

# **Report on Police Reform Recommendations**

**2021**

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**MAYOR JEROME A. PRINCE**

**MAY 19**

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**City of Gary**

**Submitted by: Gary Police Reform Commission**



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# Commission Members List

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Commission Chairman  
Executive Director  
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State President the Indiana Conference of the National Association  
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# Executive Summary

## Rebuilding Trust in our Community

On May 25, 2020 citizens all across America turned on their nightly news and witnessed a law enforcement officer kneeling on the neck of George Floyd for nine agonizing minutes. Mr. Floyd was a resident of Minneapolis, MN and had recently been out of work. He was believed to have passed a counterfeit \$20.00 bill during a transaction at a local corner store. Officers from the Minneapolis Police Department arrived to the scene after receiving a report from the store clerk. Bodycam footage along with official statements chronicled the crucial moments leading from Mr. Floyd's arrest to his subsequent death. Worldwide protests erupted demanding justice and reform of a system many have regarded as steeped in systematic racism.

It is against this back drop that Mayor Jerome A. Prince assembled the Gary Police Reform Commission (GPRC) in response to police violence and its impact on communities. The Commission consists of a cross section of community members representing various fields, organizations, and interests. It was formally tasked with addressing and reviewing the following from the Gary Police Department.

- Use-of-force policies and procedures
- Policy guidance on encounters with individuals potentially experiencing a mental health crisis

***“It is imperative that we reimagine justice that reflect the values of the community along with public safety solutions”***

The Commission emphasizes the need for officer training which encompasses cultural sensitivity, and proper use of force. Training should remain the highest priority and exploring proven crisis intervention methods such as the inclusion of Mobile Crisis Units that respond to low level mental health crisis.

Through the Commission's findings a comprehensive set of guidelines and objectives helped to develop a framework which focused on four main areas; police accountability, building community trust, prioritizing mental and behavioral health, and data collection and transparency. It has become increasingly imperative that we reimagine justice that reflects the values of the community along with public safety solutions that address the current challenges of the criminal justice system.

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## Recommendations:

### Accountability

The Gary Police Department should include language prohibiting the following to its Standard of Operating Procedures (SOP):

The use of excessive force, unwarranted physical force, or unprofessional conduct by an officer is prohibited.

Officers are prohibited from using force based on bias against a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

Force used as punishment or retaliation is prohibited.

Force used in response to a person's lawful exercise of First Amendment rights (e.g. protected free speech, lawful demonstration, and filming police activity) is prohibited.

Include language that expressly refers to de-escalation level of force in Department policies.

Language may include, but not limit to:

- requesting additional personnel to respond or make use of specialized units including crisis intervention team trained officers.
- exercising persuasion and advice with a warning prior to the use of force.

Require Tasers as issued and maintained standard equipment for all patrol officers and supervisors assigned to the Patrol Division.

Adopt the Duty to Intervene and Report into Department policies where all members are obligated to ensure compliance for themselves and other members with its regulations, policies, and the law.

### Rationale:

Acknowledging these core principles will signify the department's commitment to the sanctity of life. Officers should have access to less lethal options when accessing necessary force. Measures will also increase officer accountability and ensures equitable representation of community members in Department policies.

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## ***Building Community Trust***

Mandate usage of body worn cameras for patrol officers and supervisors. Any accompanying policies should include “standardized use” guidelines and define who will have direct access to relevant footage, release of footage procedures, and retaining storage requirements.

Standardize the hiring process to include recruitment from a diverse candidate pool that represents community demographics.

Institute mandatory Procedural Justice and Implicit Bias refresher training for officers annually.

Increase community engagement efforts to build trust with the community and promote a shared public safety prospective.

### **Rationale:**

Members of the community have a vested interest in its safety and welfare. Their voice is essential when determining the legitimacy and effectiveness of law enforcement. Building a strong relationship between community and law enforcement become vital opportunities for improved cooperation that will directly impact the stability and produce the desired outcomes to most impacted neighborhoods and citizens.

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## ***Addressing the Needs of Individuals Experiencing a Mental Health Crisis***

Re-introduction of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to GPD in a two phase program.

Step 1: Train self-selected team of two or more officers designated as CIT Team. 40 hours of training required.

Step 2: In-service four (4) to eight (8) hours of crisis intervention mandatory training for command, supervisory, investigatory, specialized and patrol units. Each will receive in-service training every year from local mental health agencies or other nationally recognized group (NAMI).

Inclusion of Mobile Crisis Units of trained health professionals that respond to residents experiencing a mental health crisis.

Provide Gary Fire Department and County Dispatch access to CIT through Train the Trainer sessions.

Create Mental Health Collaboration Group with local providers, people living with mental illness, advocates, and family members to increase community engagement, and provide tracking of care as a shared responsibility.

Develop stand-alone policy with specific language that addresses internal procedures for officers responding to mental health crisis calls including those that may not have been initially identified as such by local dispatch.

Provide officers access to a mental health professional counselor located outside of the Department in addition to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

### **Rationale:**

Allocating funding and re-establishing Crisis Intervention Training amplifies the Department's current mission of balancing all human interest and respecting the value of human life. Community concerns were captured in an administered survey and noted the increased involvement of law enforcement with citizens experiencing mental impairment, a point with which the law enforcement community strongly agreed. The collaboration between government and community groups can provide the early infrastructure to develop a separate specialized unit where a clinician and law enforcement officer work side-by-side when responding to triaged service calls not involving violence, weapons, or serious crimes. This cultural shift will prioritize the mental and behavioral health of citizens by connecting them to needed services and providing essential follow-up care.

Officers experiencing daily stress and job pressures must have access to clinically trained personnel at will. Addressing the mental and emotional health of officers destigmatizes care and decreases the adverse effects of untreated trauma.

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## ***Data Collection and Transparency***

Maintain data base of police department metric data and release annually to the public, use of force incidence, number of citizen complaints disaggregated by race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and age, calls for service and any additional information deemed relevant for community feedback.

### **Rationale:**

Data collection will allow the Department to routinely and accurately evaluate the effectiveness and fairness of its current policies. Utilizing the collected data allows city administrators to perform an internal cost savings benefit analysis, by comparing the financial impact of cost of litigating alleged misconduct. It is through this lens of public access that community members can then hold the system accountable.