



# Columbia Heights Police Department

*Scott Nadeau, Chief of Police*



## September 2016 Police-Community Dialogue Highlights

**Question #1:** *What are your concerns with race & bias and their effects on the Criminal Justice System?*

- Race and bias has significant effects on the Criminal Justice System. There is national concern that people of color are not being treated fairly based on race and that they are overrepresented in the system. This concern reaches all levels of the Criminal Justice system, including interactions with the police, arrests and detention, court representation, and court processes. A feeling of distrust in the legal process and a feeling of targeting undermines the entire system.
- There is a sense of distrust between the police and the community due to perceived or actual biases. The experiences of white vs. non-white are directly related to positive vs. negative interactions.
- Biases in the system go beyond race to include, age, community, socio-economic status.
- The media and social media have influenced both the behavior of the police and community.
- The police need to do their jobs with a balanced philosophy of community service and the enforcement of the law.
- The police need to be trained about implicit bias. Police agencies need to create and follow policy that specifically aims to avoid bias in their work.

**Question #2:** *How does bias influence the way the Criminal Justice System affects members of the public?*

- Implicit bias exists in everyone. It is inherently unfair when it manifests itself in the Criminal Justice System. This causes people to lose faith in the system.
- The Criminal Justice System is difficult to navigate, especially for immigrants and/or uneducated people.
- Income plays a significant role on the way the Criminal Justice System responds to members of the public. Income is particularly influential in the court process as it determines whether a person will be dealing with a court-appointed attorney versus a paid private attorney for their representation.
- Bias influences the way the media reports. The media places significant emphasis in people of color and reinforces stereotypes.
- Citizens are forming opinions and biases based on media and social media instead of their personal experience. This could cause larger effects, such as tainting a jury pool.
- The public feels that there are different sets of police rules based on race.
- There are certain laws that have a disparate impact on people of color. There is a disproportionate number of people of color in the court system and jails.
- There is a public sense of fear of police due to several factors, including a feeling that police are not on their side, the intimidation and the militarization of police, and police use of force.

**Questions #3:** *How do we improve police-community relations from here in Columbia Heights?*

- More casual, face-to-face interactions with the police that create positive interactions and experiences. Target outreach to high enforcement areas to counteract the enforcement that is being done. Some of these interactions can be formally planned, but others should include casual interactions in neighborhoods or parks. Officers should branch out beyond vehicle patrol and should include bike and foot patrol to facilitate more of these interactions.
- More education for the public, especially for juvenile and various immigrant populations, on the laws and functions police work.
- Consideration of alternative disciplinary measures for juvenile crime.

- The police department should consider alternative, non-lethal use of force options.
- The composition of the police department should reflect the demographics of the city and should aim to include officers who have the ability to speak different languages.
- Continue to have a variety of programs that reach many different segments of the community, including various youth programs, academies (teen, citizen, senior), CPR classes, and self-defense classes.

**Question #4:** *What other topics would you like to discuss at future forums and what is your level of commitment to positive social change?*

- Overwhelming majority of attendees expressed a strong commitment to being part of social change.
- Information on officer training, including multi-cultural trainings and de-escalation.
- Updates for the public on body-worn camera use and policy in our department.
- A forum on police personnel policies, police officer disciplinary processes, and the complaint process.
- Discussion on commitment to our city's youth, youth outreach, and juvenile crime enforcement.
- A discussion about the school-to-prison pipeline to include community members, police, judges, and school personnel.
- A community discussion on the philosophies and values of Columbia Heights residents and how these can be used to shape Columbia Heights law enforcement policies.
- Teach about and learn how to mitigate bias between minorities and the police.