
SMART POLICING COLLABORATION PRINCIPLES



Collaboration is fundamental to effective policing in today's society. In fact, collaboration is just as important today as it was in 1829 when Sir Robert Peel created the first professional police force in London, England and wrote the Principles of Law Enforcement, including this statement –

“The police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police.”

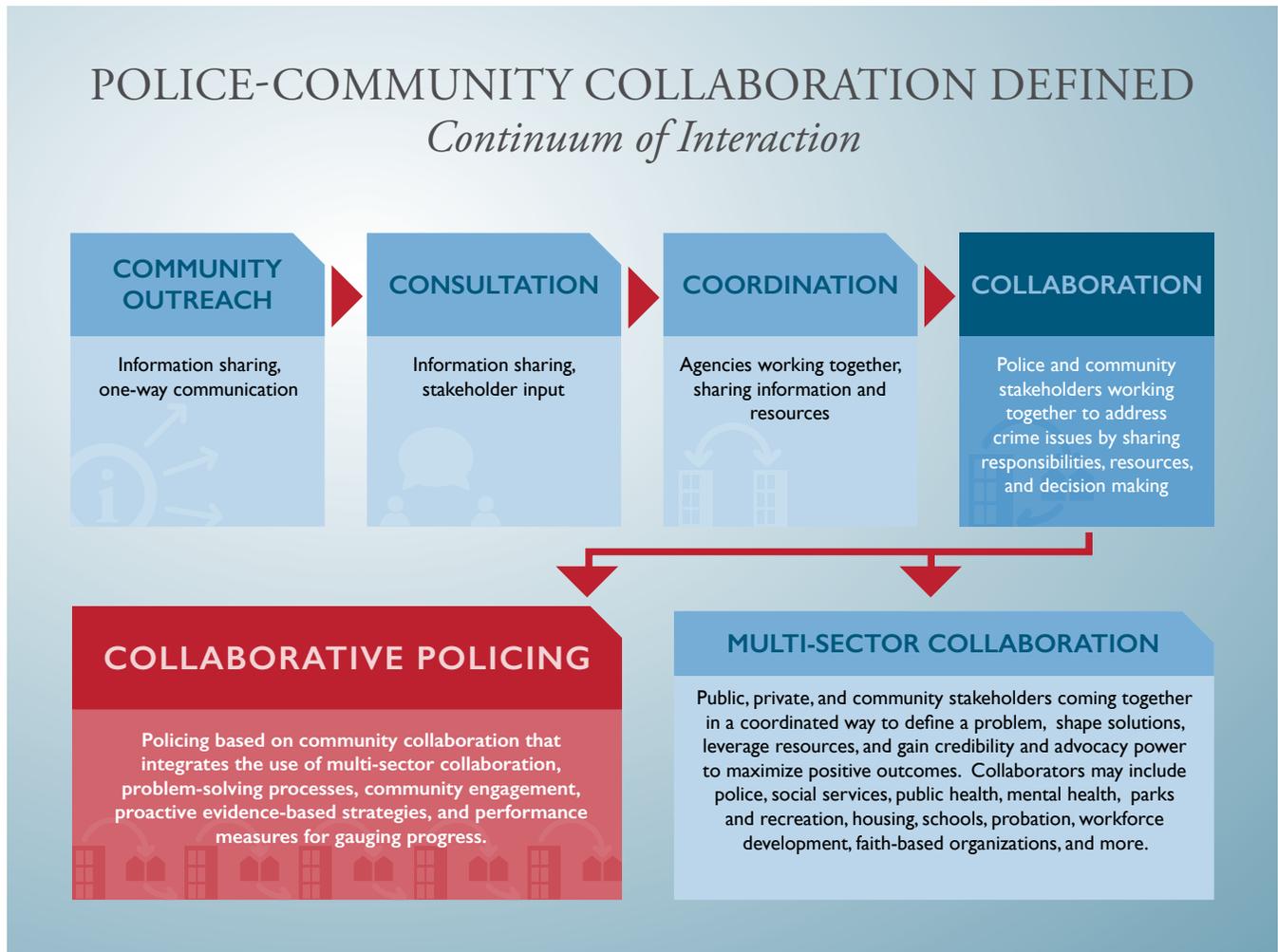
This reality has been tested in recent years when high profile officer-involved shootings in some communities resulted in open conflict and lower levels of trust in the police – particularly among people of color.

In response, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Smart Policing Initiative (SPI), in cooperation with the BJA Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) program and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), conducted a series of three workshops over the past year examining challenges and successes in police-community collaboration. The workshops provided an opportunity for SPI and BCJI sites, which integrate collaboration into their programs, to work together on this critical topic, especially in this time of heightened concern nationwide about police-community relationships.

We held the workshops in Portland, Oregon (January 13-14, 2016); Kansas City, Missouri (April 26-27, 2016), and Lowell, Massachusetts (August 3-4, 2016). Each workshop lasted for one and one-half days, each involved law enforcement and community representatives, and each included a similar range of workshop topics – building and sustaining multi-sector collaborations, collaborating with communities of color, learning the perspectives of community leaders, using technology in collaboration, and creating a culture of collaboration in police agencies.

This document represents the integration of ideas generated at all three workshops in a series of Collaboration Principles – fundamental guidelines for how local jurisdictions (police agencies and communities alike) should approach police-community collaboration.

Importantly, we characterize collaboration as a sophisticated form of police-community engagement, as illustrated here.



Effective collaboration requires that police and community stakeholders work together by sharing responsibilities, resources, and decision making. Collaboration, then, is more than outreach, or information-sharing alone; it requires joint actions with shared responsibilities and shared decision making.

Collaboration is key to problem solving, an approach that requires police and community working together, proactively, to identify underlying problems that can be addressed to reduce crime at its roots.

The factors contributing to crime problems, particularly violence may span several sectors in the community. For example, a lack of jobs and high alcohol outlet density increase the likelihood of violence. Multi-sector collaborations which combine the activities and investments of diverse sectors of the community (public, private, and community stakeholders and organizations) into one coherent approach maximize positive outcomes.

Collaborative policing is a new construct that brings together the key concepts of collaboration, problem solving, and Smart Policing to achieve more effective and long-lasting benefits. Collaborative policing approaches share similar principles and strategies with public health approaches. They incorporate multi-sector collaboration and preventative and proactive strategies; they involve data and analysis to understand problems and performance measures to determine progress; and they use evaluation processes to measure impact.

We recognize that collaboration in any of these contexts is not easy to implement. It takes intensive effort and a change of orientation for both the police and the community. The benefits of successful collaboration are enormous, however, and we offer the following principles to help guide these efforts.

COLLABORATION PRINCIPLES FOR THE POLICE

PRINCIPLE ONE STRONG LEADERSHIP

Police leaders should identify collaboration as a key principle in the agency's mission and values, promote and model collaboration at all levels of the organization, and provide opportunities for community input and oversight of the organization.

PRINCIPLE TWO ORIENT TOWARDS SERVICE

Police should strengthen their orientation toward a guardian mindset, or protector of the community, and a service model, in which police collaborate more closely with community-based service providers. Agencies should dispel myths and inaccurate perceptions of police work in the recruitment process and, where there is a need to, increase diversity in hiring.

PRINCIPLE THREE TRANSFORM TRAINING

Police training, both the recruit academy and in-service, should be reconfigured to include: social interaction, communication, empathy, de-escalation skills, procedural justice (respect and legitimacy), implicit bias, cultural awareness, collaboration and problem-solving, and evidence-based policing, even if this means reducing the emphasis on some other aspects of police training.

PRINCIPLE FOUR BUILD COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Police officers should focus on building relationships with community members and stakeholders. Effective strategies for relationship-building include – having regular face-to-face contact, being good listeners, and engaging with community members in an honest, caring, empathetic and transparent manner. Agencies should provide officers the tools to be effective relationship-builders and support the creation of multi-sector collaborative partnerships for solving community problems.

PRINCIPLE FIVE ENGAGE WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Police should tailor engagement strategies to improve collaboration with people of different races, ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds. This requires learning about the different cultures, aspirations, expectations, and experiences of community members; acknowledging past injustices and underlying, unjust conditions in stressed and underserved neighborhoods; and holding frequent small group conversations and police-youth dialogues.

PRINCIPLE SIX IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND MESSAGING

Police agencies should promote positive community interaction through improved communication and outreach strategies and create an organizational brand reflecting the benefits of collaboration. Agencies should disseminate positive stories and reach new audiences by harnessing the power of social media.

PRINCIPLE SEVEN UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Police agencies should poll and canvas community members regularly, for example through surveys, focus groups, and informal “street corner” sessions. This will give the community a voice and police a greater understanding of community priorities and perspectives on the impact of crime-fighting strategies.

COLLABORATION PRINCIPLES FOR THE COMMUNITY

Police and citizens should be equal partners in creating safe communities. This means community members have vital roles to play in collaboration—as partners, supporters, and decision makers. Improving community involvement with police will increase community buy-in and understanding of policing and the strategies they employ will increase social cohesion and will ultimately increase collective efficacy – the willingness of community members to take action to meet common collaborative goals. The community role in collaborative policing should include:

- ▶ Identifying leaders with credibility and support in the community to talk regularly with police
- ▶ Providing community input on officer training curriculum and the impact of crime strategies
- ▶ Participating with police in training exercises and problem-solving projects
- ▶ Defining public safety and neighborhood priorities from the community's perspective
- ▶ Supporting positive work in police departments and recognize officers who do good work
- ▶ Identifying widely voiced community criticisms of law enforcement practices and creating goals and objectives for joint problem-solving
- ▶ Asking police to share information; for example, the results of citizen complaints and use of force investigations
- ▶ Providing access to key community groups—faith-based, immigrants, youth, business, etc.

NEXT STEPS

SPI is committed to helping police agencies apply these Collaboration Principles in practice, and will introduce a number of products in the next six months in this regard including the following:

- ▶ A collection of Police-Community Collaboration success stories, with a summary of the problem addressed, partners involved, mission statement, activities undertaken, and key outcomes. Over 30 agencies presented on their collaborations at the workshops and these will be featured in the collection.

- ▶ A series of webinars, available to both police and community organizations, discussing the Collaboration Principles, with suggestions for how they can be applied in practice and numerous examples and success stories presented by police and community stakeholders.
- ▶ A social media campaign to disseminate the Collaboration products and assist police agencies in understanding and practicing the principles of Collaboration.

COLLABORATION RESOURCES

Bayley, David H., Davis, Michael A., and Ronald L. Davis. "Race and Policing: An Agenda for Action." Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety. Harvard Kennedy School. June 2015. Accessed Dec. 1, 2016. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/248624.pdf>

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