21st Century Policing Task Force Report:
The First Five Years



November 2021

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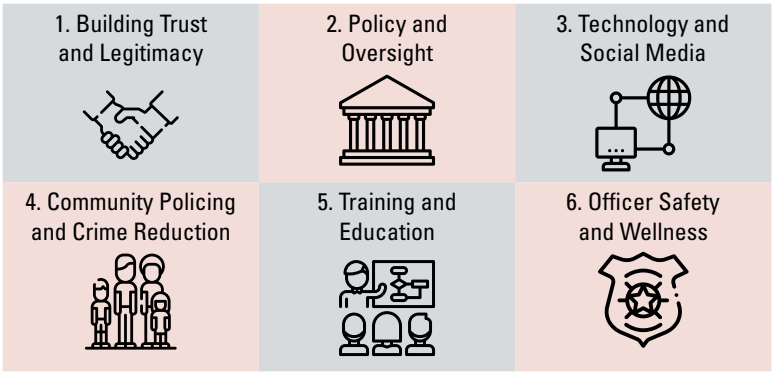
NATIONAL POLICE FOUNDATION
Advancing Policing Through Innovation and Science

I. Introduction and Purpose

Following years of visceral outcry for police reform, President Barack Obama launched The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing ("the Task Force"), which submitted its final report in May 2015. The Final Report of The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing ("the Report")[1] identified action items and recommendations designed to improve police-community relations; promote the stability and integrity of the criminal justice system; and ensure the safe, fair, and effective delivery of policing services.

Since the Task Force concluded its work, the national conversation about policing and police reform has only intensified. In this report, the National Police Foundation (NPF) assesses how the concepts, findings, action items, and recommendations contained in the Report's six pillars impacted law enforcement agencies and policing.

Figure 1. The Six Pillars of 21st Century Policing



NPF's effort was not intended to be a full-scope evaluation of the Task Force or its recommendations. Instead, this assessment was designed to provide an objective review of how the recommendations have been received and enacted in law enforcement agencies between 2015-2020.

The goals of the assessment included:

- exploring the extent to which the principles and strategies that underlie the Report have driven changes in policing or have otherwise been absorbed into the field;
- examining catalysts and inhibitors to the implementation of these principles and strategies; and,
- identifying examples of agencies that have implemented these principles and the ways in which they have done so, or, if they have not, the barriers.

II. Methodology

The assessment was conducted using a mixed methods approach that included an environmental scan (academic research, traditional and social media, and policy evaluation), a survey of law enforcement agencies, semi-structured stakeholder interviews, and case studies. Importantly, it was not intended that a full, scientific evaluation of impact be conducted or that NPF offer recommendations for how the Report and its recommendations can or should be considered today.

III. Context of the Report

The goal of this project was to explore the impact that the Report had on policing. To do this, we focused on understanding the spread and adoption of specific pillar recommendations and action items. We decided to explore issues on this more granular level in order to avoid preconceived notions and politicizations around the Report. In doing so we were able to develop more nuanced and in-depth information about how content in the Report was used by communities and law enforcement agencies to facilitate reform. Critically, this work was retrospective; it was not designed to identify recommendations that should be developed in response to the changing landscape of policing in 2021. Instead, we provide the results of this inquiry to guide future reform and development efforts. We recognize that many communities and progressive agencies have gone beyond Report recommendations and action items. We highlight these approaches where appropriate.

IV. Summary of Findings

This section provides an overview of each component of the assessment. Summarized results of the environmental scan, stakeholder interviews, agency survey, and case studies are provided; more detailed results can be found in the Appendices.

Environmental Scan



Key Takeaways

- The Report offered a common framework to discuss policing and reforms.
- Interest in the report has remained stable over time, suggesting sustained use of the Report as a resource for facilitating police improvements and reform.
- Internet searches for the Report peaked following high-profile events of police misconduct.
- Many of the recommendations of the Report remain consistent with reform efforts made at the state and federal level even more than five years after its release.
- In addition to serving as a foundational element in many legislative proposals, the Report had impact through federal grant resources allocated to many law enforcement agencies.

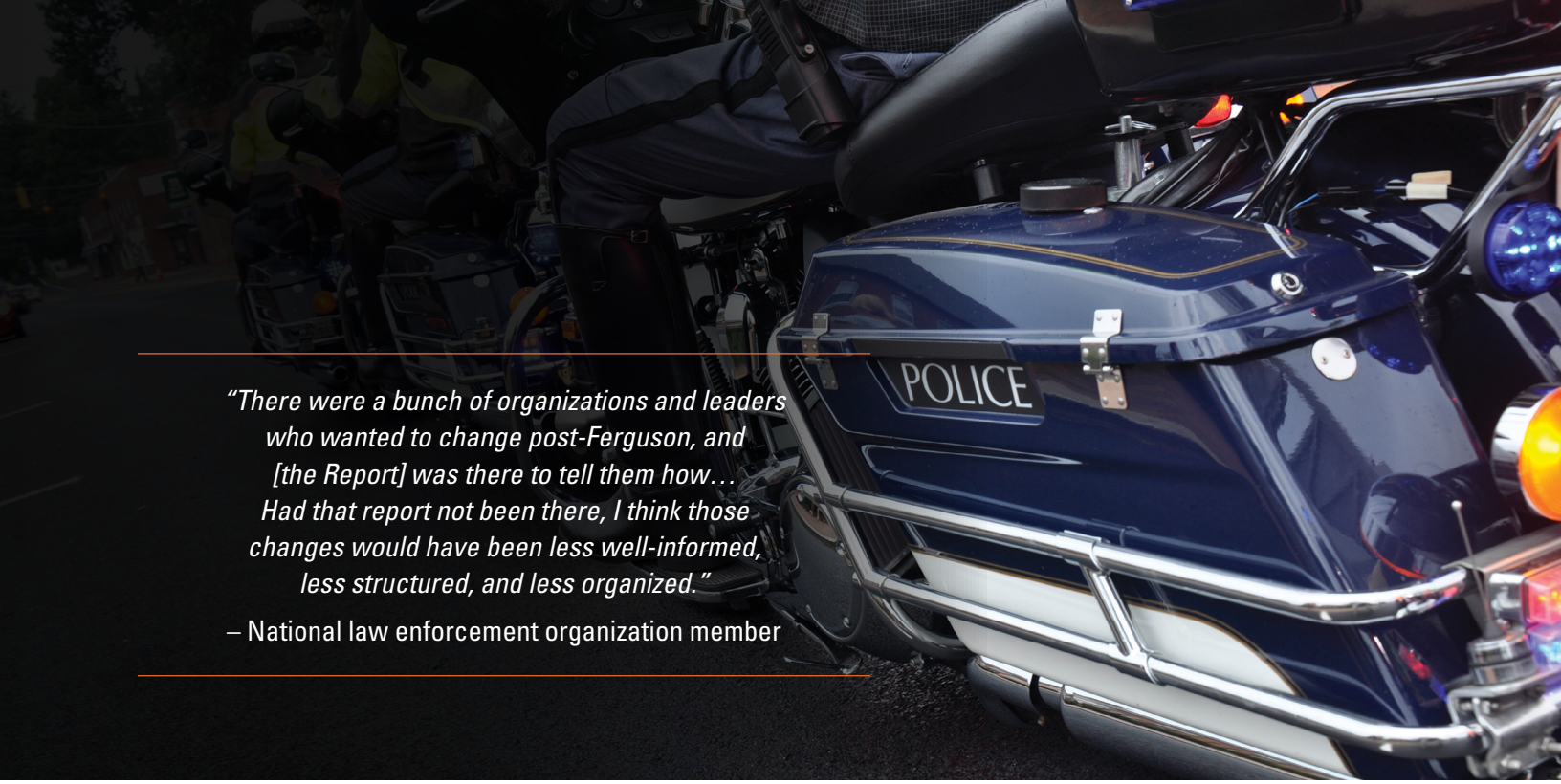
The environmental scan consisted of an examination of academic research, Internet search trends, and policy initiatives associated with the Report. In the five years since its publication, the Report has served as a benchmark and framework for policing reforms. Internet keyword search trends, including queries regarding the Report and its recommendations, have remained stable over time suggesting sustained public interest in policing practices, and continued use of the Report as a resource. Interestingly, Internet searches for the Report repeatedly spiked after high-profile incidents involving police misconduct. Changes to state and federal legislation was often in response to external activism following high profile uses of force; the Report appeared to provide guidance on the substance of those legislative efforts. Even more than five years later, many of the Report's recommendations remain consistent with reform efforts made at the local, state, and federal level. Additionally, the Report's recommendations and action items had an impact on federal grant resources allocated to many law enforcement agencies.

Key Stakeholder Perspectives

Key Takeaways

- Stakeholders were consistent in their support of 21st Century Policing standards and the Report's recommendations.
- Trust and legitimacy (Pillar 1) were still considered the highest priority areas for most stakeholders. The murder of George Floyd re-affirmed the need for transparency and accountability (Pillar2).
- Officer recruitment and retention has affected agencies' ability to implement some of the Reports' recommendations.
- Officer wellness and safety (Pillar 6) was regarded as an increasingly important topic to be addressed. Stakeholders reported that healthy officers were necessary for strong and effective police-community relationships.
- Support for the report was hampered by its politicization. Further support of the Report, and its recommendations and action items, will require reframing it as independent and objective.
- Stakeholders recommended that additional research be conducted to determine the mechanisms that motivate agencies to change, provide guidance and oversight on the implementation process, and better define performance measures and benchmarks.

NPF conducted 46 structured interviews with leaders from national and local government, community organizations, state and local law enforcement agencies, standards and training organizations, community and advocacy organizations, national law enforcement organizations, academia, mayors and city managers, federal organizations, and original Task Force members. Interviews centered on the stakeholders' perceptions of the Report's findings, and implementation of the Report recommendations in the five years following its release.



"There were a bunch of organizations and leaders who wanted to change post-Ferguson, and [the Report] was there to tell them how… Had that report not been there, I think those changes would have been less well-informed, less structured, and less organized."

– National law enforcement organization member

Stakeholders were generally supportive of the Task Force and of the Report's recommendations. Trust and legitimacy (Pillar 1) were still considered to be of utmost importance in American policing for most stakeholders. The murder of George Floyd re-ignited the public's call for transparency and accountability (Pillar2). Interviewees noted that officer recruitment and retention may have negative impacts on agency efforts to implement Report recommendations going forward. Officer wellness and safety (Pillar 6) was regarded as an increasingly important topic to be addressed at the agency-level to not only support healthy officers, but also effective police organizations and community relationships. Many discussed the importance of de-politicizing, to the extent possible, any reform efforts going forward. Finally, stakeholders identified a need for clear guidance and support governing the implementation of the Report's recommendations.

Survey of Law Enforcement Agencies

The NPF team distributed a web-based survey to a non-probability sample of 541 state and local law enforcement agencies to obtain insight into the adoption and diffusion of recommendations and action items found within the Report. Several key findings emerged from survey results. First, and perhaps unsurprisingly, agencies who found the Report to be of high importance were also more likely to have adopted some of the recommendations found therein. Second, municipal and school police agencies and larger agencies were far more likely to be familiar with the Report compared to county agencies and smaller agencies. Finally, the survey found that recommendations associated with Pillar 1, which focused on building trust and legitimacy, had more rapid adoption than the other pillars.

Key Takeaways

- Municipal agencies and school agencies were far more likely to be familiar with the Report.
- County and small agencies were less likely to be familiar with the Report.
- Recommendations associated with building community trust and legitimacy had more rapid adoption that other pillars.



Key Takeaways

- Each site experienced successes and challenges in efforts to implement Report recommendations or in using the Report to guide organizational change.
- Community engagement and transparency was a priority effort for all agencies involved in the case studies. This involved a variety of efforts from implementing civilian oversight boards to deploying body-worn cameras.
- Recruitment, and especially the recruitment of candidates with diverse demographic characteristics and lived experiences, was especially challenging for case study agencies.

Case Studies

The 2015 Implementation Guide provided a myriad of examples from agencies that at that time, were implementing specific Report recommendations. Agencies described in the Implementation Guide reported using the Report in a variety of ways. In some cases, the Report was being used as a framework for discussions with the community on implementing improvements and reform. In Spokane (WA), for example, the police department "set up an internal process to review the task force recommendations and to identify areas for improvement." In other cases, agencies were using the Report to develop better agency performance measures. For example, the Fresno (CA) Police Department developed and surveyed the community to measure sentiment towards the police.

In 2016, as part of the COPS Office's Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative (A21CPI), 15 law enforcement agencies were identified as sites to receive technical assistance in implementing recommendations from the Report. From that work, the COPS Office identified more effective implementation strategies used by those agencies; these strategies were then shared with the field to create change in law enforcement agencies across the country. Case studies were used to provide information on ways law enforcement agencies implemented specific recommendations. As an example, Indio (CA) Police Department focused on internal and external procedural justice recommendations by modifying and adopting policies and training to incorporate procedural justice throughout the department. From their experience, the IPD recommended that agencies bolster policies by incorporating procedural justice through leadership, training, and operations.

We expanded our understanding of the Report's adoption by conducting case studies of different agencies than those highlighted by COPS in 2015 and 2016. In doing so, we sought to identify agencies that were using the Report as a way to guide, frame, or support reform even five years after the Report was published. Four case studies were conducted with agencies selected based on their sustained efforts to implement Report recommendations. These locations were Bend (OR), Washtenaw County (MI), Tucson (AZ), and Boston (MA).

The NPF team interviewed police chiefs and command staff, sworn and non-sworn personnel, and community members regarding perceptions of each agency's efforts to adopt Report recommendations. Each site experienced successes and challenges in efforts to implement Report recommendations or to use the Report structure to guide organizational change. Each agency focused efforts and resources on implementation of different pillars and in a variety of ways. Many used the report as a 'framework' for outlining changes to be implemented going forward. Others used the Report and its recommendations to support and confirm decisions, strategies, and policies that they were already in the process of implementing. For example, the Bend (OR) Police Department had committed to conducting regular surveys on community trust of the department, making departmental policies available to the public online, training a majority of officers in de-escalation and crisis intervention, and for placing a premium on strong officer wellness programs. All of these strategies were supported by recommendations in the Report. Further, community members expressed generally positive views of Bend Police Department.

In Boston (MA), the police department engaged in active efforts to improve the diversity of its officers. Boston PD was lauded by the Task Force for efforts to tackle mental health issues within the community even prior to the release of the Report. The department also convened a formalized Community Engagement Bureau, formed a civilian oversight board, and implemented the use of body worn cameras, all in an effort to increase accountability, transparency, and oversight. Like many agencies, Boston PD grappled with insufficient staffing, the lack of wellness programs for officers, and challenges related body worn cameras governance.

The Tucson (AZ) Police Department has focused considerable effort on improving transparency and community engagement. To further these goals, they implemented a public dashboard that provides data on use of force incidents, arrests, and traffic enforcement, all of which serve to keep the public informed, provide transparency, and bolster community trust. The department also convened a multi-stakeholder Sentinel Event Review Board to review critical incidents. TPD has enlisted roughly 100 community volunteers for scenario-based training to provide feedback on agency performance and communication methods. The agency emphasized maintaining open and thoughtful communication between leaders and rank and file officers, and upholds community-policing principles, transparency, and accountability. TPD faced difficulties with recruitment, the community noted that officers could improve the way they communicate with people of color, and the department's de-escalation training was found to be lacking.

Washtenaw County (MI) Sheriff's Office noted many accomplishments that were consistent with the Report. Using a strategy inspired by the Report, the agency continues to prioritize healthy community relationships. The department created the 21st Century Policing Compliance Commission, organized by the pillars of the Task Force Report and bringing together the community stakeholders and partners, to review WCSO's compliance on Report recommendations. The Sheriff's Office posted policies publicly on its website and made an effort to include the community in everything from scenario-based training exercises to the hiring of new deputies. WCSO also established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. Despite these efforts, WCSO was not immune to issues facing many law enforcement agencies today, with community members citing a lack of trust in how deputies interact with the Black community, and concerns surrounding accountability in use of force incidents.

Conclusion

Half a decade after the Report's release, law enforcement agencies, communities, and stakeholders have made strides in adopting and implementing concepts found in the Report. However, during the time that this project was underway, the murder of George Floyd sparked global protests, demands for reforms in policing, and an end to racism and racial disparities within American systems in general.[2] Racial disparities, anti-police sentiment, lack of police-community trust, and deadly police-civilian interactions starkly underscore the ongoing need for additional police reform.

More work is needed to explore how on-going police reform is perceived by and impacting communities across the United States, particularly communities of color. It is also important to better understand if and how policing is being re-imagined across the nation, as well as the impact of those changes. It is clear that while significant work is still necessary to advance policing and to improve trust and legitimacy in communities, a measured, evidence-based and data informed approach will best service all communities.



Appendix A: Diffusion Assessment Analyses and Findings

A. Environmental Scan

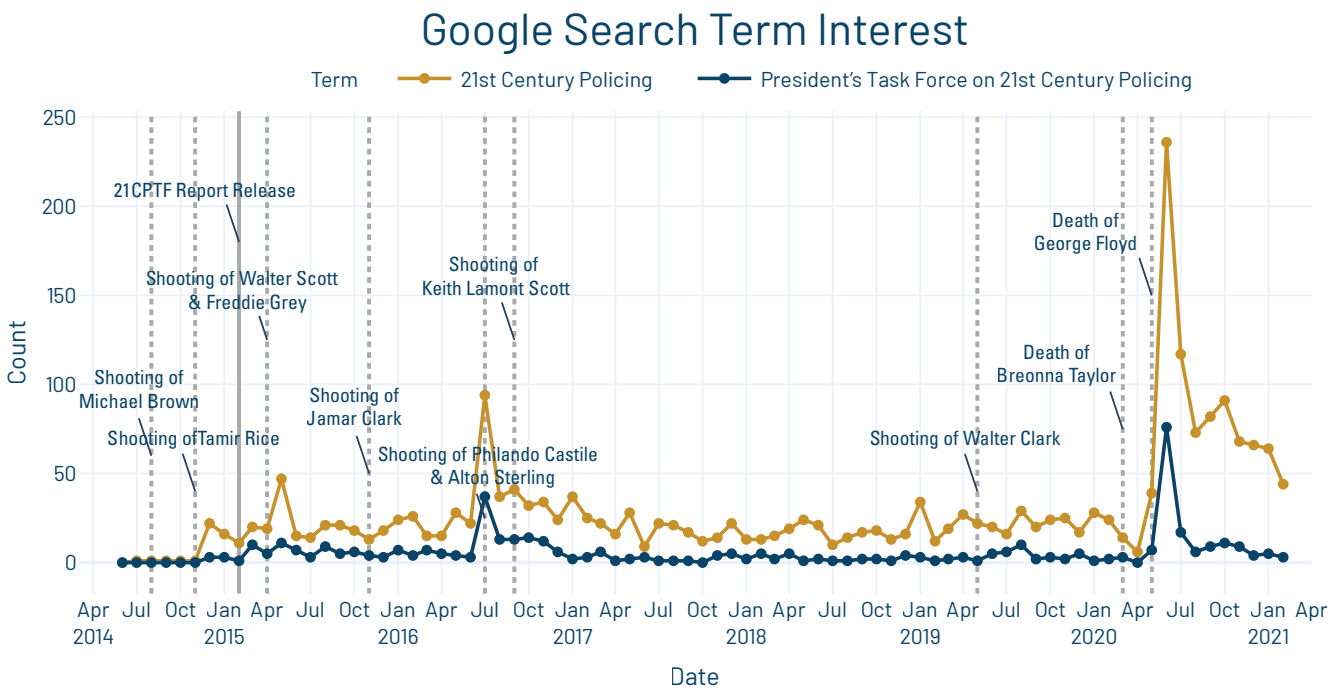
The Report brought attention to pertinent aspects of policing that go beyond traditional crime control functions, advocating for the need to build and maintain trust, legitimacy, and cooperation with the public for effective policing in the 21st Century. Since its publication, the Report has inspired and contributed to numerous empirical studies and academic discussions on policing. For example, researchers have expanded on the Report to explore specific recommendations on procedural justice[3], use of technology[4], providing high-quality training[5], and establishing standard reporting for the use of deadly force.[6] Many law enforcement organizations have embraced the Report as a blueprint for change.[7]

The Report did not go without criticism. Among the most critical, some have described ways in which it did not go far enough. One academic challenged the Report's thesis that legitimacy and trust were the basis for poor police-community relationships. Instead, legal estrangement, whereby communities of color are alienated from society through the legal system's structure was proposed as a more adequate explanation.[8] Others have critiqued the Report's lack of consideration for legislative and judicial dictates that mandate change, relying instead on agencies' own motivation for changing police culture.[9] Importantly, a perceived lack of specificity, guidance, or actionable steps for how to implement certain recommendations, such as community policing philosophy, implicit bias training, or the "warrior" versus "guardian" mindset, were noted as limitations to wide-spread adoption.[10] Others have noted that science needs to catch up to practice, and more research is needed to continue informing the conversation.[11]

Internet Search Data

Analyzing Google search and news data for the five years since the Report's release produced insights into the demand for the Report.[12] Figure 2 illustrates search interest over time within the United States between June 2014 and February 2021. A score of 100 is the peak popularity for the term while a score of 50 means that the term was half as popular relative to its peak, and a score of zero means there were not minimal searches for the term. Notably, many "spikes" in interest can be found following controversial police uses of force, such as the police shootings of Anton Sterling (2016) and Philando Castile (2016), and the murder of George Floyd (2020).

Figure 2. Google Search Term Interest in "21st Century Policing," June 1, 2014 to February 28, 2021

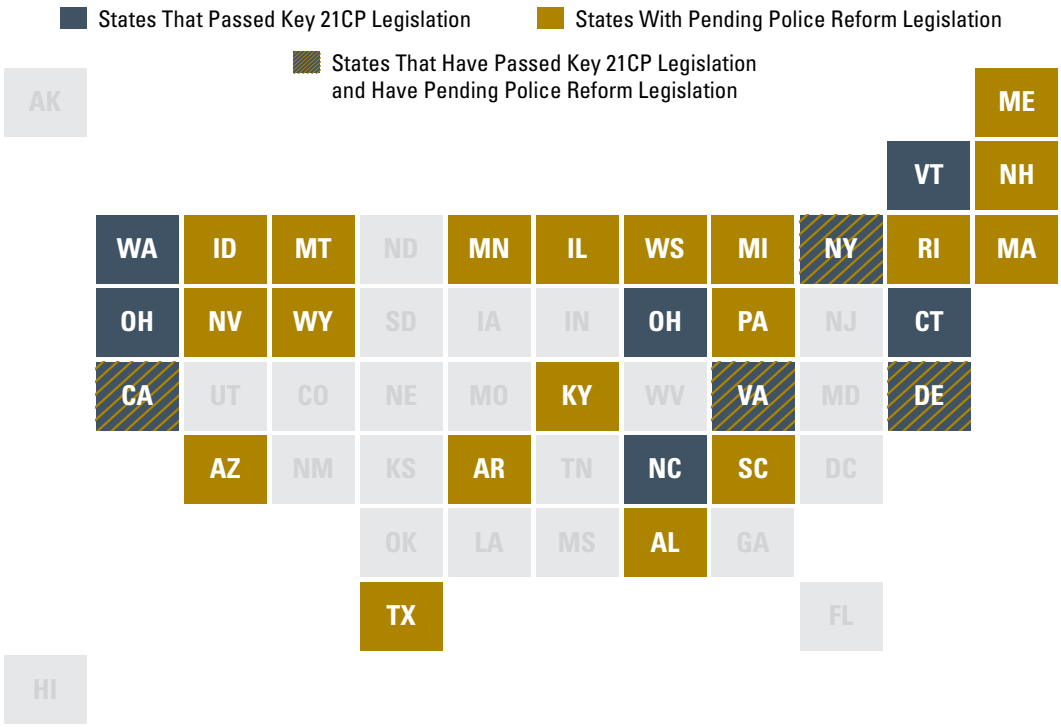


Policy Influence

The NPF assessment team conducted searches for Report-related state and local legislation using Lexis+ and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) database. Key phrases such as "21st Century Policing Task Force" and "President Obama's Task Force" returned seven pieces of legislation passed that directly cited the Report. We expanded our search parameters to include phrases such as "Guardian Mindset" and "Police Legitimacy," which identified more bills. The expanded, more generalized search terms, however, created a mass of legislation that was difficult to link directly to the Report or Task force. Additionally, since "George Floyd's death served as a catalyst for one of the largest social movements in U.S. history," it proved difficult to determine if certain legislation stemmed solely from his murder, or if there were additional influences such as the Report, perhaps not referenced.[13]

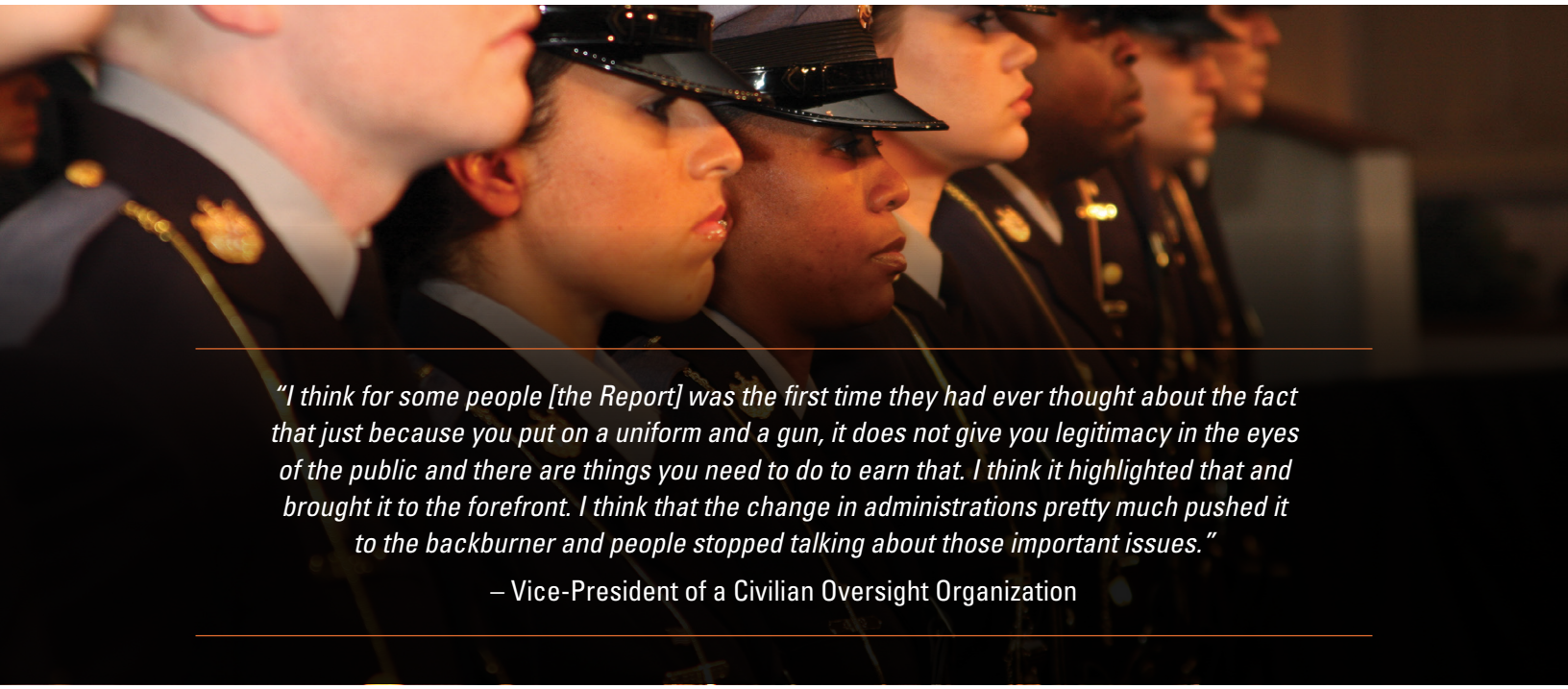
As of June 2021, 1,380 bills that related to policing topics were pending in 27 states and U.S. territories (Figure 3). Bills were related to topics such as data collection and analysis, transparency and accountability, community oversight, training, and use of force. While the Report seemed to initiate, contribute to, and amplify conversations around changes to use of force and de-escalation training, the number and timing of legislative reforms suggests that high-profile events such as the murder of George Floyd may have served as strong catalysts behind these legislative proposals.

Figure 3. Overview of State and Local Legislation



Source: "Legislative Responses for Policing-State Bill Tracking Database," National Conference of State Legislatures, https://www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/legislative-responses-for-policing.aspx.

The NPF team found a handful of federal bills enacted since 2014 that mentioned specific concepts from the Report. References to the Report were mostly found in legislative histories since 2014, which demonstrates familiarity with the Report within Congress. Only *The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021* specifically notes the *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*. The bill has struggled to gain the support needed for passage.[14]



"I think for some people [the Report] was the first time they had ever thought about the fact that just because you put on a uniform and a gun, it does not give you legitimacy in the eyes of the public and there are things you need to do to earn that. I think it highlighted that and brought it to the forefront. I think that the change in administrations pretty much pushed it to the backburner and people stopped talking about those important issues."

– Vice-President of a Civilian Oversight Organization

However, because the federal government's policy influence can occur through means that don't involve legislation – such as grant funding – it was important to look at grant funding associated with the Report. While this assessment did not allow for a comprehensive review of all federal grant award data, and a 2020 records request resulted only in partial data on grant applications and awards, the NPF team did examine publicly available data on awards offered by the USDOJ Community Oriented Policing Services Office (COPS Office). Specifically, the COPS Office's Community Policing Development (CPD) offered grants to local, state, and national jurisdictions which sought funding for 21st century policing-related initiatives. NPF reviewed grant award information, which can be found on the COPS website, for the years 2014 through 2019.[15, 16]

B. Key Stakeholder Perspectives

The NPF team conducted 46 structured interviews with policing and public safety leaders from local and national organizations, including law enforcement agencies (n = 7), standards and training organizations (n = 2), community and advocacy organizations (n = 7), national law enforcement organizations (n = 14), academia (n = 5), mayors and city managers (n = 4) federal organizations (n = 1) and original members of the Task Force (n = 6).

"I believe we've implemented virtually all of the recommendations. We view it as a roadmap, we did then, and we continue to go back to it. I think it's the best work out there."

– Chief of Police, Midsized Municipal Police Agency

Five years after the Report's publication, trust and legitimacy (Pillar 1) were still a priority. Several noted how the murder of George Floyd and the protests that ensued intensified the need for police-community relationships based on procedural justice. Numerous stakeholders highlighted the Report's recommendation for agencies to produce publicly available written policies (Pillar 2) to demonstrate and practice transparency in the communities they serve, including well-defined policies on agencies' use of technology and data (Pillar 3).

Stakeholders were less unified on the issue of civilian oversight boards (Pillar 2). Some original task force and national law enforcement organization members supported their adoption, while other law enforcement practitioners doubted their effectiveness; researchers noted a lack of understanding on how to adopt them or suggested that their value and role have yet to be identified through rigorous research. Nonetheless, oversight was one of the topics believed by community stakeholders to have advanced the most since the Report's publication, noting how it had become part of the conversation about reform.

A lack of guidance on the steps required to 'effectively' adopt community policing (Pillar 4), and evidence on which trainings lead to changes in police behavior (Pillar 5) were among reasons attributed to the inconsistent, or slow adoption of the Report's recommendations. Recruitment difficulties were a prominent discussion point for stakeholders, mentioning the limitation it imposes to efforts across the Pillars, including diversifying agencies (Pillar 1), employing community policing (Pillar 4), and enacting educational requirements for joining the policing field (Pillar 5). Officer wellness and safety (Pillar 6) was widely regarded by all stakeholder groups as an increasingly important topic deserving of more attention not only to support healthy and effective officers, but also healthy and effective police-community relationships.

The timing in which stakeholder interviews were conducted, from Summer to Fall of 2020, substantially influenced conversations. Some law enforcement organizations members, for example, expressed frustrations over the ongoing anti-police rhetoric, and what it meant for the progress they believed agencies were making, one stakeholder stated: *"Everything that we had done in the last few years to lay the groundwork with the community to prepare for something like this fell on completely deaf ears. I*

feel like nobody's listening, and all of the anger right now is directed toward the police." A community stakeholder mentioned that the way the police interact with the Black and Brown communities specifically is a new priority when discussing police-community relationships, *"You cannot separate the police from the racial reckoning that's going on in the country. At the heart of it, there is a distrust between law enforcement and communities of color ... All of these things are in the public ether now when it comes to community and law enforcement, there's a lot of work to be done."*

Some stakeholders believed the Report's impact faded over time, for example a law enforcement organization executive stated:

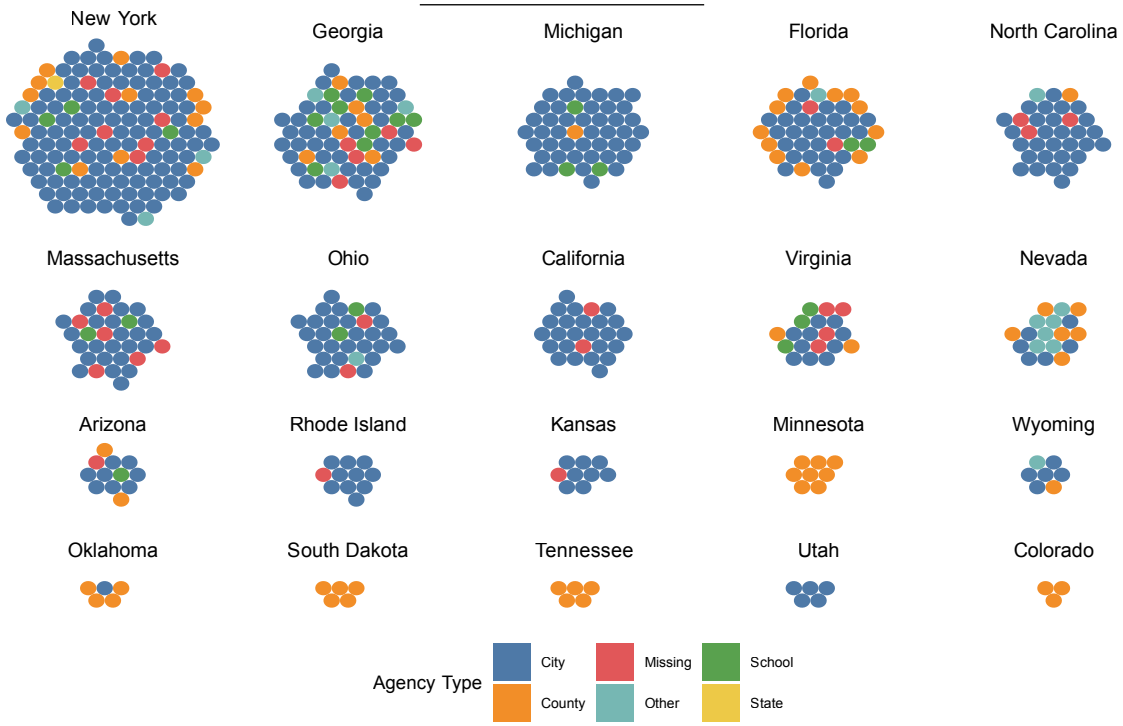
> *"Sadly, the principles of the report aren't talked about as much as they were. They've faded in memory. Whenever there's a change in administration, there's a priority change. The awareness of the report has faded as well. For a long time, people were using the task force report like the bible. I just think people aren't as knowledgeable anymore and aren't as aware of the recommendations."*

In that vein, others felt that partisan conflicts impacted the Report's ability to reach many agencies. To progress, the Report, and any 21st Century Policing standards, must be de-politicized. Mechanisms that not only motivate agencies, but also provide guidance and oversight on the implementation process and intended impacts of the Report's recommendations, were suggested as important steps to movement forward. These mechanisms could include follow-up reports, assessments, and technical assistance.

C. Survey of Law Enforcement Agencies

The NPF team used a web-based survey tool to collect data from a non-probability sample of 541 state and local law enforcement agencies. For brevity, we focused on the degree to which different agencies were familiar with the Report and how useful they found it. Respondents represented agencies from 30 states with a plurality from New York. Most respondents represented municipal agencies.[17]

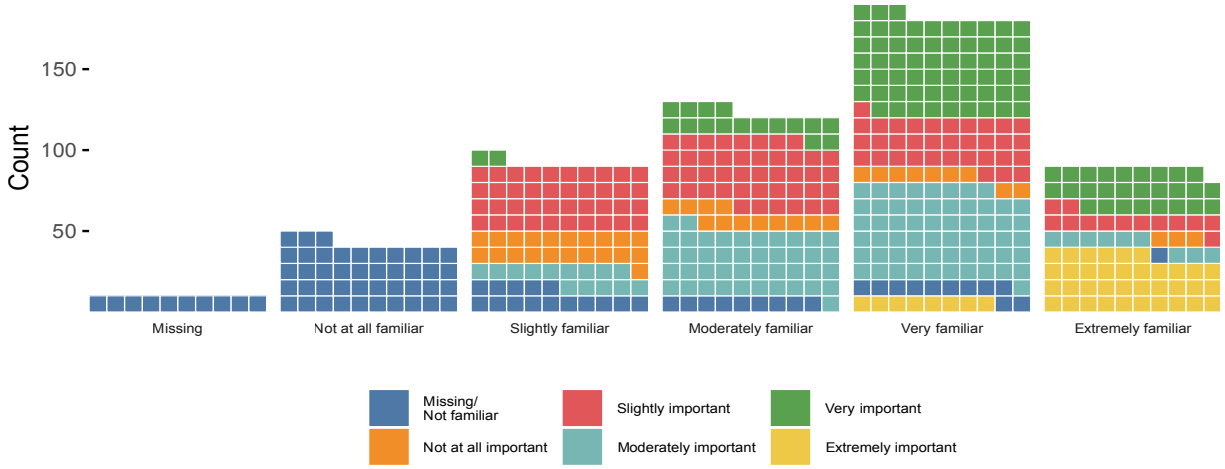
Figure 4. Who Responded?



Respondents represented agencies from 30 states with a plurality from New York. Most respondents represented municipal agencies.[18]

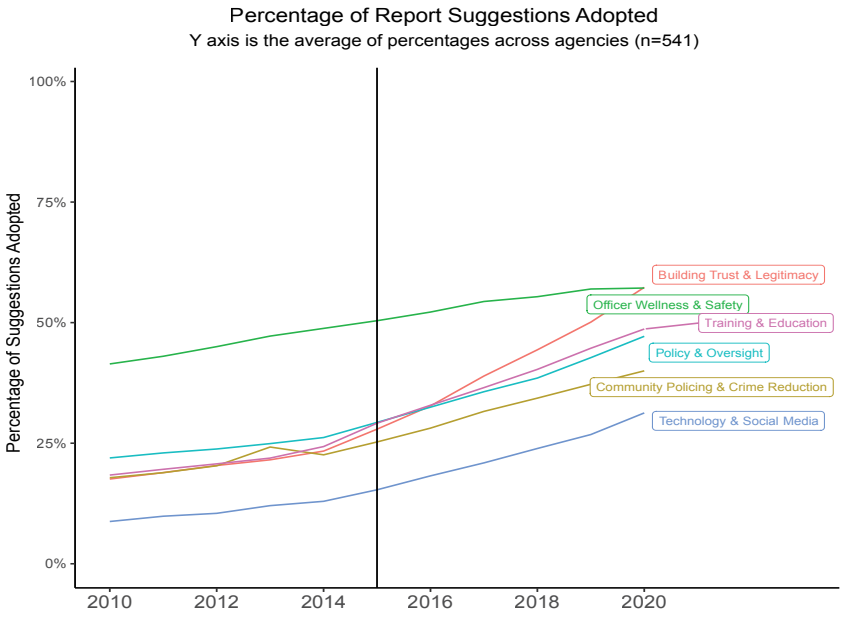
Overall, most responding agencies were at least slightly familiar with the Report. Differences did exist between agency types; county agencies were likely to be less familiar with the Report (Figure 4). Based on these results, models estimated that 70% of county agencies would be "not at all" or "only slightly" familiar with the Report[19]. Municipal agencies and school agencies, on the other hand, were estimated to be far more familiar with the Report; being "not at all" or "only slightly" familiar were estimated to be just 29%[20] and 15%[21], respectively. Small agencies were less familiar with the Report; 41% of agencies with 24 or fewer staff members[22] were estimated to be "not at all" or "only slightly" familiar while only 19% of the largest agencies (with 150 or more staff members)[23] would report the same. This may indicate that outreach and support for small and rural agencies may be necessary to drive attainable change and promote other reforms in those jurisdictions.

Figure 5. What Was the Relationship Between Familiarity and Importance?



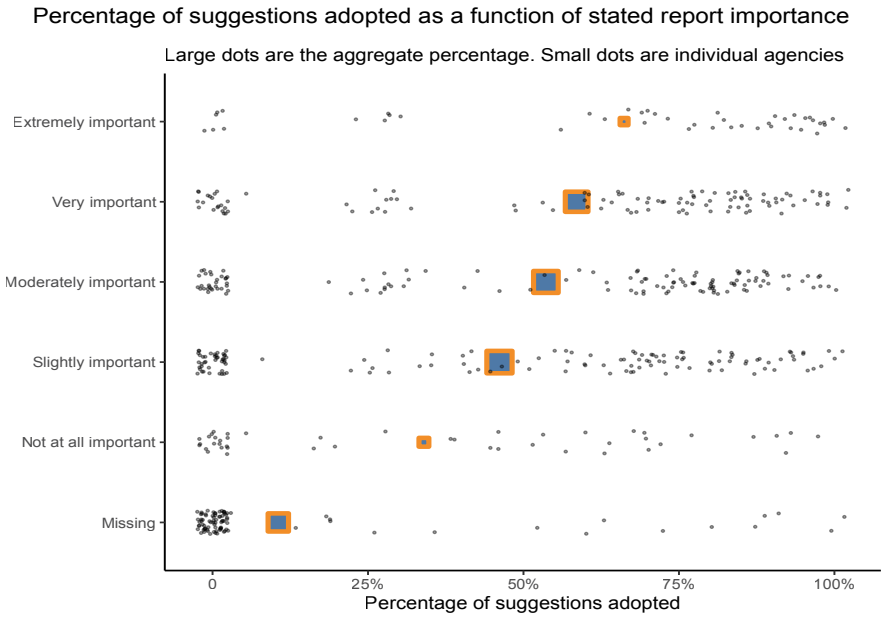
Agencies that reported familiarity with the Report were asked about the perceived importance of the Report in facilitating change within their agency (Figure 5). We estimated that the Report was "very important" or "extremely important" for 48% of school-based agencies (total n = 26)[24], 28% of municipal agencies (total n = 398)[25], and 14% for county agencies (total n = 80)[26]. Only 25% of small agencies[27] (24 or fewer sworn staff) were likely to indicate the Report was "very" or "extremely" important compared to 38% for their larger peers (150 or more sworn staff).[28]

Figure 6. When and How Quickly Did Agencies Adopt the Recommendations?



Responding agencies reported gradual adoption of the recommendations associated with Report pillars. Recommendations associated with the pillar focused on building community trust and legitimacy had more rapid adoption that other pillars. The percentage of agencies adopting recommendations in this pillar surpassed several other pillars (Figure 6).

Figure 7. Perceived Importance and Level of Adoption



Large dots are aggregate percentage for that category. Smaller points are individual agency respondents.

We compared perceived importance of the Report with the percent of suggestions that were adopted by the agency (as of 2020). A higher level of importance was generally associated with the adoption of more Report recommendations. Agencies that were unfamiliar with the Report indicated the lowest percent of recommendations adopted while those that indicated the Report was extremely important adopted the greatest percent of suggestions (Figure 7).

D. Case Studies

The NPF conducted in-depth interviews with chiefs, supervisory personnel, officers, as well as community members from Bend (OR), Washtenaw County (MI), Tucson (AZ), and Boston (MA). These case study sites were chosen due to their sustained efforts to implement the Report's recommendations over the last five years. The intent of the case studies was to better understand context and details of implementation of Report recommendations through exploration of processes, lessons learned, challenges, successes, and areas for advancement.

Bend, Oregon

Since the release of the 21st Century Policing Task Force Report, the Bend Police Department has adopted a variety of its key concepts. The department's 2015-2020 strategic plan pursued several improvements congruent with the Report's recommendations, including increasing trust, transparency, employee safety and wellness, community engagement, and technology.[29] For example, Bend PD conducts regular surveys to track the community's level of trust in the department, and all of Bend PD's policies are now made public on their website.[30] Moreover, almost all sworn officers are trained on de-escalation and crisis intervention. These efforts began well before the Report's publication. For example, their officer wellness programs, which have been nationally recognized as promising practices for law enforcement agencies,[31] took shape about 10 years ago. When discussing Bend PD's success in improving their organizational culture, a project that also began prior to the Report's release, one officer believed it was greatly due to their change in hiring process, *"[We] started hiring people for the right reasons. We hired people for emotional intelligence and empathy. It doesn't always have to be the cookie cutter image of what a cop was."* Discussions regarding areas for improvement centered on the departments' use of technology, particularly body worn cameras, as Bend PD struggled to keep up with their widespread adoption. Another challenge mentioned by Bend PD members was navigating through the re-defining of their role as officers in responding to issues of mental health, substance use, and homelessness. While some of Bend's most substantive reform efforts began before the Report's publication, the recommendations confirmed the strategies and approaches.

Community members[32] expressed generally positive views of the Bend PD. Several reported having constructive experiences with the department and indicated the belief that the department is open to community input. When asked if they have perceived a change in policing practices over the past five years, one community member stated that there has been a positive change, *"There's been growth in the hiring of patrol officers to keep up with the demand. That growth in numbers has translated to growth in community relationships too because now there is more presence to interact with the community."* Others felt that the Bend PD has managed to remain steady in their progress. One member felt that, historically, the Bend community has trusted and valued Bend PD, but that current events, the media, and the national distrust for the police institution has hampered some of that local trust. In that vein, some members felt that the racial tensions between communities of color and the Bend PD are undoubtedly present in Bend, and whilst Bend's majority White residents may hold mostly positive opinions about the department, the same cannot be generalized to its non-White residents. A member shared that until Bend PD promotes command staff that represent and understand Bend's communities of color, not much improvement can occur in those specific police-community relationships. Community



responses were positive of the Bend PD, and several residents expressed knowledge and appreciation for the department's history of community policing efforts. Overall, the Bend PD's adoption of Report concepts highlight this culture of reflection and ongoing improvement as well as the importance of using research, data collection, and analysis to inform changes and future priorities.

Boston, Massachusetts

In the Report, the Boston Police Department was commended for its effective communication via social media during the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing.[33] In the past five years, Boston PD has further expanded its implementation of 21st century policing concepts through a formalized Community Engagement Bureau, implementing active efforts to recruit and improve diversity in the department. The Bureau's goal is to ensure that every District of Boston has a dedicated and dependable community policing effort, focusing on building stable police-community relationships particularly in areas that did not have them before. However, Boston PD members strongly believe that despite their respect for the community and continuous efforts in community-based policing, the media portrays a contrasting story that often disrupts their efforts. More recently, the department began setting up civilian oversight boards incentivized by an internal review of their policies post George Floyd's murder, albeit rank and file officers expressed skepticism over the functionality of civilian oversight. While Boston PD has implemented the use of body-worn cameras, policies on use and compliance checks remain limited, indicating a point for future advancement. Another challenge felt by members of the Boston PD relates to the departments' health and wellness efforts, which were described as *"good but not great."* A lack of staff was also discussed as an impediment to Boston PD's community policing efforts, *"I think [community policing] still has meaning. They tried to put the same officer on the same beat when I first came on but over the years, we got away from it because of manpower restraints."*

One Boston community member explained that as long as there are officers committing unethical behaviors without consequences (*"the blue oath"*), the whole department becomes tainted. Some community members stated that there are officers who do engage with the community and embrace the 21st Century Policing Task Force Report recommendations, however, there are officers who do not. Community members also felt the Boston PD could improve the ways in which they communicate their values to the community at large, as well as engage them more in trainings to promote transparency. On a positive note, Boston PD was lauded for their efforts in tackling mental health issues. Several community members also commented on Boston PD's staffing diversification.



Tucson, Arizona

The Tucson Police Department (TPD) has long been familiar with the Report's concepts, as the TPD's previous Chief, Roberto Villaseñor, served as a member of the Task Force. Since its publication, TPD has continued its implementation of the Report's recommendations. As the NPF assessment team conducted interviews with TPD members in late 2020, many were already familiar with the Report, having studied it as part of their promotional examinations. Additionally, the department's website mentions that it has 'put in place recommendations laid out by President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.' Under Chief Magnus, over the last five years, TPD has expanded its implementation of Report concepts, incorporating recommendations of the Report into more of their operations and into the culture of the organization. For example, the department recently released a public dashboard that provides data on use of force incidents, arrests, and traffic enforcement.[34] With its release, TPD acknowledged the data shows they have used force against Black citizens four times the rate of White citizens—an "unacceptable" disparity that Chief Magnus noted the TPD is attempting to address. Moreover, TPD convened a multi-stakeholder Sentinel Event Review Board to review critical incidents.[35] TPD has also enlisted approximately 100 community volunteers to participate in scenario-based trainings. When discussing their experience implementing changes in policy, command staff noted the importance of open and thoughtful communication between leaders and the rank and file,

> *"Cops are cynical. There's always a level of, 'What's in it for me?' When there's a new protocol, there's the question of 'Why is this occurring?' We decided, as a group, that when we push something out to always back it with the why, through email, memo, or show up at briefings and calls for service to have conversations about the why. It's important to them. Change is scary. We want to help them along that path. Without the why, they start filling it in on their own."*

A current challenge TPD is facing relates to recruitment, and the struggle to keep pace with attrition due to the generally negative narrative around law enforcement.

TPD has generally received positive community support. In 2017, Tucson voters passed a proposition that increased the sales tax by an additional half percent for five years to provide funding for public safety improvements.[36] Support was confirmed by the community interviews that the NPF assessment team conducted.[37] Community members felt that changes at the TPD were positive. Two members attributed some of that change to Chief Magnus, who introduced the department to 21st Century Policing standards, particularly as it relates to community policing. Recurrent themes throughout these interviews included TPD's efforts in transparency and engagement, becoming more attuned to community policing, and increased willingness to listen to its community. TPD's open communication with the community through recurrent meetings, involvement in non-profit organizations, civilian engagement in trainings, commitment to speedier release of body-worn camera footage, and improvements in their responses to mental health and homelessness have been well received by the community. Some community members were more reserved in their appraisals of the TPD, noting that there was substantial room for improvement in TPD's de-escalation training and the way officers communicate with people of color. Nonetheless, community members generally felt optimistic about TPD's commitment to 21st century policing principles.

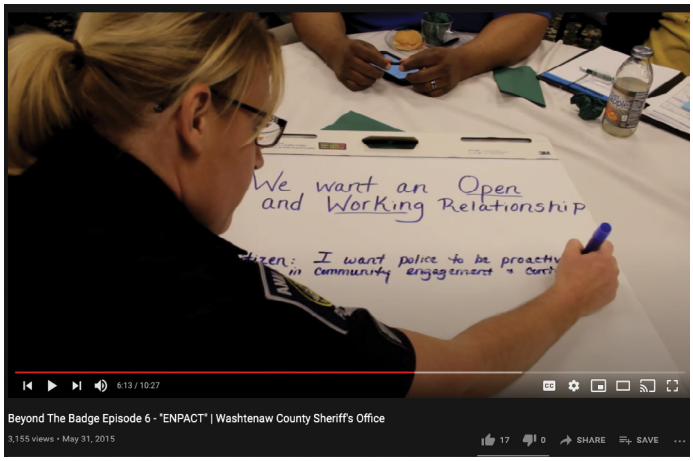


Washtenaw County, Michigan

Washtenaw County's Sheriff, Jerry Clayton, has been a vocal proponent of the 21st Century Policing Task Force, the Report, and its recommendations, which were regarded as a "solid foundation" that confirmed ongoing efforts to change the culture of the Washtenaw County's Sheriff Office (WCSO). Such efforts included the creation of the 21st Century Policing Compliance Commission, comprised of six subcommittees (aligned with each of the pillars) and 40 to 50 members – equal numbers of community, staff, and partners/stakeholders. The Commission's role was to identify measures of compliance with Report recommendations, assess WCSO's level of compliance, and provide recommendations. Moreover, WCSO has made many of their departmental policies public through their website.[38] Indeed, the department actually highlights the Report on their website and explains the pillars therein – again using it as a framework to communicate the departments priorities. However, to the extent that WCSO incorporates technology that facilitates the tenets of community policing, procedural justice and engagement, the department does follow the Report recommendations. WCSO also engages the community in their training, for example, deputies shadow mental health workers and mental health workers shadow deputies to learn from each other's perspectives and expertise. Community partners are included during the hiring process, and are invited to participate in scenario-based trainings. One area for improvement in WCSO relates to its officer health and wellness efforts, the WCSO currently does not have an internal wellness program in place, in part due to a lack of interest from deputies. However, WCSO leadership mentioned hope for the office's future in the health and wellness department,

> *"I am excited about this generation of police officers coming in, they seem a lot more open to that kind of conversation and approach. They don't feel the need to hold a macho persona, they're pushing it now. I feel better about how we're going to be in the future."*

Community members[39] acknowledged Sheriff Clayton's recent reform initiatives, noting the 21st Century Policing Compliance Commission, their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee,[40] and overall improvements in procedural justice. However, some community members expressed skepticism, particularly as to how WCSO interacts with the Black community. One community member felt that deputies' approach Black civilians with an already heightened level of aggravation, therefore escalating situations. Another community member noted that deputies need to understand why Black civilians are scared of law enforcement. The community member expressed that, *"Issues of racism and lack of integrity overshadow any good that comes out from the department"*. Others expressed worry that police unions could stifle progress. Overall, community members recognized WCSO's efforts in improving community relationships, yet they were clear that such efforts were not enough if cases of racial injustice were still occurring in Washtenaw.



Appendix B: Limitations

Media Scan

The media scan of the "President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing" was conducted on July 9, 2020, and the scan of "21st Century Policing" and "Community Policing" were conducted on June 23, 2020. These searches were then redone on March 15, 2021, to bring the results up to date through the end of February 2021. Using Google News searches by month, these results do not include news stories deemed by Google to be duplicative and results may include non-US news stories. Google news searches are time limited; older news results may have been lost and results are dependent on Google's current search algorithms. Further, Google has begun limiting the number of search results which appear per domain to produce more diversity in listings.

Policy Influence

This assessment did not allow for a comprehensive review of all federal grant award data. A records request was submitted to the USDOJ Community Oriented Policing Services Office (COPS Office) in 2020. This request produced incomplete data on grant applications and awards. These data were supplemented with publicly available information on awards offered by the COPS Office. Nevertheless, applicants may have referenced the Report in their application without adopting principles from the Report. In addition, this review only considers COPS CPD awards, and no other federal funding.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviewees were purposefully selected to provide input from diverse perspectives. We observed two main limitations. First, the timing in which stakeholder interviews were hosted, from Summer to Fall of 2020, substantially impacted the content and tone of conversations. The public health crisis posed by COVID-19 and public demonstrations around police reform pushed many conversations towards the immediate challenges that agencies were facing. Second, respondents were asked to reflect on the adoption of specific Recommendations in the Report. Less of the discussion was focused on the overall Report. This focus was made for several reasons, chiefly because of the politicized nature of the report itself and the desire to avoid biasing participants towards any preconceived opinions about the purpose of the work.

Survey of Law Enforcement Agencies

A web-based survey instrument collected data from a non-probability sample of 541 state and local law enforcement agencies. The method of distribution (through associations and membership groups comprised of law enforcement agencies) prevented calculation of a response rate. Multilevel regression with poststratification was used to correct for the divergence between the sample and known characteristics (e.g., agency size) of the target agency population.

Appendix C: Project Partners

National Police Foundation

The National Police Foundation is America's oldest non-membership, non-partisan police research organization. We were founded in 1970 by the Ford Foundation to advance policing through innovation and science. We integrate the work of practitioners and social scientists to facilitate effective crime control and the progress of democratic policing strategies.

Joyce Foundation

The Joyce Foundation is a private, nonpartisan philanthropy that invests in public policies and strategies to advance racial equity and economic mobility for the next generation in the Great Lakes region. We support policy research, development, and advocacy in six program areas: Culture, Democracy, Education & Economic Mobility, Environment, Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform, and Journalism.

21CP Foundation

21CP Foundation helps cities and communities effectively tackle the challenges of delivering safe, effective, just, and constitutional public safety services in the 21st Century. We empower communities across the country to develop and implement equitable and integrity-driven public safety – grounded in building trust and strengthening relationships.

Endnotes

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13 Leily Azry and Ram Subramanian, "State policing reforms since George Floyd's murder," *Brennan Center for Justice*, May 21, 2021, https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/state-policing-reforms-george-floyds-murder (accessed July 20, 2021).

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15 "Program Documents," DOJ Community Policing Oriented Services, https://cops.usdoj.gov/programdocuments (accessed June 26, 2021).

16 It should be recognized that some applicants may have referenced the Report as justification for their application without fundamentally adopting principles from the Report. In addition, this review only considers COPS CPD awards, and no other federal funding sources.

17 Less than five responses were received from each of the following states: Iowa, Maryland, Illinois, Indiana, Main, Nebraska, New Jersey, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin.

18 Less than five responses were received from each of the following states: Iowa, Maryland, Illinois, Indiana, Main, Nebraska, New Jersey, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin.

19 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 57% to 81%

20 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 23% to 36%

21 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 4% to 38%

22 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 33% to 48%

23 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 11% to 27%.

24 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 27% to 70%.

25 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 22% to 34%.

26 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 7% to 27%.

27 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 17% to 33%.

28 Uncertainty estimates ranged from 29% to 49%.

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