

Positive Community-Police Engagement Report

Exploring the Role of Police Foundations in Supporting Community-Police Initiatives



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Dear Readers,

After protests in cities across the country last summer were followed by overwhelmingly negative news reports of harmful and disturbing community-police conflicts, police foundation leaders began to discuss the need to promote positive examples of community-police engagement that take place daily throughout the nation.

Police foundations have been around for almost 50 years. Yet, there has never been a national study of police foundations until the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Foundation commissioned a survey of 250 police foundations that exist in the U.S. and Canada to identify and publicize positive examples of community-police engagement.

The Positive Community-Police Engagement Report is the start of ongoing research on police foundations. The survey of police foundations as successful independent community-led nonprofit organizations provides, for the first time, data to support police foundation continued sustainability and growth.

We hope that an evidence-based approach and findings will counter misconceptions about police foundations and lead to productive dialogue and future support and expansion of police foundations across the nation.

The report highlights many examples of **positive community-police engagement** from police foundations covering small, medium, and large cities spread out across the U.S. and one police foundation in Canada.

The results represent jurisdictions with populations totaling over 39 million people and police/sheriff's departments with more than 50,000 sworn members. Some highlights of the Positive Community-Police Engagement Report include:

- Approximately 78% of police foundation respondents supported their respective police/sheriff's department engaging in positive community youth and police programming involving sports, arts, education, and recreation activities. Moreover, 65% of these police foundations also funded programming supporting essential needs for local youth and their families. This data translates into police foundations supporting community-based programming for food, clothing, and other essential needs in cities with populations totaling more than 25 million people. **Supporting basic human needs of children in communities with a combined population of more than 25 million people is an example of positive community-police engagement.**
- Furthermore, 50 percent of police foundations surveyed also supported adult engagement initiatives. Specifically, 41 percent of police foundation respondents funded community-led safety/crime prevention programming, and nearly 30 percent supported family programs such as parenting classes. Some foundations even reported funding community-based career initiatives such as general resumé and job training programs and specifically focused public safety career programs in communities across the nation, totaling more than 8.5 million people. **Uplifting adults in communities with a combined population of over 8.5 million people is an example of positive community-police engagement.**

- Although almost 80 percent of police foundations surveyed funded technology and equipment, only 14 percent supported weapons, and less than 10% supported gun detection technology. None of the foundations surveyed reported funding police records management systems, computer-aided dispatch systems, vehicle license plate readers, real-time crime centers, or facial recognition software or hardware. The Survey found no data to support police foundations funding police department militarization. On the contrary, survey data showed that police department technology and equipment funding supported many different local police department needs, the most common for service animals (mounted units, bomb dogs, etc.) and community-police communications and emergency or critical incident response efforts, ***all examples of positive community-police engagement.***
- Finally, and as expected by those of us engaged in foundations supporting law enforcement, police foundations reported their continued support for police officer training and wellness programming with de-escalation and crisis intervention training listed as the most common training police foundations support. Similarly, 62 percent of police foundations in the Survey indicated they support officer wellness programs, which means that an estimated 31,000 police officers/sheriff's deputies across the nation could be eligible for wellness services via police foundation support. Ensuring that police officers are well trained and that job stressors affecting their health, especially in 2020, are being supported via funding raised by community-based police foundations is another excellent example of ***positive community police engagement.***

As we anticipate municipal budget cuts across the nation in 2021 resulting from increased costs and decreased revenue due to COVID-19, police foundations, and the public-private partnerships that they represent, will be needed even more. Police foundations may be called upon to take on more community-police engagement as cities seek restoration from 2020 protests. This effort will be necessary for police foundations to help seed and test new community-police engagement programming or partnerships to support needs and strengthen relationships. Our hope is for police foundations to continue to support the positive community-police engagement programming that the Positive Community-Police Engagement Report revealed and introduce new programs to be tested in the field by the law enforcement and public safety agencies that we support.

It is an honor to invite you to read the attached report and to share your thoughts and questions.



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Exploring the Role of Police Foundations in Supporting Community-Police Initiatives

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This project was commissioned by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Foundation. The opinions contained herein are those of the survey respondents or research and do not necessarily represent the position or opinions of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Foundation.

References to specific agencies, foundations, or services should not be considered an endorsement of the services by the author(s) or the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Foundation. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

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Recommended Reference

Herbert, J.L., Hubbert, N., Corona, A., Brody, J., & Bowman, T.L. (2021).

Positive Community-Police Engagement Survey: Exploring the Role of Police Foundations in Supporting Community-Police Engagement.

Introduction

The role of the community is essential in policing. Community-police engagement initiatives are often supported by police foundations, a key nonprofit partner in collaborating and funding community programs. Today, as national discussions emphasize more community engagement in reimagining policing services, the role that police foundations play in supporting positive community-police engagement may become further expanded and enhanced.

The first police foundation was formed in New York City in 1971. Since then, more than 300 police foundations have launched in jurisdictions across the U.S. and Canada. However, in the nearly 50 years that police foundations have existed, little has been written about or research conducted on how these independently established and operated nonprofit organizations work, and more importantly, how they support community-police engagement through donated programming and services to their local police and sheriff's departments.

There has never been a national organizing structure for police foundations. However, during the last 20 years, police foundations have met and coordinated trainings and information sharing at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference Police Foundation Track and presented at Police Executive Research Forum meetings. Moreover in 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services supported a police foundation training and technical assistance project that led to the publication of *Investing in Community Safety: A Practical Guide to Forming and Sustaining Police Foundations*. As foundations have continued to be formed, more is needed to understand promising practices. To fill this research gap and to further explore current operations and trends within police foundations, in September 2020, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Foundation commissioned the Positive Community- Police Engagement Survey and this report.

There are 250 police foundations throughout the United States and Canada, which were contacted and asked to participate in a short survey to collect organizational and operational data about their respective police foundation. Fifty-eight police foundations, or 23 percent of those contacted, participated in the survey. The survey results presented in this report include examples of encouraging community engagement with police and recommendations for strengthening police foundation operational and organizational capabilities.

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions, grouped into three main categories, to capture current community-police engagement activities and learn about police foundation operations. Each of the responding 58 police foundations indicated support for a variety of initiatives that promote ongoing and favorable community-police engagement in three primary support areas: Youth, Adult/Community and Technology/

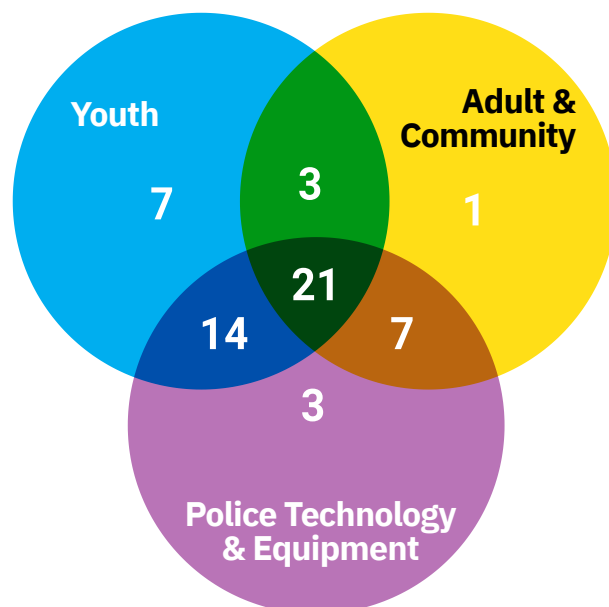
Equipment. Additional details about police professional development demonstrate added value for supporting officer wellness and how this impacts the community.

The details uncovered in these survey areas can be found in the four sections of this report. It is anticipated that this report will encourage policy makers, government leaders, community members, and other non-profit partners to join the conversation regarding ways to effectively support community safety through police foundations.

- **Youth Initiatives** – Activities, programs, events, or other initiatives that support youth development, prosocial, academic achievement, and career development.
- **Adult & Community** – Activities that support adult and/or the overall community for social engagement, crisis support, crime reduction, and other needs
- **Police Technology & Equipment** – Initiatives that support the purchase and/or maintenance of police equipment and technologies.
- **Officer Wellness & Development** – Training efforts and resources that support police or sheriff’s agency personnel.

This report only begins to provide a brief understanding of the role police foundations play in supporting community policing efforts. The variations among police foundation community organizations also suggest the need for a more national, centralized approach to define the purpose and intention of police foundations and other nonprofit collaboration in community policing and police transformation. However, this report does illustrate many examples of current community-police engagement, which can serve as a foundation from a positive viewpoint, upon which to conduct additional study.

Number of Foundations per Area



About Police Foundations

Police foundations are independent nonprofit organizations comprised of local members of their respective communities. Police foundations have existed for nearly 50 years; however, there has been little research on police foundations or their work with other community organizations.¹ Today, local community-based nonprofit organizations throughout the nation are actively taking part in an ongoing dialogue about reimagining public safety, including the role of police. This survey is the first of what is anticipated to be additional studies and recommendations for police foundation enhancements and the role police foundations can play to ensure communities are safe for everyone.

A police or sheriff's foundation (police foundation²) is a partnership between a local police or sheriff's department and members of the community who wish to assist law enforcement in accomplishing their complex and multi-faceted mission. Police and sheriff's foundations directly support their community's local law enforcement with resources to augment services to the public. Police foundations may support or supplement programs and equipment that are not sufficiently funded in a department's regular budget.

Police foundations are organized as nonprofit corporations under Internal Revenue Code § 501(c) (3). Under this statute, the foundations are charitable organizations exempt from paying taxes on the contributions they receive, and donors may also deduct their contributions on their annual tax returns. Foundations must apply to the Internal Revenue Service and comply with its rules and regulations of the state in which the foundation intends to organize to receive this special tax status.³

1. Delany, P. (2011). National Police Foundation Project: Establishing Private Sector Partnerships. United States Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Washington, DC.

2. For the purpose of this report, the term "police foundation" includes police department, sheriff office and sheriff department foundations.

3. Delaney, P., Brody, J., & Andrews, W. (2014). Investing in community safety: A practical guide to forming and sustaining police foundations. United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Washington, DC.

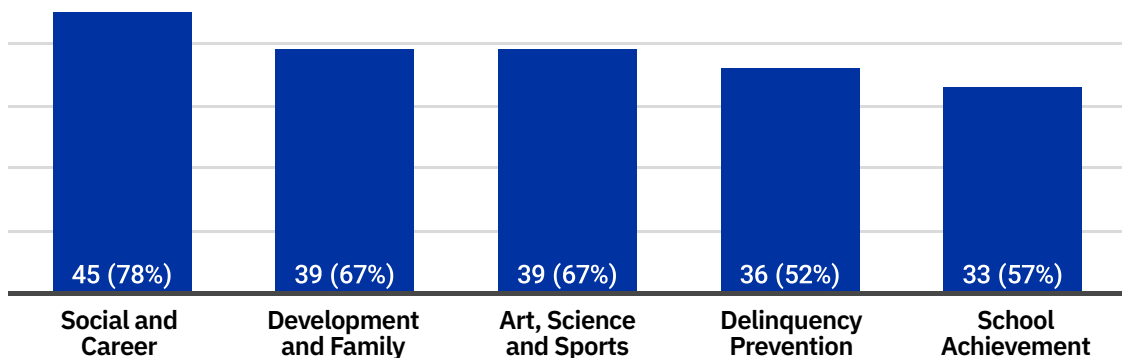
Youth Initiatives

Police Foundation Youth Engagement Programming

Police foundations seek to enhance local community youth engagement through a variety of social, athletic, school-based, and early career initiatives. Youth initiative programs or events are designed for youth and police to collectively participate in educational and recreational activities to build and strengthen relationships, trust, and understanding with one another.

Many of the youth initiatives identified within the survey demonstrate communities focus on creating shared experiences and informal mentorship. Overall, many respondents stated their foundation provides support for youth focused initiatives in general (n=45; or 78 percent). All of these foundations indicated they support social and career initiatives such as career training, ice cream socials, or police explorer programs. More specifically, thirty-nine (67 percent) of foundations support youth development and family needs initiatives such as the purchase of children’s essential needs and/or activity items. The same number of foundations (n=39; or 67 percent) also indicated they support arts, science, and sports initiatives such as organized sports, after school programs, and community youth centers. Further, 36 (52 percent) of foundations also support delinquency prevention initiatives such as youth summer camps, crime intervention initiatives, and alternative incentive programs. Lastly, 33 (57 percent) of foundations support school achievement initiatives such as scholarships and mentoring.

Percentage of Foundation Participation by Activity



Prosocial Activities

The majority of responding police foundations reported they support a variety of interactive (prosocial), educational, and early career programming initiatives. Common prosocial programs and events, such as sports or activity-based mentorship, are intended to build relationships and promote community policing. These efforts contribute to prosocial youth-police activities, as well as formal and informal youth-police mentoring and role modeling, which support youth development.



For example, the **Cleveland (OH) Police Foundation** supports the annual *Kickin' with Cop Series*, which includes community cleanup (*Cleanin' with Cops*), sports activities (*Kickball with Cops*), and skills activities (*Cookin' and Craftin' with Cops*). This series, as well as several others supported by the foundation, connects over 100 children with officers each year for learning and social activities.



Some responding police foundations reported using advanced technology and learning systems to support youth development. *The Options Program [New York City Police Foundation]* uses virtual reality scenario simulation to teach young people how to resolve conflicts and navigate challenging or potentially intimidating situations, including gang recruitment, sex trafficking, cyber bullying, police stops, guns, and hate crimes. The Program also offers internships and job opportunities for select high school graduates. The foundation reported that Program participants aged 14-18 are more likely to be empowered, learn skills, and positively impact their communities.

School Engagement and Achievement

In addition to prosocial activities, police foundations also indicated their support for school engagement or achievement programs. Although causal relationships between youth delinquency and academic achievement are not definitive, there is high correlation between youth behaviors and low-academic performance.⁴ Programs that promote protective factors (e.g., mentors, peer relationships) have shown to improve youth performance in school.⁵

4. Katsiyannis, A., Ryan, J., Zhang, D., & Spann, A. (2008). Juvenile Delinquency and Recidivism: The Impact of Academic Achievement. *Journal of Reading & Writing Quarterly*; 24(2).

5. Christle, C., & Yell, M. (2008). Preventing Youth Incarceration Through Reading Remediation: Issues and Solutions. *Journal of Reading & Writing Quarterly*; 24(2). See also Christle, C. A., Nelson, C. M., & Jolivette, K. (2003). School Characteristics Related to Suspension. National Center for Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice; and also Christle, C. A., Jolivette, K., & Nelson, C. M. (2013). Breaking the school to prison pipeline: Identifying school risk and protective factors for Youth Delinquency. *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal*, 13(2), 69–88.

Examples of Youth Programming Supported by Police Foundations



Kindling Young Minds [Harris County (TX) Sheriff's Office], aims to enhance youth's interest and abilities in reading. The Foundation holds an annual ceremony attended by school, community, and law enforcement leaders to provide student honorees an Amazon Kindle to encourage continued learning after school and during the summer months.



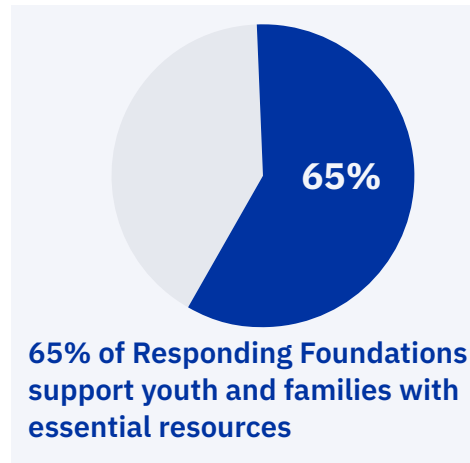
Redondo Beach (CA) Police Foundation supports college youth grants, where winners each receive college grants for being role models and exhibiting "Martin Luther King Jr" qualities.



The **Alexandria (VA) Police Foundation** supports the School Resource Officer-led and coached soccer program among Middle Eastern and Hispanic youth. According to the foundation, *"This program has been extremely successful at building a relationship between students and officers...The students have been attending school more regularly and have shown respect for not only fellow student, but also for players from the other soccer teams. We have been able to provide not only the funding for the teams but also have worked with local stores to provide needed equipment for the teams."*

Youth Development and Family

Approximately 65 percent of responding foundations support the purchase of children's essentials (e.g., clothes, backpacks, school supplies) or activity-related needs (e.g., bikes, helmets). These purchases are supported through one or more of the foundation's fundraising processes which include donations from individuals, foundations or corporations, and partnerships with organizations. Some survey respondents believe these programs help address youth and household poverty.



The Seattle (WA) Police Foundation *Beds for Kids Project* began in 2014 after two officers on a routine call witnessed two young girls sleeping on the floor without a bed of their own. Realizing that many more children in Seattle were living in similar circumstances, the project was born and since has partnered with furniture and shipping companies to purchase and transport more than 1,500 beds to children in Seattle.



The **Huntington Beach (CA) Police Foundation** Shop with a Cop program is held every December. “We ask for our schools to nominate those children whose parents and families are struggling financially and take them shopping. They can choose clothes and gifts for themselves and their family and then get the gifts wrapped ready to give at Christmas. After the shopping, they get to enjoy some snacks. The officers who participate are always enriched by the experience as well as the child and their family. We have targeted specific schools that are in an area that has a high incidence of drugs and gangs. Many of the children have learned to trust the police through this program.”

What is Still Unknown about Police Foundations Supporting Youth Initiatives

Although the survey provides examples of successful community youth-police engagement, additional information is still needed to fully understand the scope and effectiveness of these youth programs. It is common for youth programs to continue without much in the way of evaluation or impact analysis. Youth programs are difficult to assess, especially for justice system outcomes, due to varying impacts and causations among prosocial activities and criminal behaviors.⁶ Moreover, when police foundations report supporting community-youth engagement programming, these programs may or may not involve or track justice system outcomes. Supplementary information is needed regarding these outcomes and plans for measuring them, which may be beyond the scope of the foundation's role in the program. For example, some police foundations support youth programming but have no role in program implementation; while other police foundations directly run and operate youth programming.

More detail about fundraising strategies for youth initiatives is needed. The survey asked respondents general questions about the origin of support for different all areas of programming (e.g., fundraising, donations, in-kind contributions, competitive grant awards). While this demonstrated the array of resources foundations may use, this survey did not collect support details for specific programs. Below are some specific questions that may be explored through future research:

- Do police foundations operate the programs under their foundation, or do they donate funding to others who run these programs?
- What other community organizations and/or public organizations are involved in fundraising and/or program implementation?
- Do private foundations or corporate funders support specific youth programming or all programming?
- Are there public and private grant opportunities for expanding and enhancing community youth and police engagement?
- Which police foundation-supported community youth-police engagement programs have been evaluated, modeled, and/or replicated?
- Have police foundations measured increased youth and police trust and engagement resulting from these initiatives?

6. Wright, B.R.E., Caspi, A. Moffitt, T. and Silva, P. (2006). The Effects of Social Ties on Crime Vary by Criminal Propensity: A Life-Course Model of Interdependence. *Criminology*, 39(2). See also Ashton, S., Ioannou, M. , Hammond, L., & Synnott, J. (2020). The relationship of offending style to psychological and social risk factors in a sample of adolescent males. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, 17(2). And also Payne, A.A., & Welch, K. (2013). The Impact of Schools and Education on Antisocial Behavior over the Lifecourse. *Handbook of Life-Course Criminology*, pages 93-109.

What's Next for Youth Initiatives?

Additional information on how police foundations work with youth is needed to better understand the role of police foundations in community youth-police engagement as well as to support and serve as a catalyst for replication of promising practices in other cities. The focus of police foundation initiatives on prosocial activities and incentives indicate the desire to further these approaches within communities to ensure youth have essential needs, positive peer relationships, and access to future resources (e.g., college, career readiness). Learning more about how police foundations communicate intended outcomes with their respective police agency and the community is an important next step.

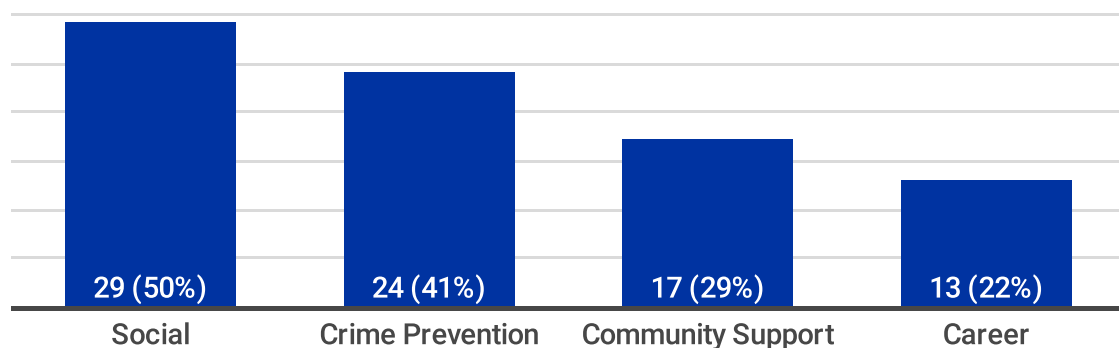
Future efforts to evaluate the roles of police foundations in supporting youth programs may benefit from the collection of additional details to inform how police foundations operate and to replicate successful strategies. In supporting youth programs in the future, police foundations may wish to consider implementing performance measures and key performance indicators for program activities. These outcomes may support additional program resources (e.g., volunteers, funding), evaluating youth needs, and further inform community policing efforts, which may in turn expand and enhance the role of police foundations.

Adult and Community Initiatives

Adult-centric (e.g., job training) or general community events (e.g., Coffee or Lunch with a Cop) seek to replicate the same prosocial and supportive youth activities among adults and officers. Fifty percent (n=29) of responding police foundations reported that they support programs for adults or in their communities at-large. These efforts are primarily social activities, such as family fun days and community picnics, allowing casual conversation and interactions among officers and community members.

Crime prevention education and related services are common police/sheriff's department activities that are funded through police foundations.⁷ Over 41 percent (n=24) of total responding police foundations support community-led safety/crime prevention programming. Moreover, nearly 30 percent (n=17) of respondents fund adult community support programming such as parenting classes and helping families in need. Additionally, 22 percent (n=13) of police foundations support community-based career initiatives including general resumé or job training and specifically focused public safety career programming. Exemplifying police foundation's support of crime prevention education services, the St. Louis (MO) Police Foundation supports a police cadet program that encourages St. Louis public high school graduates to consider a public safety career through a paid job in the police department until they finish college and/or are old enough to enter the police academy. They also offer college tuition scholarships for up to 50 cadets/year.

Percentage of Foundation Participation by Activity



Some police foundations have expanded into supporting more complex services or community outreach due to economic challenges and victimization rates in their community. For example, several foundations indicated their involvement in victim support, homeless outreach, crisis recovery, and housing or financial assistance. Additionally, some police foundations reported supporting community reentry initiatives. Moreover, as efforts to reimagine policing include more collaborative approaches with a public health and social work focus, police foundations may be key partners in piloting response programs in cities across America.

7. Delany, P. (2011). National Police Foundation Project: Establishing Private Sector Partnerships. United States Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Washington, DC.

Examples of Adult and Community Programming Supported by Police Foundations



Kansas City (MO) Police Foundation provides seed funding for social workers to work directly out of six patrol divisions with line officers to be able to immediately support families in need.



Harris County (TX) Sheriff Foundation funds specialized training for sheriff's deputies on re-entry programs for incarcerated Veterans, [persons] recovering from addiction, and sex trafficking victims.



The **Vancouver (Canada) Police Foundation** funds *Safety Resource Kits* for domestic violence victims. Each kit is tailored to the individual and can contain grocery or drugstore cards, emergency whistles, hand sanitizer, a 911 cell phone or phone minutes, protective cloth masks, emergency snacks and more. With no time to gather basic supplies before they flee, domestic violence victims often have limited financial resources to assist themselves and their children, making victims feel pressured to return to their abuser. And sadly, the increased isolation seen due to COVID-19 has resulted in a spike in domestic violence cases in Vancouver, making these Kits even more critical.⁸



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Las Vegas (NV) Metropolitan Police Department Foundation *Holiday Gift and Give Campaign* partners with the community to provide Thanksgiving meals for over 3,000 families. The meals are distributed by officers at all 10 Area Commands. The police department identifies families in need in their area and personally delivers the meals.⁹

8. More information about the Vancouver Safety Resource Kits can be found via their website and/or Facebook page.

9. More information about the LVMPD Foundation holiday meals can be found on their website and/or Facebook page.

What is Still Unknown about Police Foundations Supporting Adult and Community Initiatives

As with youth programming, the survey reveals that many police foundations support successful, ongoing community adult programming that bring together adult community members and local police. These initiatives cover a wide range of adult needs from pro-social activities to mental health services. Like youth programming, additional details are also needed to identify how police foundations raise funding to support adult-involved community initiatives. Information on how police foundations decide what services to support would be helpful in better understanding the many different programs that were identified in the survey. Future research questions regarding adult programming include:

- How do police foundations decide what adult and community programs to fund (i.e., annual/semi.annual ‘wish list’ submitted to police foundation from Chief (LA Police Foundation) vs. rank/file filling out online needs forms that are submitted directly to their police foundation (St. Louis Police Foundation), or a hybrid of these models?
- Do police foundations apply for competitive grant funding for specific adult programming needs? Are research partners involved in obtaining funding or participating in/evaluating adult programming? There are federal and private grants opportunities for many of the adult programs listed in the survey. Nonprofits, like local police foundations, are eligible applicants.
- How do police foundations track performance metrics for adult programs? What do outcomes reveal?
- Do police foundations share promising and best practices with each other?
- As reimagining policing discussions are taking place in individual communities and in state and federal government, have any police foundation leaders been asked to participate in working groups/task forces or been invited to webinars/online discussions?
- Are police foundations asked to work with local government leaders on homelessness and reentry strategies?
- Do police foundations mission statement enable them to raise funding and donate outside their police/sheriff’s department?
- Do police foundations promote community police engagement efforts on social media, in print media, or by other means?
- Do any of police foundation’s adult programs fit into locally led social justice programming? Follow up research is needed regarding how police foundations, as a locally focused community non-profit, support social justice programming goals.

What's Next for Adult and Community Initiatives?

Police foundations offer a variety and range of adult programs, including many that focus on adults engaging with police through prosocial activities as well as some that offer interventions and support for adults who need assistance. Learning more about police foundations and their work with adults, measuring successful programs, and developing strategies to replicate promising and best practices in other police foundations across the nation can help to build and strengthen trust between the community and police.

Evaluating programs supported by police foundations will help promote program effectiveness with donors as well as enhance police foundation legitimacy. Incorporating an evidence-based, data-driven approach to championing the role that police foundations play in communities across the country can help bolster existing police foundation fundraising efforts, provide more information and transparency, and support launching new police foundations in other communities.

Police Technology and Equipment

Gathering more information about police foundation-supported technology and equipment is essential to enhancing and expanding community-police communication and relationships. While providing basic police equipment is viewed as the primary responsibility of local budgets, the use of police foundations to fund additional equipment is not uncommon.¹⁰

Survey questions explored how police foundations financially support police technology and equipment across the following three categories:

- **Police Uniforms and General Equipment** (e.g., vehicle maintenance costs, police uniform clothing, community program clothing, police weapons) (n=46; or 79 percent)
- **Computers and Technology** (e.g., radios, automated external defibrillator, hardware, or software) (n=44; or 76 percent)
- **Crime Prevention and Intervention Equipment** (e.g., public space security equipment like cameras, lighting, license plate readers) (n=44; or 76 percent)

Of the responding police foundations, 46 police foundations (79 percent) indicated that they provide funding for one or more these categories. However, within these categories, there is great variation on what is funded. The largest common expenditure for police equipment focuses on support for police animal units. Some of this support is for K9 or mounted/horse units, essential resources in detecting safety concerns in large crowds (e.g., sporting events), public spaces (e.g., parking lots, malls), and general patrols.

For example, the San Diego (CA) Police Foundation funds police service dogs, mobile odor detection canines, tech detection dogs, and narcotics sniffing canines for the K9 Unit, Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, Narcotics Unit and other local and school police departments. According to the foundation, these dogs accomplish multiple important public safety objectives including de-escalating violent confrontations, locating missing persons, recovering evidence, finding child pornography storage devices, locating bombs and drugs, and much more.

Police animal programs also focus on the use of animal therapy to support police and the community. For example, the Albany (NY) Police Foundation supports the local therapy dog program to provide health benefits to both police officers and members of the Albany community. The therapy dogs, Finn and Maxi, were donated to the [police] department, assigned to a handler and are deployed in schools, at community events, at hospitals, in the police stations and in the community during and following high stress and/or crisis events. The therapy dogs also help build positive police-community relationships.

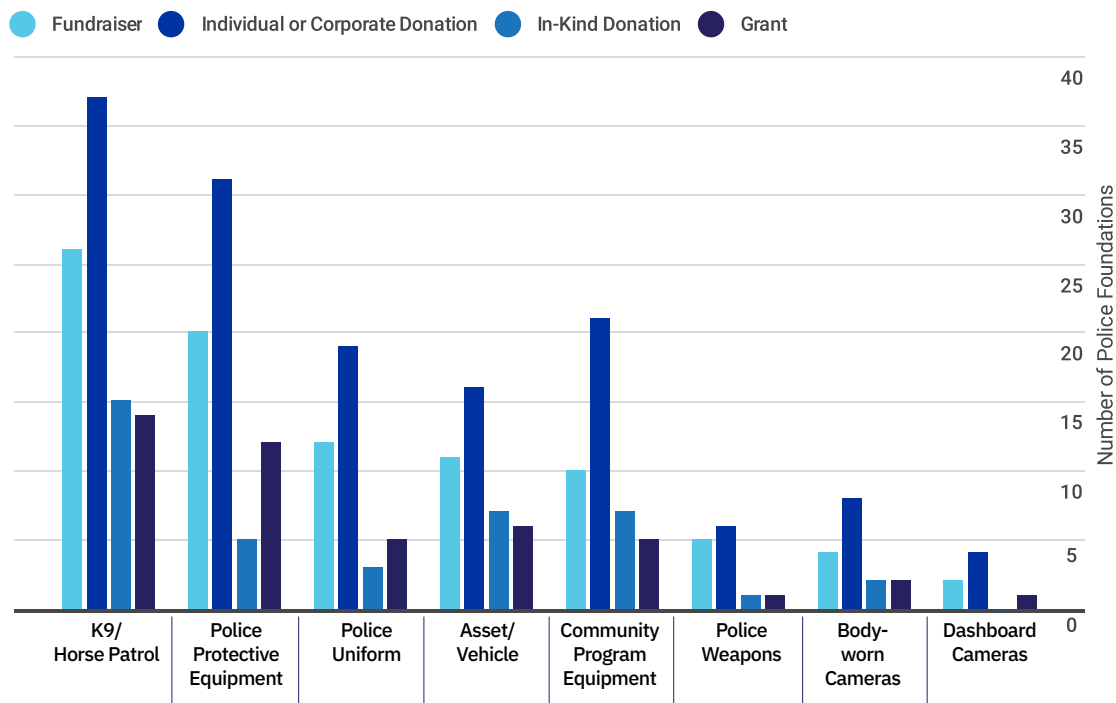
10. Delany, P. (2011). National Police Foundation Project: Establishing Private Sector Partnerships. United States Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Washington, DC.

Several foundations report providing funding to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for officers or the public. Police foundations in Texas, California and Virginia report funding for trauma kits and AED devices in vehicles to support officer emergency responses to critical incidents and help saves lives.¹¹ These efforts close initial gaps in local budget funding and often lead to budgeting changes to ensure these resources are maintained as a standard for the community.



During the pandemic, through unrestricted donations, the **Albany (NY) Police Foundation** purchased a Protexus Electrostatic Sprayer and supply cleaning tabs for the police department to aid in protecting police officers and community members from contracting Covid-19.

Very few police foundations report that they funded gun detection technology (n=5), in-car (n=4) or body worn cameras (n=8), or police weapons (n=8). No foundations reported funding police records management systems, computer-aided dispatch systems, vehicle license plate readers, real-time crime centers, nor facial recognition software or hardware.



11. HarrisCounty (TX) Sheriff Foundation;Huntington Beach (CA) PoliceFoundation;NewportNews(VA) Police Foundations

What is Still Unknown about Police Foundations Supporting Police Technology and Equipment

As police agencies become more reliant on technology resources to protect the public, protect officers, and support crime reduction, more information is needed to further inform stakeholders on how police foundations may be partners in sourcing, piloting, and implementing effective tools.

With communities seeking transparency about funding for weapons and their use, more information is not only needed about what equipment police foundations fund, but also how the technology and equipment supplied by the police foundation is being used. For example, the survey results revealed that few police foundations fund weapons (n=7; or 12 percent), but for those that do, specification on the types of weapons are not captured in this survey. Which weapons police foundations support or do not support can be controversial. For example, there is no distinction between whether funding went or goes toward less lethal force weapons (i.e., CEW – Conducted Electrical Weapon like TASER) or firearms. Further, there is no distinction between those police foundations that fund police protective equipment like bullet-proof vests or police batons. To provide more transparent information to the public, follow-up information will need to be collected that is more focused solely on police equipment and technology.

Additional information regarding how police foundations decide what technology to fund and how they go about procuring technology and equipment is needed. Future studies to collect information about police foundation procurement rules and other policies and procedures would be useful to better understand the impact of police foundations and their utilization as a tool for the public to achieve their reimagined criminal justice system goals.

Some police foundations shift their focus to providing advanced technology that their respective police department wishes to pilot but does not have funding in their budgets to purchase on their own. For example, some departments wish to collect, analyze, and share more crime and quality of life data with their community, hoping to increase transparency and accountability. In other police foundations, such as the St. Louis (MO) Police Foundation, community members can demo the police foundation-funded force option simulator to experience and view firsthand how beneficial these trainings can be as well as to gain a new understanding of the skills officers need to make accurate split-second decisions.

What's Next for Police Technology and Equipment?

Additional research about what role different police foundations play in funding technology and equipment in different communities is needed. One of the more important findings from the results of this survey is that police foundations are very local and as such, focus on local safety needs that are supported by their local police department and community. This may explain why there seem to be so many different technology and equipment initiatives funded by police foundations across the nation.

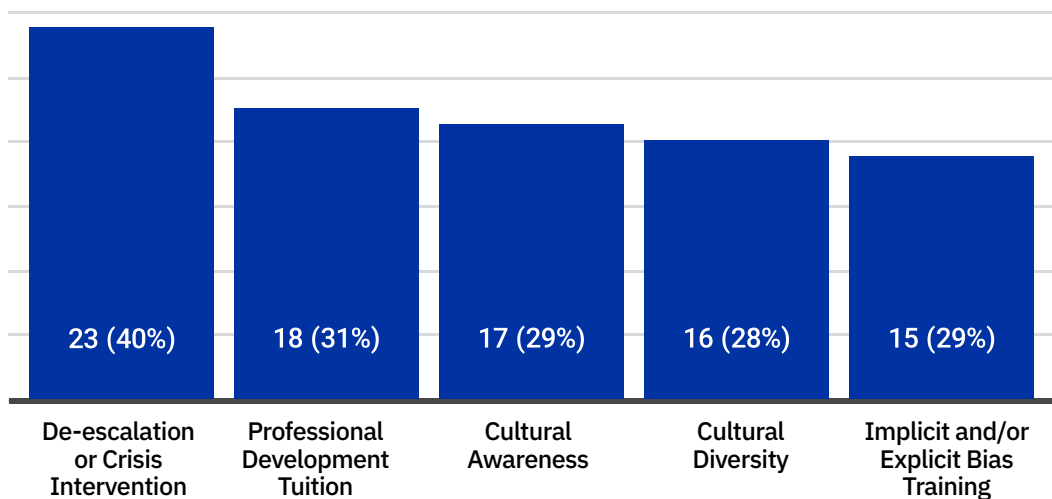
Based on survey results, police foundations are optimally positioned to support technology and equipment pilot programs. These programs can be ideally and transparently structured to determine if the technology or equipment meets community-specific safety goals and objectives. Pilot projects can also be administered and assessed via technology consultants or academic research partners funded by police foundations. In fact, 45 percent of police foundations surveyed report having existing researcher partnerships. These arrangements can help address police foundation staffing and capacity concerns surrounding administering a pilot project program.

Learning more about police technology and equipment is important for sharing information about best and promising practices from users in the field. As local budget cuts and changes resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic and police protests may occur, new cost-effective public safety and funding options are necessary.¹² Police foundations can support the procurement of new technology that can assist police departments in collecting and sharing more data in real time, leading to better communication, trust, and transparency with the community.

12. Deltek market research on State, Local and Education funding decreased by 26% in 2020 Quarter 2. Year over year comparison indicates an overall 15.2% decrease in budgets during the same period

Supporting Officer Development and Wellness

In addition to youth, adult and community, and police technology and equipment initiatives, police foundations also support community safety through officer development and wellness programs. Per survey results, de-escalation and crisis intervention training are two of the most common training programs funded by police foundations with nearly 40 percent (n=23) of all respondents indicating their support. Training support includes funding annual officer training courses, training facilities, and other simulation training resources (e.g., virtual reality) that support de-escalation and non-force decision making techniques.



Eighteen foundations (31 percent of total respondents) indicated they provide tuition reimbursement to officers. While details of the reimbursement programs were not requested, the foundations' support of officer education and development can be tied to more positive community-police engagement. Research indicates that officers with college education have shown to be beneficial in decreasing the use of force and increasing creativity and problem-solving skills.¹³

More than 62 percent (n=36) of police foundations in the survey indicated they support officer wellness programs. Additionally, almost one-third (n=18) of police foundations indicated that they also support behavioral health programming for officers. These services are reported to assist with crisis recovery, stress, and trauma.

13. Rydberg, J., & Terrill, W. (2010). The effect of higher education on police behavior. *Police quarterly*, 13(1), 92-120.

Examples of Officer Development and Wellness supported by Police Foundations



Charlotte-Mecklenburg
POLICE FOUNDATION

“We recently funded, in partnership with the City and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a new de-escalation training facility. The facility will support the training of Charlotte’s public safety personnel to lessen the volatility of encounters and reduce the use of force, ultimately making our community safer. Training will focus on generating voluntarily compliance from a subject during an encounter without having to use force.”

– Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Police Foundation



CENTRAL INDIANA
P O L I C E
FOUNDATION
(Formerly Indianapolis Police Foundation)

“We support social workers at each patrol division station for the last three years and a full-time psychologist was hired by the police department through [our] foundation funding to improve police officers’ health. A healthy department makes for a healthier safer community.

– Central Indiana Police Foundation

What is Still Unknown about Police Foundations Supporting Officer Wellness & Development

The need for increased and improved police training has been in the forefront of the current dialogue on reimagining policing. More detailed information surrounding the types of training police foundations have supported and how they measure the efficacy of that training would be helpful to further promote police foundations' value in police training in the past and their potential future role in helping to identify and support new training needs.

Officer wellness and police suicide is an increasing concern among policing agencies across the country, with recent research indicating more work is necessary on how these programs are delivered to officers and prevent negative outcomes.¹⁴ Additional information about how/if police foundations are working with national and suicide prevention organizations, mental health care providers, and researchers to measure positive impacts would be helpful.

What's Next for Officer Development and Wellness?

Police foundations support of officer development and wellness programming is important because police foundations, as local community-based nonprofits that already work with police, may be asked to enhance their efforts as strategies for reimagining police move forward. Police foundations have a unique opportunity to expand their role as a provider/supporter of new police trainings and officer wellness services.

Research shows that officers that are backed by timely training and have access to wellness supports are better officers.¹⁵ Similarly, communities that show they value and care about their police officers by supporting officer training and needed support services are engaging with local police in a positive and productive manner, which is at the core of working in partnership to keep communities safe. Promoting this effort could be helpful in enhancing and expanding community-police engagement efforts.

A common theme in reimagining policing discussions across the country involves better and quality training for officers.¹⁶ Police training and education has been expressed as a critical piece to professionalize and progress toward better standards.¹⁷ To further develop officers, police foundations could play a key role in supporting training recommendations in their jurisdictions. Police foundations should be represented in police training discussions at the local and federal level.

14. Thoen, M. A., Dodson, L. E., Manzo, G., Piña-Watson, B., & Trejos-Castillo, E. (2020). Agency-offered and officer-utilized suicide prevention and wellness programs: A national study. *Psychological Services, 17*(2), 129–140.

15. Owens, E., Weisburd, D., Amendola, K. L., & Alpert, G. P. (2018). Can you build a better cop? Experimental evidence on supervision, training, and policing in the community. *Criminology & Public Policy, 17*(1), 41-87. See also Cohen, I. M., McCormick, A. V., & Rich, B. (2019). Creating a culture of police officer wellness. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, 13*(2), 213-229.

16. President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. 2015. Final Report. (2015). Washington DC.

17. Brereton, G. (1961). The Importance of Training and Education in the Professionalization of Law Enforcement. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 52*(1).

Conclusion

Police foundations support many different community-police engagement programs in small, medium, and large jurisdictions across the United States and Canada. The scope and range of programming supporting youth, adult, police technology/equipment, police training, and wellness programming is revealed in this novel survey. The results provide examples of successful community-police engagement that showcase positive community and police interactions involving prosocial, recreational, educational, and community/officer wellness activities. However, the range of survey responses also reveals the complexity of police foundation organizations and operations, which leads to further questions.

It is hoped that the survey data and examples will assist community members engaged in current conversations surrounding reimagining police to view police foundations as successful existing community-based nonprofit partners that will continue to help build and strengthen community policing efforts. The Positive Community-Police Engagement Report provides the community and local, state, and federal government leaders with positive examples of community-police engagement to build upon and grow.

Similarly, police foundations have an opportunity to expand their partnerships with other local community organizations to support new community safety perspectives and strategies that individual, corporate, and foundation funders will support. Rather than simply focusing on what changes are necessary within policing, the survey offers information and quantified data about successful community and police engagement that currently exist in hopes of replicating successful programming from a positive perspective.

As national efforts to reimagine policing evolve, it will be beneficial for police foundation representatives to be extended invitations to participate and present their own successful examples and experiences of how to support and increase community-police engagement. Moreover, as national corporations and foundations consider funding community-based efforts to support community involvement in justice reform, consulting with police foundations as trusted and committed community partners could be beneficial by simultaneously collaborating with the community and law enforcement.

Appendix

Appendix Police Foundation Survey Respondent Characteristics

Fifty-eight police foundations or 23 percent participated in the Positive Community-Police Engagement Survey and shared details across the four categories on their successes to support community-police engagement.

Police Foundation Size and Location

The police foundation representatives participating in the survey represent all sized police and sheriff departments ranging from small (n=14 or 24 percent), medium or (n=13 or 22 percent), large (n=30 or 52 percent) in locations spread across all parts of the United States and one police foundation in Canada. The 58 respondents represent communities with populations varying between 2,700 and 8.4 million people.

Police Foundation Board Composition

Police foundations that support larger police agencies (n= 30; or 52 percent) tended to also have larger boards made up of 18 or more members (n = 17; or 29 percent). Of these larger boards, their operational tenure ranged from 5 or less years (n=13; or 22 percent), 6-10 years (n= 8; or 14 percent), 11-15 years (n=7; or 12 percent), 16-25 years (n=8; or 14 percent), and 26 or more years (n=4; or 7 percent).

Of these foundations, respondents indicate that the number of members serving on their foundation board range from five or less (n=3; 5 percent), between 6 and 11 (n=26; 45 percent), between 12 and 17 (n=10; 17 percent), and 18 or more (n=19; 33 percent).

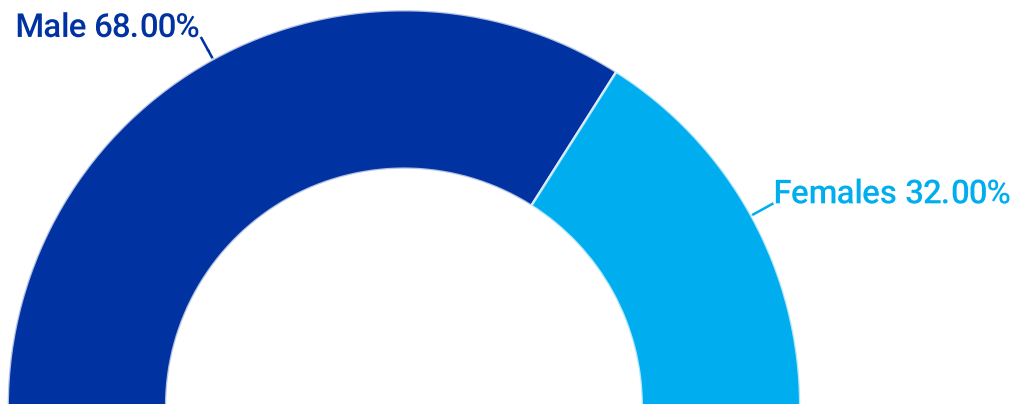
Police Foundation Employees

However, irrespective of the number of years a foundation has operated, all but five of these large foundations (n= 25; or 83 percent) stated they have paid employees and all but four foundations (n=26; or 87 percent) have operated consistently since their inception.

Board Diversity

Demographic information on gender and race/ethnicity were requested for board members. For all responses, a majority of board members are males. While race/ethnicity questions provided a glance per response, this information is based on a single responder not individual self reporting. Followup with boards will be needed to accurately capture this data.

Composition of Foundation Boards



Designated Liaison

More than 90 percent of police foundation respondents report having a specific liaison from the police or sheriff's department that they coordinate with. Strong communication links between the foundation and agency leadership indicates a good partnership and collaboration for programs.

Routine Meetings

Sixty-four percent of police foundation respondents meet with their police/sheriff's department monthly or more illustrating a high level of participation and engagement between these two organizations.