



2nd Annual Community Policing Conference Report

Redefining Public Safety

Conference Date: November 16, 2019

County of Los Angeles, Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission

Working for transparency with respect to the Sheriff's Department

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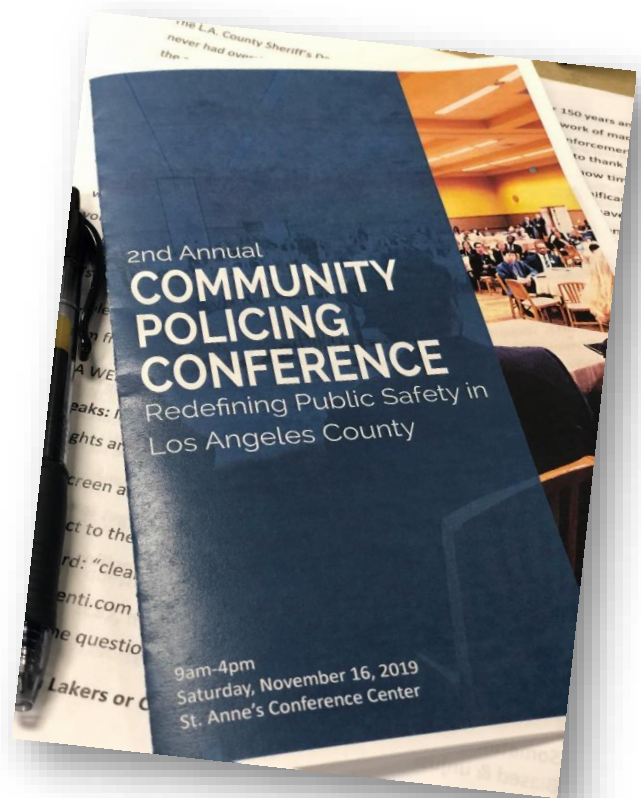
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Foreword

This report was developed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC), with support from the L.A. County Human Relations Commission (HRC) & the L.A. County Department of Public Health (DPH), on behalf of many community members, law enforcement professionals & academics that came together during the 2nd Annual Community Policing Conference.

This report provides highlights from the conference, synthesizes attendee's discussions & recommends next steps. The information in this report will be used to develop a long-term plan to ensure greater community communication & engagement to increase law enforcement transparency & accountability. A special thanks to the staff, participants & our partners for their support.



Conference Overview

On November 16, 2019, the 2nd Annual Community Policing Conference was held at St. Anne's Conference Center. This gathering brought together nearly 200 members of the public, law enforcement professionals, academics & officials for a day of dialog & engagement on redefining public safety in Los Angeles County.

Opening remarks were provided by COC Chair Patti Giggans & DPH Director of Violence Prevention Andrea Welsing. COC Executive Director Brian K. Williams, Esq. served as the master of ceremonies. The conference included a keynote speaker who shared his personal experiences in the criminal justice system & his work moving forward. After

our morning speaker, several panel sessions were held. The first panel delved into the different public safety administration structures with a look at elected sheriffs or appointed police chiefs. Thereafter, an interactive panel session was held which highlighted the L.A. County Sheriff Department's (LASD) training to help officers learn to de-escalate crisis. Conference attendees were invited to a simulated experience of de-escalating an incident without the use of force.

Throughout the day, a resource fair was held with nearly 20 tables offering information about community services. Representatives from various public & nonprofit groups included:

- L.A. County Civilian Oversight Commission
- L.A. County Department of Public Health
- Human Relations Commission
- L.A. County Sheriff's Department
- L.A. County Office of Emergency Management
- L.A. County Office of Immigrant Affairs
- L.A. County 2-1-1
- Museum of Tolerance
- Dignity & Power Now
- The Fountain Theatre

The day of dialogue concluded with a facilitated group discussion focused on next steps. In this final component of the day, more than 20 table facilitators collaborated to lead identified topic discussions at their tables & report back to all attendees.

This conference was just one of many steps in what we hope to be a continuing dialog.



COC Chair Patti Giggans provides opening remarks.



COC's Tracy Jordan-Johnson engages with community members at the resource table.

Keynote Speaker: Jerome Dixon

Jerome Dixon has been touring the country speaking about criminal justice reform. As a high school junior, Dixon was arrested by the Oakland Police Department as a suspect in a murder investigation. Unconnected to the crime, he was questioned without parental notification. After 25 hours of interrogation, Dixon stated that he was coerced into signing an incriminating statement. Even after his subsequent denial of having committed the crime, that statement was used against him in court. After his conviction, Dixon was then known to the State of California as a “term-lifer.”



Jerome Dixon talks about his experience.

Twenty-one years later at his parole hearing & after numerous appeals to lawyers, journalists & judicial stewards, the Parole Board acknowledged his claim of innocence & released him from custody. Since his release, Dixon has become a prominent voice with respect to juvenile justice, racial profiling & self-identity.

To Be or Not to Be: An Elected Sheriff

Across California & other states, different law enforcement structures administer public safety via elected sheriffs & appointed police chiefs. There have been numerous debates as to which structure provides greater accountability, transparency & oversight opportunities. This thought-provoking discussion was moderated by HRC Commissioner & Southwestern Law School Professor Isabelle Gunning who shared the stage with former LASD Undersheriff Ray Leyva, Loyola Law



COC Executive Director Brian K. Williams, Esq. introduces the Calming a Crisis panel.

School Professor Laurie Levenson & UCLA Ralph J. Bunche Center Director of Public Policy Isaac Bryan.

The discussion kicked off with a brief description of the fundamental components of each law enforcement structure: elected sheriffs & appointed chiefs. Each panelist shared their views regarding the oversight challenges associated with each structure. The rest of the discussion was framed around questions from the audience.

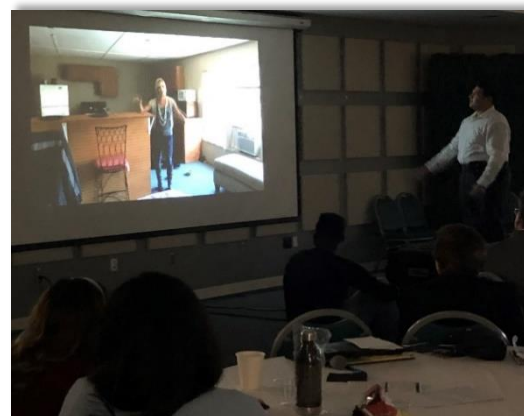


Sgt. Tiwari prepares a community member for the simulation.

Calming a Crisis: De-escalating Use of Force

This session looked at how LASD is tackling mental health crisis calls through a program called the Mental Evaluation Team (MET). MET comprises a specially trained deputy with a Department of Mental Health clinician to assist patrol deputies in such calls. LASD Sergeant Kevin Tiwari & Department of Mental Health's Angelica Isaac-Palma, who both serve on MET teams, showcased an interactive training session that relied on the Multiple Interactive Learning Objectives (MILO) simulator to experience various crisis scenarios, providing deputies the de-escalation skills needed to deal with calls involving persons suffering from mental health issues. Volunteers from the audience were able to participate in the interactive portion of this session.

The next half of the session presented COC Commissioner Sean Kennedy as the moderator & four panelists who each discussed their perspectives about how law enforcement deals with use of force & strategies to address them. Sergeant Annadennise Briz described LASD's mental health training & other programs, such as the Risk Assessment & Monitoring Program (RAMP), which follows up with civilians who were frequently encountered during the MET calls to ensure that they get the proper linkages to continuing



The audience watches the simulated demonstration.

mental health services. Jasmyne Cannick, social critic & political commentator, contributed her thoughts on law enforcement's use of force & the shortcomings of training for police officers. Theresa Smith of Law Enforcement Accountability Network (LEAN)



Panelists discuss best practices to de-escalate use of force.

shared how the death of her son at the hands of the Anaheim Police Department prompted her to protest daily in front of the station & begin a nonprofit that actively supported state legislation promoting accountability by law enforcement.

Where Do We Go from Here?

The final session was organized by HRC & moderated by HRC Executive Director Robin Toma. Participants were asked to share insights, opinions & examples relating to strategies to redefine public safety in diverse cities & neighborhoods. During conference registration, participants were assigned to tables to diversify affiliations & experiences at each table.

Table facilitators then led two 20-minute discussions drawing content from the provided discussion guide with sample questions. After each discussion, table facilitators were given ten minutes to close by asking participants to discuss key points & takeaways. A report back to the conference group highlights points of convergence & divergence between tables. Table facilitators represented HRC, L.A. County Office of the Inspector General, District Attorney's Office, Public



Conference attendees discuss the topic of redefining public safety.

Defender's Office, Board of Supervisors & Public Safety Commissions from the cities of West Hollywood & Cudahy.

The first discussion session related to "Shared Responsibility: Community Alternatives," & participants were encouraged to discuss community-based response teams, diversion initiatives, community healing & trauma.



Conference attendees discuss the topic of redefining public safety.

During the second discussion related to "Paradigm Shifts: Redefining Public Safety," participants were encouraged to discuss access to funding, subpoena power & community capacity-building.

Conference attendees shared their diverse experiences & backgrounds on the varying topics. Some attendees expressed their concerns that law enforcement agencies must train officers to recognize when they are in crisis & are not in the right mental space to engage with community members. Other attendees shared opinions of community trauma being passed down intergenerationally resulting in negative perceptions of law enforcement. One sentiment that most of the attendees shared was that accountability for both law enforcement & community is necessary after dialog takes place.



After table discussions, participants reported back to the group on their conversations.

Acknowledgements

This conference has been designed by a joint planning committee of the L.A. County Civilian Oversight Commission, the Human Relations Commission & the Department of Public Health. Thank you to the members of the public, community advocates, researchers & educators, law enforcement officers & other public service employees for attending our conference. A special thanks to the staff at St. Anne's Conference Center.

Thank you to the table facilitators & information table hosts for engaging with our community members. The conference would not have been possible without the moderators & panelists who volunteered their time to come share their experiences & expertise.



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