



# **LEGISLATIVE POLICY PRIORITIES**



## ABOUT THE IACP

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is the world's largest and most influential professional association for police leaders. The IACP is a recognized leader in global policing, committed to advancing safer communities through thoughtful, progressive police leadership. Since 1893, the association has been serving communities by speaking out on behalf of law enforcement and advancing leadership and professionalism in policing worldwide.



## INTRODUCTION

**E**very two years, the IACP sets its legislative agenda on issues of importance to the policing profession. The priorities outlined in this document are designed to bring awareness to challenges faced by law enforcement and ways in which elected officials can bring forth solutions and change through legislative action.

The IACP's legislative priorities are generated through our membership, feedback from the field, and from 9 cross-disciplinary Policy Councils that consist of 27 IACP committees and 21 sections, each focusing on specific topic areas in policing.

The policy priorities of the IACP have been broken down into key topic areas addressing the most pressing issues facing the policing profession. Under each of these items are recommended action steps that elected officials and policy makers should take to enhance the policing profession, strengthen community-police relations, and improve public safety.

While the police, community, and elected officials must jointly shoulder the responsibility to develop innovative approaches to public safety, this policy framework only encompasses recommendations specific to policing, and does not address the entire criminal justice system and the broader public health ecosystems.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

**M**any police agencies throughout the world have already implemented community-focused police approaches. Having policies and practices in place that emphasize the duty of care as well as strict policies around police tactics helps to ensure the well-being and safety of the community. Adoption of these approaches must become wide-spread and serve as bedrock principles of law enforcement.

Although great strides have been made in community-police relations, more work remains to be done. As elected officials, police leaders, and community members work to develop and implement solutions regarding concerns over policing practices and operations, it is imperative that these efforts reflect a balanced, evidence-informed, and strategic approach to combating crime and prioritizing community safety.

It is important to note that the recommendations outlined below only relate to one element of the criminal justice system – policing. A broader approach to overall systemic issues needs to be a priority of all elected officials in order to make the entirety of our criminal justice system fairer and more equitable for all. Therefore, focus should expand beyond just policing to include both the broader criminal justice and public health ecosystems.



## Action Steps:

- ✓ Support the Adoption of the National Consensus Policy on Use of Force.
- ✓ Support for Mandatory Participation in the National Use of Force Database.
- ✓ Support for the Development of National Standards for Discipline and Termination of Officers.
- ✓ Support for Enhancing the Ability of Police Leaders to Implement Effective and Timely Discipline.
- ✓ Support for the National Police Officer Misconduct Database.
- ✓ Support for the implementation of improved recruitment, hiring, and retention promotion practices that would include targeted recruitment efforts, such as partnerships with historically black colleges and universities, educational and housing loan forgiveness incentives, review of hiring standards and practices, and setting standards on educational requirements.
- ✓ Support for programs that will promote alternative approaches to assisting individuals in behavioral or mental health crises such as the implementation of co-response models, critical intervention and mental health first aid training, and significant and sustained improvements in public health services.

## REDUCING VIOLENT CRIME

**V**iolent crime has been on the rise throughout many communities. Gun violence plays a significant role in violent crime and continues to destroy innocent lives and inflict tragedy within our communities. Ranging from random shootings and suicides to retaliatory assaults and targeted mass killings, violence committed with firearms universally challenges law enforcement. It is also taking a toll on our law enforcement officers, who risk their own lives to protect the public.

A comprehensive approach is needed in order to prevent further violence in our communities.

### Action Steps:

- ✓ Support legislation and policies that prohibit the sale or transfer of armor-piercing and tracer ammunition.
- ✓ Support legislation that expands background checks and requires background checks for all firearm purchasers.
- ✓ Support legislation that would provide sufficient resources for the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).
- ✓ Limit high-capacity ammunition magazines to 10 rounds.
- ✓ Support legislation that strengthens penalties for straw purchasing and makes firearms trafficking a federal crime.
- ✓ Support legislation to create a mandatory five-day waiting period prior to the completion of a handgun purchase.
- ✓ Support legislation that creates a mechanism for legal removal of firearms when an individual meets the criteria for an “Extreme Risk Protection Order” or “red flag” that prohibits firearm possession.
- ✓ Oppose any federal legislative proposals that would either preempt and/or mandate the liberalization of individual states’ concealed-carry weapons (CCW) laws pertaining to the carrying of concealed weapons in other states without meeting that state’s requirements.
- ✓ Support legislation that addresses the threat posed by untraceable firearms (e.g., ghost guns), firearm frames and receivers requiring minimum finish work, and 3D printed firearms by ensuring that these firearms have proper serial numbers, are detectable at security checkpoints, and are subject to the same laws and regulations as firearms defined in the Gun Control Act of 1968.
- ✓ Support legislation to prohibit the mail-order sale of bulletproof vests and body armor to all individuals except sworn or certified law enforcement officers.





- ✓ Support legislation that increases resources to better allow state, local, tribal and territorial law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Department of Justice to enable greater prosecution of individuals for Brady Act violations.
- ✓ Support firearms enforcement programs that involve local, state, and federal agencies, such as Project Safe Neighborhoods and Project Exile, which have shown significant reductions in firearms-related violent crime.
- ✓ Support creating a federal registry, similar to the sexual offender registry, for offenders who have been previously convicted of a felony firearm violation or a misdemeanor that involved violent or threatening acts with firearms.
- ✓ Support legislation to reauthorize a revised ban on the production and sale of semi-automatic assault weapons.
- ✓ Oppose any legislation that would limit or reduce the ability of U.S. law enforcement agencies to combat the sale of illegal guns.
- ✓ Support legislation that provides funding and technical assistance for threat assessment training for state/local law enforcement.
- ✓ Support for amending the definition of “Fugitive from Justice” as codified at 18 U.S.C. § 921 (a) (15) which states that the term “Fugitive from Justice” means any person who has fled from any state to avoid prosecution for a crime or to avoid giving testimony in any criminal proceeding. The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) has determined that under federal law, a “Fugitive from Justice” is prohibited from purchasing or possessing a firearm only if they flee the state in which they are the subject of an active warrant. IACP supports amending 18 USC § 921 (a) (15) to strike “from any state.”
- ✓ Support legislation that prohibits the possession, import, manufacture, transfer, and sale of attachments/accessories designed or intended to increase or modify semi-automatic firearms to automatic firearms.
- ✓ Oppose any efforts to remove silencers (suppressors) from the purview of the National Firearms Act, in which these devices have been registered under since 1934.
- ✓ Support expanding the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) to broaden the authority for certain law enforcement officers to carry concealed firearms across state lines and allow qualified active and retired law enforcement officers to carry concealed firearms and ammunition (including magazines) in school zones; in national parks; on state, local, or private property that is open to the public; and in certain federal facilities that are open to the public.
- ✓ Expand the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to a national level across all major cities.

## OFFICER HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**L**aw enforcement careers are among the most rewarding jobs one could have, but also among the most demanding. Cumulative exposure to stress and trauma on the job can take a toll on officers' physical and mental health. Compared to the general public, police are at a higher risk for negative physical and mental health outcomes, including injuries, illnesses, obesity, heart attacks, and sleep disorders. When officers, agencies, and law enforcement families are provided with the tools and resources they need to address their health, safety, and wellbeing on and off the job, they are best prepared to protect the communities they serve.

### Action Steps:

- ✓ Support full funding and support for programs established under the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (PL 115-113).
- ✓ Support increased funding for the Officer Robert Wilson III Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative.
- ✓ Support full funding for programs established under the Confidentiality Opportunities for Peer Support (COPS) Counseling Act (PL 117-60) to encourage the adoption and enhancement of law enforcement peer counseling programs.
- ✓ Support efforts to continue funding for the National Law Enforcement Officer Suicide Prevention Consortium.
- ✓ Support efforts to reauthorize and fund the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act that has enabled the purchase of more than a million vests for law enforcement officers throughout the United States.
- ✓ Support for the Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB) program with appropriate review to ensure that the classification of suicides as line of duty deaths does not, inadvertently, incentivize public safety officer suicides.





- ✓ Support for the FBI's Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection program and continued efforts to refine and promote it to maximize potential for data collection.
- ✓ Support for the continual review of the FBI's Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection effort to ensure that the classification of suicides as line of duty deaths does not, inadvertently, incentivize public safety officer suicides.
- ✓ Support full funding for and promote better integration between the various systems that collect data and program evaluation about law enforcement mental health and suicide to include the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), and National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to expand the evidence base and inform prevention and intervention efforts.

## RECRUITMENT, HIRING, AND RETENTION

**M**arketing, recruiting, hiring, and retaining adept sworn law enforcement officers is one of the most important functions for the future of any agency. Law enforcement organizations must continually adapt and evolve to the needs of their community to procure officers with skill sets geared toward their specific agency and community. The IACP, which continuously works to advance the goals of its members and the field, has a long history of addressing this topic in a variety of ways, such as providing model policies and resources, producing evidence-based research, and conducting promotional assessments for law enforcement agencies.

### Action Steps:

- ✓ Support research and the development of best practices and pilot programs in the areas of hiring and recruitment.
- ✓ Support funding to develop and operate a nationwide marketing and recruitment campaign.
- ✓ Support funding for federal assistance grants that allows state and local departments to provide financial support to candidates — including tuition, compensation, housing or other benefits while attending law enforcement officer education.
- ✓ Support for the repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) in current Social Security law, two provisions of the Social Security Act that unfairly reduce or eliminate the Social Security benefits for police officers.



## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES & DATA COLLECTION

**L**aw enforcement agencies across the world are increasingly committing to evidence-based policing by collecting data, conducting research, evaluating programs, and implementing practices grounded in data and science.

Improved collection and evaluation of public safety data is needed in order to best inform the law enforcement field and to ensure that limited resources are being expended on efforts supporting that work. Currently, some of the most comprehensive repositories of gun violence or use-of-force data are being kept by the media, which is unacceptable.

Collaborative partnerships between law enforcement and researchers help to ensure that the measures to reduce crime, improve officer safety, and connect with the community are as effective as possible. When police practices are scientifically evaluated and factually supportable, police officers and communities mutually benefit.

### Action Steps:

- ✓ Support funding efforts for the creation, growth, and sustainment of evidence-based policing and data collection efforts at all levels. Funding is needed to support local data collection initiatives; state-level data collection efforts; and, ultimately, the management of the data at the national level.
- ✓ Support legislative proposals and efforts that include both the collection of data on the use of force by police and against police.
- ✓ Support partnerships between public and private institutions to initiate and evaluate policing practices.
- ✓ Support efforts to allow federal data collection and research on firearm violence.

# ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

**C**ommunities are suffering from a skyrocketing crisis related to substance use. The rise in illicit drug trafficking, opioid use, fentanyl, heroin addiction, the movement by some U.S. states to legalize medical and recreational marijuana, and the emergence of new drugs add to this problem.

Additionally, jails—where many individuals who are addicted to drugs end up—are not always the appropriate place to provide services for individuals going through withdrawal or the recovery process.

## Action Steps:

- ✓ Oppose efforts to legalize, decriminalize, declassify, or classify as a medical substance any illegal drug—including marijuana. The public safety risks heavily outweigh any purported benefits legalizing drugs may have.
- ✓ Provide funding to support naloxone being made available to first responders to help minimize the number of deaths that occur from overdoses on heroin, morphine, oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone, codeine, and other opioids.
- ✓ Enact laws establishing thresholds for evidence of impaired driving due to drug use.
- ✓ Support anti-drug efforts that blend drug enforcement, drug education, and drug treatment.
- ✓ Fully fund all federal agencies involved in combating drug crime.
- ✓ Fully fund High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area programs.
- ✓ Support efforts for a unified prescription drug monitoring program to combat prescription drug abuse.
- ✓ Support for programs that will promote alternative approaches to assisting individuals experiencing substance use and behavioral health issues, such as the implementation of co-response models, intervention, deflection, critical intervention, and mental health first aid training, and improved public health services.



## TECHNOLOGY, INVESTIGATIONS, AND FORENSICS


**C**ybercrime is an increasing threat to our communities and a challenge for police agencies. Access to interconnected mobile devices and other advanced communications systems has transformed how we live, work, and communicate. This interconnectivity of our society has also provided a new tool for criminals and creates new challenges for police investigators.

The expansion of communications technology means that crime scenes are often digital rather than physical, which poses a growing challenge to investigators. In addition, physical crime scenes—the ones that state and local law enforcement respond to every day—are much more complex than ever before. Crime scenes from homicides, kidnappings, assaults, and incidents of domestic violence—crimes that impact thousands of victims, families, and communities annually—now, more often than not, include digital communications evidence. The “footprints” left at the “scene” are no longer just physical pieces of evidence, but digital traces that can be accessed from anywhere in the world through smartphones or computers. These are the modern-day fingerprints that police use to apprehend offenders and increase public safety. Law enforcement needs access to digital information to solve crimes, locate perpetrators, protect victims, and ensure successful prosecutions.

In addition, the issue of “Going Dark”—law enforcement’s decreasing ability to lawfully access and examine digital evidence at rest and evidence in motion due to technical and nontechnical barriers— is increasingly endangering law enforcement’s ability to conduct investigations. The ability of the police to build criminal cases is dependent on discovering facts and evidence that will identify the person(s) responsible for the crime. Technologies and strategies that keep them from accessing digital evidence when legally authorized are putting public safety at risk.

### Action Steps:

- ✓ Update the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) to provide for immediate compliance when law enforcement certifies an imminent threat to life and safety.

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- ✓ Support a federal penalty for carriers and manufacturers that fail to comply with a lawful request for assistance.
  - ✓ Include a clear definition of exigent circumstances and emergencies in any legislative proposal.
  - ✓ Support legislation that requires mobile network operators to participate in the global Groupe Spéciale Mobile Association (GSMA) International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) Blacklist database by reporting lost or stolen devices and blocking service to any device on the GSMA IMEI Blacklist database regardless of country origin.
  - ✓ Support the inclusion of cybercrime reporting in NIBRS.
  - ✓ Support for the continued engagement between genealogy companies and law enforcement.
  - ✓ Support legislation that will ensure access to digital evidence with appropriate judicial authority.



## ADEQUATE & TIMELY FEDERAL FUNDING

**P**olice officers are continually expected to do more with fewer resources. Federal funding assistance distributed through competitive and formula grants are a vital resource to the law enforcement agencies that are responsible for safeguarding communities.

Unfortunately, there has been a steady decline in funding for federal government assistance programs due to the increase in assistance to state, local, tribal and territorial local law enforcement.

The following grant programs are essential to law enforcement agencies, and the IACP supports providing adequate funding to these valuable programs.

### Department of Justice

- **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG):** Byrne-JAG is the cornerstone federal crimefighting program, supporting the federal government's crucial role in spurring innovation, as well as testing and replicating evidence-based practices. Because Byrne-JAG is flexible, states and local communities can use funding to address needs and fill gaps across the entire criminal justice system in prevention, enforcement, courts, prosecution and indigent defense, corrections, victim assistance, and other community support. This flexibility is the hallmark of the Byrne-JAG program and is vitally important. The IACP opposes any proposals that would restrict the flexibility of this program.
- **Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program:** Since its inception, the COPS program has provided law enforcement agencies with the resources necessary to mount effective anticrime programs, which also serve as effective antiterrorism programs. The COPS program has a clear record of success. This program has made it possible for communities to not only hire and retain police officers, but also to ensure that these officers are well trained, well equipped, and positioned to safeguard citizens.
- **Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act:** The IACP supports legislation to reauthorize and fund the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act that has enabled the purchase of more than a million protective vests for law enforcement officers throughout the United States.



- **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA):** IACP supports funding of programs and initiatives to address issues surrounding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- **Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Act:** The IACP supports this program that seeks to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic laboratory services. Significant funding deficiencies can cause forensic science laboratories at the local and state levels to experience significant caseload backlogs that severely impact the timeliness of examinations critical to solving crimes; limit the ability to acquire modern technology, provide adequate training, provide forensic analyses in a timely manner; and impede the ability of local and state forensic service providers to attain professional accreditation.

## Department of Homeland Security

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Preparedness Grants:** Preparedness grant programs through the Department of Homeland Security's FEMA, such as the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), Port Security Grant Program (PSGP), and Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP), are essential resources to aid state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as transportation authorities, as they work to improve the prevention, protection against, response to, recovery from, and mitigation of terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies.

## Action Steps:

- ✓ Fully fund critical programs outlined above in the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security budgets.
- ✓ Oppose any congressional proposals or federal regulations that would withhold grant funds as a penalty or sanction for noncompliance with federal criminal justice policies.
- ✓ Oppose any legislation that would restrict the flexibility of current grant programs.
- ✓ Oppose the consolidation of grant programs.
- ✓ Ensure that terrorism prevention funds are properly used for law enforcement-related terrorism prevention activities.



## ROADWAY SAFETY

For most of the people whom law enforcement agencies are sworn to protect, the greatest threat to their safety comes from traveling in a vehicle.

Tragically, many roadway fatalities and injuries are largely preventable. Crucial risk factors such as speeding; distracted driving; not wearing seat belts or using child restraints; poor road design; and, most critically, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs can be reduced and even eliminated.

These are some reasons why effective traffic safety enforcement programs are so vital to our efforts to protect our communities.

### Action Steps:

- ✓ Provide funding to support the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- ✓ Support full funding for the Drug Recognition Experts program.
- ✓ Implement incentive grants for states that pass progressive highway safety laws and achieve specific performance goals, using the threat of reduction in federal highway funding only as a last resort.
- ✓ Enact laws establishing thresholds for evidence of impaired driving due to drug use.
- ✓ Support the development of a National Registry of Commercial Drivers that would be available to licensing agencies, police, and the motor carrier industry.
- ✓ Support enhanced protection for child passengers in motor vehicles.
- ✓ Oppose increases in the size and weight of large trucks.

# HOW CAN IACP HELP YOU

## Who Are Our Members

The IACP's membership consists of more than 32,000 global law enforcement members from agencies of all sizes. While our membership is primarily made up of police executives, it also comprises police officers of all ranks and professionals from across the entire criminal justice spectrum.

## Where Our Members Are

The IACP has members in every U.S. state and territory and more than 170 countries. The IACP also has governing body representation from across the globe.

## Resources IACP Can Provide

**Access to law enforcement constituents.** IACP members reside and work in every state and congressional district.

**Research, reports, model policies, and information.** We deliver timely insight on emerging criminal justice issues and provide recommended guidance to the field.

**Expertise on criminal justice issues.** Through our diverse membership of federal, state, local, tribal and territorial law enforcement representatives, we have expertise in every issue confronting law enforcement and communities. IACP also has working groups with specific substantive expertise on a variety of recurring and emerging policy and operational issues.

**Subject matter experts.** The IACP has a diverse range of subject matter experts throughout our association who can quickly provide information, testify before Congress, produce reports and recommendations, and provide timely, relevant guidance to the law enforcement field and elected officials. By tapping into its broad and diverse membership base, IACP is able to develop innovative solutions to critical issues that can be implemented by law enforcement agencies of all sizes and types.

## IACP Divisions

The IACP has four divisions representing distinct law enforcement areas, including: Global Policing; State & Provincial Police (S&P); State Associations of Chiefs of Police (SACOP); and Midsize Agencies.



## **IACP Policy Councils**

IACP's policy councils consist of standing committees and sections with subject matter experts that focus on the following substantive areas:

### **Community Safety**

- Community Policing Committee
- Crime Prevention Committee
- Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Committee
- Private Sector Liaison Section
- Victim Services Committee

### **Emerging Issues**

- Education & Training Committee
- International Managers of Police Academy & College Training Section
- Legal Officers Section
- Police Research Advancement Section
- Public Information Officers Section
- Research Advisory Committee

### **Investigations**

- Drug Recognition Experts Section
- Environmental Crimes Committee
- Forensics Committee
- Police Investigative Operations Committee
- Vehicle Crimes Committee

### **Leadership**

- Capitol Police Section
- Human & Civil Rights Committee
- Indian Country Law Enforcement Section
- Police Administration Committee
- Police Professional Standards, Ethics, & Image Committee
- Retired Chiefs of Police Section
- Smaller Department Section
- Torch Run Committee
- University/College Police Section

## **National Security/Transnational Crime**

- Civil Law Enforcement/Military Cooperation Committee
- Defense Chiefs of Police Section
- Committee on Homeland Security
- Narcotics & Dangerous Drugs Committee
- Terrorism Committee
- Transnational Crime Committee

## **Safety and Wellness**

- Human Resources Section
- Officer Safety & Wellness Section
- Police Chaplains Section
- Police Physicians Section
- Police Psychological Services Section

## **Technology**

- Communications & Technology Committee
- Computer Crime & Digital Evidence Committee
- Criminal Justice Information System Committee
- Law Enforcement Information & Technology Section
- Law Enforcement Intelligence & Information Sharing Section

## **Transportation Safety**

- Aviation Committee
- Roadway Safety Committee
- Public Transit Police Section
- Railroad Police Section

## **Violent Crime**

- Arson & Explosives Committee
- Firearms Committee
- Patrol & Tactical Operations Committee





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