PRACTICES IN MODERN POLICING

Policing in Vulnerable Populations

IACP
International Association of Chiefs of Police
PRACTICES IN MODERN POLICING

POLICING IN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS
CONTENTS

Introduction ..............................................................................................................................1

Helping the helpless ................................................................................................................2

Policing in vulnerable populations recommendations from the task force report .................4

Promising Programs for Policing in Vulnerable Populations ....................................................7

Atlanta (Georgia) Police Department .....................................................................................7

Indio (California) Police Department ...................................................................................9

Lowell (Massachusetts) Police Department .........................................................................12

Tucson (Arizona) Police Department ....................................................................................14

Camden County (New Jersey) Police Department .................................................................16

Hennepin County (Minnesota) Sheriff’s Office .....................................................................17

San Antonio (Texas) Police Department ................................................................................17

Considerations for Implementing Policing in Vulnerable Populations Strategies ...................19

Conclusion ................................................................................................................................23

Appendix A. History of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing .............................................25

Pillar 1. Building Trust and Legitimacy ..................................................................................25

Pillar 2. Policy and Oversight ..................................................................................................25

Pillar 3. Technology and Social Media ....................................................................................26

Pillar 4. Community Policing and Crime Reduction .................................................................26

Pillar 5. Training and Education .............................................................................................26

Pillar 6. Officer Wellness and Safety .......................................................................................26

Appendix B. The Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative and Its 15 Model Sites ...............27

About the IACP ......................................................................................................................29
INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the COPS Office, in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and CNA, launched the Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative. This program provides evaluations and technical support to 15 law enforcement agencies. Because these agencies are diverse in size, location, and other characteristics, their insights and lessons learned can be useful to other agencies across the nation. Their program efforts are published as part of the Practices in Modern Policing series. These reports offer guidance to the field for advancing practices and policies in specific aspects of community policing.

This publication focuses on police interactions with vulnerable populations, including persons struggling with homelessness, addiction, and mental illness.

The communities where police officers work encompass a multitude of individuals with different ages, genders, incomes, races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, abilities, health statuses, and occupations. As such, policing is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. While law enforcement officers have an obligation to serve and protect all citizens equally, how they implement their mission depends on a variety of contextual factors that can change dramatically and dynamically not only from day to day, but also from call to call. The most effective officers, therefore, are those who are trained to read all varieties of people, situations, and circumstances and to adapt accordingly. Adaptive approaches are especially important for policing vulnerable populations, including people who are elderly, homeless, disabled, undocumented, addicted, and physically or mentally ill.

Policing in vulnerable populations emerged in the final report of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing, appointed by President Obama in 2014, as a key theme for driving healthy community-police relations. “Public safety and well-being cannot be attained without the community’s belief that their well-being is at the heart of all law enforcement activities,” the task force observed in its report, adding that, “It is critical to help community members see police as allies rather than as an occupying force.”

This guide demonstrates how law enforcement agencies can build public confidence by serving vulnerable populations more effectively. It illustrates strategies that work—coalition building, officer training, and engaging with social workers—and includes examples of model programs through which law enforcement agencies are successfully leveraging them.

---

1. The task force comprised experts in the fields of policing, criminal justice, civil rights, academia, and other arenas, who worked together to identify best practices to reduce crime and build trust between the public and law enforcement. The task force’s final report identified 59 recommendations and 92 action items. For details, see appendix A.


3. Final Report of the President’s Task Force, 42 (see note 2).
Helping the helpless

“Law enforcement culture should embrace a guardian—rather than a warrior—mindset to build trust and legitimacy both within agencies and with the public.”4 Since the task force made that declaration in its final report, law enforcement agencies across the nation have been engaged in dialogue about the many roles—both punitive and protective—police officers should play in their communities. A guardian mindset can help law enforcement agencies improve relations with vulnerable populations—in particular, with those experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and drug or alcohol addiction.

Homeless populations

Although it has been trending downward for the past decade, homelessness remains a significant problem, affecting more than half a million Americans on any given day in communities nationwide.5 Along with hardships like hunger, exposure to the elements, addiction, and physical and mental illness, homeless individuals face discrimination and legal hardships.

In a series of eight IACP critical issue forums in 2016, law enforcement leaders from around the country identified homelessness as one of the biggest challenges facing law enforcement agencies.6 Law enforcement is in a difficult situation. A growing number of cities have ordinances that criminalize homelessness by making it illegal to aggressively panhandle or to perform life-sustaining activities in public, including sleeping, eating, and sitting.7 Police officers are required to enforce these laws, even while studies have demonstrated that criminalization is an ineffective solution to homelessness; research shows that it costs cities money, perpetuates poverty, and provides only temporary relief instead of a sustainable remedy.8

“[L]aw enforcement measures do not solve the underlying causes of the problem,” the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) reported in its 2012 report Searching Out Solutions: Constructive Alternatives to the Criminalization of Homelessness. “These measures punish people who currently live on the street and do nothing to reduce the factors contributing to homelessness. Rather than helping people to regain housing, obtain employment, or access needed treatment and services, criminalization creates a costly revolving door that circulates individuals experiencing homelessness from the street to the criminal justice system and back.”9

---

4. Final Report of the President’s Task Force, 1 (see note 2).
Despite policy limitations, there is a role for police in homelessness interventions. Police forces that find and maintain the right balance between law enforcement and social service are well positioned to reduce homelessness in the communities they serve.

"Many cities around the country have seen reductions in the number of people experiencing homelessness and service delivery improvements when police departments, behavioral health, and other service providers work in close collaboration," USICH said. "Such collaborations succeed in reducing the number of arrests for life-sustaining activities, panhandling, and other activities. By working together, service providers and safety officials divert people who are unsheltered to programs that both address the issues that caused their homelessness and facilitate access to permanent housing."10

**Mentally ill populations**

Nearly one in five adults in the United States suffers from mental illness,11 and approximately one in 25 suffers from mental illness serious enough to substantially interfere with or impair one or more major life activities.12 Because of its prevalence, law enforcement officers regularly encounter mental illness on calls for service. Unfortunately, a “lack of consistent policy, procedure, training, and education among law enforcement agencies” means that many of these calls for service end poorly both for citizens and for police officers, the IACP National Law Enforcement Policy Center stated in its 2014 paper *Responding to Persons Affected by Mental Illness or in Crisis.*13

One consequence of poor police interactions with the mentally ill is recidivism. “Encounters with first-responding law enforcement officers may involve arresting persons with mental illness, and then housing them in jails, prisons, and juvenile detention centers rather than providing them with treatment from mental health facilities,” the IACP explained in its 2016 report *Improving Police Response to Persons Affected by Mental Illness.* “Thus, many individuals affected by mental illness have become trapped in a cycle of arrest, imprisonment, and recidivism.”14

An even more troubling consequence is violence: Individuals who are mentally ill, are experiencing an emotional crisis, or are under the influence of alcohol or drugs are responsible for the majority of assaults against police officers, and these individuals account for one-fourth of those killed in officer-involved shootings.15 “The outcomes of these interactions have life-long implications for the people involved.

---

because they can lead to the injury or fatality of the individual, another community member, or the officer,” notes the 2016 IACP report. “Beyond potential injury or worse, the damage done to meaningful, trusting relationships between police departments and their communities can take years to repair.”

As the first point of contact with the criminal justice and mental health systems, police officers are uniquely positioned to manage interactions to make a positive impact on individuals with mental illness and the communities in which they live. “The decades-long decline in resources available to mental health providers has, to some degree, forced law enforcement agencies to serve on the frontline of the U.S. mental health crisis,” the 2016 IACP report concluded. “As a result, police officers today play a critical role in ensuring that persons affected by mental illness do not cycle in and out of homelessness and jails, but rather, are diverted to treatment and rehabilitation where appropriate and available.”

**Addicted populations**

In any given year, nearly 10 percent of Americans aged 12 or older—23.5 million people—need treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol abuse problem. Of those, only 11.2 percent—2.6 million people—actually receive it at a substance abuse treatment facility. This gap is apparent every day to law enforcement officers who answer calls for service responding to and intervening on behalf of individuals with drug and alcohol addictions.

While substance abuse disorders may lead drug- and alcohol-addicted individuals to act violently or commit crimes, incarceration is not always an effective remedy. As front-line partners in a coalition of community stakeholders, law enforcement agencies are in a unique position to help address the problem more effectively. “As gatekeepers of the criminal justice system, police personnel play a vital role in preventing and intervening in the cycle of offending and advancement through the criminal justice system,” the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority stated in its 2017 report *Rethinking Law Enforcement’s Role on Drugs.* “Police agencies can lead the way in referring and diverting individuals to treatment to break the cycle of criminal justice system involvement and further offending.”

**Policing in vulnerable populations recommendations from the task force report**

The final task force report concluded “Building trust and nurturing legitimacy on both sides of the police/citizen divide is the foundational principle underlying the nature of relations between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.” Furthermore, it suggested that agencies should “proactively...
promote public trust by initiating positive nonenforcement activities to engage communities that typically have high rates of investigative and enforcement involvement with government agencies; that law enforcement agencies should engage in multidisciplinary, community team approaches for planning, implementing, and responding to crisis situations with complex causal factors; and that communities should support a culture and practice of policing that reflects the values of protection and promotion of the dignity of all—especially the most vulnerable. Pursuant to those objectives, the task force recommended the following action items:

The U.S. Department of Justice should do the following:

- Support research into the factors that have led to dramatic successes in crime reduction in some communities through the infusion of nondiscriminatory policing in order to determine replicable factors that could be used to guide law enforcement agencies in other communities.

- Collaborate with others to develop and disseminate baseline models for a multidisciplinary, community team approach to managing crisis situations with complex causal factors.

Congress should do the following:

- Appropriate funds to help support law enforcement crisis intervention team training.

Law enforcement agencies should do the following:

- Acknowledge that using physical control equipment and techniques against vulnerable populations can undermine public trust and therefore such equipment and techniques should be leveraged only as a last resort.

- Carefully consider and review policies toward vulnerable populations and adopt policies if none are in place.

- Adopt policies for training on use of force that emphasize de-escalation and alternatives to arrest or summons in situations where appropriate.

- Establish search and seizure procedures related to LGBTQ populations and adopt as policy the recommendation from the President’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA) to cease using the possession of condoms as the sole evidence of vice.

- Adopt and enforce policies prohibiting profiling and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, housing status, occupation, or language fluency.

22. Final Report of the President’s Task Force (see note 2).
23. Final Report of the President’s Task Force (see note 2).
Consider adopting preferences for seeking “least harm” resolutions, such as diversion programs or warnings and citations in lieu of arrest for minor infractions.

Underscore the importance of language used and adopt policies directing officers to speak to individuals with respect.

Work with community residents to identify problems and collaborate on implementing solutions that produce meaningful results for the community.

Make crisis intervention training a part of both basic recruit and in-service officer training.

Ensure that basic recruit and in-service officer training include curricula on the disease of addiction; recognizing and confronting implicit bias and cultural responsiveness; cultural diversity; and interactions with the LGBTQ, Muslim, Arab, South Asian, and immigrant or non-English speaking communities.24

---

24. Final Report of the President’s Task Force (see note 2).
PROMISING PROGRAMS FOR POLICING IN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Law enforcement agencies around the country have developed and implemented many successful programs to serve and protect vulnerable populations—and to build public trust by strengthening relationships with them. In the wake of the final task force report, the 15 model sites for the Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative25 have recommitted to and reinvested in established programs while also conceiving innovative new ones that raise the bar on community policing. As a result, what’s emerging across the nation is a new, more treatment- and service-focused approach to policing America’s most vulnerable and at-risk citizens.

Atlanta (Georgia) Police Department

HOPE (Homeless Outreach Proactive Enforcement) Team

The city of Atlanta, Georgia has a poverty rate of 22.3 percent, rising to 30.5 percent in the surrounding counties.26 Despite this, Atlanta’s homeless population decreased by over 40 percent between 2011 and 2016, with the unsheltered percentage of that population decreasing 15 percentage points, from 35 percent to 20 percent, over the same period.27 Atlanta attributes its progress to a number of factors, including a “housing first” approach to homelessness that focuses on getting individuals shelter with quick follow-up to connect them with social services, intensive work internship programs that help people with criminal records and substance abuse histories gain employment, and advance case work with incarcerated individuals that helps them successfully reenter society.28 The Atlanta Police Department (APD) also has helped move the needle with efforts like its Homeless Outreach Proactive Enforcement (HOPE) Team.

The APD established the HOPE Team in 2005 to focus on homelessness response and intervention. Its current incarnation, however, can be traced back to 2011, according to Major Marisha Shepherd, commander of the APD’s Community Oriented Policing Section. In October 2011, she says, hundreds of peaceful protesters inspired by New York’s Occupy Wall Street Movement—many of them homeless—began gathering in Woodruff Park in downtown Atlanta, where they lived in tents for more than 15 days.

---

25. The Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative, which IACP and the COPS Office created in 2016, provides evaluations and technical support to 15 law enforcement agencies, and published reports highlighting the agencies’ program efforts constitute the Practices in Modern Policing series. For more details, see appendix B.


“The chief of police at the time had the zone commander of the area come together with a team that could go out and help these people with proactive enforcement,” Shepherd says. “We weren’t looking to arrest them; we wanted to go out, talk to them, and do outreach to find out what resources they needed.” Arrests had not helped Atlanta reduce its homeless population; maybe, the APD theorized, coordinated social services assistance would.

In its initial iteration, the HOPE Team focused primarily on placing homeless individuals in housing. While this approach proved to be effective it quickly became apparent that people who had become homeless once would continue to become homeless unless they first addressed the root of their homelessness.

“We realized that a lot of people were homeless because of mental health problems and substance abuse. These types of illnesses caused them to lose homes and jobs, leading them to be on the streets,” Shepherd explains. “So, instead of focusing solely on getting them into housing, we try to identify those who have these types of illnesses and get them the help they need to get their lives back on track. Getting treated for their illness is the first step toward finding employment or receiving government assistance, which ultimately will help them get housing that they won’t lose.”

The city-funded HOPE Team currently comprises seven officers who work full time on homeless outreach. Two officers work in the city, where they comb underpasses, shelters, and other hotspots for homeless encampments. The remaining five work at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, which during the day attracts a sizable homeless population that considers it a safe and convenient public place in which to seek shelter and food. In both locations, HOPE Team officers spend their days cultivating long-term relationships with homeless individuals, offering social services to those who need them, and coordinating care for individuals who accept their help.

Most individuals who are offered assistance initially refuse it. But the consistent presence of dedicated officers whom they get to know means that many gradually develop trust in police, which eventually breaks down barriers and over time yields successful interventions.

“Other jurisdictions have officers who refer homeless people to social services, but we have a dedicated unit that does only that;” Shepherd says. “That’s what makes us stand out.”

Along with their narrow job description—their sole focus is homeless outreach—HOPE Team officers’ success is the result of collaborative partnerships and extensive training. Partnerships, for instance, exist with numerous local service providers, including United Way of Greater Atlanta, Mercy Care, the Salvation Army, HOPE Atlanta, Grady Memorial Hospital, and the Atlanta VA Medical Center, among many others. Weekly meetings with those partners ensure Atlanta has a wide safety net with which to catch and cushion its homeless population.

“It starts with us, but it doesn’t end with us. We’re just the beginning,” Shepherd says. “We have a good list of resources here in Atlanta that a lot of smaller jurisdictions just don’t have. They’re there to help us with mental health, housing, and other needs, and that helps us succeed. . . . It’s a joint effort.”

Training is just as critical as teamwork, according to Shepherd, who says all HOPE Team officers have received 40 hours of crisis intervention training that emphasizes de-escalation techniques instead of use of force.
“When they’re on the streets, people who are mentally ill tend not to get their medicine,” explains Shepherd, who says the APD added crisis intervention training to its police academy curriculum in 2016 to ensure that all new officers receive it. “Because they’ve received training on crisis intervention, our officers know how to deal with those individuals safely.”

While privacy laws make it difficult to track individuals whom HOPE Team officers have helped, there is anecdotal evidence of the team’s successes. “We’re not able to track our success rate, but we know we’re helping people because we know these people and we don’t see them on the street anymore,” concludes Shepherd. “Social workers are not in the street every day. They’re behind desks looking at case files. As police officers, we’re out there meeting people and getting to know them. We see the condition they’re in because we’re on the front lines. That’s why it makes sense for us to be the primary first responders to identify and engage the homeless community.”

**Indio (California) Police Department**

**Quality of Life Unit**

California’s Coachella Valley, home to Palm Springs, has a reputation for great wealth; however, it also has pockets of great need. Across Riverside County, which includes the Coachella Valley, there were 2,165 homeless individuals in 2016, of whom 1,351—more than half—were unsheltered.

Although any homeless population is too large, that number was still down dramatically from the 6,203 who were homeless and 5,090 who were unsheltered in 2011.

One driver of this change is the Indio Police Department (IPD) in Indio, California, which has the Coachella Valley’s second largest homeless population behind Palm Springs. Under the direction of retired Chief Richard Twiss, it launched two efforts that continue, under Chief Mike Washburn, to be a positive resource for the Coachella Valley’s homeless population: the Community Outreach Resource Program (CORP) and its Quality of Life unit.

In 2012, Twiss accompanied IPD police officers on a series of ride-alongs during which he witnessed firsthand the extent of homelessness in Indio, where law enforcement’s approach to homelessness had long been to criminalize it. Instead of a revolving door of bookings and releases, he envisioned a community policing strategy that reduced homelessness in Indio by addressing its root causes; in response, Twiss stood up a Quality of Life unit. Launched in 2012 as a grant-funded overtime detail, it is now a permanent unit consisting of two city-funded officers whose daily mission is helping homeless citizens instead of arresting them.

---


“We were handling the homeless by giving them tickets, arresting them, and shooing them away, but we weren’t really dealing with their homelessness,” says Quality of Life Officer Jose Ibarra. “Chief Twiss decided we needed to deal not only with the criminal aspect of the problem, but also the social aspect of it.”

Unsure where to start, Ibarra and his partner, Quality of Life Officer Brandon Haworth, turned to the local social work community for help. “Typically, social services and law enforcement are viewed as having incongruent goals. But we realized we have to work together to help these people,” says Ibarra. The Quality of Life team established partnerships with service providers, building relationships and getting to know each provider personally. Additionally, the IPD sends the Quality of Life team law enforcement, local government, and social service provider trainings and homelessness-related community events to network and locate new or additional services for potential clients on a broader regional scale. Through these successful partnerships, Ibarra and the rest of the team have learned from social workers the right way to approach homeless people and build relationships with them.

Quality of Life officers engage homeless people directly, connecting them with meals and showers, taking them to get haircuts and driver’s licenses, and directing them to treatment resources for mental illness and addiction. “Each day we go out and touch base with our homeless population to figure out: What are you doing today, and what can we do for you?” says Ibarra, who calls the individuals he works with “clients” to emphasize his role as a service provider. “We can’t force them, we can’t coerce them . . . All we can do is provide them with assurance that we’re there. Then, when they’re ready for help, they know where to find us.”

“We have come a long way,” concludes Ibarra, who says the Quality of Life unit has helped many individuals get off the streets entirely. “They know us and they’re no longer afraid of us. And that’s a hundred miles from where we were two years ago.”

CORP (Community Outreach Resource Program)

The Quality of Life unit also recommends candidates for the IPD’s Community Outreach Resource Program, or CORP. CORP was conceived in 2013, when the IPD began engaging local stakeholders—including the Riverside County superior court, public defender’s office, district attorney’s office, Probation Department, Department of Public Social Services, Department of Mental Health, and nonprofit social service providers like the ABC Recovery Center, Coachella Valley Rescue Mission, and Martha’s Village and Kitchen—in a multidisciplinary conversation about how to solve Indio’s long-standing homelessness problem.

That conversation led to a resolve to eliminate the hurdles to recovering from homelessness, rather than merely boosting people over them. CORP was established in 2015 to eliminate criminal fines and court fees for homeless people charged with low-level, nonviolent criminal offenses like trespassing, theft, and possession; the program may also allow for select minor offenses to be expunged.
Here’s a common scenario: A homeless person receives a $75 ticket; doesn’t appear in court; and is fined an additional $300. Multiplied across numerous tickets and court appearances, hundreds of dollars can easily become thousands—which to someone who has neither a home nor a job might as well be millions. Failure to pay results in a suspended driver’s license, making it harder to find and access education or employment.

“A lot of people will make it through a [treatment] program—whether it’s a 90-day program, a six-month program, or a year-long program—but when they get out they still don’t have the financial resources to take care of their responsibilities,” explains Sherri Van Dorn, executive assistant to the chief of police. “So, they can’t get their driver’s license, which means they can’t get to work or school and ultimately just fall into the same cycle they were in before. They’re defeated from the beginning.”

By forgiving criminal penalties and court fees, CORP averts this cycle before it can begin. Arrestees are referred to CORP either by the IPD’s Quality of Life unit, probation officials, or social service providers, all of whom refer people they think will be successful based on their demonstrated commitment to changing their circumstances. Participants must be approved by the public defender’s office, the district attorney’s office, the probation department, and the court; face only nonviolent and misdemeanor charges; pay any court-ordered restitution to victims of their crimes, which is never waived; and successfully complete a social service provider’s program, such as drug or alcohol abuse treatment, a residential shelter’s counseling program, or an educational or vocational program. Only then are they eligible to have fines and fees waived.

“It’s trust that has developed between all of the agencies that keeps this program moving forward,” Van Dorn says. “If it wasn’t such a collaborative effort that benefited all the agencies as well as the community and the client, it wouldn’t work.” Those benefits include streamlining judicial procedure, as Judge Dean Benjamini of the Riverside County Superior Court explains: “IPD’s policing of vulnerable populations, particularly the homeless community, is making a positive difference in the lives of the homeless and in the community. The result of this approach means the court sees fewer new cases, resolution of old stagnant cases, and finally that fines, fees, and victim restitution are being handled.” Deputy District Attorney Scott Mason adds, “The benefit to the DA’s Office is that we represent the interests of the community, and CORP helps to address the issue of our county’s homeless population, by offering a way for our homeless population to work toward getting off of the street. Additionally, by reducing the number of individuals who continue to commit low-level recidivist crimes, we reduce our caseloads.”

“However, the greatest benefit to our clients, and to our agency as a whole, is the change that has occurred in the clients’ lives,” states Barbara Plate, Supervising Deputy Public Defender with the Riverside County Public Defender’s Office. “The journey they have taken to enter one of our partner programs, and how hard they worked to get to where they are to be accepted into CORP, is a testament to the fact that they have decided to take a different path. They have spent a minimum of 90 days in programming, addressing the challenges that they have struggled with for many years. CORP helps them to continue on that path to build a better life for themselves and their families, and to become productive members of our community.”
In addition, the program requires no additional resources from stakeholders beyond the time and commitment it takes to coordinate with one another. “The only funding challenge we have is that we need help with the evaluation components of the program,” explains IPD Senior Management Analyst Erika Martinez, who says stakeholders are currently seeking grant funding from the state to assist with evaluating CORP’s success. “The big question we all have is: Is it making a difference?”

Although longitudinal tracking of CORP graduates is still forthcoming, short-term results already are evident: As of January 2017, 89 individuals had graduated from the CORP program, resulting in the dismissal of 27 pending misdemeanors or infractions and $234,830.08 in fines and fees. Among the first 12 graduates—who served as the program’s pilot group—two-thirds (67 percent) had zero contacts with police in the first nine months after graduation, and only one graduate was rearrested.

“Both statistically speaking and at the individual level, it’s making a difference,” Martinez concludes.

Lowell (Massachusetts) Police Department

CO-OP (Community Opioid Outreach Program)

In 2015, 12.5 million Americans misused licit opioids such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and fentanyl, and another 828,000 used the illicit opioid heroin; 33,091 of those people died from an opioid overdose.31 This level of opioid abuse, and the associated death rate, represent “an unprecedented opioid epidemic.”32

Although the epidemic is national in scale, it is especially worrisome in the 30 states that have seen increases in the rate of drug overdose deaths in the last five years33—including Massachusetts, where an estimated 2,069 people died of opioid-related overdoses in 2016, up 17 percent and 42 percent, respectively, from 2015 and 2014.34 The Lowell Police Department (LPD) is doing its part to cure the crisis by connecting opioid addicts with treatment via its Community Opioid Outreach Program (CO-OP).

Retired LPD Superintendent William Taylor knew his agency needed to do more to combat opioid overdoses when he witnessed the crisis firsthand on a call for service in late 2015. “He happened to be in the area when he heard the call, so he responded with patrol,” recalls LPD Public Safety Research and Planning Director Maryann Ballotta. “Someone had had a fatal overdose in one of our homeless encampments surrounded by trash and debris, and it struck him: This isn’t a unique story; we’re losing people on a regular basis.”

The story didn’t end there. “It turned out that this person who had overdosed had an appointment to get treatment two weeks after his death, and later we found out that he was a National Guard veteran,” Ballotta continues. “The details obviously changed from person to person, but this was a story that was happening over and over again in our city.” In the wake of this incident, Taylor conceived CO-OP, a multiagency program that seeks to prevent fatal opioid overdoses by conducting outreach to individuals who suffer nonfatal opioid overdoses, of which there are two to three in Lowell every day.

Established in March 2016, the CO-OP program is executed by an LPD police officer, a firefighter from the Lowell Fire Department, an outreach specialist from Lowell House, a local substance abuse service provider and the Public Health Department. Whenever a nonfatal overdose becomes known to the agencies involved with the CO-OP program, CO-OP responds within 24 to 48 hours in order to offer them help seeking treatment. The goal: Quell the tide of opioid addiction by helping at-risk people in their hour of greatest need.

“A lot of times, these individuals refuse and walk away. But that’s just the beginning of the relationship,” Ballotta says. “A lot of people are repeat overdose victims, so they may say no the first couple of times and then, eventually, say yes, at which point we can connect them to the services they need.”

Law enforcement is a crucial CO-OP stakeholder for numerous reasons, according to Ballotta. First, victims must be located after their nonfatal overdoses, and law enforcement has access to data that can help the CO-OP team find them. The CO-OP team also utilizes the services of a local emergency medical service company, which tracks overdose cases. Second, many victims live in homeless encampments, where law enforcement has relationships. Third, reducing opioid addiction is in law enforcement’s best interest, as doing so can reduce recidivism in drug-related crimes such as theft and burglary. “A lot of individuals who have addictions are also low-level criminals,” Ballotta says. “We understand that arresting them is not going to solve the problem; we need to address their addiction.”

To help them do exactly that, the LPD and its partners are leveraging federal grants to expand the program into other areas. For example, they’re creating a Fatal Overdose Review Team that will investigate fatal opioid overdoses to determine where and how services could have been offered in order to generate nonfatal outcomes. They also are expanding the CO-OP team, adding substance abuse clinicians and a recovery coach to track victims and follow up with them in order to ensure they’re actually getting the help they agreed to seek.

Although funding builds capacity, what ultimately makes CO-OP work is the team’s commitment to its cause. “Our officer on the CO-OP outreach team was previously our homeless liaison, so he’s very familiar with the community,” Ballotta says. “You can’t put just any officer in this type of position; it takes a certain kind of person who is passionate about helping this population and knows how to work with them.”

Indeed, not all officers are prepared to deal with addicted populations, as many don’t understand the nature of addiction. To that end, the LPD has used CO-OP as a launching pad from which to offer addiction education to all its officers, who learn the science of substance abuse both at the police academy and during annual in-service training. This training equips them to engage drug- and alcohol-addicted citizens when they encounter them on calls for service.
“It’s very hard to help someone if you don’t understand that addiction is a disease,” Ballotta says.

Fortunately, diseases can be managed when treated with the right medicine—in this case, collaboration, which already has anecdotally shown to help Lowell achieve a reduction in fatal opioid overdoses in the first half of 2017, compared to the same period in 2016.35

“The key to making this work is partnership,” Ballotta concludes. “It’s a team effort, and we have a long history of working with community partners to solve common problems across agencies.”

**Tucson (Arizona) Police Department**

**MHST (Mental Health Support Team)**

On January 8, 2011, 22-year-old gunman Jared Lee Loughner opened fire on a crowd of citizens in the parking lot of a suburban Tucson grocery store, killing six people and wounding 13 others. His target was Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who was hosting a meet-and-greet with her constituents and suffered a critical injury during the incident. Mental health professionals subsequently diagnosed Loughner with paranoid schizophrenia, symptoms of which had been overlooked by school officials, campus police, and local law enforcement.

At the time of Giffords’ shooting, the Tucson Police Department (TPD) was already a national leader in crisis intervention training and programming, through which it provided critical outreach and resources to citizens with mental health needs. And yet, Loughner had still slipped through the system’s cracks. To ensure that others like him didn’t do the same, TPD established the MHST, a specially trained unit focused exclusively on mental illness. Established in 2013, it consists of one sergeant, two detectives, and seven field officers. Its objective is preventing public-safety threats by proactively identifying citizens in mental crisis and connecting them with needed behavioral health services.

“Mental health is such a big problem that you need to have a specialized team focusing on it,” says MHST leader Sgt. Jason Winsky, who likens MHST to a dedicated DUI squad. “Any police officer in the United States is capable of giving a person a DUI. So why are there DUI squads? There are DUI squads because drunk driving is a community-wide problem and it can really hurt people. The community recognizes that, so we deploy highly trained DUI officers to go out into the community and do DUI enforcement exclusively. Behavioral health deserves the same treatment.”

MHST has two primary functions, the first of which is to support and transport: MHST officers respond to calls for service involving individuals in crisis and also handle all involuntary commitment pickup orders.

“In all 50 states, police departments are responsible for court-ordered pickups—taking people to the hospital involuntarily; 99.9 percent of police departments serve these pickup orders completely at random,” Winsky says. “In Tucson we’ve taken a specialized group of police officers, given them an incredible amount of education and training, and made them the central access point for pickup orders.”

35. Public Safety Research and Planning Director Maryann Ballotta, email message to author, February 14, 2018.
This approach has yielded two principal benefits. “We weren’t keeping data as an agency before, but we’ve essentially zeroed out use of force in pickup orders,” continues Winsky, who says the TPD hasn’t had a single use of force during an involuntary commitment pickup since establishing MHST. “The other thing centralizing pickup orders has done for us is, it’s allowed our officers to learn about the population. You tend to get the same people over and over again, and my officers have established rapport with those people.”

That rapport is one of several key ingredients that help MHST officers build trust and de-escalate situations with mentally ill individuals. Other ingredients are officers’ plainclothes uniforms and unmarked vehicles—which reduce the stigma, anxiety, and embarrassment felt by individuals during police encounters—and officers’ training, which includes eight hours of mental health first aid training at the recruit level, 40 hours of crisis intervention training as an elective, and a 10-hour advanced refresher crisis intervention training course.

Although persons with mental illness are more likely to come into contact with police as suspected offenders, and more likely to be arrested, most of these police contacts do not arise from criminal behavior; rather, they occur when police are asked to respond to a person in emotional crisis.\textsuperscript{36} “You might spend four hours training an officer how to put someone in jail, but we spend the exact same amount of time training officers how to not put that same person in jail,” notes Winsky, who says MHST manages mental health training for all TPD officers.

Although approximately 65 percent of its police force is trained in crisis intervention, what makes TPD’s training effective isn’t the quantity of officers who complete it, but the quality of training those officers receive. “A lot of crisis intervention trainings around the country are just cops teaching cops,” Winsky observes. “Here, over 80 percent of our 40-hour course is taught by people who are not police officers; it’s taught by psychiatrists, professors, judges, clinicians, mobile teams, behavioral health professionals, social workers, and lawyers . . . . We even bring in the consumers of the system and their family members to talk about their experience with the system. It’s very hands-on.”

Also “hands-on” are the detectives who constitute MHST’s second primary function: investigation. In order to stop mental health issues from escalating into public safety threats, they review more than 8,000 cases a year looking for at-risk individuals who need to be connected or re-connected to the behavioral health system. On criminal cases, they work with the mental health and criminal justice systems to determine a case outcome that will meet the needs of both the individual and the public. On noncriminal cases—including so-called “nuisance” complaints such as vagrancy, suspicious activity, and public disturbance—they look for evidence of mental illness and coordinate interventions with appropriate behavioral health system partners.

\textsuperscript{36} International Association of Chiefs of Police, Improving Police Response (see note 14).
"Police departments around the country have burglary detectives and domestic violence detectives, but they don't have suspicious activity detectives. We do," states Winsky, who says patrol officers refer to MHST all cases in which there is an individual who wasn't arrested but who nonetheless needs additional scrutiny. "We're looking for that needle in a haystack—that person who is escalating slowly over time and building up to doing something really, really bad but maybe hasn't committed a crime yet."

Helping detectives find the "needle in a haystack" are behavioral health system partners with whom MHST has built close and collaborative relationships. One such partner, for example, is Tucson's Crisis Response Center (CRC), a public psychiatric hospital that was opened in 2011 as an alternative to jail for individuals in mental crisis.

"We take thousands of people there every year instead of jail," Winsky says. "We work with them very strategically to determine if there are people going to the CRC over and over again whose needs aren't being met. We've also become part of their discharge planning; if they're discharging someone and they think that person needs a home visit, they'll call us and my team will go check on them."

The results speak for themselves, according to Winsky. "About two-thirds of law enforcement drop-offs to the psychiatric hospital here in Tucson are voluntary," he says. "That tells us two very important things. One, we have a real alternative to jail here, and we're thankful to have that. Two, our cops here know how to sell that service to people who need it."

The final outcome—averted crises—benefits individuals, police officers, and the public at large. "Everyone is safer when the MHST team responds," Winsky concludes.

Camden County (New Jersey) Police Department

Among the most vulnerable citizens in Camden, New Jersey, are sex workers, who are at high risk for rape, physical assault, and posttraumatic stress disorder.37 Because most of Camden's prostitutes are on the streets in order to feed a drug addiction, traditional enforcement solutions—i.e., arrest—generally are ineffectual; when a prostitute is arrested, she is typically back on the streets after her release, according to Lt. Janell Simpson, supervisor of CCPD's Special Victims Unit.

Instead of sanctions, the CCPD decided to try services by partnering with She Has A Name, a local nonprofit established in 2005 to provide assistance to drug-addicted prostitutes. Every month, volunteers accompany the CCPD on prostitution details; arrestees are offered food, clothing, counseling, and—most importantly—the opportunity to enter an out-of-state, inpatient drug treatment program in lieu of sentencing. Although many refuse, some accept. For those that do, the opportunity can be life changing—and lifesaving. "These women want to get clean; they just can't seem to break the habit," Simpson says. "If they're ready to change, we'll help them. And even if they aren't, we've at least gotten them off the streets for a few hours."

Hennepin County (Minnesota) Sheriff’s Office

For mentally ill inmates of Hennepin County Jail, an arrest for a nonviolent or misdemeanor offense was too often the start of a long cycle. The environment inside the jail often exacerbated their illness, provoking behavior, such as being unruly or refusing food and medicine, that made expedient release unlikely. As a result, inmates often stayed in jail longer for infractions related to their mental illness than for their original crime. Upon finally being released, many missed court dates through lack of follow-up services, subsequently landing in jail again on a bench warrant. And so the cycle continued.

“I was tired of seeing the same people come into jail for low-level offenses and sit there with nobody to care about them,” says Hennepin County Sheriff Richard Stanek. “We have an obligation to do better than that.”

A series of reforms beginning in 2011 have changed the way the Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office approaches mental health. For instance, it has educated deputies about alternative resources they can leverage instead of jail when responding to mentally ill individuals; established an “Integrated Access Team” composed of social workers who line up services and resources for mentally ill inmates before they are released from jail to ensure a smooth transition; and incorporated mental health professionals on the front end of the jail intake process to identify inmates with mental health needs so they can be diverted or cared for appropriately. It also has hired a mental health case manager to provide on-site psychiatric care for mentally ill inmates once booked; mandated CIT training for all deputies; and established relationships with local courts, with whom Stanek collaborates to ensure inmates are sentenced to state treatment facilities instead of jail when they need specialized care. Finally, in 2016, it conducted a “One-Day Snapshot” on mental illness in its jail, quantitative findings from which it can use to obtain support for additional services.

“We discovered that 52 percent of the people in my jail—one half of our booking population—suffers from treated or untreated mental illness,” Stanek concludes. “We obviously have a problem, and we’re trying a number of different initiatives to get people the wraparound services they need.”

San Antonio (Texas) Police Department

On his first day as a police officer with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), Monty McCann arrested a homeless man for public intoxication. Twenty-three years later, that same man still lives on the streets in downtown San Antonio. “Every day we were doing the same thing over and over again expecting a different outcome, but what we were doing didn’t help our homeless population one bit,” says McCann’s partner Officer Joe Farris. “That gentleman shows you just how ineffective it was.”

Although it wasn’t doing anything to reduce homelessness in San Antonio, the status quo—issuing tickets, making arrests, and moving people along—was all McCann and Farris had. That is, until January 2016. “Our supervisor recognized that the traditional formula wasn’t working, so we were tasked with trying something different,” McCann says. “Our only marching orders were to be creative and think outside the box.” Because they had recently received crisis intervention training from SAPD’s Mental
Health Unit, McCann and Farris decided to apply the same principles to homeless outreach by creating a network of social service providers who could collaboratively address homelessness the same way the behavioral health system collaboratively addresses mental illness.

The product of their vision is the Homeless Outreach and Positive Encounters (HOPE) Team, a unit of plainclothes officers—similar to the Atlanta Police Department unit—whose main objective isn’t policing the homeless community, but rather helping it.

“What we advocate is compassion and accountability: If you’re responding to a crime in progress, then bring a criminal response. If you’re not, bring a crisis response,” McCann says. “Our goal isn’t arresting people; it’s connecting the homeless population to the service providers that are there for them.”

To that end, the HOPE Team—including McCann, Farris, and three part-time officers they have trained—focuses on three primary activities: interacting with San Antonio’s homeless population, whom it assists with finding food, shelter, health care, and employment; communicating with service providers about what needs exist in the community and what services they can offer to meet them; and training fellow SAPD officers in CIT principles in pursuit of an agency-wide pivot in police-homeless relations.

Although their colleagues initially were skeptical, McCann says the HOPE Team’s approach has catalyzed exactly the paradigm shift they hoped it would. “When you take a person who’s literally sleeping on the concrete day in and day out, and you’re able to help them reconnect with a family member, or seek treatment for a medical condition they have, or start caring enough to clean themselves up, that brings a new level of satisfaction to your work,” McCann says. “That kind of success is contagious.”
CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING POLICING IN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS STRATEGIES

"Positive police contact facilitates public confidence."  
—Sue Rahr, Sheriff (ret.), King County, Washington, and Stephen K. Rice, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, Seattle University

Based on the final task force report and its six pillars, on the Advancing the 21st Century Policing Initiative, and on information gathered by the IACP’s One Mind Campaign, the IACP has arrived at the following eight considerations for law enforcement agencies developing strategies for policing vulnerable populations.

**Consideration 1. Build a multidisciplinary coalition of community partners.**

Whole-community problems demand whole-community solutions. Law enforcement agencies should therefore take a collaborative approach to addressing challenges such as homelessness, mental health, and addiction, which permeate the criminal justice system but also reach well beyond it. Specifically, law enforcement agencies should build a multidisciplinary network of close-knit partners who can take coordinated action in support of individuals and against the systemic challenges those individuals face. Partners may include but should not be limited to the following:

- Criminal justice professionals: Public defenders, district attorneys, probation and parole divisions, corrections departments, and courts, among others, are important stakeholders who can help law enforcement agencies remove systemic barriers that keep vulnerable populations entrapped by negative circumstances.

- Health practitioners: Because they are conduits to recovery for many vulnerable populations, the public and private health systems are critical partners to law enforcement agencies, who can leverage their resources to drive positive outcomes both for at-risk citizens and for the communities in which they live.

- Social service providers: Progress for vulnerable populations hinges on having access to services in areas such as housing and employment. Although they are ideally positioned to help citizens discover and access them, law enforcement officers are not equipped to deliver such services. Social service providers who have the requisite education, experience, and resources are therefore essential fixtures in every community-partnership ecosystem.

---

Consideration 2. Embrace alternatives to arrest.

Criminal arrest and prosecution are appropriate remedies for criminal acts. For minor offenses and noncriminal behavior, however, book-and-release tactics can be expensive, ineffective, and unjust, perpetuating and exacerbating challenges in vulnerable populations instead of resolving them. Law enforcement agencies should empower police officers and deputies in those circumstances to use alternative remedies such as drug and alcohol treatment, hospitalization, and other diversionary programs, when appropriate, as these outlets can simultaneously help citizens, save money, and reduce recidivism.

Consideration 3. Assign dedicated resources to community problems.

The problems facing vulnerable populations are numerous and complex. Casual and haphazard approaches are therefore insufficient and ineffective. Instead of Band-Aids offering temporary relief, law enforcement agencies need sustainable solutions that facilitate long-term gains through incremental progress. Such gains are possible only when agencies devote dedicated time and resources to the problems and populations that need them, building personal relationships that over time yield the trust, appreciation, and respect that law enforcement agencies require to be effective in the communities they serve.

Consideration 4. Appoint passionate police personnel.

Because their job requires them to regularly confront their communities’ worst attributes, remedies to which can seem evasive, police officers are understandably prone to cynicism. To positively impact vulnerable populations, law enforcement agencies need to entrust their progressive policing programs to officers and leaders who are capable of creating change by virtue of believing that change is possible. Such individuals are well-positioned to channel intangible passion and positivity into tangible outcomes.

Consideration 5. Consider community perception of police presentation.

For law enforcement agencies, success hinges on engagement, and engagement on trust. Unfortunately, a history of negative perceptions and interactions with police has made many vulnerable populations skeptical of law enforcement. In this context, their uniforms can sometimes be a distraction to officers seeking inroads with at-risk individuals and communities. When appropriate, wearing soft uniforms and driving unmarked patrol cars can help law enforcement officers transcend police stereotypes and ingratiate themselves with populations that may historically have seen police as a threat instead of an asset.
**Consideration 6. Use crisis intervention training to improve policing outcomes for citizens, police officers, and communities.**

Crisis intervention training for first responders promotes community partnerships, de-escalation techniques, and prearrest jail diversion for citizens experiencing a mental health crisis. Using crisis intervention strategies to police vulnerable populations not only promotes a more humane police culture, but also improves policing outcomes for both citizens and police officers, whose safety is compromised when situations are allowed to escalate toward use of force.

**Consideration 7. Leverage evidence-based education to engender empathy.**

Law enforcement agencies must embrace, promote, and practice empathy in order to successfully resolve crises facing vulnerable populations. Education—delivered by expert practitioners instead of fellow police—can unlock such empathy in officers who lack it by helping them see vulnerable citizens as victims of negative circumstances rather than products of poor choices. Officers who understand the biological underpinnings of addiction, the hereditary causes of mental illness, and the economic forces behind homelessness are more likely to approach individuals affected by them with sympathy instead of suspicion.

**Consideration 8. Generate long-term support by tracking and measuring outcomes.**

Success begets success. Law enforcement agencies’ progressive policing initiatives can therefore go farther, faster when they include analytical components through which to measure longitudinal outcomes. Quantitative evidence gathered through such means can make it easier to secure internal and external resources, attract new leaders and partners, and win over skeptical officers and citizens, all of which can catalyze investment and reinvestment in programs so they can be continued, refined, and expanded to the benefit of vulnerable populations.
CONCLUSION

“Policing … is about real and sustainable efforts to make differences within our communities.”

—Eric Jones, Chief of Police, Stockton, California

Policing in vulnerable populations is inherently challenging. Although law enforcement’s mission—to serve and protect—is the same in vulnerable communities as in society at large, the circumstances under which it must be executed can be dramatically different. In particular, citizens suffering from mental illness, addiction, homelessness, and other social maladies have distinctive needs and characteristics that raise the stakes of police encounters by imposing extra demands on law enforcement, as well as extra risks. Responding to such individuals in a way safe for all stakeholders requires police officers to assume new responsibilities outside the bounds of traditional law enforcement.

Indeed, police officers increasingly find themselves sharing duties with social workers, community organizers, and other advocates. Although their newfound roles can burden law enforcement officers with new obligations, they also can introduce them to new opportunities for making positive impacts in the communities they serve. The result—material progress toward solving deeply rooted social problems—can simultaneously improve citizens’ lives, reduce recidivism, decrease crime, and remind police officers why they entered law enforcement in the first place.

As guardians of their communities, it is law enforcement’s responsibility to improve life and enhance public safety for all their neighbors. Working with community partners and stakeholders, law enforcement can develop strategies that accomplish both.

APPENDIX A. HISTORY OF THE TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING

Trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve is essential in a democracy. Following several high-profile events that exposed rifts in this relationship, President Obama established the Task Force on 21st Century Policing on December 18, 2014. The task force, comprising experts in the fields of policing, criminal justice, civil rights, academia, and other arenas, heard testimony from stakeholders around the United States and identified best practices to reduce crime and build trust between the public and law enforcement, with an emphasis on mutual respect and fair and equitable treatment.

The Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing set forth six main topic areas, or pillars, found to be essential to healthy community-police relations: (1) building trust and legitimacy, (2) policy and oversight, (3) technology and social media, (4) community policing and crime reduction, (5) training and education, and (6) officer safety and wellness. Within these pillars, the task force laid out 59 recommendations with 92 action items. These practical steps provide a road map to help law enforcement and communities move forward to mend and strengthen relationships.

Pillar 1. Building Trust and Legitimacy

A law enforcement agency must not be seen by the community as an occupying force but rather as a legitimate, trusted, and fair authority. Embracing a guardian rather than a warrior mentality will help law enforcement gain the trust and respect of those they serve. This can be achieved through positive, nonenforcement activities (e.g., Coffee with a Cop, National Night Out, or officer athletic or activity leagues) that engage the community. The task force also recommended that agencies adopt procedural justice as their guiding principle and establish transparency and accountability to ensure that decision making is understood by citizens. Last, creating a diverse workforce that mirrors the community will increase trust building.

Pillar 2. Policy and Oversight

An agency’s policies should reflect community values. An agency can ensure this by developing comprehensive policies and responsive strategies “that reduce crime by improving relationships, increasing community engagement, and fostering cooperation.” Clear and comprehensive policies that ensure formal checks and balances and data analysis are critical. For example, an agency should make sure that its SRO policy states that SROs should never enforce school discipline rules and are there only to enforce crime problems.

40. For background on the task force implementation, findings, and recommendations, read the Final Report of the President’s Task Force (see note 2).
41. Final Report of the President’s Task Force, 2 (see note 2).
Pillar 3. Technology and Social Media

Through the use of technology and social media, law enforcement can engage the community (particularly youth) and educate and inform citizens in an up-to-date and evolving way. Implementing new technologies can allow police departments an opportunity to engage the community in a discussion about their expectations for transparency, accountability, and privacy. Agencies also should monitor social media for enforcement purposes and learn about the issues that are important to the community. Using social media can also help keep the community informed about major events and provide up-to-date reports on live incidents.

Pillar 4. Community Policing and Crime Reduction

By encouraging and implementing policies that support community-based partnerships, officers can reduce crime and increase trust. Working alongside residents to identify problems and collaborate on “implementing solutions that produce meaningful results” for all engages residents, provides them with a stake in the outcome, and promotes mutual respect.42

Pillar 5. Training and Education

Cadets, line officers, and executives should respond to the challenges of modern policing. Academy and in-service trainings should focus on previously unaddressed subjects such as mental health, cultural differences, and youth brain development. High-quality, effective training, particularly that which comes from a highly regarded academic institution, will enable officers to better understand the diverse populations with which they work.

Pillar 6. Officer Wellness and Safety

The stress that accompanies being a law enforcement officer cannot be understated. For this reason, the mental and physical health of officers is crucial to effective and equitable policing, which is why promoting safety and wellness throughout an agency is important. Endorsing practices that support officer safety and wellness (e.g., evaluating and adjusting shift lengths or requiring officers to wear bulletproof vests) will enable officers to better do their jobs.

42. Final Report of the President’s Task Force, 3 (see note 2).
APPENDIX B. THE ADVANCING 21ST CENTURY POLICING INITIATIVE AND ITS 15 MODEL SITES

The Task Force on 21st Century Policing’s goal of transforming the thinking and organizational approach of U.S. law enforcement is intended to be applicable to every size and type of law enforcement agency. Given the local design of the U.S. law enforcement model, it is critical that local agencies adapt the implementation of the task force recommendations to fit their individual needs and capacities. Agencies ready to implement the task force recommendations will need to develop strategies to achieve such change.

In May 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and CNA (a nonprofit research and analysis organization), launched the Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative, which provides evaluations and technical support to the following 15 state and local law enforcement agencies that already have made strides in implementing the task force recommendations:

1. Albany (New York) Police Department
2. Arlington (Texas) Police Department
3. Atlanta (Georgia) Police Department
4. Camden County (New Jersey) Police Department
5. Columbia (South Carolina) Police Department
6. Doral (Florida) Police Department
7. Gun Lake Tribal Public Safety Department (Michigan)
8. Hennepin County (Minnesota) Sheriff’s Office
9. Indio (California) Police Department
10. Kewaunee County (Wisconsin) Sheriff’s Department
11. Louisville (Kentucky) Metro Police Department
12. Lowell (Massachusetts) Police Department
13. San Antonio (Texas) Police Department
14. South Dakota Highway Patrol
15. Tucson (Arizona) Police Department
These agencies vary widely in size, type, and location. Their diversity ensures that the information stemming from the initiative is useful to the greatest number of agencies throughout the United States.

Armed with lessons and information learned from these sites, the IACP and the COPS Office have created a series of companion guides to the final task force report. This series, Practices in Modern Policing, focuses on common and emergent themes from the report and highlights programs from the 15 sites. In each case, it is important to note that post-implementation studies will be needed to measure the impact of these new policies and programs.
ABOUT THE IACP

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is the world’s largest and most influential professional association for police leaders. With more than 30,000 members in 150 countries, the IACP is a recognized leader in global policing. Since 1893, the association has been speaking out on behalf of law enforcement and advancing leadership and professionalism in policing worldwide.

The IACP is known for its commitment to shaping the future of the police profession. Through timely research, programming, and unparalleled training opportunities, the IACP is preparing current and emerging police leaders -- and the agencies and communities they serve -- to succeed in addressing the most pressing issues, threats, and challenges of the day.

The IACP is a not-for-profit 501c(3) organization headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia. The IACP is the publisher The Police Chief magazine, the leading periodical for law enforcement executives and host of the IACP Annual Conference, the largest police educational and technology exposition in the world. IACP membership is open to law enforcement professionals of all ranks, as well as non-sworn leaders across the criminal justice system. Learn more about the IACP at www.theIACP.org.
In 2016, the COPS Office, in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police and CNA, launched the Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative. This program provides evaluations and technical support to 15 law enforcement agencies. Because these agencies are diverse in size, location, and other characteristics, their insights and lessons learned can be useful to various other agencies across the nation. Reports on their efforts in the program are published as part of the Practices in Modern Policing series. These reports offer guidance to the field for advancing practices and policies in specific aspects of community policing.

This publication focuses on how law enforcement agencies can build public confidence by serving vulnerable populations more effectively. It illustrates strategies such as coalition building, officer training, and engaging with social workers that work.