goals and respecting each other’s points of view.

“Labor/management relations have traditionally been viewed as a zero-sum game. One side ‘wins’ only if the other side ‘loses.’ We need to shift the paradigm to realize that it is possible to have a ‘win-win’ relationship with one another. By committing to working towards shared goals, we can really accomplish something positive.”

—Cameron McLay, Chief of Police
Pittsburgh Bureau of Police

When labor and management stand together behind a common goal, it also demonstrates that *all* elements of the police department are united in their efforts to serve the community.

For example, when Brookline (Massachusetts) police officers were asked to undergo extra training and work additional hours to provide security at the first Boston Marathon following the 2013 bombings, the union president lent his full support to the effort. “The union recognized how important these efforts were to protecting the public safety,” said Brookline Police Chief Daniel O’Leary. “They came to us and said, ‘We’ll do what it takes.’ ”

“I’ve found that labor and management agree when it comes to the goal of improving police-community relationships. We need to share information about what is going on in the community and support each other in community-oriented service projects. This is an area that is ripe for collaboration.”

–Chuck Canterbury, National President
Fraternal Order of Police

Principle 2. Engage in open communication and seek input from one another

Open communication between labor and management leaders is critical for a number of reasons. Engaging in frequent communication allows leaders to forge personal connections with one another, which is necessary for building trust and collaboration. It also helps prevent disagreements from escalating by providing an avenue for leaders to share information and discuss their concerns routinely, and thus avoid misunderstandings. Ongoing communication can also help labor and management reach agreements on how they will handle potential issues such as contract negotiations, disciplinary issues, and department actions following officer-involved shootings or other controversial incidents, before these things occur.

Labor and management leaders can promote open communication by meeting frequently, sharing information, engaging each other in the decision-making process, and seeking to build personal connections with one another.

“Closing off communication between labor and management is the worst thing you can do, not only for your department, but also for your community. You have to be able to address common problems, and the only way to do that is through communication.”

–John Beirne, Deputy Police Commissioner
New York City Police Department

In addition to regularly holding formal meetings with one another, labor and management leaders said that engaging in informal communications can help them build strong personal relationships. “Labor and management leaders should occasionally just go out for a meal together. Breaking bread with each other is a great way to improve trust and communication,” said Darrel Stephens, executive director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association.

In Sacramento, California, Police Chief Sam Somers and Sacramento Police Officers Association President Dustin Smith credit these types of regular meetings as a key to their strong working relationship. “Communication is so important. Not just talking, but having a real conversation,” said Smith. Somers and Smith have a standing monthly meeting, usually over a meal, to discuss concerns and share information. Their executive teams also meet with one another on a monthly basis.

Robert Jenkins—president of the Miami Beach, Florida, FOP—said, “I find it useful to have informal, one-on-one conversations with the chief. Going out to coffee or out to lunch is a great way to start an open dialogue.”

Regular telephone communications also can help build stronger relationships. “I have the FOP president’s cell phone number, and he has mine,” said Chief Magaw of Prince George’s County, (Maryland). “We know that we can contact each other at any time, and that goes a long way.”

“We put a strong emphasis on communication. We meet over lunch or dinner, which allows us to break bread and build a personal relationship. We have each other’s phone numbers on speed dial. This helps us settle problems one-on-one before they go to the grievance or arbitration process.”

–Sam Somers, Chief of Police
Sacramento (California) Police Department

Another key to promoting open communication is seeking each other’s input and including one another in the decision-making process. For example, in places like Philadelphia, Sacramento, and Prince George’s County, labor and management leaders make it a practice not to adopt any major policies or make public statements without first receiving input from one another.

“No new policy or general order leaves my office unless our union president has a chance to see it and weigh in.”

–Mark Magaw, Chief of Police
Prince George’s County (Maryland) Police Department

Principle 3. Handle disagreements with respect and professionalism

Inevitably, there will be times when police executives and labor leaders disagree. When these circumstances arise, it is more important than ever to treat each other with respect. This sets a good example for officers, demonstrates professionalism to the community, and ensures that the working relationship—and potential progress—is not irrevocably damaged.

Treating one another with respect and professionalism means not taking differences personally, refraining from spreading rumors or making personal attacks, and resolving disagreements privately rather than in public.

“If we are going to be a profession, we need to act like professionals. Professionals can disagree on policies and on actions without making it personal. We can’t let personalities become bigger than the issues.”

–William Bratton, Police Commissioner
New York City Police Department

Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey and Philadelphia FOP President John McNesby said that treating each other with respect is one of the keys to their good working relationship. “We aren’t going to agree on everything, but when we disagree, we try to do it quietly and behind closed doors, said McNesby. “You won’t see us out in the press banging each other up, because at the end of the day we are on the same side.”

Labor and management leaders in Columbus, Ohio, strive to take a similar approach. “I think ultimately it benefits everyone if we handle our disagreements behind the scenes,” said Columbus Deputy Police Chief Timothy Becker.

“Everything boils down to respect. When something happens, I call John McNesby and give him a heads up, and he does the same for me. We don’t wait to read about it in the newspaper.”

–Charles Ramsey, Police Commissioner
Philadelphia Police Department

Treating one another with respect also means remembering that words matter—especially when they are spoken to the news media. When voicing concerns or expressing disagreement, police executives and labor leaders should avoid making negative generalizations or personal remarks. Such remarks damage relationships, officer morale, and the public’s overall perception of the police department.

“As leaders, we are the ones who project the image of the police to the community. If we blast each other in the media, it shows that we don’t trust each other. How can we then ask the community to trust us?”

–Dustin Smith, President
Sacramento, California, Police Officers Association

Principle 4. Understand and respect one another’s roles and responsibilities

Although police executives and labor leaders share many common goals, they also have distinct responsibilities and approach issues from different perspectives. And though labor and management leaders serve the community and the police agency, each must also answer to unique constituencies. For example, police chiefs must consider how their actions will be received by the local officials who appointed them to office, while labor leaders are charged with protecting the interests of individual members of their organizations.

Rather than viewing these differences as barriers to building trust and collaboration, labor and management leaders can strive to learn from one another and to understand one another’s perspectives. This means engaging in honest dialogue, remaining open to new ideas, and acknowledging the challenges and limitations that others may face. It can be easier to make a concession if you understand exactly why the concession is essential from your counterpart’s point of view.

Some labor and management leaders have found it useful to educate one another by incorporating one another’s perspectives into training sessions. For example, in Columbus, Ohio, Deputy Chief Becker and FOP President Jason Pappas co-hosted a training class for new supervisors. “The class gave new supervisors a chance to hear about issues from both the labor and the management perspectives,” said Pappas. “It was a great way for us to come together, and I highly recommend that others engage in opportunities like this.” The FOP has developed a training curriculum to help officers understand the police chief’s role and responsibilities, which it plans on incorporating into its annual training for newly elected state and local FOP officials.

“We have to remember that we all have a job to do, and we all have different people we have to answer to. One problem is that we don’t communicate those roles and responsibilities well. Officers need to understand where the chief is coming from, and management needs to understand where the officers are coming from. We have to educate each other.”

–Chuck Canterbury, National President
Fraternal Order of Police

Many labor and management leaders said that it is particularly important that they understand and respect each other’s roles when it comes to contract negotiations. Police executives said that it helps if officers have a clear understanding of the extent to which the police chief shares control over the police budget with elected officials. Systems for developing a police budget vary from one jurisdiction to the next. In many cases, the total budget figure is not a decision made by the chief, but the chief has a substantial role in requesting a certain level of funding and setting the priorities for funding within the total budget. In some cases, even the spending priorities are contentious issues in the community and among elected officials. The chief’s relationship with officers is better served if officers have realistic expectations of how much influence the chief can exert over budget negotiations.

Labor leaders said that police leaders can improve officer morale by being transparent about budget and contract issues. “We make it a point to educate our members about the political realities of the county budget process,” said Dean Jones, president of the Prince George’s County FOP. “That way they understand that a lot of decisions—like whether we’re going to get pay raises—are largely out of the chief’s control. They need to understand that not everything is management’s fault.” Jones stressed that both sides need to present information to their constituencies that is based on fact, not rumors or emotion.

“When chiefs make decisions that officers aren’t going to like, it helps if management communicates the reason behind those decisions,” said FOP National President Chuck Canterbury. “It is always better if we can understand where the other side is coming from.”

“One of the reasons labor and management were able to successfully negotiate a contract in Camden was because we each tried to understand the other side’s needs, expectations, and objectives. Once you familiarize yourself with where the other side is coming from, it is much easier to sit down and work things out.”

–William Wiley, President
Camden County, New Jersey,
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 218

Principle 5. Work together to promote officer safety and wellness

One reason collaboration between labor and management is so critical is that it leads to policies and practices that officers understand and support. This, in turn, increases officers’ job satisfaction. During the roundtable discussions, there was a growing recognition among management and labor leaders that officers who are happy in their work and who believe they are treated with respect by their supervisors and department leaders are more likely to treat community members with similar respect. Roundtable discussion participants said that this can advance overall police department goals, such as reducing crime, because community members are more likely to work collaboratively with the police and provide information about what is happening in their neighborhoods if they believe they are treated respectfully by the police.

Thus, as labor and management leaders noted, internal procedural justice within a police agency (treating officers fairly and putting a high value on their input) serves as a model for officers to provide external procedural justice to community members. And both types of procedural justice help a police department to achieve its goals.

“We have to treat officers fairly and strive to restore faith within the department between labor and management. The same gaps in trust exist between management and labor, as exist between police and the communities we serve. Since our officers will treat the public no better than they perceive their organization treats them, we must address the gap in trust within our organizations if we are to improve police/ community trust.”

–Cameron McLay, Chief of Police
Pittsburgh Bureau of Police

Labor and management leaders agreed that officers who feel respected, who feel involved in the decision-making process, and who feel that their needs are being met are often more motivated to put in extra effort. As Hassan Aden, Director of Research and Programs for the International Association of Chiefs of Police, said, “Officers will work more diligently if they have ownership in what they do. And giving officers a voice is key to improving morale.”

Promoting procedural justice within a police department involves getting input from officers on decisions regarding equipment, new technology, and working conditions, as well as valuing officers’ views regarding policing strategies and tactics. For example, New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton sent a survey to officers to solicit their views on policies and practices that affected their duties. Patrick Lynch, the president of the New York City Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association, said this step helped make officers feel more empowered.

In Dane County, Wisconsin, Sheriff Dave Mahoney tries to include unions as part of the budget process. He also hosts a regular meeting between management and labor, which he feels has been successful in helping to give deputies a voice.

One area in which police leaders should always solicit officers' views is the selection of new uniforms and equipment, which will have a direct impact on officers' daily lives. In places like Houston and Fort Worth, Texas, involving officers in decisions about which types of body armor to purchase helped the police departments gain union support for mandatory-wear policies. Responding to officer concerns that wearing body armor was too uncomfortable in these warm environments, labor and management worked together to select a cooler exterior vest option.

Many departments have also found that involving officers in the decision-making process can help strengthen internal support for new programs and policies. "When we decided to deploy body-worn cameras, we had our unions involved every step of the way," said Richmond (California) Police Chief Chris Magnus. "Officers tested out different camera models and the union helped us develop our camera policy."

"When you talk about communication and respect, it can't just be between labor leaders and management leaders. It also has to involve the officers on the street. We have to remember that officer morale matters. How we treat officers is going to affect how they treat people in the community."

—John Gallagher
Assistant U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Pennsylvania
and former officer, New York City Police Department

In addition to giving officers a voice, labor and management leaders agreed that promoting officer safety and wellness is another key to improving officer job satisfaction and performance. FOP Executive Director James Pasco said, "Labor and management may disagree on a lot of things, but I think we can all agree that taking care of our officers is one of our most important responsibilities."

In Prince George's County, officer safety and wellness are viewed as a joint effort between labor and management. After a series of car accidents claimed the lives of Prince George's County officers, labor and management leaders joined together to enact mandatory seat belt policies and implement "Arrive Alive," a campaign aimed at improving seat belt compliance. The police chief and FOP president sat side by side and filmed a video emphasizing seat belt safety.⁷

In many departments, labor and management leaders have partnered to address the significant toll that stress, dangerous working conditions, and traumatic incidents can take on officer wellness. One model for collaboration is the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) program in Philadelphia, which is offered through the local union and fully supported by management (see chapter 2 for further information). Similarly, in Prince George's County, Chief Magaw and FOP President Jones released a joint letter to officers that included information about alcohol recovery programs available for first responders.

"Officers put their lives on the line every day, and so the least we can do is give them a voice. They may not always get what they want, but they at least need to know they are being heard."

—Dean Jones, President
Prince George's County, Maryland,
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 89

Sometimes it is important for leaders to simply listen to officers' concerns. "People at all levels within a police department need to be sensitive to what officers go through," said Leonard Matarese, Director of Research and Project Development for the International City/County Management Association's Center for Public Safety. "Officers need to know that their fears are acknowledged and that we understand and appreciate the tough things that they face on a daily basis."

7. See sidebar on page 18 for additional information on the Arrive Alive program.

Building Strong Labor-Management Relations in Sacramento, California

In Sacramento, Police Chief Sam Somers and Sacramento Police Officers Association (SPOA) President Dustin Smith have forged a relationship that can serve as a model for building trust and collaboration between labor and management. They credit their strong relationship to engaging in open communication and not taking disagreements personally. They also stressed that it is important to settle disputes privately rather than by going to the news media.

“There was a time in Sacramento when every disagreement was aired publicly in the media, and it caused a huge rift in the relationship between labor and management. We have worked hard to change that, and it has led to better results for everyone,” said Somers. Smith said, “You project your image on the community. If Chief Somers and I went to the media and blasted each other publicly, it would show there is no trust between us. If we can’t trust each other, why would the community trust us?”

Somers and Smith also strive to solicit input from each other when they develop policies or make public statements. “It’s really important to include labor when you’re making decisions about things that affect officers, such as body-worn camera policies, disciplinary matters, and the promotion process. For example, when we post an announcement for a new job, we send the job description to the union and ask for their input,” said Somers.

Because of the strong working relationship between Somers and Smith, the Sacramento Police Department and the SPOA have largely been able to resolve disciplinary matters and contract disputes without resorting to arbitration or other formal processes. “If we disagree on a disciplinary issue, Chief Somers and I can sit down one-on-one, have a rational discussion, and come to a reasonable settlement agreement,” Smith said. “The same goes with contract disputes. Chief Somers and I will go through the contract together, work out our disagreements, and put together a contract that is reasonable. We are able to avoid arbitration because we engage in continual dialogue and have built a relationship that has trust woven into it.”

Somers and Smith described several strategies they have found effective for building stronger labor-management relationships. These include

- ▶ standing monthly meetings between the police chief and labor president, preferably over a meal;
- ▶ monthly meetings between the police department command staff and union executive board;
- ▶ monthly meetings between the labor president and the deputy chief of operations;
- ▶ having the police chief periodically attend union membership meetings to answer questions and address concerns;
- ▶ informal meetings between the police chief and labor president, including regular telephone conversations;
- ▶ soliciting input from one another on issues like new policies or public statements;
- ▶ having a labor representative on the Safety Committee, the Uniform Committee, and other decision-making bodies in the department;
- ▶ one-on-one meetings between the police chief and labor president to discuss disciplinary and contract disputes before the matters go through formal channels.

“The old-school mentality of playing hardball at all costs just isn’t effective,” Smith said. “We try to approach labor-management relations from a modern business model, which focuses on collaboration. You have to work together, or else everyone loses.”

Chapter 2. Working Together to Address Challenges in Policing

At the series of roundtable discussions, police executives and labor leaders discussed how they collaborate to address current and ongoing challenges to the field of policing. This chapter will discuss strategies for how labor and management can work together to address four key challenges identified at the roundtable discussions:

1. Increasing **body armor and seatbelt use** among officers
2. Recruiting and retaining a **strong, diverse workforce**
3. Promoting officer **mental and physical wellness**
4. Developing workable **social media** policies

“When we look at ways to improve policing, we should remember that we are much better off when labor and management work together. We need each other’s instincts, skills, and leadership abilities to solve the common problems that we face. It is about the betterment of not just the department, but of the policing profession as a whole.”

–William Bratton, Police Commissioner
New York City Police Department

Increasing body armor and seat belt use among officers

“One of our best officers was completely paralyzed after he was in a car accident and wasn’t wearing his seat belt. He was in the prime of his life, but now he can’t even scratch his forehead, and he won’t ever recover. It’s very, very sad. His family members looked me in the eye and said, ‘Chief, why don’t you make your officers wear their seat belts?’ After that, I said enough is enough. Our officers are going to be wearing their seat belts—no excuses.”

–Charles McClelland, Chief of Police
Houston (Texas) Police Department

“The union was fully on board with the decision to make seat belt use mandatory in Houston. Except in extenuating circumstances, we do not fight the disciplining of officers who are caught not wearing their seat belts, and for those who think discipline is too harsh, I tell them to remember the officer who was paralyzed. In every single meeting, the last thing we tell our members is to wear their seat belts. The consequences are just too great not to do so.”

–Ray Hunt, President, Houston Police Officers’ Union

When an officer is killed or injured, it is devastating not only to the officers who are involved but also to their families, their fellow officers, the police department, and the community as a whole. At the roundtable discussions, labor and management leaders agreed that protecting officer safety is one of the most significant responsibilities they share. They also agreed that improving officer safety begins with reducing the number of officers who are killed or injured in traffic accidents and shootings.

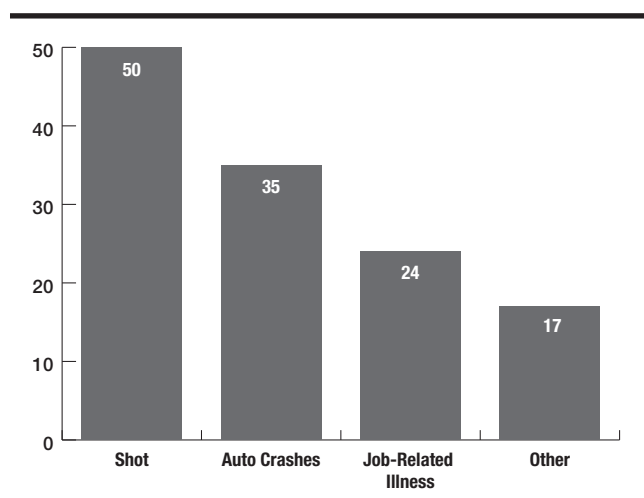
Each year, traffic accidents and firearms-related incidents are the leading causes of death among law enforcement officers who are killed in the line of duty.⁸ **In 2014, 85 of the 126 officers killed in the line of duty were killed in firearms-related incidents or automobile crashes.**⁹

Table 1. Auto accidents and shootings as a percentage of on-duty officer deaths, 2009–2014

Year	Total on-duty officer deaths	Deaths due to auto accidents or shootings (N)	Deaths due to auto accidents or shootings (%)
2009	125	89	71
2010	161	111	70
2011	171	117	68
2012	122	77	63
2013	100	59	59
2014	126	85	67

Source: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

Figure 1. Cause of on-duty officer deaths, 2014



Source: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

8. “Causes of Law Enforcement Deaths—Over the Past Decade (2005–2014),” National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.nleomf.org/facts/officer-fatalities-data/causes.html>.

9. *Preliminary 2014 Law Enforcement Officer Fatalities Report*, National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.nleomf.org/assets/pdfs/reports/Preliminary-2014-Officer-Fatalities-Report.pdf>.

Body armor and seat belts have been proven to save lives and help reduce injuries to officers. Between 1987 and 2008, more than 3,000 officers have survived life-threatening injuries because they were protected by body armor.¹⁰ And a 2005 study found that officers who were not wearing seat belts were 2.6 times more likely to be killed in automobile crashes than officers wearing seat belts.¹¹

Despite their life-saving benefits, officers’ use of body armor and seat belts remains dangerously inconsistent.¹² Between 2003 and 2012, 36 percent of the officers who were feloniously killed in the line of duty were not wearing body armor.¹³ It is estimated that roughly half of all officers do not wear seat belts while on duty,¹⁴ and in 2012, 10 of the 26 officers killed in automobile crashes were not wearing seat belts at the time of the incident.¹⁵

10. Adrienne Quigley, “Vests Save Lives: A Reminder of the Importance of Wearing Body Armor,” *Police Chief* 75, no. 10 (October 2008), http://www.policemagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_arch&article_id=1643&issue_id=102008.

11. Lois Baker, “Not Wearing Seat Belts Can Be Deadly for Police Officers,” State University of New York University at Buffalo, last modified January 24, 2005, <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/7082>.

12. *In Support of Mandatory Body Armor and Seatbelt Wear Policies* (see note 2).

13. *Ibid.*

14. “Below 100 Frequently Asked Questions,” Below 100, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://below100.org/below-100-frequently-asked-questions/>; Ashley Halsey III, “For Police, Not Wearing Seat Belts Can Be Fatal Mistake,” *Washington Post*, last modified October 14, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/for-police-not-wearing-seat-belts-can-be-fatal-mistake/2012/10/14/78a8dd10-f207-11e1-892d-bc92fee603a7_story.html.

15. Craig W. Floyd, *Changing the Culture of Safety* (Washington, DC: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 2013), http://www.nleomf.org/assets/pdfs/nhtsa/NSA-Traffic-Safety-Committee-June-2013_NHTSA-web-version.pdf.

Reaching consensus on mandatory body armor and seat belt policies

At the November 2014 roundtable discussion in Philadelphia, police executives and labor leaders came together and agreed that, as Houston Police Chief Charles McClelland expressed it, “Enough is enough.” **Labor and management leaders reached a groundbreaking consensus on a unified statement that calls on all law enforcement agencies to adopt mandatory policies requiring the use of body armor and seatbelts by officers.**¹⁶ The full statement is included as appendix A to this publication.

“If ever there is a place to have common ground between labor and management, that’s on the issue of officer safety.”

—William Bratton, Police Commissioner
New York City Police Department

Historically, the primary barrier to reaching consensus on mandatory-wear policies has been a concern among many labor leaders that these policies could lead to the denial of death or disability benefits in cases in which officers were not wearing body armor or seat belts when they were killed or injured. This is especially true with respect to benefits paid out under the federal Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) programs, which have statutory language regarding the denial of benefits due to officer negligence and misconduct that troubles many labor leaders.¹⁷

“Of course we all agree that officers should wear their seatbelts and body armor,” said William Johnson, Executive Director of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO). “But language in the PSOB statute is the main reason why NAPO is concerned about mandatory wear policies. We just don’t want officers’ families penalized further if the officer is killed or injured while not wearing seat belts or vests.”

16. Kevin Johnson, “Police Union, Chief Call for Mandatory Armor, Seat Belts,” *USA Today*, last modified November 20, 2014, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/11/20/mandatory-armor-seat-belts/19326349/>.

17. 42 U.S.C. § 3796(a), effective January 1, 2006, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title42/html/USCODE-2011-title42-chap46-subchapXII-partA-sec3796.htm>.

To address these concerns, the joint labor-management agreement reached at the November 2014 roundtable discussion is conditioned upon the guarantee that failure to comply with mandatory wear policies will not be used by any police agencies or government entities as a basis for denying death or disability benefits to officers or their families. The agreement also calls for amending language in any disability laws that would provide otherwise.¹⁸

The unified statement strongly recommends that police executives and labor leaders work together when enacting mandatory wear policies and highlights that officers should be involved in testing and selecting equipment. The statement also calls upon police agencies to provide officers with up-to-date equipment that is in good working order and that meets all applicable safety requirements.

“We support mandatory-wear policies, because we want officers to be safe, and one of the best ways to do that is to make sure they are wearing their vests and seat belts. But we want to make sure that there is no threat to officers receiving benefits, that good equipment is provided by the department, and that the equipment meets all the standards for safety and comfort.”

—James Pasco, Executive Director, Fraternal Order of Police

18. The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing also recommended, “Public Safety Officer Benefits (PSOB) should be provided to survivors of officers killed while working, regardless of whether the officer used safety equipment (seatbelt or anti-ballistic vest) . . . Families should not be penalized because an officer died in the line of duty but was not wearing a seat belt or body armor.” President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*, 64 (see note 4).

Strategies for improving body armor and seat belt compliance

Roundtable discussion participants recognized that in addition to adopting mandatory-wear policies, it is critical for labor and management to collaborate on strategies to promote seat belt and body armor compliance among officers. This section discusses some of the strategies that roundtable discussion participants found promising for improving body armor and seat belt use among officers within their own police departments.

“Philadelphia already had mandatory-wear policies when I joined the department in 2008. And we still had six officers killed in the line of duty within my first year. We have an obligation to do everything possible to make sure it doesn’t happen again. Whether it’s through discipline, training, or education, we have to send the message that officers have to wear their seatbelts and vests. And we have to make it a strong message.”

—Charles Ramsey, Police Commissioner
Philadelphia Police Department

Strategy #1. Change the culture within the department

Labor and management leaders agreed that changing the culture regarding body armor and seat belts within the department is critical to improving officer compliance and that this change in culture must start with a commitment from the top.

The National FOP encourages police chiefs, command staffs, union leaders, and other top officials to lead by example and wear their protective vests. This is the approach that Fort Worth (Texas) Police Chief Jeffrey Halstead takes. “I’m an avid supporter of body armor, and I wear my vest every day,” said Halstead.

Assistant Chief Patrick Burke of Washington, D.C.’s Metropolitan Police Department said, “You have to set the example for things that you want people to do. If the leaders are wearing their vests and seat belts—and not just writing the policies—it brings much more credibility.”

Jason Pappas, President of the Columbus FOP, said, “I think seeing the command staff wearing seat belts and vests would help remove some of the resistance among officers. Part of it is a fairness issue—there shouldn’t be two separate standards, one for management and one for officers.”

Consistent messaging is also key to changing the culture. The commitment to safety must be continuously emphasized by both managers and labor leaders. For example, in Houston, at every monthly meeting between Chief McClelland and labor leaders, the chief reminds the labor leaders to encourage officers to wear their seat belts, and the labor leaders promise to do so. In Columbus, several deputy chiefs have a tagline in their emails stating that officers should wear their body armor and seat belts on every tour. And in Miami Beach, Florida, union leaders emphasize driving safety and seat belt use at all monthly meetings with members.

“The most important thing is to change the culture and the mindset surrounding body armor and seat belts. We support the mandatory-wear policies in Philadelphia, because we have lost a lot of good officers and so our members understand why these tools are beneficial. New officers wear their vests from day 1 of the academy, so to them, it is just a natural part of the job.”

—John McNesby, President
Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #5

Labor and management leaders said that it is also important to make wearing seat belts and body armor a part of officers’ daily routine, starting from their first day at the academy. “A lot of improving compliance is about changing behaviors. Once you wear the seat belt five, six times, it becomes a matter of second nature,” said Commander Donald O’Neill of the Chicago Police Department.

“In New York City, body armor and seatbelts have been mandatory for many years. We don’t get a lot of push back from officers, and a big reason for that is because the unions have been involved with the efforts to change the culture and improve compliance,” said New York City Police Department (NYPD) Deputy Commissioner John Beirne.

“It all comes down to changing the culture,” said Sergeant Robert Cherry, former president of the Baltimore FOP. “Management can set the policies, and then as union leaders we have to remind our members why wearing vests and seat belts are so important. When we see those young officers out on the streets not wearing seat belts, we as leaders have to be the ones to pull them aside and remind them to put them on. Nothing will change until it is just an accepted part of the job.”

Strategy #2. Involve officers in equipment testing and selection

Many labor leaders said that asking officers to help test and select which equipment to use goes a long way toward improving officer support for body armor and seatbelts. In many places, including Boston; New York City; Fort Worth, Texas; San Antonio, Texas; and Washington, D.C., there is an officer or labor representative on the department’s uniform and equipment committees.

“We want our officers to wear body armor and seat belts, because we all want our officers to be safe. But I also want to make sure that officers are invited to the table when it comes to making decisions about policies and about which equipment to use. They are the ones who have their boots on the ground and who are going to be using these tools on a daily basis. They know what is comfortable, what is safe, and what will work for them. It has to be a cooperative relationship.”

–Rick VanHouten, President
Fort Worth, Texas, Police Officers Association

When it comes to seat belts, one of the biggest complaints that officers have voiced is that seat belts do not fit comfortably over the equipment they wear. Some police agencies have addressed this by purchasing seat belt extenders, a step taken by Miami Beach (Florida) Police Chief Daniel Oates when he was the police chief in Aurora, Colorado.

“We can all agree on the importance of wearing vests and seat belts, and we can talk about policies and discipline, but in the end, a lot of it is going to come down to whether officers feel comfortable and safe wearing them. When I was the police chief in Aurora, I instituted a mandatory seat belt policy after one of my best officers was killed in a car crash while not wearing a seat belt. At first there was some resistance among the officers. They came to me and said, ‘One of the main reasons we don’t like to wear the seat belts is because they don’t fit right, especially if you’re a bigger person.’ So we bought seat belt extenders for all the patrol cars, and that simple step really seemed to help improve compliance.”

–Daniel Oates, Chief of Police
Miami Beach (Florida) Police Department

In Houston, Texas, soliciting input from officers about which vests to use helped Chief McClelland secure union support for a mandatory body armor policy. Under Houston’s prior policy, officers were exempted from wearing their vests if the heat index reached 100 degrees. After an officer survived being shot at point-blank range because he was wearing his vest, McClelland decided to change the policy and do away with the heat exemption. “We saw how the vest saved that officer’s life, and after that I didn’t want to take any chances. It can get awfully hot in Houston, but that isn’t a reason to take the risk of not wearing the vest,” McClelland said.

To address officers’ concerns about wearing bulky vests under their uniforms in extreme heat, Ray Hunt, president of the Houston Police Officers’ Union (POU), approached Chief McClelland about switching to a cooler exterior vest option. McClelland worked with the union to make the change. “Allowing officers to wear exterior vests was a really important point of consensus,” said Hunt. “It helped win support from the union, and it made officers feel like the chief was listening to their concerns.”

Chief McClelland and POU President Hunt credit their collaboration for the success of Houston’s mandatory body armor policy. “Ray was 100 percent right to come to me about the exterior vest option, because I’m not sure the officers would have been on board if we hadn’t made that change,” McClelland said. “When it comes to officer safety, it can’t be a zero-sum game where management has to win and labor has to lose, or vice-versa.”

Hunt said, “Not long after the policy took place, another officer was shot while wearing his vest. He told us that the policy probably saved his life.”

When selecting body armor, police agencies should choose vests that are tailored to fit comfortably, that are climate-appropriate, and that meet gender-specific needs. It is also important that vests be updated to fit an officer as his or her body changes over the years. “Officer compliance would definitely be better if the vests were more comfortable,” said Vice President Keith Ferrell of the Columbus FOP. “It would be helpful if officers were given a wider variety of options to choose from.”

Strategy #3. Provide up-to-date equipment at no cost to officers

Labor and management leaders said that another way to improve officer compliance is for the police agency to provide—at no additional cost to officers—equipment that meets all applicable safety standards and that is updated regularly. “When officers had to buy their own vests, it was really a hardship. Now that the agency pays for our vests through grant funding, compliance has significantly improved,” said Captain Don Tijerina of the Bexar County (Texas) Sheriff’s Office.

“There is absolutely no reason why every officer in the country shouldn’t have a vest that is paid for by the government,” said FOP Executive Director James Pasco. “Yes, it can be cost-prohibitive to purchase body armor, especially in smaller agencies that don’t receive as much funding. But there are federal programs that will help, and there is no excuse not to apply for those grants. The money is there.”

Police agencies have funded their body armor purchases in several ways. Many agencies participate in the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) program, which since 1999 has provided more than \$393 million in federal funds for the purchase of more than one million vests in more than 13,000 state and local jurisdictions.¹⁹ As of FY 2011, all law enforcement agencies that receive BVP funds must certify that they have a mandatory-wear policy in effect.²⁰

Some police departments, including New York City’s, have used asset forfeiture funds to purchase vests. Others receive donations from private companies through their local police foundations. For example, in 2014, the Philadelphia Police Foundation received a \$100,000 donation from Independence Blue Cross to purchase 120 new vests.

Roundtable discussion participants also noted that departments must budget to replace outdated equipment, including protective vests and patrol vehicles. “Our police foundation helps us tremendously with purchasing vests and other equipment,” said Philadelphia FOP President John McNesby. “But the shelf life for a vest is maybe five years, and they are only effective if they are regularly replaced. We have to make sure we take that into account when we talk about costs.”

Strategy #4. Implement awareness campaigns

Another effective strategy for improving officer compliance is to develop an awareness campaign for officers about the benefits of seat belt and body armor use. Of course, officers are well aware that seat belts and body armor save lives, but for a variety of reasons, many officers do not always use this equipment. Awareness campaigns should identify these reasons for resistance and provided targeted information to change officers’ thinking.

The efforts taken to improve officer seat belt use in Prince George’s County, Maryland, represent a model of how labor and management can work together to promote officer safety.

19. “Bulletproof Vest Partnership/Body Armor Safety Initiative” (see note 10).

20. Ibid.

Many awareness campaigns include videos that demonstrate the real-life consequences of not wearing a vest or a seat belt. For example, the Houston (Texas) Police Department produced a video on driving safety that features interviews with an officer who was paralyzed from the neck down following a car accident in which he was not wearing a seat belt. The officer also recorded an audio announcement that runs on a loop every hour on patrol radios, reminding officers to use seat belts. The Houston Police Officers' Union supported the officer's involvement in these efforts, and it worked with the police department to ensure that the officer would not be denied benefits because of his failure to wear a seat belt.

“It is important to take a holistic approach to improving officer use of seat belts and body armor. Discipline alone isn't enough. So we've started putting a greater emphasis on education and awareness, especially when it comes to wearing seat belts. We provide information about the odds of being hurt or killed in a traffic accident, versus by other means.”

—William Scott, Commander, Los Angeles Police Department

Similarly, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) produced a video titled “Remembering 5th and Wall,” which depicts the fallout from a 1988 accident between two LAPD patrol cars. Of the four officers involved in the accident, the lone survivor was the only one wearing a seat belt. The video includes interviews of the surviving officer and testimonies from the deceased victims' friends and family members about their loss.

Many labor and management leaders said that the police culture regarding body armor and seat belts often changes after officers witness first-hand the consequences of not using the equipment. “We had an officer who was killed in a car accident while responding to the call, so everyone understands the importance of wearing a seat belt. We see it as a common-sense strategy to improve officer safety, so we didn't push back at all when the department adopted mandatory seat belt policies,” said Richmond, California, Police Officers' Association Secretary John Lopez. The police departments in Baltimore and New York City also produced videos that feature the testimony of officers who have been injured in car accidents. The police executives in those departments said they hope that these videos, which are shown during officer training, will help change officers' attitudes about seat belt use.

In addition to videos, many departments, such as the Columbus (Ohio) Division of Police and the Dane County (Wisconsin) Sheriff's Department, distribute posters and other materials aimed at raising safety awareness. The Philadelphia Police Department created a poster featuring an officer who survived a shooting thanks to his protective vest. The poster depicted a photograph of the officer alongside his young son, who is holding up his father's vest with the bullet hole clearly visible. The caption reads, “This saved my dad's life.” Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey said, “This kind of poster has an impact because it shows the consequences of not wearing a vest in a very emotional way. It's basically saying, ‘If you don't do it for yourself, do it for your family.’”

“Arrive Alive:” How Labor and Management Promote Seatbelt Use in Prince George’s County, Maryland

In the summer of 2012, an officer from Prince George’s County, Maryland, was killed in an automobile crash during a high-speed pursuit of a suspect. The officer was not wearing his seat belt; his partner, who was wearing a seat belt, walked away with only minor injuries. Less than three months later, another Prince George’s County officer was killed in an accident after losing control of his car. He, too, was not wearing his seat belt.

In both cases, Prince George’s County Police Chief Mark Magaw and Prince George’s County FOP President Dean Jones rushed to the emergency room while doctors tried unsuccessfully to save the officers’ lives. “Twice within a three-month span, we stood together in the hospital and tried to comfort the families of two young officers,” said Magaw. Jones described the scene after the second accident: “We literally stood in blood inside that operating room. By the time we came out, the officer’s family members had gathered, and more than 100 officers were standing vigil outside of the emergency room.”

As Magaw and Jones stood together inside the hospital after the second accident, they learned that, as in the first accident, the officer had died because he was not wearing his seat belt. There and then, they made the decision to take action.

“We turned to each other and said, ‘We can’t let this happen again.’ At that moment, our differences didn’t matter. We were both feeling the same pain,” said Magaw. “In every traumatic event, there is an opportunity for positive change. Protecting officer safety is paramount. It isn’t a management issue. It isn’t a labor issue. It has to be a joint effort.”

These tragedies prompted the Prince George’s County Police Department to implement a policy mandating that officers wear seat belts in patrol vehicles. The local FOP was fully on board with the new requirement. “Every single officer who was standing vigil outside that emergency room understood right then why wearing a seat belt is so important,” said President Jones. “So there was zero pushback from our membership about the mandatory policy.”

In addition to enacting mandatory-wear policies, the police department and local FOP worked together to develop a driving safety program known as “Arrive Alive.” The Arrive Alive campaign, which is modeled after a similar program in Las Vegas, Nevada, addresses all aspects of traffic safety, including seat belt use and the dangers of distracted driving. The campaign includes several components:

- ▶ The police department holds a weekly in-service training class on driving safety. The course is taught by deputy chiefs rather than regular in-service instructors to demonstrate the importance of the subject.
- ▶ As a learning tool, officers are shown dashboard-camera video footage of Prince George’s County police car accidents. They are asked to identify what went wrong and how to correct those mistakes.
- ▶ The police department and local FOP collaborated to produce a video aimed at raising awareness about the consequences of not wearing seat belts. The video features interviews with family members of officers who were killed while not wearing seat belts, testimonies of officers whose lives were saved by seat belts, and joint statements from Magaw and former Prince George’s County FOP President Vince Canales about the importance of wearing seat belts.
- ▶ The police department placed a decal inside every patrol vehicle that says, “Arrive Alive—Slow Down, Buckle Up, Pay Attention.” To make the decal more personal, it also features a picture of the memorial to fallen Prince George’s County officers.
- ▶ A driving safety message is broadcast over officers’ radios three times per day. A new message is recorded each week.

Magaw and Jones said their goal is to change the culture within the department regarding seat belt use. “One thing we’ve really done well is to turn the peer pressure around,” Magaw said. “In the past, there was a culture of not wearing seat belts. Today, our officers are committed to looking out for each other. They’re saying to each other, ‘I don’t want to carry your casket because you weren’t wearing a seat belt. So put it on.’”

Strategy #5. Provide proper training

One of the most common reasons given by officers for not wearing seat belts while on duty is the fear that seat belts will prevent them from exiting the vehicle quickly during emergency situations, such as during an ambush or to pursue a suspect on foot. Many labor and management leaders agreed that these concerns can be addressed through proper training on tactical seat belt use.

“Good training programs can show officers that seat belts don’t make much of a difference when it comes to response time,” said FOP National President Chuck Canterbury. “They need to understand that their chances of survival are so much higher with seat belts than without them. There should be no excuses.”

“With proper training, any safety concerns about wearing seat belts can be overcome.”

—Dave Mahoney, Sheriff
Dane County (Wisconsin) Sheriff’s Department

Officers in San Diego, California, are taught tactical seat belt removal procedures during the training academy and during advanced officer training. “Officers are required to wear seat belts when they are training in vehicle simulators,” said Brian Marvel, president of the San Diego, California, Police Officers Association (POA). “We demonstrate to recruits that you can still exit the car quickly, even if you are wearing a seat belt.”

Tyler Izen, president of the Los Angeles Police Protective League (PPL), has pushed for increased seat belt training for officers in Los Angeles. “We can all agree that we should wear our seat belts, but we still have some young officers who worry that they’re going to get trapped in the car if they have them on,” said Izen. “We have to show them that there are no real downsides to wearing their seat belts, but there sure are a lot of downsides to not wearing them.”

Strategy #6. Impose disciplinary action for noncompliance

Many labor and management leaders said that, while discipline alone is not enough to ensure seat belt and body armor compliance, it is a critical piece of the overall strategy.

The Houston (Texas) Police Department has instituted a minimum one-day suspension for noncompliance with body armor requirements and a minimum two-day suspension for not wearing a seat belt. “We take a zero-tolerance approach,” said Chief McClelland.

Houston POU President Ray Hunt said, “If our members complain that a two-day suspension is too harsh for not wearing a seat belt, I tell them, ‘If you’re not wearing your seat belt and you’re thrown from the car and wind up hurt, you’re going to be out a lot longer than two days. So just buckle your seat belts.’”

Deputy Commissioner Beirne of New York City said that his department conducts aggressive inspections for use of body armor and seat belts. Discipline for noncompliance is progressive, from a minimum of a documented warning to a maximum of five days’ vacation loss. “Following through with discipline has definitely helped improve seat belt and vest use,” Beirne said.

Recruiting and retaining a strong, diverse workforce

At the roundtable discussions, police executives and labor leaders said that one of their most significant challenges was to recruit and retain qualified officers. For many police agencies, building a strong workforce has been difficult in light of budget cuts and competition with higher-paying jobs. Another consideration is that generally speaking, the current generation of young people, when compared to past generations, is less interested in committing to a long career in a single police department or even in remaining in one career for a lifetime.

Roundtable discussion participants discussed several strategies for how they can collaborate to address these issues, focusing particularly on how they can improve their efforts to recruit and retain candidates who reflect the diversity of the community.

Offering competitive compensation

Many management and labor leaders agree that compensation is one of the primary factors in attracting and retaining qualified officers. When police agencies cannot offer competitive compensation, they find that qualified candidates choose to pursue other careers or join police departments that offer better pay.

Compensation is often one of the main issues facing police labor leaders and management, and roundtable discussion participants outlined ways to collaborate on this issue. First and foremost, **they recommended that labor and management focus their efforts on increasing support for police departments among local officials and the public, which can lead to more funding for hiring and compensation.**

In most places, local officials such as mayors and city councils determine the overall budget for the police department. It should be noted that in municipal budgets, the police department budget often is the single most expensive line item. Furthermore, within a police budget, labor costs often consume as much as 70 to 80 percent of the total funding.

Many labor and management leaders said that they are sometimes victims of their own success, because when crime rates decrease, so do agency budgets. Local officials are hesitant to prioritize funding for an agency that appears to be performing well at existing funding levels. On the other hand, if a police department is not doing particularly well and has poor relationships with its communities, that can hurt public support and funding for police agencies.

“To get public support, we have to redefine the role of police. It isn’t just enough to drive crime rates down. People need to see officers out in the community being involved in outreach and initiatives that really help people. Police need to be effective neighborhood organizers and the glue that holds communities together. This is the narrative we need to be building.”

—Chris Magnus, Chief of Police
Richmond (California) Police Department

Strategy: Demonstrate the police department’s value to local officials and to the public

Roundtable discussion participants said that when advocating for police department funding, it is important that labor and management come together to demonstrate their value to local officials and to the public. This often involves making arguments that go beyond crime rates and statistics. Labor and management leaders said that they need to show they are serving the community on

many fronts, and they need to engage in the sort of outreach and programming that backs that up.

For example, in Richmond, California, Police Chief Chris Magnus has focused on changing the role of police in his community. In addition to crime prevention, officers in Richmond participate in a number of community-based initiatives, such as working with prisoner reentry programs, which have helped improve public support for the department.

“Our officers aren’t just focused on reducing crime but instead are out there in the neighborhoods facilitating access to services, participating in outreach programs, and truly being a part of the community,” Chief Magnus said. “It has really helped build trust in the department, and because of that, the public recently supported a 20 percent pay increase for officers.”

“We have made great strides in lowering crime rates, but because of this, crime is no longer listed as one of the major concerns in many cities. Our challenge is to keep ourselves relevant.”

—William Bratton, Police Commissioner
New York City Police Department

Labor and management leaders emphasized the need to demonstrate that even when crime rates are low, police departments need funding to support continued improvement. They said that labor and management should have a coordinated strategy for communicating this message, with each side using its unique set of skills and resources.

Many labor organizations encourage their members to participate in community outreach programs, such as coordinating fundraising drives for local organizations or collecting toys for children during the holidays. These efforts can demonstrate to the public that officers are there to support them, which can increase support for the local police.

Labor organizations also often engage in direct political advocacy, often through their political action committees (PAC). Labor PACs in places like Houston, Texas; San Diego, California; Columbus, Ohio; and Fort Worth, Texas, use funds to endorse candidates for local office who will support initiatives that will help the police departments hire

and retain qualified officers. Labor organizations can also advocate directly to the public for tax policies that will benefit the department. For example, Columbus FOP President Pappas said that his members went door to door within the community to successfully campaign for a tax increase initiative.

“In recruiting and retaining the high-quality candidates necessary to meet the demands and challenges in today’s policing environment, compensation continues to play the biggest role. If you can’t stay competitive with other departments, you can’t hire and keep good officers. In an atmosphere where many interests are competing for government resources, you have to advocate for your fair share. Public safety remains the most important service provided by government.”

—Patrick Lynch, President
New York City Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association

Though police executives typically cannot engage in this sort of direct public advocacy, many management leaders said that they also have a role to play in educating the public about these issues. Many police executives participate in initiatives aimed at strengthening police-community relations, which can help increase support for the department among the public. Many police executives also work with local officials behind the scenes to advocate for funding for their police departments. Labor leaders said that it is important for management to communicate these efforts to officers, who may otherwise be unaware that management is working on their behalf.

The approach taken in Philadelphia illustrates how labor and management can successfully work together—and with local city officials—to attain competitive compensation packages for officers. In Philadelphia, officers have received a 28 percent increase in salary since 2008, and they have what is widely considered one of the best medical plans in the country. Philadelphia Police Commissioner Ramsey and FOP President McNesby credit this to the good working relationship they have built with each other and with the mayor and other local officials.

“The new model for labor is to be politically savvy, not out there banging our chests and screaming for raises,” said FOP President McNesby. “We have a good relationship with Commissioner Ramsey and with the mayor, and that goes a long way.”

“The key is building relationships and making sure the door is open for dialogue among everyone involved,” Ramsey said. “My role as police commissioner is to help build those relationships and to demonstrate to the mayor that our officers deserve support. John McNesby and I understand that we are going to be more successful at getting that support when we work together. If we’re out there fighting in the news media every day, no one is going to want to support us.”

Promoting policing as a long-term career

At the roundtable discussions, many labor and management leaders discussed the generational differences that make it difficult to recruit and retain younger officers. They said that it can be challenging to make policing an attractive profession to qualified young people who have many other career options and that today’s young people are less willing to commit to one job, or even one career path, for the long term. In many places, police departments are spending money to train young officers only to see them leave for other departments or other jobs.

“We have to be able to address the generational differences that exist. Many of today’s officers are coming straight out of college and have never had a job before becoming an officer. And they tend to not be as willing to stick around in one job or one department for a lifetime. For many of them, policing is not seen as a long-term career.”

—Al Durham, Assistant Chief of Police
Washington (D.C.) Metropolitan Police Department

“We try to focus on recruiting the best and brightest people out of college or the military, but it can be hard when other jobs offer more money and less dangerous working conditions,” said Sergeant Cherry of Baltimore. “A lot of young people don’t view policing as a career option anymore, and we have to find ways to change that.”

At the roundtable discussions, participants addressed various strategies for attracting a greater number of young people to policing.

Strategy #1. Demonstrate that policing is a profession that matters

San Diego POA President Marvel said that it is critical to demonstrate to young people that policing is *a profession that matters*. “One of the biggest contributors to retention problems is officer burnout,” he said. “Many young officers would like to do more proactive policing and community outreach, but because departments are understaffed, officers spend most of their time responding to calls for service. If we make the job meaningful, not as many officers would leave for other professions.”

Strategy #2. Give officers a voice

Many labor and management leaders emphasized that young officers will be more satisfied—and thus less likely to leave the department—if they are given a greater voice in the decisions that impact them. Some labor leaders also said that young officers are more likely to leave an agency if they perceive unfair treatment, especially when it comes to discipline. “Fair treatment needs to be systemic within the organization,” said Petersburg (Virginia) Police Chief John Dixon.

Strategy #3. Invest in education

Investing in education is one strategy that many police departments have used to help recruit and retain qualified young people. In some places, such as in Houston, police departments offer tuition reimbursement for officers who enroll in college courses. This can be particularly helpful in police departments that have college credit requirements or that require officers to have a certain level of education prior to being promoted.

“If we want to make policing a true profession, we have to have high standards. Investing in education is one way to raise the professionalism of the department. If we could have money to offer tuition reimbursements to officers, we’d see benefits down the road.”

—Bob Cherry, Sergeant
Baltimore (Maryland) Police Department
and former President, Baltimore Fraternal Order of Police

Strengthening workforce diversity

Police executives and labor leaders agreed that improving the diversity of their workforces should be among the top priorities in any police department. They said that as events in places like Ferguson, Missouri, have shown, a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community helps strengthen police legitimacy and improve trust in the police; and a department that does not reflect the community can be out of touch with community concerns, which results in serious problems. They also said that a diverse workforce promotes a wider range of perspectives within a police department, which can help lead to innovation and better policing services.

“As we focus on improving diversity in policing, the key is demonstrating to minority candidates why policing is a good career option. This starts with bridging the gap between police and the minority communities. If we don’t do that, the young people who are qualified and educated are going to always choose other professions over policing.”

—John Dixon, Chief of Police
Petersburg (Virginia) Police Department
and Immediate Past National President,
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

At the roundtable discussions, labor and management leaders shared several strategies that they have found promising for recruiting and retaining candidates from diverse backgrounds and demographics. Many of these strategies focus on strengthening outreach to minority communities, which can help not only recruiting efforts but also overall police-community relationships.

Strategy #1. Demonstrate a commitment to diversity

Labor and management leaders agreed that improving diversity within a police department requires a commitment to this goal at all levels—from the top executives to the command staff to the officers on the streets. And many leaders said that efforts are often more successful when labor and management work together.

“The goal to improve diversity needs to be a message coming from both labor and management. There needs to be more of a unified message and strategy on this issue,” said Dane County (Wisconsin) Sheriff Dave Mahoney.

Captain Tijerina of Bexar County (Texas), who is also president of the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA), said that police executives can demonstrate their commitment to improving diversity by promoting a diverse group of officers through the ranks. “In many agencies, entry-level officers may mirror the diversity of the community, but they are hitting obstacles to promotion above the sergeant rank. There needs to be mechanisms in place to eliminate those glass ceilings,” Tijerina said.

“Police departments have to do more than pay lip service to the idea of improving diversity. It has to be a philosophy that is infused through the entire department, starting at the top. Our recruiting staff knows that I won’t accept it if they present me with candidates who don’t reflect the diversity of Prince George’s County, and that’s an important message that police chiefs need to send.”

—Mark Magaw, Chief of Police
Prince George’s County (Maryland) Police Department

Strategy #2. Conduct outreach to strengthen relationships with minority communities

Many labor and management leaders agreed that it is difficult to attract diverse candidates when police departments do not have strong relationships with people in minority communities. These relationships can be improved by engaging in community policing, participating in community outreach programs, and treating everyone in the community with dignity and respect.

Captain Tijerina of Bexar County (Texas) said, “Police departments can become more attractive to diverse candidates if they truly integrate themselves within minority communities.” He suggested that police departments forge strong relationships with community leaders and build networks within minority communities.

“You need to show people that you are there for them, that the police department is open-minded and is truly interested in having them be a part of it,” Tijerina said.

“Officers are the face of the police department. They are the ones interacting with the community on a daily basis,” said Commissioner Ramsey of Philadelphia. “When those interactions are only negative, it can cause many young people in minority communities to think, ‘Why would I want to be a part of that?’ It can create peer pressure against joining the police force. But when you have good officers out there treating everyone with dignity, and doing the right thing, it can help overcome some of that negativity.”

“You can use targeted recruiting, job fairs, social media—those are all good strategies. But nothing is going to help recruiting in minority communities more than having officers who are delivering good police services and treating people with respect and dignity on a daily basis. If we are going to ask people to join our profession, we have to truly engage them and show them why they should. We have to truly engage people, and it has to go beyond just helping kids and the elderly. We have to engage those hard-to-reach communities if we are going to make any progress.”

—Charles McClelland, Chief of Police
Houston (Texas) Police Department

Richmond (California) Police Chief Chris Magnus said that it is also important that police departments engage in more outreach to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. “There is a whole market of untapped LGBT candidates who would serve the department well, but they have been completely overlooked by many police departments,” Magnus said. He suggests that police departments incorporate sexual orientation issues into diversity training to help officers become more comfortable with these issues. He also said that directly engaging the LGBT community can be a good first step.

“We sent our recruiting team to the gay pride parade in San Francisco,” Chief Magnus said. “Maybe only a small fraction of the people who attended the event would apply to work for the department, but they have friends, and they spread the word, and then the dialogue becomes, ‘You know, if you are thinking of applying to be a police officer but you didn’t think there was a department where you’d feel comfortable, well there is.’ We want to be that department.”

Strategy #3. Develop targeted recruitment efforts

Many police agencies have begun using strategies that specifically target diverse candidates, such as recruiting at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), through professional organizations, and in the military. Houston Police Chief McClelland said that his department has also had success participating in job fairs in large, diverse universities that have criminal justice programs.

Chief Dixon of Petersburg (Virginia), who is also the Immediate Past National President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), is an advocate of targeted recruiting. “There has to be a conscious effort to go to the places where you will find qualified minority candidates. NOBLE reaches out to colleges and universities and tries to mentor students in the criminal justice programs, so that when they graduate they have a good networking base,” Dixon said.

Columbus (Ohio) Deputy Chief Timothy Becker said that targeted recruiting also involves understanding and addressing the underlying reasons why people are hesitant to become police officers, which may differ across various minority communities. “There are a lot of reasons why people are wary of joining the department,” Becker said. “Some issues, like compensation, are the same across all communities. But people in the Asian community may have different concerns than people in the Somali community, and it is important to understand and respect those differences.”

The Columbus Division of Police has held focus groups with young officers from various minority groups to better understand their perspectives. “We asked how they learned about the department, why they chose to join, and what they liked and didn’t like about being a police officer,” Deputy Chief Becker said. “We also asked their opinions on

the best way to do targeted messaging—which TV stations they watched, Internet sites they visited, and events they liked to attend. This helped us get a grasp of how we could better reach young minority candidates, and it helped us be more sensitive to their concerns.”

In some police agencies, such as in Houston and Fort Worth, Texas, targeted outreach includes offering financial incentives for candidates who are bilingual. Not only does this approach help attract diverse candidates but it also strengthens the police department’s ability to connect with members of the community.

Many police departments have found that using social media is an effective strategy for recruiting diverse candidates. This was the approach taken in Camden, New Jersey, where the police department has had success with building a diverse workforce. “You have to look at messaging through nontraditional ways,” said Camden County Police Chief Scott Thomson.

Strategy #4. Commit to having diverse role models in key positions throughout the organization

Many roundtable discussion participants said that having a diverse recruiting staff is critical to attracting young people from minority communities. “It’s important to expose young people to diverse role models in key positions. They need to see people who look like them and who have succeeded within the department. It gives young people motivation and allows them to see that it is okay to become a police officer, even if there is peer pressure against it,” said Dixon.

Miami Beach Police Chief Daniel Oates said, “Having diversity in the higher ranks is a crucial recruitment tool. It demonstrates that the department is a friendly, open place for all people, and that everyone will have a chance to succeed.”

In addition to having diversity on the official recruiting team and in executive positions, many police leaders also said that it also helps to have officers who are from the local neighborhoods where they are now working. “It’s important that we recruit from within the city, from the local high schools, that we bring local people up and push them through the ranks,” said Assistant Chief Burke of Washington, D.C. “These officers understand the neighborhoods and are respected there.”

Strategy #5. Invest in youth programs

Many police agencies have found that developing youth programs can help get young people interested in policing. For example, the Columbus (Ohio) Division of Police created a public safety summer camp for younger children, which Deputy Chief Becker said has helped create positive attitudes towards policing among area youth.

Chief Dixon of Petersburg (Virginia) and NOBLE suggested that police agencies develop cadet programs in local high schools. These programs expose youth to careers in policing and help them develop the skills and discipline they need to succeed. Captain Tijerina of Bexar County (Texas) and HAPCOA said that HAPCOA offers scholarships, internships, and mentoring programs to help develop potential candidates among minority youth.

Promoting officer mental and physical wellness

Roundtable discussion participants agreed that officers' mental and physical wellness is a critical issue facing nearly every law enforcement agency. Statistics on officer suicide and job-related illnesses seem to support this. **In 2012, 126 law enforcement officers committed suicide²¹—more than the number of officers (122) who were killed in the line of duty.²² In 2014, job-related illnesses such as heart attacks were the third-leading cause of on-duty officer deaths.**

“Officer wellness deserves much more attention than it currently gets. There are so many things that labor and management can do to take care of our officers, like providing them with PTSD counseling, connecting them with substance and alcohol abuse treatment, and offering fitness and stress management programs. These things are all part of producing an environment that helps officers do their jobs more effectively when they are out on the street.”

—Darrel Stephens, Executive Director
Major Cities Chiefs Association

21. Ron Clark and Andy O'Hara, *2012 National Study of Police Suicides: The NSOPS Study, Badge of Life*, last modified January 4, 2013, <http://www.policesuicidestudy.com/id16.html>.

22. “Officer Deaths by Year,” National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.nleomf.org/facts/officer-fatalities-data/year.html>.

Labor and management leaders noted that there are still many barriers that prevent officers from seeking help when they have problems with stress, depression, alcohol or substance abuse, or other issues. “Some officers fear they will suffer job-related consequences, such as forced leave or even termination, if they come forward with a problem,” said Darrel Stephens, Executive Director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA). “Another issue is the culture within police departments. Officers often feel they need to be ‘tough’ and to just deal with these problems on their own. It’s a culture of bravery and silence, and so there is still that stigma to seeking help.”

“Our association is committed to making sure our members are safe and have access to the right resources,” said Secretary Lopez of the Richmond, California, Police Officers Association. “But it can be hard to know when an officer is feeling depressed or having a problem, because it’s the kind of profession where people tend to keep those feelings to themselves. You really have to look closely to see the signs.”

At the roundtable discussions, labor and management leaders presented several strategies that they have found promising for reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues, for strengthening the response to physical and mental wellness concerns, and for giving officers the support they need.

“When we talk about saving officers’ lives, we have to include mental health and wellness in the conversation. Every day, many of our officers are out on the streets seeing people get killed, they are risking their own lives, they are witnessing trauma after trauma. We are failing them if we don’t help them process those things. It should be just as much a part of what we do to safeguard our officers as providing them with bulletproof vests.”

—Tommy Nee, Former President
Boston Police Patrolmen’s Association

Strategy #1. Make wellness a priority

Roundtable discussion participants said that the first step is to make wellness a priority throughout the organization. This involves getting buy-in for wellness programs on every level, starting with the top leaders in the organization. Police executives and labor leaders should strive to understand the research surrounding mental and physical health issues and should implement holistic and innovative wellness programs. This demonstrates to officers that their concerns are being taken seriously and that it is okay to come forward with problems.

Making wellness a priority also involves greater collaboration between labor and management. For example, Police Chief Mark Magaw and FOP President Dean Jones of Prince George's County, Maryland, view wellness as a joint effort between labor and management. They co-authored a letter to officers that provides information regarding alcohol abuse treatment programs available to first responders. This kind of partnership illustrates a strong commitment towards promoting wellness at every level.

"As union presidents and police chiefs, we have a responsibility to change the culture," said Rick VanHouten, president of the Fort Worth, Texas, Police Officers Association. "We need to make it unacceptable to ignore your fellow officers' problems. We have a duty to make sure our officers are surrounded with all the support and help they need."

Strategy #2. Shift from a rules-based approach to a values-based approach

Many labor leaders said that one of the primary barriers to officers coming forward to seek help is the fear of job-related consequences. This can be especially true when officers are experiencing PTSD or drug and alcohol problems. "In the policing culture, most of the officers don't want to admit they have a problem, because they worry it will end their career. This is why they aren't seeking help," said FOP Executive Director Pasco.

To reassure officers that asking for help will not have a negative impact on their careers, some police agencies, such as the Dane County (Wisconsin) Sheriff's Department, are looking to move from a rules-based approach to a values-based approach on issues like substance abuse.

"A values-based approach means that we focus on encouraging officers to get help, rather than dinging them for violating policies," said Sheriff Mahoney. "We're moving in that direction because we want our deputies to take care of themselves. We don't want them to be scared that they'll get in trouble if they come forward."

"The focus should be on prevention and intervention when we talk about substance abuse. The bottom line is that we have to be concerned about the health and welfare of our officers. We can't let it get to the point where these problems could cost them their careers."

—Charles Ramsey, Police Commissioner
Philadelphia Police Department

In most police agencies, officers who self-report a substance abuse problem will receive treatment rather than discipline. In Dane County, deputies who self-report receive paid time off in order to undergo a clinical evaluation, and after the evaluation is completed the department will set up a treatment plan for the officer. However, if an officer is caught abusing drugs or alcohol during random testing or by some other means, the officer will be subject to discipline.

In Philadelphia and other cities, labor organizations are taking on the responsibility of connecting officers to drug and alcohol treatment. Some labor organizations host confidential group meetings for officers who are struggling with substance abuse, and others help direct officers to professional counseling and treatment services. Many labor and management leaders believe that this helps reduce officers' fears regarding discipline and makes them more comfortable coming forward for help.

Strategy #3. Require counseling for anyone involved in a traumatic event

Roundtable discussion participants agreed that PTSD is a concern that is often overlooked and misunderstood by police agencies. "I've actually heard some police officials claim that PTSD isn't real," said FOP National President Canterbury. "Well not only is it real, but it can be treated. There is no reason for an officer's life or career to end because of PTSD."

Several police agencies have begun *requiring* critical incident counseling for officers who have been involved in a traumatic event such as a shooting. Officials in these agencies have found that providing immediate, mandatory counseling may assist in preventing PTSD from occurring. For example, in Boston, officers who are even present at an officer-involved shooting are required to attend counseling. “We found that requiring everyone who was on the scene to get counseling—not just the officer who was actually involved in the shooting—makes the officer who was involved feel less singled out. That helps reduce the stigma surrounding counseling,” said Boston Police Department Deputy Superintendent Steven Whitman.

Many police agencies, including the Columbus Division of Police, contract with local mental health providers to administer PTSD counseling and other services. For example, the Philadelphia Police Department partners with the University of Pennsylvania’s behavioral health program to provide counseling services to officers.

Strategy #4. Implement peer support programs

In addition to offering professional counseling, many police agencies and labor organizations have developed peer support programs. These programs typically involve training current or retired officers to provide counseling or crisis intervention services to fellow officers. Peer support programs are generally confidential and sometimes even anonymous, which reduces the possibility that what is shared during the sessions will lead to job-related consequences. Labor and management leaders said this gives officers a safe space to step forward and discuss their problems with peers who understand the nature of their work.

“Police officers often have trust issues, so they may not want to sit and talk to a traditional therapist. But to sit and speak with a peer, who knows what the officer is going through and who can say, ‘I’ve been there,’ can make all the difference in the world. It normalizes what the officer is going through and can make them feel like they aren’t alone. Sometimes that’s all the officer needs to get over the hurdles to seeking help.”

—Andy Callaghan
Sergeant, Philadelphia Police Department and Director,
Philadelphia FOP Law Enforcement Peer Support Network

Some peer support teams are coordinated through the labor organization while others are run by the police department. In Boston, being a peer-support officer is a full-time assignment while in Houston, retired officers manage a 24/7 crisis intervention telephone line. The Camden County (New Jersey) Police Department has a chaplaincy program that is headed by a sergeant. “Our chaplain offers things like grief counseling, and he even works with officers who have been disciplined or terminated to make sure they are doing okay. It has been a wonderful, proactive wellness program for us,” said Chief Thomson.

In addition to its peer support team, the Columbus Division of Police has facilitated an online site where officers can anonymously share their experiences with close call situations such as car accidents and shootings. Deputy Chief Becker said this program has been successful because it gives officers a safe, confidential avenue for discussing problems.

“We know of at least one person who called our crisis intervention line while he was suicidal. Our peer counselors were able to intervene and get him the help he needed. So these types of programs can definitely save lives.”

—Ray Hunt, President, Houston Police Officers’ Union

The Law Enforcement Peer Support Network: Addressing Officer Mental Health in Philadelphia

Unfortunately, mental health-related issues such as depression, post-traumatic stress, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide are common in the field of policing. Officers who experience these problems are often reluctant to seek help for a variety of reasons: they fear that coming forward will result in suspensions or even termination, they do not want to appear weak among their fellow officers, they are used to remaining silent about their problems, or they do not know where to turn for help.

In Philadelphia, officers like Sergeant Andy Callaghan are trying to change the culture regarding officer mental health. Callaghan is the director of the Law Enforcement Peer Support Network (LEPSN), a peer support program that is coordinated through the Philadelphia FOP Lodge 5. The LEPSN program is intended to supplement professional counseling services, which are provided through a partnership between the Philadelphia Police Department and the University of Pennsylvania's behavioral health program.

Through the LEPSN, officers are trained to provide knowledge, emotional support, and practical assistance to fellow officers who are experiencing trauma from critical incidents, general stress, mental health concerns, or substance abuse problems. They also help link officers to professional counseling and treatment services. Peer support officers are not intended to be a replacement for professional therapists; rather, they can provide a supportive resource for critical incident and general stress related issues.

A primary focus of the LEPSN is training officers to recognize signs that a fellow officer is in crisis and how to properly intervene when this occurs. "Intervening in crisis situations is a daily part of what officers do," said Callaghan. "But often, officers don't know how to intervene when that crisis involves a fellow officer. They have too many emotions attached or are afraid of confronting another officer. We can train past that fear."

Callaghan, who has researched and written many articles on topics such as PTSD and suicide prevention, said that officers are trained to look for the fatal triangle, which is present in almost every officer suicide. "The fatal triangle occurs when officers have three major negative events going on in their lives. For example, if an officer is in trouble at work, has a drinking problem, and then goes home and learns that his wife wants a divorce, he is someone we need to be looking out for," he said.

Callaghan also teaches officers to identify and address issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and acute stress disorder (ASD). He also emphasizes the importance of stress inoculation, which focuses on preparing for stressful situations through preventative measures such as training, exercise, eating right, and getting enough sleep. Training is the most important part of stress inoculation, because in intense stress situations, officers often act on auto-pilot before they even have processed their conscious thoughts.

The LEPSN provides an array of support services, all of which are facilitated by trained officers. These services include

- ▶ a crisis hotline manned by trained peer counselors;
- ▶ "Bottles and Badges," a voluntary meeting held weekly at the FOP lodge to help officers who are struggling with alcohol use;
- ▶ "Shooters Support," a voluntary meeting held every other week at the FOP lodge where officers can support each other with the decision to use deadly force;
- ▶ "Green to Blue," a program aimed at helping officers who are transitioning from military service;
- ▶ critical incident stress management;
- ▶ referrals to professional counseling and substance abuse programs;
- ▶ links to other resources for addressing mental health concerns.

Callaghan credits two primary factors for the success of LEPSN. First, the issues that officers discuss in the support groups, on the crisis hotline, and in other conversations with peer support counselors are kept confidential and are not reported back to their supervisors. And second, all of the services are provided by fellow officers—rather than professional therapists—which helps officers feel more understood and less alone.

"There is no reason why officers need to keep suffering," said Callaghan. "When officers are given support and are linked to the appropriate services, they can get better. Our model focuses on training as many peers as we can to provide that support. We want to become a force multiplier for officer wellness."

Strategy #5. Implement physical fitness and stress management programs

Labor and management leaders discussed various strategies that promote physical wellness, especially when it comes to officer stress and fatigue.

“We don’t do enough to address the significant levels of stress and fatigue that our officers face. The toll that stress and fatigue take on the body is enormous,” said MCCA Executive Director Stephens. He said that police agencies should consider stress and fatigue when developing their shift policies and that they should use devices like heart-rate monitors to measure stress.

Some police agencies are moving away from traditional physical fitness tests, which measure things like how many pushups an officer can do, and toward requiring officers to undergo comprehensive physicals from their doctors. In Prince George’s County, the local FOP is proposing this move as a way to measure an officer’s overall health.

“The wellness initiative for LAPD command staff takes a holistic approach to wellness. Stress and substance abuse are real problems in policing, and we have to take better care of ourselves. Our program is designed help change the culture for people who are in the leadership role.”

–William Scott, Commander, Los Angeles Police Department

Many police agencies, like the Columbus Division of Police, contract with fitness centers around the city so that officers can train at little or no cost. The Columbus Division of Police has also hired an industrial hygienist to review injury claims and sick days to see whether new training or safety protocols are needed.

The Los Angeles Command Officers’ Association launched a wellness initiative for command staff that includes preventative physical checkups, consultations with psychologists, and substance abuse education. LAPD Commander William Scott said that participants can receive training hours or small financial incentives, funded through the association, for participating. He said this has contributed to a 70 percent participation rate in the initiative’s first year.

Developing workable social media policies

As law enforcement agencies begin to embrace the use of social media, it is important to be aware of the benefits and negative consequences of this technology. Many police agencies find that social media is a useful tool for engaging the community and is extremely efficient in disseminating important information to the public in a timely way. However, some police agencies have experienced officers posting inflammatory or sensitive material on their personal social media accounts, which can undermine police-community relationships and damage ongoing investigations.

At the roundtable discussions, police executives and labor leaders discussed strategies for achieving the benefits of social media while mitigating the potential downsides. Most participants agreed that police agencies need to develop written policies to govern social media use. However, these policies raise questions regarding officers’ First Amendment rights and the extent to which departments can control what officers post online.

“Social media is here to stay. Our younger officers have already embraced it, so we really have no choice but to embrace it as well. If we don’t ride the wave, we will get crushed by it. And it can be a great tool when it is used correctly. So at this point the issue is really about risk management. We can’t eliminate the risks, but we can take steps to minimize them.”

–Luther Reynolds, Assistant Chief
Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Department

The benefits of social media

Many police agencies have become quite active on social media in recent years. Sites like Facebook and Twitter provide police agencies with widespread access to a large section of the community at little cost other than the time of police employees who do this work. The use of social media in policing has become so prevalent that in 2013, PERF and the COPS Office partnered to study how police departments are using this tool to manage large gatherings of people, to investigate crimes, and to handle other events. This research culminated in a report titled *Social Media and Tactical Considerations for Law Enforcement*, which was released by PERF and the COPS Office in 2013.²³

Police agencies that use social media typically have an official department account, which is often managed by the department's public information office. It is also becoming more common for agencies to require command staff members to create additional social media accounts and update them regularly. In this way, the information being posted by the police—such as daily notices about the crimes that have been reported in a neighborhood—can be customized to particular police precincts or other subgroups.

For example, the NYPD requires all commanders to have an official Twitter account, and it urges each commander to tweet three or four times per day. The department is also in the process of training commanders on how to use Twitter effectively. "Training is a multi-day course that covers what is appropriate to post online, the legal ramifications of what is posted, and the most effective messaging for engaging their communities," said NYPD Deputy Commissioner Beirne.

Police agencies and individual officers use their official social media accounts in a variety of ways. Many police agencies use Twitter and Facebook to provide real-time alerts to the public regarding public safety emergencies such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks. Social media can be much faster and more efficient and direct in a crisis than traditional approaches such as briefing new media reporters. Often, the public and the news media look to the police department's social media feeds to get accurate, up-to-date information during these types of incidents.

23. Police Executive Research Forum, *Social Media and Tactical Considerations for Law Enforcement* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2013), <http://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p261-pub.pdf>.

This was the case during the aftermath of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, when the Boston Police Department used Twitter to keep the public informed during the search for the suspects in the days following the bombing. Christine Cole, Vice President and Executive Director of the Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice, said that this was an example of how police agencies can use social media effectively. "The Boston Police Department really became the official news source in the aftermath of the bombings," said Cole. "Tweets from the department that week were retweeted upwards of 25,000 times, while tweets from major news outlets were being retweeted less than 1,500 times. The department did a great job of using Twitter to correct misinformation and to make sure the right information got out to the public."

"In the aftermath of the bombings, there was understandably a lot of fear and confusion within the community. Hundreds of thousands of people turned to our Twitter feed to get accurate, timely information about what was going on. Two or three days after the bombings, many major news outlets erroneously reported that a suspect had been apprehended. We were the ones who set the record straight. The key was that we were a controlled, centralized source for information. Through Twitter, we were able to dispel rumors and let the public know what was happening as it happened."

—Steven Whitman, Deputy Superintendent
Boston Police Department

Police agencies also use social media to solicit crime-solving tips from the public, especially when searching for suspects or missing persons. For example, the Philadelphia Police Department used Twitter and Facebook to post surveillance videos of the suspect in the 2014 case of Carleesha Freeland-Gaither, a woman who was abducted off the street in Philadelphia and later found safely in Maryland. In a joint effort between labor and management, the department also posted information about a reward offered by the Philadelphia FOP.

“An abduction that occurs on a public street is something that is very frightening to people. So we tried to lower that fear by disseminating as much information as we could. A case like this really demonstrates the power of social media,” said Philadelphia Police Commissioner Ramsey.

“When we do things like offer a reward for information about a crime, we work with the police department to get the word out. The department is great about posting the information online and reaching as many people as it can. It is just one small way we can work together to put a criminal behind bars and put the community at ease.”

—John McNesby, President
Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #5

Police agencies also use social media to communicate with the public on a routine basis. That includes pushing out notifications about events taking place in the community, such as major demonstrations or sporting events that cause road closures or traffic jams, or using social media platforms to highlight community-outreach efforts and the positive things that officers are doing. Many agencies also use social media to disseminate information about new programs that the department is implementing. For example, many police agencies used social media to engage the public as they consider deploying body-worn cameras.

“Social media gives police departments the ability to get their messages out to the community. It can help departments demonstrate the good work that officers are doing. But you need a strategy for how your department uses social media, or else it can become tough to manage that message.”

—Ben Tucker, First Deputy Commissioner
New York City Police Department

In addition, police agencies have found that social media is a useful tool for recruiting new officers and volunteers. This was the approach taken in Columbus, Ohio, and Camden, New Jersey. “When we were looking to expand recruitment, experts told us that we should stop advertising in the newspapers and start targeting the places where people were listening, talking, and interacting. And that place is social media,” said Camden Police Chief Thomson.

The potential for social media abuse

At the roundtable discussions, police executives and labor leaders agreed that social media abuse is a problem in many police agencies. They said that the biggest concern they face is when officers post confidential information or inflammatory or inappropriate content to their personal Twitter and Facebook sites. Even though these are not official department posts, they can damage police-community relationships.

For example, in Fort Worth, Texas, an officer who was on occupational leave posted racist comments in a political chat room. Someone in the chat room identified him as a Fort Worth police officer, took a screenshot of the comments, and forwarded them to the media. Although many people in the community called for the officer to be fired, Fort Worth Police Chief Halstead disciplined the officer rather than firing him. He based this decision on legal advice regarding a court ruling stating that the police department did not have the ability to terminate an officer for making comments that were unrelated to his employment while he was speaking as a private citizen. Halstead faced intense scrutiny over his decision. “All it takes is one comment on what you think is a private site, but officers need to remember that nothing online is really private,” Halstead said.

Many police leaders also worry about officers jeopardizing police operations by posting confidential information about suspects, crime scenes, or tactics to their social media accounts. In Columbus, Ohio, an officer took a picture of a suspect in handcuffs and posted it to his Facebook page. The photo captured the faces of several covert officers who were in the background, threatening not only the covert operation but also the safety of the officers.

In Dane County, Wisconsin, a sheriff's deputy took a photograph of an inmate in the jail and posted it to Facebook. The officer captioned the photo with inappropriate comments and included confidential medical information about the inmate in the post. Sheriff Mahoney said the employee association recommended strong discipline in this case, and the department ultimately fired the deputy.

Some officers have posted sexually explicit photographs online, which can undermine the public's respect toward their police department. In Houston, an officer posted nude photographs of herself to a website, and she was demoted from sergeant to officer. "These sorts of posts do not project the professional image that we want our officers to project," said Houston POU President Hunt.

Disciplining officers for online activity

In most cases, when officers abuse social media, it is not on official department accounts but rather on their private social media accounts or other websites. Roundtable discussion participants said this can make it difficult to reach an agreement regarding what discipline—if any—can be handed down. Officers do not give up their First Amendment rights when they are off duty, but they are sworn to uphold the values of the department at all times.

"Agencies have the right to discipline officers who make improper posts while associating themselves with the department. It's a tougher call if there is nothing to tie the officer to the department. But if an officer posts something that would make a reasonable person question whether the officer should serve as an officer, then it is legitimate for the agency to evaluate that action."

—William Johnson, Executive Director
National Association of Police Organizations

Most labor and management leaders agreed that officers can be disciplined for posts on their personal accounts if they have identified themselves as officers or connected themselves to the department in some way, such as by posting photos of themselves in uniform.

This is the approach taken by many police departments, including those in New York City; Columbus, Ohio; Philadelphia; Baltimore; Miami Beach, Florida; Fort Worth, Texas; Camden, New Jersey; and Brookline, Massachusetts. The labor leaders in these cities largely agree with this policy, as long as there is a nexus between the officer's personal posts and the police department.

"We had some First Amendment concerns about monitoring what officers post in their private lives, but it is hard to defend an officer who is posting inappropriate things while clearly identifying as a police officer," said Brookline, Massachusetts, Police Union president Thomas Maguire. William Wiley, president of the Camden, New Jersey, FOP, said, "Officers can't just go online and promote activities that are detrimental to the department or to the profession."

"Our management thought having a social media policy was important to protect against problems with social media abuse they saw in other departments," said Alex Bello, former president of the Miami Beach, Florida, FOP. "What officers do in their personal time is personal, but they can't speak on behalf of the agency or as an officer. They need to be careful what they post."

"Officers have First Amendment rights, but they are still expected to live up to the values of the department in their private lives. Inappropriate posts diminish the community's confidence and trust in police, which means they go against departmental values."

— Dave Mahoney
Sheriff, Dane County (Wisconsin) Sheriff's Department
and Secretary, Major Counties Sheriffs Association

"Our social media policy prohibits officers from posting things that go against the department's core values," said Houston Police Chief McClelland. "This includes things posted in a personal capacity or while the officer is off duty. We have to protect the reputation and professionalism of the department, which is why we don't let officers say things that betray the department's values while in public. Saying those things online is no different."

Some police executives and labor leaders worry that these policies do not go far enough. They believe that what officers post online in a private capacity can be detrimental to the department, even when the officers do not clearly connect themselves to the department or identify as officers.

“Under our policy, officers are prohibited from posting pictures of themselves in uniform or identifying themselves as New York City police officers,” said NYPD Deputy Commissioner Beirne. “Having said that, people are going to have other ways of knowing that the person is an officer, even if it isn’t made explicit.”

“We are pretty much on duty all of the time. We represent the department and its values, even in our private lives. So officers have to be very sensitive about what they post online, because there is always a chance that someone can identify them as officers or tie them to the department—even if they didn’t explicitly make that connection in their posts.”

—Brian Marvel, President
San Diego, California, Police Officers Association

Many management and labor leaders said that one reason why police departments should have the ability to monitor what officers post in a private capacity is that statements made online can have an impact on subsequent court proceedings. “Defense attorneys have begun using officers’ inappropriate social media posts to undermine their credibility when they are testifying in a case,” said Houston POU President Hunt.

Camden County (New Jersey) Police Chief Thomson said, “You don’t want to have a prosecutor decline to prosecute a case that an officer was involved with because that officer posted inappropriate things online. In the eyes of the prosecutor, the question of whether that officer is fit for duty can be based entirely on what the officer does online.”

Other social media considerations

Although most labor leaders support disciplining officers who have made improper posts while associating themselves with the department, some worry that police departments may use social media policies to punish officers for expressing political beliefs or opinions that are unpopular with management. “We accept that officers are held to a higher standard, and that their First Amendment rights are somewhat limited,” said FOP National President Canterbury. “But officers do still have those constitutional rights, and they need to be protected. If I don’t like an elected official, I should be able to say so, even if I am a police officer.”

NAPO Executive Director Johnson said, “Social media policies are important, and in certain cases officers can be disciplined for what they post online. But officers still have the right to be private citizens. Political speech typically enjoys the highest protections under the Constitution, and so when officers express their own political beliefs in their private lives, that should be protected.”

Some police executives and labor leaders also worry that prohibiting officers from representing the department on their personal social media accounts may prevent officers from posting things that could actually improve the community’s perceptions of police. “Our department discussed enacting a policy that prohibited officers from posting *any* pictures of themselves in uniform or ever identifying themselves as police officers, even if the posts were positive,” said Los Angeles PPL President Izen. “I’m not sure that we need social media policies at all, because we already have rules in place that prohibit officers from making statements that go against the department’s values. Those rules apply online as well as offline.”

“On the one hand, we want officers to be able to share with the community all of the good things they are doing. We want officers to be proud of what they do as police. But we also want to avoid the negatives. So it can be really hard to draw that line,” said Deputy Superintendent Whitman of Boston.

Strategies for promoting responsible social media use

At the roundtable discussions, participants discussed strategies for how labor and management can work together to promote responsible online activity within the police department.

Strategy #1. Develop a written social media policy

Having a written policy is important for clarifying what is expected of officers when it comes to using social media, including both official and personal accounts. It is also important to clearly state the disciplinary measures that will be imposed for noncompliance with the policy or for other online activities.

Strategy #2. Incorporate social media use into officer training programs

Labor and management leaders agreed that they need to do a better job of teaching officers that what they say and do online can have serious consequences. They also said that this is an area where collaboration between labor and management is important.

“The role we have as leaders, whether we are on the labor side or the management side, is to help our officers do their job. Part of that is making sure that our officers understand the consequences of what they post online. The answer is to train them on how to use social media responsibly. There are times when labor and management should be completely aligned, and this is clearly one of those times.”

–Daniel Oates, Chief of Police
Miami Beach (Florida) Police Department

Many police departments have incorporated social media into their formal training programs, and many labor organizations have also begun to hold social media classes for officers. For example, the FOP has a social media program that includes online training through its website. The course teaches officers about the legal consequences of what they post online, including the possibility of discipline and the dangers of online content being discoverable in courts.

FOP National President Canterbury said the attorneys who teach the course recommend that officers immediately disengage from having an online presence, though he recognizes that this may not always be realistic. “Social media has become such a way of life that you can’t always get officers to stop using it completely. So we have to be there to assist them and educate them on what they can and cannot say,” said Canterbury.

Labor organizations in San Diego and in Richmond, California, have invited attorneys to speak to their members about responsible online behavior. “One of our attorneys teaches a First Amendment class that is taught strictly for law enforcement personnel. The class emphasizes that officers need to be cognizant about what they do online,” said San Diego POA President Marvel. Columbus, Ohio, FOP Executive Vice President Ferrell has attended national training on social media and has written about the topic in the local FOP magazine.

The Philadelphia Police Department asked a local detective who was active on Twitter to help the department develop policies and training for social media use. When Philadelphia officers are interested in having an official online presence, they receive training through the department’s public information office. “You have to constantly educate officers that they can’t do things online that will embarrass themselves, the department, and their families. It’s a partnership between labor and management, because it’s in everyone’s best interests to have training at all levels,” said Philadelphia Police Commissioner Ramsey.

“We have a responsibility to give officers the tools they need to be responsible online. Officers need to remember that while they do have a constitutional right to freedom of speech, they don’t always have a constitutional right to be free from the consequences of that speech. They are going to be online anyway, and social media can be a great benefit for police departments. If we make sure they are doing it correctly, everyone is better off.”

–Rick VanHouten, President
Fort Worth, Texas, Police Officers Association

Strategy #3. Be aware of officers' social media use and encourage online caution

Labor and management leaders said that promoting online responsibility often goes beyond formal training. Some labor leaders said they informally check what their members are posting online by periodically looking at their Facebook and Twitter sites. Houston POU President Hunt said that he has called members and asked them to remove posts that may reflect badly on them or the department.

In many places, management and labor leaders take every opportunity to remind officers to be cautious about their online activities and to take every privacy precaution possible. For example, Delroy Burton, the chairman of the District of Columbia Police Union, regularly cautions members that they cannot identify themselves as officers and post derogatory statements online.

In Prince George's County, Maryland, labor leaders tell members that they should be careful about even associating themselves with the department in any way while online.

"We tell our members, 'If you wouldn't put this on your church bulletin board, then you probably shouldn't put it on Facebook or Twitter,'" said Houston POU President Hunt.

Chapter 3. Promising Strategies for Collaboration between Labor and Management

The PERF/COPS Office roundtable discussions gave police executives and labor leaders an opportunity to discuss how they can build stronger relationships and more effectively collaborate to address common challenges. The first two chapters of this publication provided a detailed look at many practices and strategies that participants have found promising in achieving these goals. This chapter summarizes these strategies into a comprehensive, user-friendly list.

Building trust and collaboration between labor and management

At the February 2, 2015 roundtable discussion, police executives and labor leaders agreed on a statement of key principles for building trust and collaboration. Detailed below are five key principles and promising strategies:

1. **Focus on finding common ground.** Rather than focusing on their differences or on their individual interests, labor and management leaders should work to identify common ground. Strategies to find common ground include the following:
 - » Identify shared goals, priorities, and challenges. Use these commonalities as a starting point for working together and improving collaboration.
 - » Approach the relationship from a “win-win” perspective, rather than viewing every interaction as a potential battle.
 - » Stand together publicly on areas of agreement by releasing joint labor/management media statements or holding joint press conferences involving the police chief and labor president. This demonstrates that all elements of the police agency are united in their efforts to serve the community.
2. **Engage in open communication and seek input from one another.** Labor and management leaders should strive to have continual dialogue and to seek input from one another. Strategies to improve communication include the following:
 - » Schedule regular standing meetings between the police chief and the labor president, as well as between the police department command staff and the labor organization executive board.
 - » Hold meetings over a meal or coffee. Breaking bread can help make meetings more personal.
 - » Engage in informal interactions with one another, including frequent telephone calls.
 - » Invite top police executives to occasionally attend full union membership meetings.
 - » Police leaders should not make major changes in policies or general orders without first seeking input from labor leaders.
 - » Do not release statements to the public or the news media without first soliciting input from one another, or at least giving each other notice.
 - » Hold training courses for officers, command staff, and labor leaders on how to communicate effectively with one another and with the public.

3. **Handle disagreements with respect and professionalism.** Even when they disagree, labor and management leaders should strive to treat each other with respect. This sets a good example for officers, demonstrates professionalism to the community, and ensures that the working relationship is not damaged. Strategies for handling disagreements with respect and professionalism include the following:

- » Avoid taking disagreements personally. Remember that people on each side are doing their jobs and that professionals will sometimes disagree.
- » Refrain from spreading rumors or making personal attacks about one another. This applies both to internal communications inside the police agency and to external communications with the news media or others.
- » Resolve disagreements privately, rather than in the media.
- » Third-party facilitators may be able to help overcome impasses.

4. **Understand and respect one another's roles and responsibilities.** Labor and management leaders should acknowledge and respect that each faces different challenges, must answer to different constituencies, and approaches problems from different perspectives. Strategies include the following:

- » Invite labor and management leaders to co-host various training courses or presentations to officers, so that each side's perspective is represented.
- » Hold a training course for officers and labor leaders regarding the police chief's role and responsibilities, including the chief's role in the city's budget process (which may be more limited than what officers believe).
- » Conduct a training course for newly promoted police command staff/supervisors that incorporates labor's perspective on issues such as discipline, compensation, working conditions, and technology.

- » Ensure that officers understand management's budget and compensation decisions. During budget season, management representatives could attend union meetings or hold special meetings to discuss the police chief's budget priorities, the city's current budget situation, and how the current economic realities affect the upcoming budget.

5. **Work together to promote officer safety and wellness.** Officers' job satisfaction can affect their performance. Labor and management leaders should strive to treat officers the way they want officers to treat people in the community. Strategies for promoting officer safety, wellness, and job satisfaction include the following:

- » Strive to promote internal procedural justice within the police agency to serve as a model for how officers should provide external procedural justice to people in the community. Procedural justice involves treating people fairly and with respect, and giving them an opportunity to tell their side of the story.
- » Conduct surveys of officers to measure job satisfaction and officers' opinions on policies and programs that affect them.
- » Include officer/labor representatives on the committees within the police agency that make decisions about policies and practices that impact officers, such as equipment, technology, working conditions, and policing strategies.
- » Work together to develop comprehensive officer wellness programs that address both physical health and mental health. Promoting officer wellness is an area that is ripe for collaboration between labor and management.

Increasing body armor and seat belt use among officers

At the roundtable discussion on November 20, 2014, labor and management leaders reached an important agreement calling on law enforcement agencies to adopt mandatory policies requiring officers to wear body armor and seat belts. This groundbreaking agreement is an important first step toward reducing needless deaths in automobile crashes and firearms-related incidents.

Participants also discussed several promising strategies for how labor and management can work together to improve body armor and seat belt use among officers, i.e., ensuring that officers accept and obey mandatory-use policies. These strategies include the following:

1. Focus on changing the culture surrounding body armor and seat belt use within the organization.
 - » Demonstrate a commitment from the top by encouraging high-level police executives and labor leaders to wear their seat belts and protective vests.
 - » Do not have different body armor and seat belt standards for management and for officers. Command staff should be required to wear body armor and seat belts in any situation in which line officers are required to do so.
 - » Make body armor and seat belt use second nature. This starts with requiring officers to wear body armor and seat belts while in the training academy.
 - » Have labor and management leaders include a reminder to wear body armor and seat belts in their e-mail taglines.
 - » Remind officers to wear their body armor and seat belts at each union meeting.
2. Involve labor organizations and officers in decisions about body armor and seat belt policies and equipment and select equipment that officers find comfortable to wear.
 - » Involve a labor representative on the policy development committee and seek input from the labor organization on any draft policies.
 - » Solicit input from officers when testing and selecting equipment. Include line officer and labor representatives on the department's uniform and equipment committees.
 - » Purchase seat belt extenders so that seat belts fit more comfortably over the equipment officers wear on their chests.
 - » Select body armor that is tailored to fit comfortably, that is climate-appropriate, and that meets gender-specific needs.
3. Provide up-to-date equipment at no additional cost to officers. There are many potential sources to help police agencies fund equipment purchases, including the following:
 - » In warm climates, it may be useful to explore purchasing exterior protective vests, which are reportedly much cooler to wear. Some police agencies have switched to lighter-weight uniform shirts to fit under the exterior vests.
 - » Apply for federal funds through the U.S. Department of Justice's Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) program.
 - » Work with the local police foundation, in cities that have one, to solicit funds from private donors.
 - » Consider using asset forfeiture funds to help cover equipment costs.
 - » Make sure equipment is updated regularly and meets all applicable safety standards.
4. Implement awareness campaigns to educate officers about the benefits and consequences of body armor and seat belt use. An education campaign may include the following:
 - » Hold in-service training courses on driving safety.
 - » Produce a video that features testimonies from officers whose body armor or seat belts saved their lives, officers who were injured because they were not wearing body armor or seat belts, and family members of officers who were killed while not wearing body armor or seat belts.
 - » Show dashboard-camera footage of accidents involving police vehicles and asking them to identify what went wrong and how to correct those mistakes
 - » Broadcast audio public service announcements over patrol radios reminding officers to wear their body armor and seat belts. Many police agencies broadcast such announcements multiple times per day. In some agencies, announcements are recorded by officers who have been injured while not wearing their body armor or seat belts.

- » Place decals in every patrol car reminding officers to wear their seat belts. Decals can be personalized to the police agency—for example, by featuring a photo of the agency’s fallen officer memorial.
 - » Create written educational materials such as posters and pamphlets and distribute them in places where officers are likely to gather, such as inside police stations and union meeting halls. Some police agencies personalize written materials by including testimonies and photos of local officers.
 - » Explore participating in national or statewide campaigns aimed at increasing the use of body armor or seat belts.
5. Incorporate tactical seat belt training into officer training programs. Training may include how to take seat belts off quickly as well as how to put them on quickly. Training may also include discussion of any concerns officers may have that are not based on fact, such as getting trapped by a seat belt.
6. Conduct body armor and seat belt inspections and impose discipline for noncompliance.
- » Institute a written discipline schedule that imposes progressive penalties, depending on the circumstances of the violation.
 - » Solicit input from labor leaders when creating the discipline policies.

Recruiting and retaining a strong, diverse workforce

Many police executives and labor leaders agreed that recruiting and retaining qualified officers has become increasingly difficult due to budget cuts, competition with higher-paying jobs, and the fact that many of today’s young people are less willing to commit to a lifetime working for one department or even remaining in one career.

At the roundtable discussions, participants discussed several strategies by which labor and management can collaborate to improve compensation packages, to attract young people to policing, and to strengthen diversity within the police agency. These strategies include:

Offering competitive compensation

- ▮ Develop a coordinated plan to demonstrate the police department’s value to local officials and to the public, which can increase support for funding to provide competitive compensation packages.
 - » Labor and management can work together on advocacy, each utilizing its own strengths and resources.
 - » If crime rates are down in the area, it can be difficult to argue that a police agency needs additional officers or funding for compensation. Strategies for demonstrating that police provide value to the community beyond reducing crime include the following:
 - Demonstrating how funding for more officers could help improve policing services.
 - Refocusing the role of officers toward activities that help strengthen the community. In many police agencies, officers spend a portion of their time working with community members to solve the problems that damage the quality of life in a neighborhood.
 - Encouraging command staff, labor leaders, and line officers to participate in community outreach programs, such as community forums or toy drives for local children.

Promoting policing as a long-term career

- ▮ Demonstrate to young officers that policing is a profession that matters.
 - » Implement proactive policing programs to reduce any misperceptions among young officers that policing is only about responding to calls for service.
 - » Implement community outreach programs to make the job more meaningful for young officers.

- » Soliciting input from officers can help make them feel more invested in their work.
 - » Treating officers fairly, especially when it comes to discipline, can help make officers feel more satisfied.
- » Offer tuition reimbursement for college courses.
 - » Offer promotion/compensation increases for attaining college credits.
- » Directly engage people in the community by attending community events, such as neighborhood festivals, parades, etc.
 - » Do not overlook the importance of outreach to the LGBT community.

Strengthening workforce diversity

- » Labor and management can work together to promote the philosophy and message of improving diversity.
 - » The commitment to diversity must start with the top officials.
- » Strive to understand and address the underlying reasons why people may be hesitant to join the police department. Some police agencies hold focus groups with officers of different races and backgrounds to better understand their perspectives on policing.
 - » Participate in job fairs and engage in recruiting efforts
 - at women’s colleges and HBCUs;
 - at large, diverse universities that have criminal justice programs;
 - through professional organizations for women and minorities.
 - » Advertise at events and on media platforms (social media, Internet sites, radio stations, etc.) that are likely to reach a diverse range of candidates.
 - » Offer financial incentives for bilingual candidates.

- ❶ Develop programs to get young people interested in policing. Examples of these programs include the following:
 - » High school police cadet programs
 - » Public safety summer camps for younger children
 - » Internships with the police agency
 - » Mentoring programs in local schools

Promoting officer mental and physical wellness

Mental and physical health-related issues ranging from depression, PTSD, and substance abuse to everyday stress and fatigue are major concerns in the field of policing. Not only can these issues have a negative impact on officer performance and job satisfaction but they can also lead to serious illnesses or, in severe cases, to officer suicides.

At the roundtable discussions, labor and management leaders discussed several strategies that they have found promising for strengthening the response to physical and mental wellness concerns, reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues, and giving officers the support they need. These strategies include the following:

- ❶ Make officer wellness a priority throughout the organization.
 - » Creating a culture that prioritizes wellness can help officers feel that their needs are being met and make officers feel more comfortable in asking for help.
 - » Making wellness a priority starts with a commitment from the top-level officials such as police chiefs, members of the command staff, and labor presidents and executive boards.
 - » Prioritizing wellness involves implementing holistic, research-based programs that address the many facets of wellness, including both physical and mental health. It can be helpful to use wellness programs have been effective in other organizations as a model, such as the peer support program in Philadelphia.

- ❷ Making wellness a priority also requires a joint effort between labor and management. Collaboration can include the following:
 - » Partnering to develop and administer wellness programs, which can lead to greater officer buy-in.
 - » Using the unique strengths and resources that each side brings to the table. For example, management leaders can enact policies that encourage officers to seek help for problems. Labor leaders can offer meeting space for programs and disseminate information about wellness programs during member meetings.
 - » Releasing joint statements from the police chief and labor president that reiterate the importance of wellness and that provide information about wellness resources.
- ❸ Some police agencies have shifted from a rules-based approach to a values-based approach regarding the police agency's response to officers who seek help, especially for substance abuse issues. This approach focuses on providing assistance, rather than imposing discipline. This can help reduce the fear that coming forward will lead to job-related consequences.
 - » Many agencies enact policies that focus on providing treatment, rather than imposing discipline, when officers self-report a drug or alcohol problem.
 - » Many agencies have found it is useful to develop individualized treatment plans for officers with substance abuse problems. This includes facilitating a clinical assessment, linking the officer with the appropriate level of intervention (e.g., inpatient treatment, outpatient counseling), and providing ongoing support for the officer.
 - » Some agencies provide paid time off for officers to undergo substance abuse treatment as long as the officer self-reports the problem.
 - » With management's support, some labor organizations have taken the lead on connecting officers with substance abuse treatment, including group meetings or referrals to professional counseling.

- ❶ Provide free and ongoing counseling for officers who have been involved in a traumatic event such as a shooting.
 - » In some police agencies, this counseling is required for any officers who were even *present* at a police-involved shooting. This can help the officer who was involved feel less singled out. And requiring counseling, rather than making it optional, can remove any stigma that some officers may attach to counseling.
 - » Partner with local mental health providers, such as programs at local universities, to provide professional counseling services.
- ❷ Implement peer support programs to provide a safe place for officers to seek help.
 - » Train current or retired officers on crisis intervention and basic counseling techniques. Some agencies make being a peer support officer a full-time assignment.
 - » Implement a 24/7 crisis hotline that is manned by trained peer support staff.
 - » Develop a chaplaincy program to provide counseling and support to officers.
 - » Develop officer-led support groups for officers who have substance abuse problems, who have been involved in shootings, who are transitioning from the military, etc. Some labor organizations host these meetings at their union halls.
 - » Develop an online support site where officers can anonymously share their experiences and concerns.
 - » To the extent it is legally allowed, ensure that all information officers share while participating in peer support services is kept confidential.
 - » Advertise peer support services during union membership meetings, roll call, and on materials disseminated to officers or posters hung in precinct stations and union halls.
- ❸ Develop comprehensive physical wellness programs that address issues such as physical fitness, stress, and fatigue.
 - » Implement shift policies that are based on research regarding the impact of shift work on officer stress and fatigue.
 - » Some police agencies are exploring using heart-rate monitors or other devices to monitor stress levels while officers are on duty.
 - » Some agencies have begun requiring officers to receive comprehensive annual physicals from their doctors. The doctors can simply report whether the officer is fit for service without reporting confidential medical information.
 - » Some agencies contract with local fitness centers to provide workout facilities to officers at little or no cost.
 - » Review records of injury claims and sick leave to determine whether changes to training or safety protocols are needed. Some agencies have hired an outside consultant who specializes in these types of reviews.
 - » Some agencies provide incentives for officers who participate in physical fitness initiatives, such as training hours or small financial rewards funded by the police association.

Developing workable social media policies

Many police agencies use social media to provide real-time alerts about public safety emergencies, to solicit crime-solving tips from the public, to disseminate information about crime trends or new police programs, and to recruit officers and volunteers. While social media can be a useful tool, many labor and management leaders agreed that it can also lead to problems when officers post confidential information or inappropriate content online.

At the roundtable discussions, labor and management leaders discussed strategies for leveraging the benefits of social media while minimizing the potential for abuse. These strategies include the following:

- ▶ Develop a written social media policy that includes
 - » policies for using official department social media accounts;
 - » policies for using personal social media accounts;
 - » disciplinary measures that will be imposed for noncompliance with the policy or for other online activities.
- ▶ Incorporate social media use into officer training programs.
 - » Training should include the following topics:
 - The police agency's social media policy
 - What is proper and what is improper to post online
 - Legal and disciplinary consequences of online activities
 - First Amendment issues
 - Effective messaging for engaging the community
 - The impact that an officer's online activity can have on court cases (e.g., what content is discoverable)
- » Some police agencies encourage or require command staff to have official department social media accounts in order to directly engage their communities. Anyone with an official department account should be trained on proper protocols for using these accounts. In some departments, the public information office conducts this training.
- » In addition to official police department training, some labor organizations host social media training sessions for members. These courses are often taught by union attorneys.
- ▶ Be aware of officers' social media use and continuously encourage officers to be cautious about their online activities.
 - » In addition to formal training, many labor and management leaders have begun to regularly caution officers on an informal basis about the consequences of social media misuse.
 - » Some leaders encourage officers to disengage from having an online social media presence outside of the official department accounts.
 - » Some labor leaders informally view members' public postings online and ask officers to remove problematic content.

Conclusion

In the past, relationships between police executives and police labor leaders have too often been characterized by conflict, suspicion, and an unwillingness to compromise or cooperate. Battles between labor and management leaders can lead to distrust within a police agency and damage the public's perception of the police. This can undermine an agency's ability to effectively serve the community.

Fortunately, this outdated way of thinking is changing. The new model for labor and management relationships emphasizes finding common ground and collaborating to achieve shared goals: protecting and serving the community, promoting safety and wellness, and building professional, diverse police departments.

Building trust and collaboration between labor and management requires a commitment from leaders on both sides to look past their differences and focus on what is best for the police agency and for the community. As they work toward these common goals, police executives and labor leaders must engage in open communication and seek input from one another. They must also strive to handle disagreements with respect and professionalism, to learn from each other's perspectives, and to understand each other's roles and responsibilities.

As the series of roundtable discussions demonstrated, much can be accomplished when labor and management work together. They can reach agreement on policies that help save officers' lives, such as mandatory body armor and seat belt wear policies. Labor and management leaders can also partner to develop strategies for strengthening diversity in recruitment and hiring, to implement officer wellness programs, and to capitalize on the benefits of social media while minimizing its abuse.

Labor and management relationships are so important to improving policing that the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing included a panel dedicated to this subject at its February 23, 2015 listening session on officer safety and wellness. During this "Labor & Management Relations" panel, PERF Executive Director Chuck Wexler testified alongside several other roundtable discussion participants, including Prince George's County (Maryland) Police Chief Mark Magaw; Gary, Indiana Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson; FOP Executive Director Jim Pasco; and Sacramento, California, Police Officers Association President Dustin Smith. Their testimony, along with a joint statement on the key principles for building trust and collaboration that were agreed upon at the February 2, 2015 roundtable discussion, was incorporated into the recommendations of the task force.²⁴

Labor and management leaders will not always agree. But when they are committed to building a collaborative relationship, they often can overcome disagreements and take steps that benefit everyone—officers, the police agency, and the community.

24. Chuck Wexler's testimony is included as appendix C to this publication. For more information about the Labor & Management Relations panel, please see "Listening Session: Officer Safety & Wellness," Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=2772>.

Appendix A. Statement In Support of Mandatory Body Armor and Seat Belt Wear Policies

Note: This appendix has been slightly modified to adhere to COPS Office publication standards.

Each year, traffic accidents and firearms-related incidents are the leading causes of death among law enforcement officers who are killed in the line of duty.²⁵ When an officer is killed or injured, it is devastating to families, fellow officers, the police department, and the community as a whole. Although it is impossible to prevent all officer deaths and injuries, as a profession we must do all we can to keep officers safe.

This is why Attorney General Eric Holder, through the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Policing Services, suggested convening police executives and labor leaders to examine how we can partner to protect our law enforcement officers from the dangers they face each day. As part of this effort, police and labor leaders came together and agreed that improving officer safety begins with reducing the number of officers who are killed or injured each year in traffic accidents and shooting incidents.

In 2013, 59 of the 100 officers killed in the line of duty were killed in automobile crashes or shootings, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.²⁶ Traffic-related incidents were the *number one cause* of officer fatalities 13 of the last 15 years.²⁷ Preliminary reports for 2014 indicate that deaths due to these causes increased since last year.²⁸

Body armor and seat belts have been proven to save lives and help reduce injuries to officers. Yet officers' use of body armor and seat belts remains dangerously uneven. Research shows that:

- Between 2003 and 2012, **36%** of the officers who were feloniously killed in the line of duty were not wearing body armor.²⁹
- When it is worn, body armor is effective. Since 1987, more than **3,000** law enforcement officers have survived life-threatening injuries because they were protected by body armor.³⁰ In one year alone, protective vests were directly attributable to saving the lives of at least **33** law enforcement and corrections officers.³¹
- Seat belt use among law enforcement officers is well below that of the general public. Studies indicate that seat belt wear among the general public is at **86%**,³² whereas it is estimated that roughly **half** of all officers do not wear seat belts while on duty.³³
- In 2012, 10 of the 26 (**38%**) officers killed in automobile crashes were not wearing seat belts at the time of the incident.³⁴ Over the past three decades, **42%** of the officers killed in automobile crashes were not wearing seat belts.³⁵

25. "Causes of Law Enforcement Deaths" (see note 8).

26. Ibid.

27. "Help Protect Our Officers—Drive Safely: The campaign to Decrease Officer Fatalities on the Road," National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.nleomf.org/programs/drive/>.

28. *Preliminary 2014 Law Enforcement Officer Fatalities Report* (see note 9).

29. "2012 Law Enforcement Officers Killed & Assaulted," Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed August 4, 2015, https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/leoka/2012/officers-feloniously-killed/felonious_topic_page_-2012.

30. "Bulletproof Vest Partnership/Body Armor Safety Initiative," Office of Justice Programs, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://ojp.gov/bvpbasi/>.

31. Ibid.

32. *Seat Belt Use in 2013—Overall Results* (Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2014), <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811875.pdf>.

33. "Below 100 Frequently Asked Questions" (see note 14); Halsey, "For Police, Not Wearing Seat Belts" (see note 14).

34. Craig W. Floyd, *Changing the Culture of Safety* (see note 15).

35. Ibid.

This is why we support the mandatory use of body armor and seatbelts in all law enforcement agencies, and why we are calling upon all law enforcement executives and labor leaders to join in this effort. It is critical that police leaders and employee representatives work together to adopt and enforce sensible mandatory wear policies and to develop strategies that will increase the use of body armor and seatbelts among officers.

Our support for mandatory wear policies is conditioned on the following:

1. Failure to comply with the policy should *not* be used by any police agencies or government entities as a basis for denying death or disability benefits to officers or their families.
2. The language in some federal and state disability laws states that officers may be denied benefits if their deaths or injuries are caused by their intentional misconduct or gross negligence or if their actions were a substantial contributing factor to the death or injury. We believe that this language should be amended to state that the failure to wear body armor or a seat belt does *not* constitute the type of intentional misconduct, gross negligence, or substantial contributing factor that would warrant denial of benefits.
3. Police executives should work closely with their employee associations and unions when developing mandatory wear policies, and officers should be involved in testing and selecting equipment.

4. Law enforcement agencies should provide their officers with up-to-date equipment that meets all applicable safety requirements. This includes ensuring that agency vehicles are in good working condition and making best efforts to provide the newest and best vehicles possible.
5. Police executives and labor leaders should work together to develop strategies for increasing the use of body armor and seat belts among officers. This includes selecting body armor that is climate-appropriate and individually tailored and that meets gender-specific needs, providing tactical training on safe seatbelt usage, and implementing educational campaigns on the importance of wearing body armor and seatbelts.

By working together to enact mandatory wear policies and to encourage body armor and seat belt use among officers, police executives and labor leaders can make a difference. We owe it to our officers, their families, and our communities to do all we can to keep our officers safe. **We believe that mandating body armor and seat belts can cut the number of officers who die in auto accidents and shootings by nearly half**—that is why we have come together to support this important resolution and encourage other forward-thinking leaders to do the same.

Appendix B. A Statement of Behalf of Police Executives, Police Labor Leaders, and Mayors and Other Local Officials on Principles for Building Trust and Collaboration

Note: This appendix has been slightly modified to adhere to COPS Office publication standards.

To explore strategies for improving trust and collaboration, during the past year the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), with support from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), hosted a series of roundtable discussions that brought together police executives and labor leaders from around the country. As an example of what can be accomplished when labor and management work together, in November 2014 these leaders reached a groundbreaking agreement in support of mandatory policies requiring officers to use body armor and vehicle seat belts.³⁶ At the most recent roundtable discussion in February 2015, participants gathered to share their perspectives on how collaboration between police executives, labor leaders, and top local officials can improve policing in their communities.

Emerging from these discussions is a set of key principles that participants agreed are critical for improving trust and collaboration between police executives, police labor leaders, and top local officials. As we strive to improve policing services and strengthen police-community relationships, we must not overlook the importance of building and sustaining strong partnerships among these leaders.

The words and actions of leaders set the tone for how officers do their jobs and interact with people in the community. Police leaders and elected officials determine policing goals and priorities, and they make decisions that impact both the community and the officers on the street.

In light of these responsibilities, it is critical that police executives, police labor leaders, mayors, and other chief elected and appointed officials collaborate to develop workable strategies for protecting public safety, strengthening police-community relationships, improving officer safety and wellness, and building more effective police departments.

We call upon leaders across the country to commit to adopting the following key principles as they work to build relationships with one another:

1. **Focus on finding common ground.** Police executives, labor leaders, and local officials work towards similar and interconnected goals: protecting the safety and well-being of the community, improving officer safety and wellness, increasing professionalism, and building a police department that effectively carries out its mission of serving the community. By focusing on these shared goals—rather than on their differences or on their individual interests—leaders can find common ground on which to build collaboration and trust. Whenever possible, leaders should publicly stand together on key issues. This demonstrates that the local government and all elements of the police department are united in their efforts to serve the community.
2. **Engage in open communication and seek input from one another.** Communication and transparency are key to building trust and collaborative relationships. This means meeting frequently, sharing information, engaging each other in the decision-making process, and seeking to build personal connections with one another. Open communication is important to building strong relationships at all levels, including with rank-and-file officers. Effective communication should be a part of standard training at all levels.

36. *In Support of Mandatory Body Armor and Seatbelt Wear Policies* (see note 2).

3. **Handle disagreements with respect and professionalism.** Inevitably, there will be times when police executives, labor leaders, and local officials disagree. When disagreements occur, it is more important than ever to treat each other with respect. This sets a good example for officers, demonstrates professionalism to the community, and ensures that the working relationship—and potential progress—are not irrevocably damaged. This means not taking differences personally, refraining from spreading rumors, and resolving disagreements privately rather than through the news media. If leaders must discuss disagreements publicly, they should give one another notice prior to doing so. Leaders should remember that their words matter—especially when speaking to the media—and should avoid making negative generalizations or criticizing each other's motives when voicing concerns.

4. **Understand and respect each other's roles and responsibilities.** Police executives, labor leaders, and top local officials each have distinct responsibilities, must answer to different constituencies, and have perspectives that are informed by their unique experiences and backgrounds. Rather than viewing these differences as obstacles, leaders should strive to learn from one another, understand each other's perspectives, and acknowledge the challenges and limitations that the other may face.

5. **Recognize the link between promoting officer safety and wellness and building strong police-community relationships.** Police executives and labor leaders agree that there is an important link between officer job satisfaction and performance. Thus, leaders should strive to treat officers the way we want officers to treat people in the community. This means getting input from officers on decisions regarding equipment, new technology, and working conditions, as well as valuing officers' views regarding policing strategies and tactics. It also means promoting officer safety and wellness and improving responses to officer stress and mental health concerns.

By working together, police executives, labor leaders, and top local officials can make a difference. This is why we have come together to support these principles for building trust and collaboration. **We believe that all leaders should commit to these principles as they strive to improve policing services, strengthen police-community relationships, and build better police departments.**

Appendix C. Testimony of Chuck Wexler, Executive Director, Police Executive Research Forum, before the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, February 23, 2015— Washington, D.C.

Note: This appendix has been slightly modified to adhere to COPS Office publication standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my perspectives on the important mission of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

For more than 20 years I have served as executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), which is a research and policy organization based in Washington, DC, dedicated to advancing the profession of policing. PERF is also a membership organization of police chiefs and others with an interest in policing.

Each year, PERF conducts research projects on the most important issues in policing. For example, in December PERF and the U.S. Justice Department’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) convened a meeting in Washington, DC of more than 60 police chiefs and other officials to discuss emerging issues with respect to ensuring constitutional policing. PERF also recently released recommendations for deploying body-worn cameras³⁷ and has conducted research on legitimacy and procedural justice³⁸ in policing.

37. Lindsay Miller, Jessica Toliver, and Police Executive Research Forum, *Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014), <http://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p296-pub.pdf>.

38. Craig Fischer, ed., *Legitimacy and Procedural Justice: A New Element of Police Leadership* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2014), http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Leadership/legitimacy%20and%20procedural%20justice%20-%20a%20new%20element%20of%20police%20leadership.pdf.

You have asked me to focus my testimony on building trust and collaboration between police executives, police labor leaders, and elected officials. When we talk about improving policing, the relationship between labor and management is an area that has been neglected for too long. And as recent events have shown us, everyone loses when these leaders fail to work together—especially people in the community and the officers on the streets.

Historically, labor and management have often viewed each other with suspicion. It often has seemed that they see each other as warring factions and treat each other as the enemy. In some cases, police unions were created in response to poor practices and working conditions that existed in police departments. Even as unions continued to grow, management often made changes to policy without labor’s input. The unions responded by openly opposing changes, and the cycle of distrust continued.

Fortunately, this way of thinking is beginning to change. The new model for labor/management relations puts an emphasis on finding common ground so that we can work together to achieve goals that we all share—protecting and serving the community more effectively, promoting officer safety and wellness, and building better police departments.

Although we have not always seized opportunities to collaborate, we must do so now. We must leave mistakes of the past behind and move forward in our way of thinking.

Labor and management leaders still may not always agree on everything. And they may disagree sometimes with actions taken by the elected officials in their communities. But when these leaders disagree, it is important to treat each other with respect, to have open communication, and to bring everyone to the table.

With support from the COPS Office, PERF has held a series of productive roundtable discussions over the past several years with police executives and labor leaders to explore ways they could better collaborate. The most recent of these meetings was convened earlier this month in Washington.

As an example of what can be accomplished when labor and management work together, at a roundtable discussion last November, police and labor leaders reached a groundbreaking agreement that calls upon all law enforcement agencies to adopt mandatory policies requiring officers to wear body armor and vehicle seat belts.³⁹ This agreement addresses the concerns of both labor and management and represents an important step in protecting officer safety. Because of this unprecedented agreement, lives will be saved. We especially recognize the Fraternal Order of Police and the National Association of Police Organizations, whose leadership on this issue was critical to reaching this important agreement.

And at the most recent roundtable discussion, the conversation focused on fundamental strategies that police executives, labor leaders, and elected officials can employ to improve trust and collaboration with one another. Following this meeting, we also talked to several mayors to get their perspectives.

Thanks to these discussions, we were able to reach an agreement on the key principles that are critical for improving trust and collaboration among police, labor, and elected leaders.⁴⁰ We call upon leaders across the country to commit to adopting these principles as they work to build relationships with one another.

Today I would like to share several success stories from places where police executives and labor leaders have worked together to find common ground. In many of these places, elected leaders have played a key role in taking positive steps towards change.

39. *In Support of Mandatory Body Armor and Seatbelt Wear Policies* (see note 2).

40. *A Statement on Behalf of Police Executives* (see note 3).

As these stories show, when leaders work together it can lead to real progress: safer communities; police departments that are operating effectively; officers who are professional, diverse, and satisfied in their jobs; and ultimately stronger relationships between labor and management, and between police and their communities.

Leaders should focus on finding common ground. One key to building trust and collaboration is for leaders to focus on the goals and priorities they have in common, rather than on their differences or individual interests.

This is the approach taken by labor and management leaders in Prince George's County, Maryland. They enjoy a strong working relationship, in part because they share a common view of the direction the department should take. Although they may disagree on specific issues, they choose to build upon their commonalities and stand together publicly.

In Prince George's County, officer safety and wellness are viewed as a joint effort between labor and management. After a car accident claimed the life of a Prince George's County officer, the police chief and union president joined together to enact mandatory seatbelt policies and implement "Arrive Alive," a campaign to improve seat belt compliance. Sitting side by side, the police chief and union president filmed a video emphasizing seatbelt safety.

Focusing on shared goals is critical to building better police departments. For example, police, labor, and elected leaders often agree that it is important to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community. In many places, leaders have begun working together to explore promising strategies for improving hiring diversity, such as targeted recruiting and outreach to minority communities, a diverse recruitment staff, and mentoring programs.

Finding common ground can also help strengthen relationships between police and the community. For example, many unions facilitate community outreach programs, and these efforts are more effective when they have the support of management. And in places like Racine, Wisconsin and Gary, Indiana, mayors are working with police chiefs to expand community policing to help officers better relate to the people they serve.

Leaders should engage in open communication and seek input from each other. Communication and transparency are key to building trust and good relationships. This means meeting frequently, sharing information, being transparent about decisions, engaging each other in the decision-making process, and seeking to build personal connections with one another.

In Sacramento, California, where labor and management enjoy a good relationship with each other and with local elected officials, the police chief and union president have a standing monthly meeting—usually over a meal, which they find to be more personal and helpful. Both also regularly have one-on-one meetings with the mayor.

Effective communication also means that leaders should engage in ongoing dialogue about how they will handle officer-involved incidents, rather than waiting until after the incident takes place. For example, the mayor in Little Rock, Arkansas, stresses that it is important that he and the police chief discuss what steps they will take if an officer-involved shooting occurs, so that they can present a united, clear, and factual message about what happened.

And in places like Philadelphia, Sacramento, and Prince George’s County, management and labor leaders make it a practice to not enact any new policies or make public statements without first receiving input from each other. In Sacramento, the mayor’s office consults with the police department and union prior to making public statements that involve police. In Prince George’s County, no new policy or general order leaves the police chief’s office unless the union president has had a chance to see it and weigh in.

Communication strategies should be a part of standard training for officers, command staff, and labor leaders. We also recommend creating joint training opportunities for elected officials and police executives, as well as their communications staffs, to improve communications between each other and with the public.

Leaders should handle disagreements with respect and professionalism. Inevitably, there will be times when police executives, labor leaders, and elected officials disagree. When this happens, it is more important than ever to treat each other with respect.

This means not taking differences personally, refraining from spreading rumors, and resolving disagreements privately rather than in public.

Although labor and management relations in Philadelphia have historically been contentious, the current police commissioner and union president have a good working relationship. They credit this to treating each other with respect, resolving problems behind the scenes, not taking disagreements personally, and avoiding spreading rumors through the press. They said they have been able to get more things done—such as securing pay raises for officers and implementing officer wellness programs—by working together than by constantly focusing on disagreements.

Treating each other with respect also means remembering that words matter—especially when they are spoken to the news media. When voicing concerns or expressing disagreement, leaders should avoid making negative generalizations or personal remarks. Such remarks damage relationships, officer morale, and the public’s perception of the police department.

The approach taken by the mayor in Gary, Indiana, is a model for how to publicly address issues in a way that demonstrates trust and respect. When she speaks publicly about the community’s concerns regarding police, she tries to present a balanced approach—acknowledging and addressing valid concerns while still recognizing that the majority of officers in her city are working hard to do the right thing.

Leaders should understand and respect each other’s roles and responsibilities. Though police, labor, and elected leaders share many common goals, they also have distinct responsibilities, must answer to different constituencies, and have unique experiences and backgrounds.

Rather than viewing these differences as obstacles, leaders should strive to learn from one another and understand each other’s perspectives. This means engaging in honest dialogue, remaining open to new ideas, and acknowledging the challenges each other face.

A recent example in Sacramento illustrates how leaders can overcome differences to forge even stronger relationships. There, the mayor and police union president met privately to discuss comments each had made to the media following the grand jury decision in Ferguson, Missouri. Although the two leaders had a good working relationship, their public comments reflected different reactions to the Ferguson decision. However, rather than letting these differences damage their relationship, they worked with each other and with the police chief to turn this into an opportunity to discuss their views and learn from one another. Their willingness to respectfully meet and be open to new perspectives not only helped to save their relationship, but to strengthen it.

Leaders should work together to promote officer safety and wellness. Leaders should strive to treat officers the way we want officers to treat people in the community. Promoting officer safety, wellness, and job satisfaction is a perfect opportunity for collaboration between labor, management, and elected officials. Leaders can make great strides in this area by working together.

For example, many departments obtain officer input when selecting uniforms and equipment. In places like Houston and Fort Worth, this approach helped the departments gain union support for “mandatory wear” body armor policies, a critical aspect of officer safety. Responding to officer concerns that wearing body armor was too uncomfortable in these warm climates, labor and management worked together to select a cooler exterior vest option.

Labor and management have also come together to address the significant toll that stress, dangerous working conditions, and traumatic incidents can take on officers. One model for collaboration on officer wellness is the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) program in Philadelphia, which is offered through the local union and fully supported by management. Similarly, in Prince George’s County the police chief and union president released a joint letter to officers regarding alcohol recovery programs available for first responders.

Elected leaders can also promote officer satisfaction by creating conditions that make it easier for officers to do their jobs. Sometimes this means providing funds for things such as equipment and cars, and other times it means listening to officers’ concerns and expressing support for officers as long as they follow protocols and do what is right.

Leaders can also improve officer job satisfaction by working together to negotiate contracts fairly, honestly, and from a “win-win” perspective. For example, in Camden, New Jersey, the police chief and union president recently worked together to successfully negotiate the first contract under the reorganized police department. They were able to avoid arbitration by respecting each other’s points of view and understanding what each side needs and expects.

Even when compensation decisions are not favorable to officers, we have heard that officers are more likely to be satisfied if they feel that leaders solicited their input and were open and candid about financial issues. For example, the mayor in Racine met with officers to discuss the city’s financial situation and explain how funds were being spent. This honest approach helped alleviate many of the officers’ concerns and removed barriers to reaching a contract agreement.

The key lesson that we have learned throughout our work is that we are all better off when labor, management, and local officials work together. We hope that leaders across the country will commit to these five principles for building trust and collaboration: (1) finding common ground, (2) engaging in open communication and soliciting each other’s input, (3) treating each other with respect and professionalism, (4) seeking to understand each other’s roles and responsibilities, and (5) working together to promote officer safety and wellness. By committing to these principles, we can overcome the negativity of the past and move forward—together—towards building better communities and police departments.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my views. I would be glad to answer any questions that members of the task force may have.

Appendix D. Labor and Management Roundtable Discussion Attendees

April 24, 2014, Washington, D.C. | November 20, 2014, Philadelphia, PA | February 2, 2015, Washington, D.C.

This list reflects participants' titles and organizations at the time of the roundtable discussions.

Alexandria (Virginia) Police Department

Eddie Reyes, Deputy Chief of Police

Baltimore, Maryland, Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 3

Bob Cherry, Former President

Gene Ryan, President

Baltimore (Maryland) Police Department

Anthony Batts, Police Commissioner

Jerry Rodriguez, Deputy Commissioner

Boston (Massachusetts) Police Department

Steven Whitman, Deputy Superintendent

Boston, Massachusetts, Police Patrolmen's Association

Thomas Nee, President

Brookline (Massachusetts) Police Department

Daniel O'Leary, Chief of Police

Brookline, Massachusetts, Police Union

Thomas Maguire, President

Camden County, New Jersey, Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 218

William Wiley, President

Camden County (New Jersey) Police Department

Scott Thomson, Chief of Police

Chicago (Illinois) Police Department

Donald O'Neill, Commander

Columbus (Ohio) Division of Police

Timothy Becker, Deputy Chief of Police, Administrative Subdivision

Columbus, Ohio, Fraternal Order of Police, Capital City Lodge 9

Keith Ferrell, Executive Vice President

Jason Pappas, President

Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association

Jon Adler, National President

Fort Worth, Texas, Police Officers Association

Rick VanHouten, President

Fort Worth (Texas) Police Department

Jeffrey Halstead, Chief of Police

Fraternal Order of Police

Chuck Canterbury, National President

James Pasco, Executive Director

Community Resources for Justice, Crime and Justice Institute

Christine Cole, Vice President and Executive Director

Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association

Don Tijerina, President and Captain, Bexar County (Texas) Sheriff's Department

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New York City (New York) Police Department

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About PERF

The **Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)** is an independent research organization that focuses on critical issues in policing. Since its founding in 1976, PERF has identified best practices on fundamental issues such as reducing police use of force, developing community policing and problem-oriented policing, using technologies to deliver police services to the community, and evaluating crime reduction strategies.

PERF strives to advance professionalism in policing and to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership, public debate of police and criminal justice issues, and research and policy development.

In addition to conducting research and publishing reports on our findings, PERF conducts management studies of individual law enforcement agencies, educates hundreds of police officials each year in a three-week executive development program, and provides executive search services to governments that wish to conduct national searches for their next police chief.

All of PERF's work benefits from PERF's status as a membership organization of police officials, academics, federal government leaders, and others with an interest in policing and criminal justice.

All PERF members must have a four-year college degree and must subscribe to a set of founding principles, emphasizing the importance of research and public debate in policing, adherence to the Constitution and the highest standards of ethics and integrity, and accountability to the communities that police agencies serve.

PERF is governed by a member-elected president and board of directors and a board-appointed executive director. A staff of approximately 30 full-time professionals is based in Washington, D.C.

To learn more, visit PERF online at www.policeforum.org.

About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concentrates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement.

The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- ▶ Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.
- ▶ To date, the COPS Office has funded approximately 125,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.
- ▶ Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- ▶ To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than 8.57 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

COPS Office resources, covering a wide breadth of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—are available, at no cost, through its online Resource Center at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This easy-to-navigate website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

To examine the role that labor and management relationships play in this new era of policing, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), with support from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), convened three labor and management roundtable discussions in 2014–15. Police executives, labor leaders, and other experts from across the country came together to discuss how labor and management can build stronger relationships and work together to address common challenges. This publication documents the proceedings of the three forums and recommends promising strategies for collaboration between labor and management.



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street NE
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To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.



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ISBN: 978-1-935676-85-0
e061525702
Published 2015