

IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center

UNBIASED POLICING

Model Policy
December 2015

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to emphasize this agency's commitment to unbiased, equitable treatment of all persons.

II. POLICY

Persons having contact with members of this agency shall be treated in a fair, impartial, equitable, and objective manner, in accordance with law, and without consideration of their individual demographics as defined in this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

Biased Policing: Discrimination in the performance of law enforcement duties or delivery of police services, based on personal prejudices or partiality of officers toward classes of individuals or persons based on individual demographics.

Fair and Impartial Treatment: The belief that persons, irrespective of race or other distinctions, shall be treated in the same basic manner under the same or similar circumstances. This does not mean that all persons in the same or similar circumstances can or must be treated identically. Reasonable concessions and accommodations may be, and sometimes should be made, when dealing with individuals with physical or mental disabilities, injury, illness, or similar conditions, or when information about them necessitates different treatment.

Individual Demographics: For the purposes of this policy, personal characteristics, to include, but not limited to race, ethnic background, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, age, disability, cultural group, or political status.

Police Services: Sometimes referred to as community caretaking functions, these are actions and activities that may not directly include enforcement of the law but that contribute to the overall well-being and safety of the public. These include, but are not limited to, such tasks as assistance at fire scenes, traffic accidents, and medical emergencies; lifesaving services; crime prevention; preventive patrol; traffic control; public information; education; and similar activities.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Fair and Impartial Treatment

1. Biased policing is prohibited both in enforcement of the law and the delivery of police services.
2. Officers shall take equivalent enforcement actions and provide equal services to all persons in the same or similar circumstances.
3. Officers shall not consider individual demographics when performing law enforcement duties or delivering police services except when such characteristics are part of a specific subject description.

4. Unless exigent circumstances exist, officers shall not engage in a law enforcement matter when it involves a family member, friend, relative, or other person with whom he or she has a personal relationship, such that the officer's objectivity may be, or may appear to be, compromised. In situations where the officer is personally involved, he or she will summon other officers for assistance.

B. Compliance

1. Officers who witness or who are aware of instances of biased policing shall report the incident to a supervisor. Also, where appropriate, officers are encouraged to intervene at the time the biased policing incident occurs.
2. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the incident, supervisors may provide the involved officer(s) with informal, non-punitive intervention such as training and counseling.
3. All external complaints and internal complaints that cannot be resolved effectively and appropriately by supervisory personnel—or that are determined to be potentially serious in nature—shall be forwarded to the agency's internal affairs office or other designated authority for investigation.
4. The internal affairs office shall maintain data relating specifically to complaints of biased policing. Information shall be provided to the chief executive officer or designated authority in a manner most suitable for administrative review, problem identification, and development of appropriate corrective actions.

C. Training

All employees will receive basic and periodic in-service training and, where deemed necessary, remedial training on subjects related to police ethics, cultural diversity, police-citizen interaction, standards of conduct, conducting motor vehicle stops, implicit bias, and related topics suitable for preventing incidents of biased policing.

Acknowledgment

This document was developed by the IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center in conjunction with Lorie Fridell. Ms. Fridell is an Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of South Florida and a national expert on biased policing. With funding from the COPS Office, she has developed the Fair and Impartial Policing training program, which is based on the modern science of bias.

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Every effort has been made by the IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center staff and advisory board to ensure that this model policy incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgment on this issue. However, law enforcement administrators should be cautioned that no "model" policy can meet all the needs of any given law enforcement agency. Each law enforcement agency operates in a unique environment of federal court rulings, state laws, local ordinances, regulations, judicial and administrative decisions and collective bargaining agreements that must be considered. In addition, the formulation of specific agency policies must take into account local political and community

perspectives and customs, prerogatives and demands; often divergent law enforcement strategies and philosophies; and the impact of varied agency resource capabilities among other factors. This document is not intended to be a national standard.