

Simple Solutions to Improve Police Practices

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) released a Statement of Policy for Public Health, Racism, and Police violence¹, which urges local health departments to take action against injustices within communities. In particular, health departments are advised to work in collaboration with community-based organizations and local law enforcement agencies to research and report unfair police practices and determine their impact on health outcomes. In a series of twenty-five short articles, Shaun King² addresses multiple issues with current United States Policing policies, and proposes a solution for each of those issues. This summary outlines the policy changes King introduced, which need to begin at a local level of government in order to encourage a system wide change.

- Recruitment efforts should focus on creating a more diverse police force.
- Police training should integrate more class time and include courses on cultural sensitivity.
- Officers should receive regular, random drug screening throughout their careers.
- There should be a zero-tolerance policy for racism within the police force.
- All officers should be required to obtain a four-year degree.
- Policing for profit and budget meeting should be banned.
- Responding officers should have information about the mental health status of individuals in crisis.
- There should be a balance of men and women on the police force.
- Officers should live in or near the communities they serve.
- Communities of color should not be over-policed with unnecessary force and excessive penalties for petty crimes.
- All police officers should be tested for implicit bias towards racism, sexism, ageism and anti-Muslim bigotry.
- There should be regular screening and treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder before an officer receives their badge and after any use of force incident.
- Policies should protect whistleblowers from retaliation from within the police force.
- There needs to be a reform in the policies on handling mentally ill suspects.
- Officers should be required to wear and keep a body camera on at all times, and they should not have access to the footage until after giving their report of the incident.
- Anything beyond physical force that would include weapons should be non-lethal, and officers should be properly trained on how to use weapons correctly.
- Officers should have a minimum of three non-lethal weapons on their person at all times.
- There should be a punishment for discharging based on inaccurate assumptions.
- Department policies should follow the NAACP guidelines for citizen protection against racial profiling.
- After use of force incidents, officers should be required to make an immediate statement of events without access to any official documents or coaching by other officers.
- All use of force incidents should be reviewed by an independent authority, a Police Commission and a Civilian Complaints Office.
- Special Prosecutors should be used to arraign officers for misconduct.
- If a department is receiving federal funds, they should be required to report information requested by the Death in Custody Reporting Act.
- Policy change should begin at the state and local level, beginning with progressive states and college campuses.

¹National Association of County & City Health Officials. Health Equity and Social Justice. Policy Statement: Public Health, Racism, and Police Violence. July 7, 2015. Retrieved from <http://archived.naccho.org/advocacy/positions/upload/15-04-Public-Health-Racism-and-Police-Violence.pdf>

²Shaun King, "Shaun King Solutions for Police Brutality". *New York Daily News*. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/king-solutions-for-police-brutality/stories>