

Special Community/Police Task Force  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Regarding 'Use of Force'  
Published: February 2016



Fitchburg Police Department  
**PROGRESS REPORT**

Updated: October 2020

## Background

In 2016, The NAACP/United Way Law Enforcement and Leaders of Color Collaborative released a report that was the result of collaborative efforts of a law enforcement and community task force to specifically address the topic of law enforcement use of force. The task force issued recommendations in four main areas:

- Change key policing practices that will reduce excessive ‘Use of Force’
- Police Academy Training
- Engage and educate the community
- Ensure the well-being of officers

Each main area contained specific points of emphasis for law enforcement agencies to consider as they relate to the overall goals of the recommendation and report to address the use of force.

## Initial Assessment

Following the release of the report, members of the Fitchburg Police Department began work to assess and analyze the recommendations. As part of the assessment, department supervisory staff evaluated where the department stood on the scale of implementation for each recommendation. Many of the recommendations had already been fully implemented and several of those had already been longstanding practices of our department. Other recommendations were prioritized to evaluate for implementation.

Following the initial assessment, our department released a draft “checklist” to provide a brief overview of the recommendations and the status of implementation of each within our department. The checklist was completed and shared with the community in September of 2016. It has remained an important tool to guide our department’s efforts of improving our service and meeting the expectations of our community.

## Today

With a renewed focus on law enforcement and its relationship with the community in the summer of 2020, our department began the process of reassessing our progress on the report’s recommendations. Over the last four years, several major components of the recommendations have been fully implemented, including the use of body-worn cameras and an employee wellness program. Even with full implementation of a recommendation, we recognize our work to improve our service and meet expectations is never truly complete. We will continue our efforts to further improve our service and implement new best practices and recommendations.

As we continue our efforts, we will seek additional opportunities to engage, educate, and learn from those we serve. We recognize the vital importance of co-producing public safety in partnership with our community and understand that work begins with trust, transparency and accountability. In light of the evolving role of law enforcement in our community we began work in 2019 to create a contemporary and meaningful mission, vision and value statement, which we believe aligns with many of the recommendations of this report, but more importantly believe will aid in our service to the community. Earlier this year we made those statements public:

**Mission:** “To Serve and Respect”

**Vision:** A trusted, impartial partner in the pursuit of a peaceful community, where all members feel safe and respected.

**Values:** Service, Teamwork, Accountability and Respect

## Updated Checklist

In the following pages you will find an overview of the report and our progress on each recommendation. A check mark denotes our self-assessed progress and an arrow indicates the movement from the initial assessment in 2016.


For more information regarding our department’s efforts to improve our service and share information with the community, please visit [www.fitchburgwi.gov/police](http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/police) and navigate to the “Accountability” tab.


**Part One:**

Change key practices to reduce use of force

RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION	NOT APPLICABLE
INSTITUTIONALIZE MAJOR INCIDENT DEBRIEFINGS	✓				
CREATE A SYSTEM OF TRACKING AND ANALYSIS FOR COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS		✓			
CREATE A SYSTEM OF TRACKING AND ANALYSIS FOR USE OF FORCE	✓ <sup>1</sup>	←			
CAMERAS: PATROL CAR	✓				
CAMERAS: BODY-WORN CAMERA	✓ <sup>2</sup>		←		
CAMERAS: RANDOM REVIEW	✓ <sup>2</sup>			←	
CAMERAS: POLICY	✓ <sup>2</sup>	←			
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	✓ <sup>3</sup>			←	
EXPAND THE COACHING ROLE OF SERGEANTS AND MID-LEVEL MANAGERS		✓ <sup>4</sup>			
DEVELOP STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN RECRUITMENT EFFORTS	✓				
CONTINUE TO REWARD POLICE GUARDIAN BEHAVIOR	✓				

**KEY**

  
**CURRENT STATUS**

  
**CHANGE FROM 2016**

**Notes**

- 1** Use of Force Incidents, including any time a firearm is displayed, are tracked and information necessary for analysis is collected. Summary statistics have been published in our Annual Report. The department is in the process of adding additional statistics to our website.
- 2** Full implementation of body-worn cameras occurred in 2018 along with updated policies and random review of patrol car and body-worn camera videos.
- 3** A team of officers works to identify and screen individuals who have received municipal citations and meet the criteria for the Dane County Restorative Court program.
- 4** The department is in the process of adjusting administrative duties previously maintained in the sergeant work group in order to allow for more dedicated time to coach and mentor line level personnel.

**Part Two:**

Change key practices to reduce use of force

RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION	NOT APPLICABLE
TRAIN ON GUARDIAN FORM OF POLICING		✓ <sup>1</sup>			
DE-ESCALATION & WEAPON TRANSITION TRAINING	✓				
PROFESSIONAL POLICE COMMUNICATION	✓				
WHEN & HOW TO USE FORCE	✓				
CHIEF EXECUTIVES & AFTERMATH OF O.I.S.		✓			
REGULAR IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING	✓ <sup>2</sup>				
REGULAR CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN-SERVICE TRAINING	✓ <sup>2</sup>	←			
STATE LESB DIVERSITY					✓
INCREASE FUNDING TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDED 40 HOURS ANNUALLY				✓ <sup>3</sup>	
UTILIZE SCENARIO-BASED TRAINING ON USE OF FORCE, CRITICAL THINKING & COMMUNICATION	✓				
ALLOW USE OF ELECTRONIC CONTROL DEVICE WITHOUT BACK-UP	✓				
TRAINING ON CREATING TIME & SPACE	✓				
POLICY & TRAINING ON FOOT PURSUITS			✓ <sup>4</sup>	←	
BRIEFING TRAINING ON CULTURAL AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY FEELINGS & CONCERNS ABOUT POLICE		✓ <sup>5</sup>		←	

**Notes on following page**

**Part Two (continued):**

**Training**

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTED</b>	<b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED</b>	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>	<b>UNDER CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>
RESPONSE TO PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS					
PROVIDE CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING	<sup>6</sup>				
TRAIN OFFICERS & DETECTIVES IN USE OF TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERVIEWING SKILLS			<sup>7</sup>		
DISPATCHER TRAINING TO IMPROVE OFFICER PREPAREDNESS, CRISIS INTERVENTION PARTNER, IMPLICIT BIAS, CULTURAL COMPETENCY					
EXPLORE SCOTLAND'S DE-ESCALATION & NATIONAL DECISION MAKING MODEL		<sup>8</sup>			

**Notes**

- 1** While not completely defined in the report we believe our training and values align with and emphasize the ideals of the “guardian” style of policing.
- 2** We have completed training in both of these areas over the last several years of regular in-service training and are committed to continued regular training on both topics.
- 3** We have participated in a minimum of 32 hours of training annually with many department members exceeding that amount. We are assessing the viability of increasing training hours for all sworn personnel by adding an additional 4 to 8 hours of annual in-service training.
- 4** We are in the process of developing and modifying a number of policies as we prepare for a complete assessment, update, and reorganization of our policy manual. Funding to accomplish this task with the assistance of an outside company was allocated in the fall of 2020 and work is expected to be completed by 2022.
- 5** Our briefing training and other informal opportunities for training continue to evolve. Conversations about modern policing and our relationships with our community and issues within our community occur on a regular basis.
- 6** Additional department members continue to receive Crisis Intervention Training (C.I.T.) as it becomes available. Approximately 30% of sworn staff has received the training. Several members are actively involved in assisting mental health consumers in our community through regular contact and coordination with mental health providers and other community resources.
- 7** Several department members have received training in trauma-informed interviewing skills. As additional training opportunities become available, more personnel will be considered for attendance.
- 8** Department personnel have studied the model and feel many components of it are already embedded in standardized training and department policy.

**Part Three:**

**Engage and Educate the Community**

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTED</b>	<b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED</b>	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>	<b>UNDER CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>
COMMUNITY GROUPS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DCCOPA SHOULD DEVELOP TRAINING ON SAFER INTERACTIONS FOR ALL					✓
USE OF FORCE POLICIES & OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION REGARDING STOPS, ARRESTS AND REPORTED CRIMES ON POLICE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE		✓ <sup>1</sup>			
GREATER EFFORT TO COLLECT PUBLIC OPINION ON POLICE DEPARTMENT BY POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION					✓ <sup>2</sup>
INVOLVE COMMUNITY IN HIRING & PROMOTIONAL PANELS	✓ <sup>2</sup>				←
POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION SHOULD DEVELOP SYSTEM TO REPORT COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND USE OF FORCE					✓ <sup>2</sup>
ENSURE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION IS COMPRISED OF DIVERSE GROUP OF CITIZENS					✓ <sup>2</sup>
EDUCATE PUBLIC ON HOW COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS CAN BE FILED	✓ <sup>3</sup>				

**Notes**

**1** Information regarding arrests, crimes, and other data is published in our annual report that is accessible on our website. A public data portal is on the horizon to provide data “on-demand.”

**2** The role and authority of the Police & Fire Commission is enumerated in state statutes. Members are appointed to the PFC by elected officials. Information related to the filing of complaints is available on our website. Community members have participated in every hiring or promotional panel over the last two years.

**3** Information on filing a complaint or compliment is available on our website.

**Part Three (continued):**

**Engage and Educate the Community**

RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION	NOT APPLICABLE
DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY MEMBERS	✓ <sup>4</sup>				
DEVELOP ONGOING COMMUNITY INTERFACE TO SOLICIT COMMUNITY COLLABORATION ON IDEAS & PROGRAMS TO FOSTER BETTER COMMUNICATION, TRANSPARENCY & RELATIONS	✓ <sup>4</sup>				
INCLUDE RELATIONSHIP BUILDING CONVERSATIONS DURING TRAINING	✓ <sup>5</sup>	←			
COLLABORATE WITH CITIZENS TO DEVELOP BEST PRACTICES REGARDING COMMUNITY POLICING		✓			
OPENLY DISCUSS EFFECTS OF POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT, SINGLE-PARENT HOMES, LACK OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND HOW THESE AFFECT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICE & RESIDENTS	✓				

**Notes**

**4** Department members seek to regularly engage community members via a number of different outlets. Examples include neighborhood association meetings, Fitchburg Faith Leaders meetings, social media, youth and citizen’s academies, and events such as Coffee with a Cop or our Community Night Out. Additionally, officers are assigned to a specific area of the city to patrol for a period of two years. The goal is for officers to develop relationships with residents, business owners and apartment managers. These relationships assist in identifying problems and finding collaborative solutions.

**5** One of the focus areas of our most recent in-service training was developing relationships with the community. This topic is also reinforced in the department’s field-training program.

**Part Four:**

Ensure Officer Well Being

RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION	NOT APPLICABLE
DEVELOP EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOCUSING ON MENTAL HEALTH, PHYSICAL HEALTH & NUTRITION	✓ <sup>1</sup>	←			
USE TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES FOR SECONDARY TRAUMA TO FIELD OFFICERS	✓ <sup>1</sup>	←			
SUPPORT RESTORATIVE, SCIENTIFICALLY-SUPPORTED WORK SCHEDULES AND PRACTICES TO ALLOW FOR DECOMPRESSION AND ACCOUNT FOR EVERYDAY TRAUMA			✓		

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> In 2018 we launched a joint “Public Safety Wellness Team” with the Fitchburg Fire Department and Fitch-Rona EMS. Components of this team include trained peer-support members, training on topics such as functional fitness & nutrition, activities such as yoga and fitness training and events including will preparation. Additionally, all department personnel participate in annual mental health check-ins with a mental health provider.

**For More Information**

If you have questions regarding this report please contact Chief Chad Brecklin at (608)270-4361 or via email at [chad.brecklin@fitchburgwi.gov](mailto:chad.brecklin@fitchburgwi.gov)

For more information on the Fitchburg Police Department, including a link to the annual report and other resources such as a map of police calls for service, please visit [www.fitchburgwi.gov/police](http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/police)



**Fitchburg Police Department**  
 5520 Lacy Road  
 Fitchburg, WI 53711  
 (608)270-4300