

Racial Equity Plan

Alexandria Police Department

The Alexandria Police Department (APD) is a progressive police department serving those who live, work and visit the City of Alexandria. The Department's role in the community is very dynamic. Service needs vary given the diverse communities and changing demographics throughout the City. Holding ourselves to the highest standards of performance and ethics is a key part our commitment to serve the community, enhance the quality of life and nurture public trust.

BECOMING PRO-EQUITY

This plan looks specifically at creating and building racial equity within the City of Alexandria. Equity is the concept of being fair, just and impartial; being racially "pro-equity" is simply being racially just and inclusive. Racial equity is achieved when race can no longer be used to predict outcomes.

Pro-equity will only be successful when the City works together as a team. This includes the leaders within Alexandria, the business, citizens, commuters and first responders. Together we can implement changes in policies and practices that will focus on root causes that will improve community conditions and result in thriving families and persons, regardless of race.

The following guide outlines of how the Alexandria Police Department is promoting racial equity by the implementation of 21st Century Policing Task Force Recommendations. Former President Obama developed this task force to identify best practices and offer recommendations on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust. The recommendations developed from this task force are organized around six main topic areas, referred to as pillars.

THE SIX PILLARS



The contents of the 21st Century Policing report and its recommendations are consistent with APD's goals and objectives. In 2017, APD reviewed its own policies and procedures and found many of the recommendations were already in place. However, many of the recommendations require ongoing efforts by the department to be successful.

Based on our successes and lessons learned, we have an approach in each of the six pillars on how to become pro-equity. The following section outlines each pillar's main recommendations, with a focus on how APD will address those recommendations and our future goals. Not only will we focus our efforts on how we approach our work but what we seek to accomplish.

#1 *Building Trust & Legitimacy*

Nurturing trust and legitimacy between police and communities stems from a belief that law enforcement is acting in a fair and just procedural manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of APD is to establish a culture of transparency and accountability while acknowledging the role of policing in the past and present injustice and discrimination. This is done by ensuring police strategies avoid potential damage to the public trust, conducting community engagement surveys and engaging in positive non-enforcement activities. Additionally, the department will promote legitimacy by holding everyone accountable and continues to make efforts in creating a diverse workforce.

HOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A variety of programs exists at APD to ensure officers are fair, impartial and engaged in proactive positive community activities. In 2018, the Community Relations Division was developed to house, maintain, and oversee these programs. These programs include our Community Orientated Policing Unit, School Resource Officers, Volunteers, Youth and Faith Outreach Program, and the Crime Prevention unit.

FUTURE GOALS

- Continue to conduct public perception surveys annually.
- Continue to review and improve the recruitment process to improve the demographic representation.
- Continue to assess and collect officer activity data.
- Continue to evaluate the 21st Century Policing Plan to ensure the department is maintaining efforts to be transparent, accountable and uphold fair, unbiased policies and practices.

DELIVERIABLES

- Directive 1.1, Mission
- Directive 2.3, Complaints and Disciplinary Actions
- Directive 4.14, Employee Evaluations
- Directive 12.1, Community Liaison
- Directive 12.7, School Resource Officers
- APD 21st Century Policing Plan

#2 Policy & Oversight

By developing policies and strategies that reflect the community values, especially those disproportionately affected by crime, a positive relationship can be developed and improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

An appropriate form of civilian oversight should be developed to include collaboration with the communities and neighborhoods affected by crime to deploy resources. Internal policies and procedures should prohibit profiling, discrimination, quotas and should establish search and seizure procedures related to LGBTQ and transgender populations. Data efforts should be made to analyze demographics of all detentions.

HOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In May 2017, the Community Advisory Team (CAT21) was created. This group is comprised of community leaders appointed by the Chief of Police to serve as key partners in APD's ongoing efforts to strengthen its connection to the communities it serves. The community also assists the Department in considering and implementing relevant recommendations from the 21st Century Policing Task Force mentioned in this plan. Additionally, the City's Human Rights Commission provides external review of complaints involving APD. Policies & Procedures are continually reviewed and revised to reflect fair and impartial policing as well as to be

current with laws and standards. They are also routinely examined by an independent agency (CALEA) to ensure fair and impartial policing is met. Policies directly prohibit profiling and any discrimination

FUTURE GOALS

- Continue to monitor effectiveness of policies and use of force incidents.
- Publish policies updates/changes for the public.
- Discuss the usefulness of implementing non-punitive peer review of critical incidents.
- Continue to utilize the Data Transparency Plan to analyze demographic data on detentions.
- Continue to not use a quota system and review officer performance measures to ensure quotas are not part of the evaluation process.

DELIVERABLES

- Directive 1.10, Accreditation Preparedness
- Directive 2.3, Complaints and Disciplinary Actions
- Directive 10.25, Search Incident to Arrest
- Directive 10.27.06, Prisoner Transport Procedures
- Directive 2.4, Non-bias Policing

#3 *Technology & Social Media*

New technology and social media offers opportunities for enhanced engagement and communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

New technology standards are recommended including the need to address human rights and privacy concerns. Additional recommendations include the implementation of body cameras and less lethal technology.

HOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A variety of social media outlets are used to communicate with the community, this includes: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and our own Alexandriava.gov website. This communication helps keep citizens up to date on current happenings at the police department, events, outreach programs, police activity, crime statistics, etc. Adopt policies and best practices for technology-based community engagement. Less lethal technology has been developed and implemented at APD.

FUTURE GOALS

- Continue to provide outreach via social media outlets to improve transparency and communication.
- Continue efforts to test and implement new less lethal technology.
- Due to the cost of body worn cameras, an excess of \$1 million per

year, APD is not currently pursuing this recommendation. However, APD will continue to assess the recommendations as technology improves and may perhaps reduce expenditures.

DELIVERABLES

- Directive 3.3, Mobile Computers
- Directive 2.6, Social Media / Internet Postings

#4 *Community Policing & Crime Reduction*

Community policing is about working with community residents and having a guiding philosophy to co-produce public safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

City leaders need to work closely with APD to reinforce the importance of community engagement and affirm the voices of the community, especially the most vulnerable including youths. A multidisciplinary, community team approach should be used to approach the planning and action response to crisis situations, whether those situations are inside the department or in the community. Additionally all stakeholders should foster and promote the values and dignity of all.

HOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

APD works with the local Community Services Board, Hospital personnel for critical incidents, especially those involving mental health factors. The department also places emphasis on Critical Incident Stress Management and the Crisis Intervention Team when these situations occur. There are also a variety of programs that affirm and recognize the voices of those most vulnerable and youth populations in the community including the School resource Officer Program, Youth Outreach Coordinator and Community Oriented Policing Section. APD hosts a summer camp each year for the inner

city youth and provides a mentoring program. The department recently refocused its Community Oriented Policing (COPS) unit to focus on specific neighborhoods to help build relationships with the community's youth.

FUTURE GOALS

- APD will continue to review and revise its policies regarding critical incidents.
- The COPS unit will be reviewed to ensure the new strategies are being effective in relationship building.

DELIVERABLES

- Directive 1.1, Mission (value)
- Directive 2.2, Rules of Conduct
- Directive 4.5, Critical Incident Stress Management
- Directive 11.13, Crisis Intervention Team
- Directive 12.01, Community Liaison Program

#5 Officer Training & Education

The responsibilities of officers are far-reaching and the need for effective training and education is critical.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership training should be provided for all officers and higher education should be incentivized. Both of these help improve social interactions, understanding and awareness of social bias and improve response to situations. There should also be ongoing research into the development of technology to enhance internal training efforts.

HOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

New officers receive training while at the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy (NVCJTA) related to bias in policing and the history of racially based policing. Additionally, APD has incorporated recommendations made by a separate study which was conducted by George Mason University concerning procedural justice protocols into its Fair and Impartial Policing Training Program

FUTURE GOALS

- Continue to run regular training internal training about implicit bias and cultural diversity.
- Continue to explore leadership training options internally and externally.

DELIVERABLES

- City's tuition reimbursement program for higher education
- Directive 4.16, Incentive Pay

#6 Officer Safety & Wellness

The safety and wellness of officers is critical not only for the officer, but their colleagues and to the public at large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Promote safety and wellness throughout the department and adopt policies that require officers engage in safe behaviors. Officers face dangerous, stressful and life changing situations that can adversely affect their mental state and future actions. This in turn could affect how they respond to the next incident. City leaders should work together with the police department to guarantee officers are at their best both on and off the job. Law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to embrace injury reduction and mitigation practices, develop nutrition and mental health recommendations for law enforcement.

HOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The department places great emphasis on Critical Incident Stress Management, and has recently refocused its' peer support program. The department continually looks at new technology to keep officers safe, including ballistic vests, first aid and emergency kits, new ballistic shields, etc. Additionally, the department has started reviewing its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to determine areas of improvement.

FUTURE GOALS

- Continue to review updated research on shift lengths.
- Review policies and procedures to ensure they promote and require appropriate and safe practices.

DELIVERIABLES

- Directive 4.19, EAP
- Directive 4.5, Critical Incident Stress Management
- Directive 11.10, Active Violence.