

# Immersing College Students in Police Agencies Can Improve Recruitment and Community Trust

Lessons From the PERF-HBCU  
Summer Internship Program



February 2024



POLICE EXECUTIVE  
RESEARCH FORUM



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Cover: Members of the 2023 class of interns at the PERF annual meeting in New York City.

We are grateful for a generous gift from MacKenzie Scott, which made this publication possible. The points of view expressed herein are the authors' and do not necessarily represent the opinions of MacKenzie Scott or all Police Executive Research Forum members.

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# A Message From Executive Director Chuck Wexler

**For the past two summers**, PERF has sought to answer a research question that touches on three related challenges facing the policing profession: strengthening recruitment, improving diversity, and building public trust. The question is, **Can deeply immersing students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) inside police agencies positively change their attitudes about policing and their willingness to consider it as a career?** The answer, we learned through the PERF-HBCU Internship Program, is an overwhelming yes.

“The younger generation doesn’t have the best perception of police at this moment, but this internship changed my perception,” said Sam Mensuphu-Bey, a Coppin State University (MD) student who interned with the Baltimore County (MD) Police Department in 2022, the first year of our program. “I care for all the officers. . . . I know that they’re working hard, and I know that they’re risking their lives.”

Similarly, Eberechukwu Nwanegwo, who graduated from Lincoln University (PA) with a nursing degree shortly before beginning her internship with the Baltimore (MD) Police Department (BPD), spoke enthusiastically about an officer’s handling of an incident she witnessed:

*I would have never thought a police officer would have the training or the background to be able to calm down or de-escalate a situation that I’m spending three years [as a nursing student] learning how to do. . . . I was just so surprised that they were so worried about [the individual’s] health. And I was like, Wow, this is beautiful, the way they serve their community. I have so much respect for police officers.*

And Morgan State University student and BPD intern Yasmine Bryant said simply, “I will remember this internship for the rest of my life.”

## The Staffing Crisis and the Need for Diversity

The idea of creating a PERF summer internship program can be traced to our 2019 report, “The Workforce Crisis, and What Police Agencies Are Doing About It.” The report highlighted increases in officer retirements and resignations and declines in applica-

tions, which have created unprecedented challenges for the profession.<sup>1</sup> (Those challenges have only grown since then, as our 2023 report, “Responding to the Staffing Crisis: Innovations in Recruitment and Retention,” showed.)<sup>2</sup>

One reason for the staffing crisis is the harsh public scrutiny of policing (including calls to “defund the police”), which has made policing less attractive to younger workers. And, among racial groups, Black adults report the lowest confidence in their local police, the least satisfaction with police–community relations, and the greatest desire for major police reforms.<sup>3</sup>

Yet there are reasons for hope. Research shows that diversifying the profession can reduce disparities in police interactions with minority citizens,<sup>4</sup> and greater diversity in police agencies has been associated with increased public trust and improved public perceptions of police fairness and legitimacy.<sup>5</sup>

These findings should serve as a call to action. Just as a recent PERF report presented strategies to increase the number of women in police leadership,<sup>6</sup> agencies must employ innovative strategies to improve their racial diversity, which would help bridge the gulf between police and communities and help address the current staffing crisis. One strategy is for police agencies to “go upstream” in the recruiting process by creating programs like police cadets, explorers, and internship opportunities, which can show young people what policing is about.<sup>7</sup>

## “Going Upstream” to Find the Next Generation of Officers

As I thought more about police agencies “going upstream” to help address the staffing crisis, I saw an extraordinary opportunity for PERF to test the question of whether immersing students in police departments could change their attitudes. I recalled my own experience, as a graduate student at MIT, when I interned with the Boston Police Department and saw first-hand how police served as peacekeepers during the bitter school busing crisis in 1974. That experience altered my career.

I wondered, would an internship program today have a similarly powerful impact on college students’ attitudes toward policing, particularly students of color? Given the cen-

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1 Police Executive Research Forum, “The Workforce Crisis, and What Police Agencies Are Doing About It,” September 2019, <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/WorkforceCrisis.pdf>.

2 Police Executive Research Forum, “Responding to the Staffing Crisis: Innovations in Recruitment and Retention,” August 2023, <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/RecruitmentRetention.pdf>.

3 M.C. Brown II and Camille Lloyd, “Black Americans Less Confident, Satisfied with Local Police,” Gallup, September 18, 2023, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/511064/black-americans-less-confident-satisfied-local-police.aspx>.

4 Douglas Starr, “Study: Police Diversity Matters,” *Science*, Vol. 371, No. 6530, February 12, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.371.6530.661>.

5 Bocar A. Ba et al., “The Role of Officer Race and Gender in Police–Civilian Interactions in Chicago,” *Science*, Vol. 371, No. 6530, February 12, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abd8694>; U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, “Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement,” October 2016, [https://www.justice.gov/d9/advancing\\_diversity\\_in\\_law\\_enforcement\\_report\\_october\\_2016.pdf](https://www.justice.gov/d9/advancing_diversity_in_law_enforcement_report_october_2016.pdf); Joshua C. Cochran and Patricia Y. Warren, “Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in Perceptions of the Police: The Salience of Officer Race Within the Context of Racial Profiling,” *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, Vol. 28, No. 2, May 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986211425726>.

6 Police Executive Research Forum, “Women in Police Leadership: 10 Action Items for Advancing Women and Strengthening Policing,” March 2023, <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/WomenPoliceLeadership.pdf>.

7 Police Executive Research Forum, “The Workforce Crisis, and What Police Agencies Are Doing About It.”





trality of race in shaping attitudes about policing and the ongoing challenges of recruiting a diverse workforce, this struck me as a question worth exploring. If we immersed students from our nation’s HBCUs — some of whom might well have negative views of police — inside police agencies, would they emerge from their internship with different attitudes and perceptions about police officers and policing? And would they be more likely to consider a career in policing, either as an officer or as a member of an agency’s professional staff?

## A Partnership Is Born

The partnership that launched the PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program was formed in two hours. In early 2022 I called **then-Baltimore Police Commissioner and PERF Board President Michael Harrison** to suggest that we partner with two of Baltimore’s HBCUs to offer students paid summer internships with the BPD. He enthusiastically agreed and contacted the presidents of Morgan State University and Coppin State University, Dr. David Wilson and Dr. Anthony Jenkins. They endorsed the partnership, and the work to develop the program began immediately.

This joint venture between PERF, BPD, and Baltimore’s HBCUs was the first of its kind, and we learned a great deal from the pilot program that summer about what it takes to develop and administer an internship program on a local scale. We applied those lessons in the summer of 2023 as we expanded the program nationally to 30 interns, 29 police agencies in 15 states, and 13 HBCUs in ten states.

Funding for the paid internships was available through the substantial donation that philanthropist and author MacKenzie Scott made to PERF through *Yield Giving*, her initiative to support organizations working to combat inequality and advance social justice.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> MacKenzie Scott, “Helping Any of Us Can Help Us All,” March 23, 2022, <https://yieldgiving.com/essays/helping-any-of-us-can-help-us-all>.

“Coppin State University centers our purpose and our partnerships around the needs of our students and our community. This internship is an opportunity for students to earn, while they learn more about the law enforcement profession. This is also a chance for them to envision how they can serve their communities in a meaningful way. My hope is this internship will enrich the lives of our students, help inform their choices, and support them as they consider careers in law enforcement after graduation.”

**Dr. Anthony L. Jenkins,  
President  
Coppin State University**



## What We Learned

Our two-year experiment proved even more promising than I had hoped. While every intern had their own experience with the program, the vast majority came away seeing and appreciating the complexity of policing. They began the internship thinking police officers spend most of their shift responding to 911 calls and enforcing the law, with very little time for community-related activities. They ended the internship knowing that police spend far more time communicating with people and problem-solving than taking enforcement action.

Surveys also revealed that the experience led some interns to consider becoming a police officer and others to consider seeking a professional staff position within a police agency. That’s music to the ears of participating chiefs. **Elgin (IL) Police Chief Ana Lalley**, who hosted an intern from Howard University, told us, “I tried to recruit her the first day. I’ll be in touch with her in a couple of years,” when she graduates.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Rick West, “From Howard U. to Elgin: Police Internship Welcomes Students from Historically Black Colleges,” *Daily Herald*, August 28, 2023, <https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20230828/from-howard-u-to-elgin-police-internship-welcomes-students-from-historically-black-colleges/>.



**MORGAN**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

“Paid internships are always attractive to students who want to get some work experience under their belt while understanding the culture of an organization. This internship program is a terrific way to expose students on HBCU campuses to the multiple career opportunities in police departments across the United States. When many people think of police work, they often only think of patrolling. But there are so many opportunities in data analytics, finance, accounting, forensics, public administration, and journalism. I applaud the investment PERF is making and thank Commissioner Harrison for his advocacy of Baltimore’s HBCUs. Morgan State is thrilled to be a part of this program, and I am confident we will see more graduates of HBCUs working in the policing profession because of it.”

**Dr. David K. Wilson,**  
**President**  
**Morgan State University**

## Lowering Barriers, Building Bridges

**Captain Paul Borowski, Commander of Employment with the Baltimore County Police Department,** witnessed the transformation in attitudes that can occur with a well-designed internship program: “When [our intern] first came here, I don’t believe he had a positive view of us. He’s leaving here as part of our family. We are going to miss him greatly.”<sup>10</sup>

The program demonstrated a promising new way to break down barriers between aspiring young professionals and police: immerse young people in the day-to-day operations of a police agency; expose them to a wide range of policing professionals, criminal justice partners, and community stakeholders; give them a better understanding of a police officer’s daily work; challenge their existing perceptions about police and the

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Hunter, “Baltimore County Police Participate In HBCU Internship Program,” August 18, 2023, <https://www.wmar2news.com/baltimore-county-police-participate-in-hbcu-internship-program>.

policing profession; and introduce them to various professional experiences and career opportunities in policing.

**Buffalo Police Commissioner Joe Gramaglia**, who hosted an intern from Lincoln University (PA), saw the program as a way to build bridges to the next generation of police officers, which he considers essential to fostering community trust and attracting the best and brightest to serve. “We have to build credibility,” Gramaglia said, and “get some young people to come in and get a look behind the curtain at what we’re doing.”

## A Challenge to Agency Leaders: What This Report Is About

I am grateful to the interns, HBCUs, and host agencies that turned our vision into reality, and **I challenge other police departments and sheriff agencies to establish their own internship programs**. This report is designed to help them do just that. It details how the PERF-HBCU Internship Program operated, both in its pilot phase in 2022 and as a national program the following summer. It discusses how interns were recruited and selected, the different kinds of assignments they received, the capstone projects they presented at the end of their internship, and — maybe most important — how the experience changed their views of police, policing, and a possible career in policing.

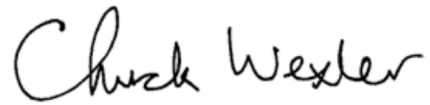
The report concludes with **ten steps for creating an internship program**. These ten steps can be applied to any police agency internship program, whether they partner with an HBCU or other college or university:

1. Create or expand partnerships with local universities, colleges, and high schools
2. Develop clear timelines
3. Establish screening and eligibility criteria
4. Develop program objectives
5. Create a compensation policy
6. Provide a formal intern orientation
7. Give interns meaningful assignments
8. Start small
9. Build an intern cohort
10. Provide ongoing opportunities for interns to give feedback

I’m happy to report that some agencies have already started planning their own internship programs. The Rochester (NY) Police Department, for example, is setting up a six-week paid summer internship with Central State University, an HBCU in Ohio. And other agencies, colleges, and universities have inquired with PERF about how to forge a partnership, recruit interns, and structure a program.

Policing is at a crossroads. The last ten years have forced the profession to seek a new direction to rebuild public trust and address its ongoing staffing crisis. Race has been at

the center of these challenges, and diversifying agencies is more important than ever. How do we attract the next generation of police officers? How do we expose them to the good they can accomplish through a career in policing? PERF's two-year experiment provided powerful evidence that student internship programs can be an important part of the answer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Wexler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chuck Wexler

Executive Director

Police Executive Research Forum

Washington, D.C.



# Acknowledgements

PERF thanks **Mackenzie Scott** and **Yield Giving**<sup>11</sup> for the generous donation that made the PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program possible. PERF also thanks the stars of the show—the 38 HBCU interns<sup>12</sup> who distinguished themselves through their academic achievements, intrepid spirit, enthusiasm, and dedication to better understanding the policing profession and the communities they serve. We hope they have learned as much from the internship as PERF and the participating agencies have learned from them.

## **2022 Baltimore Police Department Interns**

### **Yasmine Bryant**

Morgan State University (MD)

### **Albert Johnson**

Coppin State University (MD)

### **Kayla Keys**

Coppin State University (MD)

### **De'Shawndra McDonald**

Coppin State University (MD)

### **Cheikh McKissic**

Morgan State University (MD)

### **Fortune Olayinka**

Morgan State University (MD)

### **Wesley Rice**

Coppin State University (MD)

### **Jasmine Slide**

Coppin State University (MD)

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<sup>11</sup> <https://yieldgiving.com/>

<sup>12</sup> One of the interns was separated from the program and is not listed here.

## **2023 National Program Interns**

### **Lanayah Adams**

Kentucky State University  
Louisville Metro Police Department (KY)

### **Thomas Barnes**

Morehouse College (GA)  
Chicago Police Department (IL)

### **Cylah Bass**

North Carolina A&T State University  
Philadelphia Police Department (PA)

### **Jakiya Franklin**

North Carolina A&T State University  
Greensboro Police Department (NC)

### **Jessica Gray**

Savannah State University (GA)  
Atlanta Police Department (GA)

### **Jayla Hall**

Alabama A&M University  
Minneapolis Police Department (MN)

### **Patricia Harrell**

Lane College (TN)  
Jackson Police Department (TN)

### **Taina Harris**

Harris-Stowe State University (MO)  
Washington University Police Department  
(MO)

### **Aaniyah Hicks**

Howard University (DC)  
Metropolitan Police Department (DC)

### **Cierra Isaac**

Harris-Stowe State University (MO)  
Chattanooga Police Department (TN)

### **Ariana Jones**

Savannah State University (GA)  
Chatham County Police Department  
(GA)

### **Kaliyaha Lane**

Harris-Stowe State University (MO)  
Houston Police Department (TX)

### **Erika Laster**

Lincoln University (PA)  
Buffalo Police Department (NY)

### **Andino LaVersa**

Howard University (DC)  
Austin Police Department (TX)

### **Immanuel Martin**

Howard University (DC)  
Prince George's County Police  
Department (MD)

### **Javier McDonald**

Lane College (TN)  
Tennessee Bureau of Investigation

**Sam Mensuphu-Bey**  
Coppin State University (MD)  
Baltimore County Police Department  
(MD)

**Ayiana Newcombe**  
Howard University (DC)  
Elgin Police Department (IL)

**Eberechukwu Nwanegwo**  
Lincoln University (PA)  
Baltimore Police Department (MD)

**Peace Odili**  
Morgan State University (MD)  
Annapolis Police Department (MD)

**Tkhai Pauling**  
North Carolina A&T State University  
Raleigh Police Department (NC)

**Maria Rosell**  
Harris-Stowe State University (MO)  
St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department  
(MO)

**Sacha Shorter**  
Harris-Stowe State University (MO)  
Glendale Police Department (CA)

**Aaylia Smith**  
Southern University at New Orleans (LA)  
New Orleans Police Department (LA)

**Aaron Szegedi**  
Tennessee State University  
Metro Nashville Police Department (TN)

**LaNiya Vargas**  
Howard University (DC)  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department  
(NC)

**Darrius Williams**  
North Carolina A&T State University  
Chapel Hill Police Department (NC)

**Lauren Williams**  
Savannah State University (GA)  
Savannah Police Department (GA)

**Zaria Wilson**  
Harris-Stowe State University (MO)  
St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department  
(MO)

Additionally, the internship program would not have gotten off the ground without the support of the following individuals: **Baltimore Police Department**: Commissioner Michael Harrison (former); Director Leslie Parker Blyther, BPD Equity Office; Program Manager Kim Stevenson, BPD Equity Office; **Coppin State University**: Dr. Anthony Jenkins, President, and Dr. Johnny Rice, Chair, Criminal Justice Department; and **Morgan State University**: Dr. David Wilson, President.





Baltimore Police Commissioner Michael Harrison speaks with Coppin State University President Dr. Anthony Jenkins and Morgan State University President Dr. David Wilson

PERF would also like to thank the following chiefs and their staff from the participating police agencies, who were instrumental in expanding the internship program nationally in its second year.

**Annapolis Police Department (MD)**

Chief Edward Jackson  
Sergeant Mark Cochran

**Anne Arundel County Police Department (MD)**

Chief Amal Awad  
Lieutenant Michael Cox  
Lieutenant Daniel Sereboff

**Atlanta Police Department (GA)**

Chief Darin Schierbaum  
Crime Laboratory Director Candace Walker

**Austin Police Department (TX)**

Chief Joseph Chacon (former)  
Division Manager Kyran Fitzgerald

**Baltimore Police Department (MD)**

Commissioner Michael Harrison (former)  
Equity Office Director Leslie Parker Blyther  
Program Manager Kim Stevenson

**Baltimore County Police Department (MD)**

Chief Robert McCullough  
Captain Paul Borowski

**Buffalo Police Department (NY)**

Commissioner Joseph Gramaglia  
Deputy Commissioner Dawn Kent

**Chapel Hill Police Department (NC)**

Chief Celisa Lehew  
Lieutenant Todd Harris

**Charlotte–Mecklenburg Police Department (NC)**

Chief Johnny Jennings  
Captain Gene Lim

**Chatham County Police Department (GA)**

Chief Jeffrey Hadly  
Sergeant Tony Slayden, Jr.

**Chattanooga Police Department (TN)**

Chief Celeste Murphy  
Sergeant Michael Smith

**Chicago Police Department (IL)**

Interim Superintendent Fred Waller  
Assistant Director LeKeshia Royal

**Elgin Police Department (IL)**

Chief Ana Lalley  
Executive Assistant Katie Johnston

**Glendale Police Department (CA)**

Chief Manuel Cid  
Sergeant Teal Metts  
Sergeant Sharon Kim

**Greensboro Police Department (NC)**

Chief John Thompson  
Assistant Chief Milford Harris

**Houston Police Department (TX)**

Chief Troy Finner  
Sergeant Roman Flores

**Jackson Police Department (TN)**

Chief Thom Corley  
Captain Danielle Jones  
Lieutenant Trey Trull

**Louisville Metro Police Department (KY)**

Chief Jacquelyn Gwinn-Villaroel  
Victim Services Supervisor Meghan Ware

**Metro Nashville Police Department (TN)**

Chief John Drake  
Administrative Assistant Suzanne Murphy

**Metropolitan Police Department (DC)**

Chief Pamela Smith  
Chief Robert Contee (former)  
Special Assistant Wanda Gattison

**Minneapolis Police Department (MN)**

Chief Brian O'Hara  
Lieutenant Marjane Khazraeinazmpour  
Sergeant Keia Boyd

**New Orleans Police Department (LA)**

Deputy Superintendent Michelle Woodfork  
Personnel Administrator Shelly Stolp

**Philadelphia Police Department (PA)**  
Commissioner Danielle Outlaw (former)  
Inspector Verdell Johnson

**Prince George's County Police Department (MD)**  
Chief Malik Aziz  
Payroll Coordinator Kelly Meyers

**Raleigh Police Department (NC)**  
Chief Estella D. Patterson  
Sergeant J.C. Steelman

**Savannah Police Department (GA)**  
Chief Lenny Gunther  
Assistant Chief Robert Gavin

**St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (MO)**  
Chief Robert Tracy  
Police Chaplain Clarence Hines  
Sergeant Brad Roy

**Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TN)**  
Director David Rausch  
Assistant Special Agent in Charge Ronnie Faulkner

**Washington University Police Department (MO)**  
Chief Angela Coonce  
Assistant Director Kelly Nappier

Many PERF staff have contributed to the internship program and this report. Senior Principal Martin Bartness has managed the program since its inception, and Senior Research Assistant Zoe Mack provided significant administrative and programmatic support as it expanded into its second year. Director Tom Wilson and Deputy Director Jennifer Sommers of the Center for Management and Technical Assistance helped direct the overall effort. Additional administrative support for the internship program was provided by Membership Coordinator Sydney Eischens, Senior Research Assistant Caleb Regen, and former Research Assistant Adam Kass. Executive Assistant Soline Simenauer helped with logistical support. Senior Research Associate Kristen McGeeney and Senior Principal Martin Bartness wrote the report. In preparing the report, Zoe Mack and Research Associate Ashley Richards conducted research and data analysis. Executive Editor John Springer edited this report. Communications Associate Dustin Waters photographed the interns, designed and laid out the report, and produced and edited the intern podcast series. Kelly Services<sup>13</sup> managed the internship program's human resources in the second year, including the onboarding of interns and payroll functions.

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13 <https://www.kellyservices.com/>



# Introduction: Police Internships Benefit Students and Agencies Alike

In criminal justice as well as other fields of employment, student internships are valuable for the students as well as the organizations where they work. These programs offer a host of mutual benefits.

For students, internships allow them to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to the real-world workplace.<sup>14</sup> They allow students to “test-drive” working in a professional environment, giving them an opportunity to navigate relationships, produce deliverables, solve challenges, and receive feedback from supervisors on skills to continue developing.<sup>15</sup> Students can also learn the norms of the working world, such as punctuality and appropriate dress.<sup>16</sup>

Internships also provide an important networking opportunity. Through internships, students can build connections with prospective employers, demonstrate their value to an organization, and obtain job leads for the future.<sup>17</sup>

For HBCU students in particular, internships can help them to “maintain a competitive edge in gaining post-graduation employment.”<sup>18</sup> This is an especially important factor in

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14 Celia A. Sgroi and Margaret Ryniker, “Preparing for the Real World: A Prelude to a Field-work Experience,” *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 13, no. 1 (March 2002): 187–200, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511250200085411>.

15 David Murphy and Stephen Gibbons, “Criminal Justice Internships: An Assessment of the Benefits and Risks,” Western Oregon University, April 2017, [http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/fac\\_pubs/39](http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/fac_pubs/39); Tameka Williams *et al.*, “The Benefits of Criminal Justice Internships at a Historically Black University: An Analysis of Site Supervisors’ Evaluations of Interns’ Professional Development,” *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 31, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 124–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2019.1671468>.

16 Mark Jones and Heidi S. Bonner, “What Should Criminal Justice Interns Know? Comparing the Opinions of Student Interns and Criminal Justice Practitioners,” *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 27, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 381–409, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2016.1143519>.

17 Matthew L. Hiller, Christopher Salvatore, and Travis Taniguchi, “Evaluation of a Criminal Justice Internship Program: Why Do Students Take It and Does It Improve Career Preparedness?,” *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 25, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2013.856929>.

18 Williams *et al.*, “The Benefits of Criminal Justice Internships at a Historically Black University.”



Wesley Rice, 2022  
intern, Coppin State  
University

helping level the playing field for people of color, who may have fewer family members or social connections in policing.<sup>19</sup>

Police agencies also benefit from hosting student interns. The PERF–HBCU internship program has shown how interns can support the daily operations of police agencies and bring fresh perspectives to promote innovation and efficiency. Internship programs also create a recruitment pathway for potential hires, especially those who may be considering a career in policing but are not quite sure or may lack the confidence needed to apply. In fact, **across industries, employers “overwhelmingly believe hosting internships is the recruiting strategy that yields the highest return on investment” leading to entry-level hires.**<sup>20</sup> And once hired, former student interns begin their formal employment with an appreciation of the complexities and challenges of policing, an understanding of the requirements of the job, and experience developing and applying skills such as technical writing and analytics.<sup>21</sup>

For some students, experiencing a career in policing up close can show them that becoming a police officer isn’t for them — before the agency has made costly investments in their hiring and training. At the same time, these students can learn through their internships about career possibilities in professional (i.e., non-sworn) staff positions in an agency. As PERF’s report “Responding to the Staffing Crisis: Innovations in Recruitment and Retention” points out, making greater use of professional staff is an important strategy for agencies to address the recruitment and retention crisis for sworn personnel.<sup>22</sup>

19 Police Executive Research Forum, “Responding to the Staffing Crisis: Innovations in Recruitment and Retention”; David Murphy, Wyatt Merritt, and Stephen Gibbons, “Student and Supervisor Perspectives on the Benefits of Criminal Justice Internships,” *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 24, no. 2 (June 2013): 235–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2013.782053>; Lee E. Ross and Ogbonnaya Oko Elechi, “Student Attitudes towards Internship Experiences: From Theory to Practice,” *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 13, no. 2 (November 2002): 297–312, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511250200085491>.

20 Kevin Gray, “Employers Cite Internships as Recruiting Strategy with Highest ROI; Strongly Prefer In-Person Career Fairs,” *NACE Journal, Trends & Predictions*, January 9, 2023, <https://naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/trends-and-predictions/employers-cite-internships-as-recruiting-strategy-with-highest-roi-strongly-prefer-in-person-career-fairs/>.

21 Ross and Elechi, “Student Attitudes towards Internship Experiences.”

22 Police Executive Research Forum, “Responding to the Staffing Crisis: Innovations in Recruitment and Retention.”

# Figure 1: Organizations Participating in the 2023 PERF-HBCU Summer Intern Program



## PERF's Internship Program for HBCU Students

In 2022, the inaugural year of the PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program, PERF administered a pilot program that placed eight current students and recent graduates from Morgan State University and Coppin State University with the Baltimore Police Department (BPD). Piloting the internship program was important to ensure it was appropriately resourced, monitored, and evaluated before additional agencies and academic institutions were invited to participate.

Due to the success of the pilot, the program expanded nationally in 2023 to 29 police agencies in 15 states with 30 interns from 13 HBCUs. Both years were filled with inspiring moments and promising developments, as well as challenges and lessons learned. This report briefly conveys these experiences and takeaways to share lessons learned about developing and managing a student internship program.



# Intern Recruitment and Selection

## Pilot Program (2022)

In the program's pilot year, eligibility criteria for interns were intentionally broad to minimize barriers to access and promote inclusivity. Prospective interns were required to be:

- Currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at, or a recent graduate (within the past two years) of, Morgan State University or Coppin State University;
- 18 years or older;
- A permanent resident of Baltimore City (preferred) or a resident of Baltimore City while enrolled in classes; and
- Able to pass a cursory background review and Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) fingerprint check.

In addition to those minimum eligibility criteria, BPD staff selected the eight interns based on their written statements of interest, resumes, letters of support, and in-person interviews. Notably, the eligibility requirements did not include any specific degree program or minimum number of credits earned. This was done to expand the pool of applicants, including those who may have been undecided about their professional pathway.

## National Program (2023)

The national program was designed very differently. Whereas the pilot program involved only one police agency, two HBCUs, and 17 applicants, the national program expanded to include 29 agencies, 13 HBCUs, and 147 applicants. Logistically, this was a much more challenging endeavor and required the full commitment of all participants.

PERF contacted 101 HBCU presidents and 389 police chiefs and sheriffs, inviting them to participate in the 2023 program (see Appendix A); the letters to the HBCUs were accompanied by a letter co-signed by the presidents of Coppin State University and Morgan State University encouraging their colleagues to participate (see Appendix B). Interested HBCUs notified PERF of their willingness to market the program to their students. Interested police agencies notified PERF of their interest in hosting an intern for the summer.



Taina Harris (2023 intern, Harris–Stowe State University) with Chief Angela Coonce, Washington University Police Department (MO)

With the assistance of a temporary employment agency, PERF screened 147 intern applicants for minimum eligibility requirements.<sup>23</sup> Applicants were then rated based on the strength of their written statements<sup>24</sup> and the alignment of their academic majors and career interests with the program goals.

PERF categorized applicants into bands – A (strongest), B, and C (weakest). PERF then matched applicants in the A and B bands with one of the three police agencies where the interns expressed an interest in working. Where multiple interns sought assignment with the same agency, A-band applicants received priority. C-band applicants were not selected for placement.

To maximize the program’s geographic reach and potential impact, PERF tried to assign only one intern per police agency.<sup>25</sup> But assigning interns to as many different agencies as possible, while accommodating geographical constraints of where students could actually work, proved difficult.

HBCUs are concentrated in the Southeast, and most of the applicants sought internships with police agencies in that region.<sup>26</sup> (See Figure 1, page 16.) In those instances where more than one well-qualified applicant wanted to work at the same agency, PERF contacted nearby departments to ask if they would host an intern for the summer. Six agencies beyond those that initially expressed an interest in the program ultimately hosted an intern.

After PERF matched an agency with an applicant, the agency completed the screening and selection process by conducting an additional (discretionary) background investigation and interview of the intern. PERF encouraged this additional screening—beyond

23 Eligibility requirements were expanded in the second year of the program to include only those who were in “good academic standing” or recent graduates of an HBCU.

24 The interest statement (maximum 300 words) asked applicants: How would this internship benefit your academic and career goals? What do you hope to take away from the experience? Multiple applicants were screened out for submitting interest statements that were AI-generated or dismissively brief (in many cases, only one or two short sentences).

25 This goal was largely achieved, as only one agency was assigned more than one intern (St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department).

26 Funds for housing and travel were not provided as part of the program, so interns were limited to working where they could obtain their own housing accommodations.



what PERF and the temporary employment agency had already done—to ensure a good fit between the intern and the agency with which they were paired.

PERF contracted with a temporary employment agency to serve as the interns’ employer of record; its responsibilities included background screening, insurance-related issues, and payroll. The decision to outsource human resources was fiscally beneficial to PERF and relieved our small staff of time-consuming administrative tasks associated with 30 additional employees.



“When I first arrived at my internship at Austin PD Headquarters, I was immediately greeted with professionalism and kindness by my supervisors, and was given my own workspace directly next to Chief Chacon’s office.”

**Andino LaVersa, 2023 intern,  
Howard University**

# Intern Spotlight: Jayla Hall

## Alabama A&M University; Minneapolis Police Department (MN)

Originally from Jacksonville, Jayla Hall planned to intern at a police department in her home state of Florida, but when that arrangement fell through, PERF offered her the opportunity to intern with the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) instead. Jayla was apprehensive about traveling to an unfamiliar city. But she summoned the courage to take on a new challenge and was ultimately grateful she did:

*I didn't know Minneapolis was such a diverse and expansive city. It may be small, but there's just so much going on – good and bad, but I definitely thought the good outweighed the bad. I was pleasantly surprised when I was always enjoying my nights out, enjoying my weekends, and even enjoying working with the police department.*

Throughout the summer, Jayla participated in role-playing scenarios and defensive tactics instruction with police officer trainees, joined the recruitment team at public events, rode along with officers on patrol, had a one-on-one conversation with MPD Chief Brian O'Hara, and met Hennepin County Sheriff Dawanna Witt at a Somali festival. She also attended PERF's annual meeting in New York City and was impressed to see how police officers exchanged promising ideas:

*It was very interesting . . . as people were talking and engaging and sharing their different experiences and what works for their department and what worked for other people. . . . I took so many notes about how they were able to combat issues they were having in their specific city. And I was honestly amazed that it wasn't just in the United States because someone stood up to speak and he was from New Zealand.*

Jayla explained how the internship changed her views on police:

*I never necessarily hated the police, but I was always very watchful in their presence. I was kind of standoffish. . . . I don't feel like I truly valued or respected police like I do now. Seeing behind the scenes and how they interact with the community has really shown me a different image than what I had, and what I feel like people generally or my friends have. . . . I'm glad that I was able to shift that perspective because now, even in Huntsville, Alabama, I'll see a cop and I'll wave, like I know him. So that's never something I did before.*

The internship has also caused her to reconsider her career plans:

*Prior to this internship I was very set on going to the FBI. That was my one goal once I got my degree, but now I'm kind of exploring different options and feel like I might start off local and be a police officer for several years before I transition to the federal level.*

And as a testament to the power of internships to grow the talents of our future leaders, Jayla talked about an awakening of her social skills:



Jayla Hall

Photo credit: ShelettaMakesMeLaugh.com

*I was a very shy person and kept to myself. Having to . . . get out there and socialize and network, that really changed my perspective. Now when I walk into a room I no longer sit in the back and talk to someone that I already know. I sit in the front and I socialize with the people around me.*

Jayla put her newfound social skills to work by helping to recruit potential candidates for the MPD on her campus at Alabama A&M. After resuming classes in the fall, Jayla donned an MPD shirt for a university recruitment fair, where she spoke with her fellow students about a career with the department. MPD Sgt. Keia Boyd said her long trip from Minneapolis to attend the fair was well worth it, as some of the students there expressed a willingness to apply and relocate.<sup>27</sup>

To learn more about Jayla's internship experience, listen to her PERFCast episode with Chuck Wexler at <https://www.policeforum.org/HBCUInternship>.

<sup>27</sup> Reg Chapman, "Minneapolis Police Department wants to recruit more from HBCUs," WCCO CBS News Minnesota, October 5, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/minneapolis-police-department-seeks-to-recruit-from-more-hbcus/>.



# Program Structure and Curriculum

## Pilot Program (2022)

The structure of the internship program during the pilot year was the product of collaboration among PERF, BPD, Coppin State University, and Morgan State University. PERF established the basic parameters of a 10-week, paid program for HBCU students, but all stakeholders helped develop the program’s objectives, intern assignments and experiences, and capstone project assignment.

BPD’s Equity Officer and Program Manager provided program oversight and coordinated day-to-day supervision of the interns as they moved between units and participated in various activities and events (see Table 1). All interns began the program on June 10 and ended on August 19.

**Table 1**

### Program Objectives: Pilot Program (2022 – Baltimore)

1. Explore the historical and current relationships between Baltimore City police and citizens.
2. Study the complex operational and managerial components of a police agency.
3. Integrate theory and practice, developing skills directly associated with the concepts and theories learned in the classroom.
4. Complete a data-driven capstone project to improve a specific area of operations in the agency.
5. Earn compensation to support the intern’s college expenses or in pursuit of a career in policing.
6. Gain a mentor within the agency to support their intern experience.
7. Explore potential career paths in policing.

“I will remember this internship for the rest of my life.”

**Yasmine Bryant,  
2022 intern,  
Morgan State  
University**



## National Program (2023)

The program expanded nationally in 2023 to include 29 agencies and 13 schools, and its objectives (see Table 2) broadened to accommodate the different needs of multiple police agencies and HBCUs. However, PERF’s approach to program structure and management remained largely the same. Internships ranged from eight to ten weeks, with different start and end dates to accommodate interns’ academic calendars (contingent upon intern and agency agreement).<sup>28</sup>

**Table 2**

<b>Program Objectives: National Program – 2023</b>
1. Give interns a comprehensive overview of the police agency where they are assigned and the policing profession in general.
2. Expose interns to a wide range of police professionals, justice partners, and community stakeholders.
3. Challenge negative perceptions interns may have about the policing profession and police officers.
4. Introduce interns to a variety of professional experiences and career opportunities in policing.
5. Increase interns’ interest in a career in policing as an officer or professional employee.
6. Give interns a better understanding of a police officer’s daily work.

28 The students’ internships began as early as May 23 and ended by September 15.

**“It was a very insightful and profound experience for me.”**

**Cheikh McKissic,  
2022 intern,  
Morgan State  
University**



Each agency was responsible for assigning duties to its intern, which varied according to the agency’s specific structure and needs. Some agencies assigned their intern to a single unit for the duration of the program, while others rotated their intern through different units. In agencies with pre-existing internship programs, some integrated the PERF intern into those programs while others separated the PERF-HBCU intern from their other interns to try a different approach.

A designated supervisor in each agency scheduled assignments for the intern and approved their work hours. PERF staff facilitated the capstone projects.

# Student Experiences

Across both years of the program, interns were exposed to a variety of experiences beyond their day-to-day assignments. Many met with chiefs, command staff, investigators, analysts, technicians, and others to learn about operations, department culture, leadership priorities, and agency challenges. Most interns also met with other justice system officials (e.g., prosecutors, judges, jail administrators, medical examiners) and other stakeholders, like community-based organizations, behavioral health professionals, and government agencies such as the mayor's office (see Table 3).

Cylah Bass  
(2023 intern,  
North Carolina  
A&T University)  
speaks at a  
PERF conference  
on body-worn  
cameras in  
Washington, D.C.



**Table 3: Examples of Intern Assignments and Activities**

<b>Assignments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forensics &amp; Evidence Services / Crime Lab</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Group Violence Reduction Strategy</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> <li>• Victim Services</li> <li>• Education &amp; Training</li> <li>• Recruitment &amp; Administrative Duties</li> <li>• Crisis Intervention Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Patrol Precinct/District</li> <li>• Office of the Chief / Bureau of Administration</li> <li>• Equity Office</li> <li>• Legal Division</li> <li>• Government Affairs</li> <li>• Special Victims Unit / Special Crimes Division</li> </ul>
<b>Training events, meetings, workshops, field trips</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aviation and Marine Units</li> <li>• U.S. Marshals Service</li> <li>• Homicide Unit</li> <li>• Media relations / public information</li> <li>• K-9 Unit</li> <li>• Autopsies</li> <li>• Breakfast with the Police Commissioner &amp; PERF Executive Director</li> <li>• Consent Decree Implementation Unit &amp; Consent Decree Monitoring Team</li> <li>• Other executive &amp; command level staff</li> <li>• Officer safety &amp; wellness</li> <li>• Neighborhood Patrol Division</li> <li>• Officer affinity groups (e.g., Hispanic Officers Law Enforcement Association, LGBTQ+ Officers Association, Women in Policing)</li> <li>• Major Crimes Division</li> <li>• Communications &amp; Dispatch</li> <li>• Property &amp; Evidence Management</li> <li>• Bomb Unit</li> <li>• Intelligence Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ride-alongs with patrol officers</li> <li>• Comstat crime meetings and debriefings</li> <li>• Internship program press conferences &amp; media interviews</li> <li>• City administrative offices (e.g. Mayor's Office of Equity &amp; Civil Rights, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety &amp; Engagement)</li> <li>• Human Trafficking Task Force</li> <li>• Family &amp; Youth Services</li> <li>• Community outreach events (e.g., National Night Out)</li> <li>• Serving a search warrant with SWAT and the FBI</li> <li>• Detention center tour</li> <li>• Court hearings and meetings with judges</li> <li>• Civilian academy</li> <li>• Police Athletic League</li> <li>• Local museums and non-profits</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement with PERF</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits to PERF office in Washington, D.C.</li> <li>• Attendance at PERF conferences: annual meeting in New York City, body-worn cameras issue forum in Washington, D.C.</li> <li>• Weekly virtual check-ins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly experience surveys</li> <li>• Pre- and post-internship surveys</li> <li>• Press conferences and media interviews</li> <li>• Capstone project presentations</li> <li>• Podcast interviews with Chuck Wexler</li> </ul>





# Capstone Project and Presentation

As current students (or recent graduates) of criminology, criminal justice administration, sociology, and other relevant majors, interns are well positioned to serve as a bridge between theory and practice.<sup>29</sup> Thus, both years the internship program required each intern to complete a capstone project. Interns needed to identify a process, system, or product within their assigned unit and recommend how to improve it (see Table 4).

PERF knew the interns would bring fresh perspectives and ideas to their agencies—an imperative for any public-sector organization seeking to remain relevant to its community.<sup>30</sup> They surpassed expectations, in several cases identifying problems their agencies had not yet detected and recommending solutions that executives were eager to adopt.

**Table 4**

## **Capstone Project Objectives**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the unit to which the intern was assigned.
2. Apply critical thinking to evaluate one process, system, or product from the assignment.
3. Research and integrate best practices about the process, system, or product being evaluated.
4. Apply relevant policing concepts and theories to the selected process, system, or product.
5. Redesign the process, system, or product for improved work performance.
6. Submit a written proposal (2-3 pages) on the evaluation, research, and redesign of the process, system, or product.
7. Deliver a brief oral presentation (5-10 minutes) on the evaluation, research, and redesign of the process, system, or product.

29 Gennaro F. Vito, "Research and Relevance: Role of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences," *Justice Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (March 1999), <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418829900094031>.

30 Ross and Elechi.



Immanuel  
Martin,  
2023 intern,  
Howard  
University

For example, in his assignment with the Prince George’s County Police Department (MD), 2023 intern Immanuel Martin from Howard University identified an unrealized opportunity to leverage school resource officers (SROs) as agency recruiters, since they are often young people’s first direct contact with the police. In his capstone presentation, Immanuel suggested several opportunities for SROs — such as holding student assemblies, speaking with classes, and even creating school-based police cadet programs — to engage students about safety, participation in the justice system, and career opportunities in the profession. While many police agencies have cadet programs, they often are not affiliated with local schools, which limits student awareness and access. Bringing cadet programs to schools could expose a wider cross-section of the community to the possibility of a career in policing. A full list of intern capstone projects is included in Appendix C.

**“I love learning how the department is engaging with the community. These are things we don’t see posted on social media.”**

**Jakiya Franklin,  
2023 intern,  
North Carolina A&T State University**



# Intern Spotlight: Sam Mensuphu-Bey

**Coppin State University (MD);  
Baltimore County Police Department (MD)**

Sam Mensuphu-Bey grew up in Baltimore County, Maryland, where his grandmother raised him and his two siblings.

Sam says he had both positive and negative interactions with police from an early age, but a negative interaction with a police officer when he was in high school stuck with him:

*I always remember that experience because it kind of traumatized me at that age. To this day, I still remember that experience. It made me not want to be a police officer. It made me not like officers. I knew there were good police out there, but due to that one officer and that one experience, I didn't care for the police at all at that time in my life.*



Sam Mensuphu-Bey and Captain Paul Borowski, Commander of Employment with the Baltimore County Police Department

As a result of his experiences with police before the internship, Sam came to see every officer as serious, uptight, and sometimes angry. But his thoughts about police officers changed soon after his internship with the Baltimore County Police Department (BCPD) began:

*In the office, or even my first ride-along, the officers were making jokes, just laughing and smiling. They're regular people, some of the funniest people I've ever met in my life. That kind of changed my perspective. It showed me they take their job seriously, while at the same time they want to have fun and welcome the citizens and the community in their neighborhood.*

*I know the younger generation doesn't have the best perception of police at this moment. But this internship changed my perception. I care for all the officers at the Baltimore County Police Department. I know that they're working hard, and I know that they're risking their lives.*

Sam hopes to one day open a non-profit organization for underprivileged youth. In the meantime, he is considering a career in policing, including with BCPD.

To learn more about Sam's internship experience, listen to his PERFcast episode with Chuck Wexler at <https://www.policeforum.org/HBCUInternship>.



# Intern Spotlight: Ayiana Newcombe

**Howard University (DC); Elgin Police Department (IL)**

Ayiana Newcombe, the oldest of five children, grew up on the north side of Chicago in a diverse neighborhood with Black, Hispanic, and white residents and people from a variety of cultures. She attended Lane Tech, a college preparatory high school that helped steer her toward Howard University in Washington, DC.

In talking about her internship experience with the Elgin Police Department, she reflected on her misapprehensions about the profession and how her attitudes toward police officers have changed:



*I was coming into the department expecting to see police officers sending a lot of kids to jail, without any diversion programs or community engagement. I learned that policing can be so much more than punitive action. I saw firsthand the importance of community policing and how it positively impacts the community. And one officer can wear so many hats. Policing includes a lot of quick thinking and multitasking.*

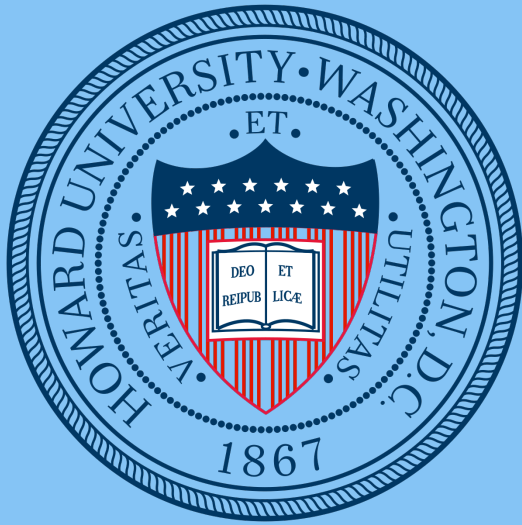
*There was a lot of respect in every single arrest when I was there. The officers were always like, "Hey, this is why I'm arresting you. This is what's going on. I'm letting you know." It was a lot of talking everyone through the process. And this was with every officer.*

*My attitude has changed. Originally, I thought most officers did not welcome change or reform or that they would all be smug, but in this department that wasn't true. A lot of them love serving their community and are willing to make any changes to make sure that they're doing it in the most effective way.*

*I was expecting kind of a recoil when they heard the word "reform," but everyone was like, Okay, what can we do better? Everyone I met. They were open to having conversations about bias and race. Sometimes they would even introduce the conversation themselves. This is not what I was expecting walking into a police department.*

*Everyone I met was so genuine and welcoming. I thought I would get a lot of cold shoulders, but it was the complete opposite. Ninety-nine percent of the interactions I had were pleasant. I was*

*also surprised at how many [community] events the department does and the number of programs they have for kids.*



When Ayiana’s classmates ask how she spent her summer, she always begins by telling them about her internship: “I tell them I did this internship with the police department and it was really cool. And they’re looking at me like, Are you serious? I’m like, Yes, it was actually really great.”

To learn more about Ayiana’s internship experience, listen to her PERFcast episode with Chuck Wexler at <https://www.policeforum.org/HBCUInternship>.



# Key Outcomes of the Program

PERF collected data for the 2022 and 2023 intern cohorts from weekly activity surveys, weekly check-in calls, and one-on-one interviews; for the 2023 cohort PERF also collected data from pre- and post-internship surveys. Figures 2-10 are based on the 20 respondents who completed both the pre- and post-internship surveys.<sup>31</sup>

The findings below broadly describe the interns' experiences. However, because each intern's experience was unique to the agency where they worked and because not all interns completed both surveys, these results are not representative of every PERF intern.

## Perceptions of Police-Community Engagement

Many interns spoke with us about how their views of the police as people and policing as a profession changed through the course of the internship. At the start of the program, several interns described having negative feelings toward police, which they attributed to prior adverse interactions, observations in their communities, or media reports. This was reflected in the pre-internship survey, where 43 percent of the interns (12 of 28) described the quality of the relationship between their community and the police as "poor" or "very poor" (see Figure 2). These results mirror public opinion polls of Black Americans' perceptions of police.<sup>32</sup>

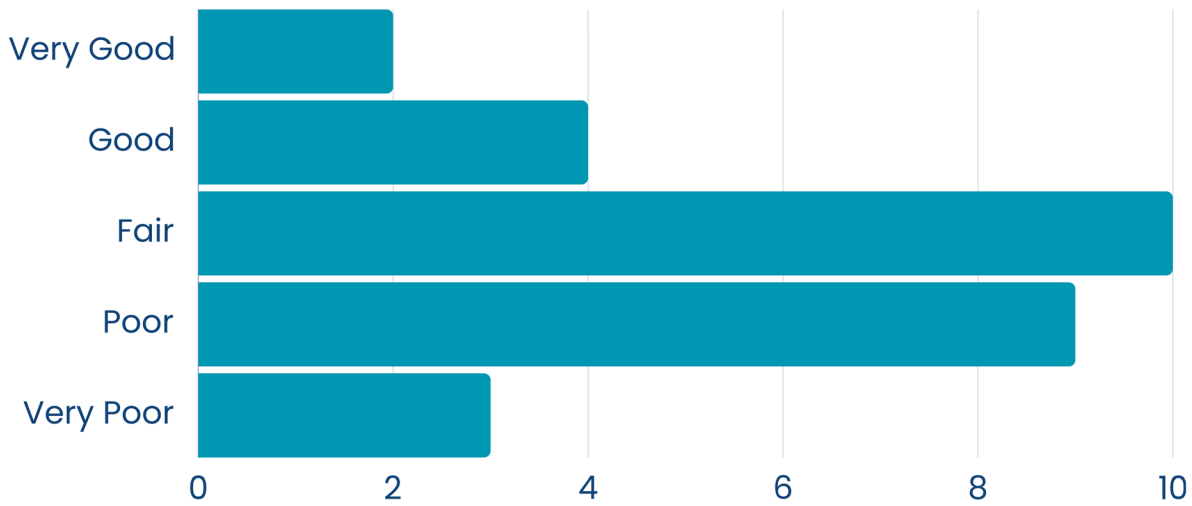
Every intern who completed the post-internship survey agreed that the experience had positively changed their opinion of policing in general, and 60 percent strongly agreed with that statement. Several interns said that getting an inside look at the day-to-day operations of a police department led to this change in their perceptions of police.

**Sam Mensuphu-Bey** (Coppin State University / Baltimore County Police Department) recalled that he entered the program thinking police didn't really "protect and serve" the community. By the end of the program, however, Sam realized, "that's not the case. They're sacrificing their lives and they're humans just like us. They have families, and

<sup>31</sup> The response rate was 93 percent (n=28) for the pre-internship survey and 69 percent (n=20) for the post-internship survey. The post-internship response rate is based on a total of 29 interns who completed the program.

<sup>32</sup> Brown II and Lloyd.

## Figure 2: What is the quality of the relationship between your community and the police?



Source: PERF Survey

“The people I’m surrounded by are definitely looking out for my best interests. I was welcomed with open arms and they are doing their best to guide me in the right direction.”

**Patricia Harrell,**  
2023 intern,  
Lane College



**LANE**  
COLLEGE





2023 interns Cierra Isaac (left, Harris-Stowe State University) and Lauren Williams (right, Savannah State University) speak at the PERF annual meeting in New York City



they actually care about their community and want to make a change.”<sup>33</sup> Sam’s supervisor, Captain Paul Borowski, saw this change in him: “When he first came here, I don’t believe he had a positive view of us. He’s leaving here as a part of our family. We are going to miss him greatly.”<sup>34</sup>

**Immanuel Martin** (Howard University / Prince George’s County Police Department) agreed:

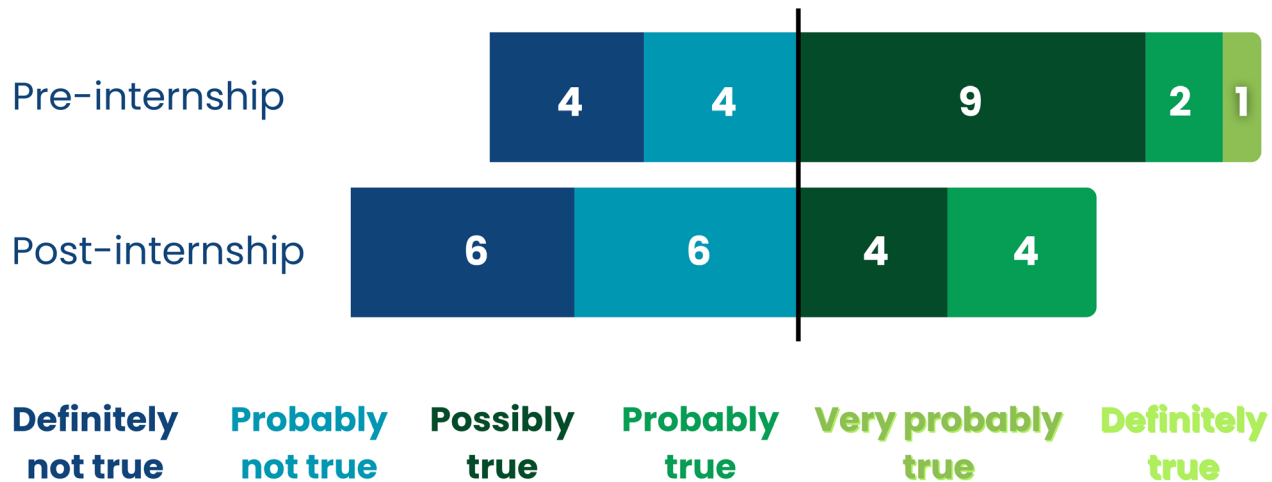
*We were able to see the issues that police executives have to deal with. Not just what the media shows, but how they’re really trying to manage a police department. That was very powerful and kind of pushed me over the edge of wanting to do local law enforcement. I really had to look inside and say, “If I really want to make a change in my own community, if I want to see a change in how the world views law enforcement, I have to get in it. I can’t just criticize it from the outside.”*

**Jayla Hall** (Alabama A&M University / Minneapolis Police Department) expressed similar sentiments. Prior to her internship, her perception of MPD was — like many people’s — shaped by the coverage of George Floyd’s murder. In her podcast interview with Chuck Wexler, she said, “I was a little scared but at the same time, I was like, “I’m not going to truly know how it is up there until I go for myself.” What she found was that the majority of MPD officers “are trying to do their job, which is to protect the community. . . It’s not

33 Caroline Foreback, “College Students Learn about Baltimore County Police through HBCU Internship,” WJZ CBS News Baltimore, August 17, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/college-students-learn-about-police-through-hbcu-internship-baltimore-county/>.

34 Jonathan Hunter, “Baltimore County Police Participate in HBCU Internship Program,” WMAR 2 News, ABC Baltimore, August 18, 2023, <https://www.wmar2news.com/baltimore-county-police-participate-in-hbcu-internship-program>.

## Figure 3: Officers on duty spend the majority of their time enforcing the law rather than providing services to the community



Source: PERF Survey

always about enforcing the laws and arresting people; it's so much more than that once you're able to sit down and experience and see the magic behind the curtains."<sup>35</sup>

After completing the program, interns were less likely to believe that officers spend the majority of their time enforcing the law rather than providing services to the community (see Figure 3). The number of interns who believed it was "possibly true" to "very probably true" that officers on duty spend the majority of their time on enforcement activities fell from 12 before the program to 8 after the program.

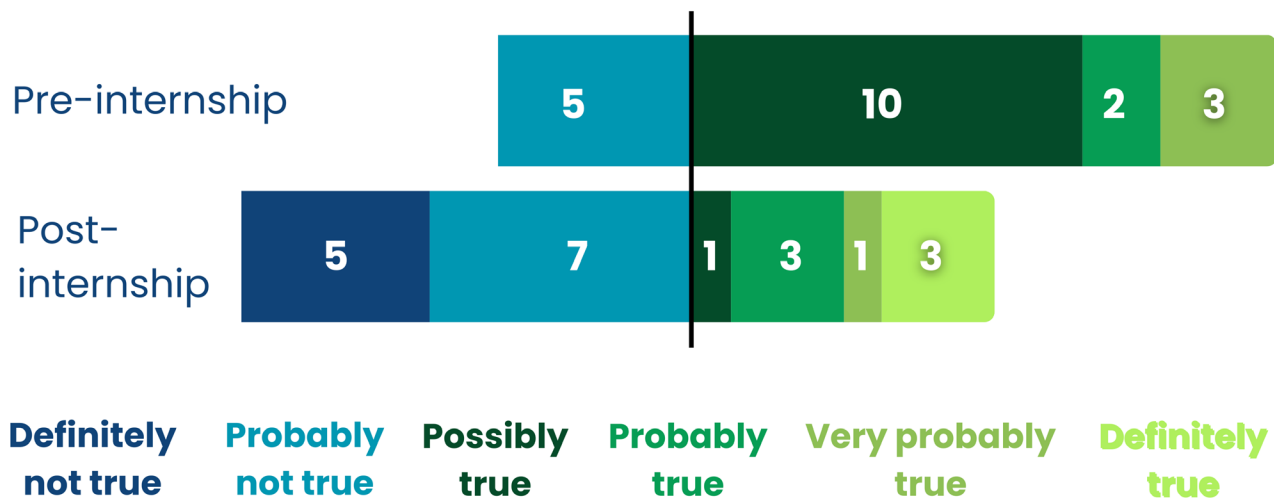
Similarly, after completing the program, interns were less likely to believe that officers spend most of their time responding to 911 calls rather than engaging in community activities (see Figure 4). The number of interns who believed it was "possibly true" to "definitely true" that officers on duty spend most of their shift responding to 911 calls fell from 15 before the program to 8 after the program.

### Perceptions of Police Work

The internship experience showed interns that, contrary to how police are commonly portrayed in the media, police spend far more time communicating with people and problem-solving than taking enforcement action.

<sup>35</sup> Reg Chapman, "I'm Not Going to Know Unless I Go There Myself: HBCU Student Interns for Minneapolis Police Department," WCCO CBS News Minnesota, August 4, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/im-not-going-to-know-unless-i-go-there-myself-hbcu-student-interns-for-the-minneapolis-police-department/>.

## Figure 4: Officers on duty spend most of their shift responding to 911 calls, with very little time for community-related activities



Source: PERF Survey

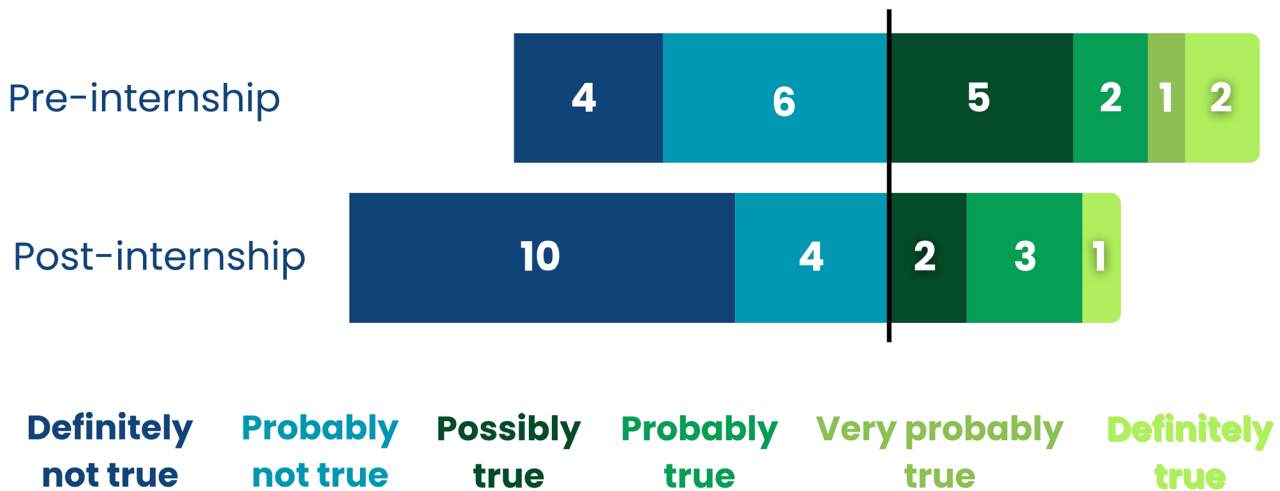
After completing the program, interns were:

- less likely to believe that officers resolve most issues by making arrests (see Figure 5);
- more likely to be aware of the strategies and options officers use for peacefully resolving incidents, like mediating interpersonal disputes (see Figure 6); and
- more likely to be aware that officers provide appropriate resources for people with unmet needs, like treatment for substance use (see Figure 7) and resources for unhoused persons (see Figure 8).

**Ayiana Newcombe** (Howard University / Elgin Police Department) said:

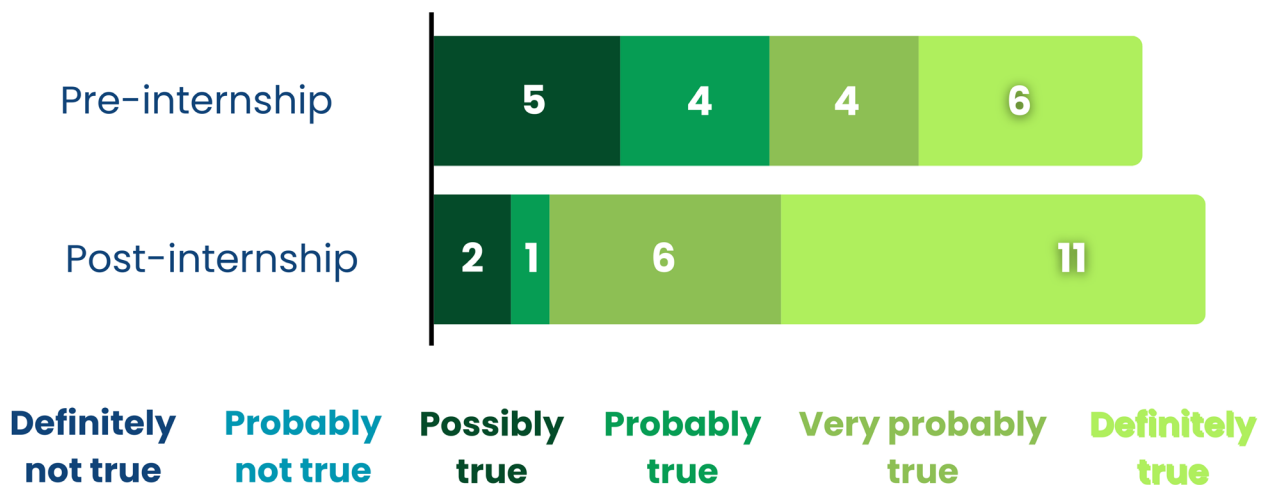
*I think coming from Chicago and being at Howard, I've always taken a critical lens when it comes to policing. But I've never sat in a squad car. I've never had a badge to see the processes of policing and what everything involves. So now when I am being critical, I can come at it with a holistic view. I've seen what they do. I've seen pretty much what it takes.*

## Figure 5: Officers on duty solve most issues by making arrests



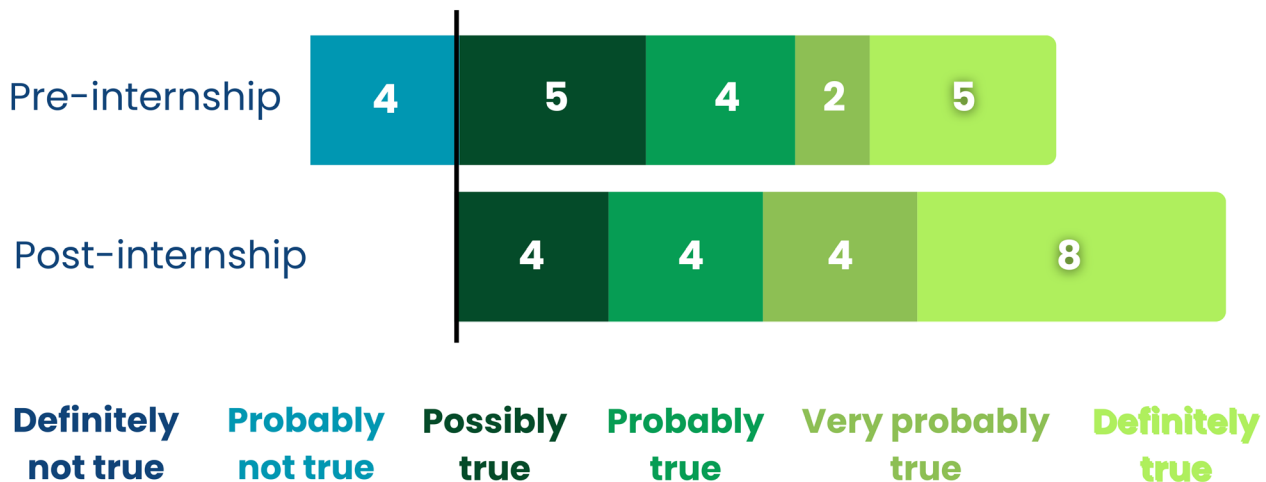
Source: PERF Survey

## Figure 6: Officers on duty try to mediate solutions between people who are arguing or disagreeing



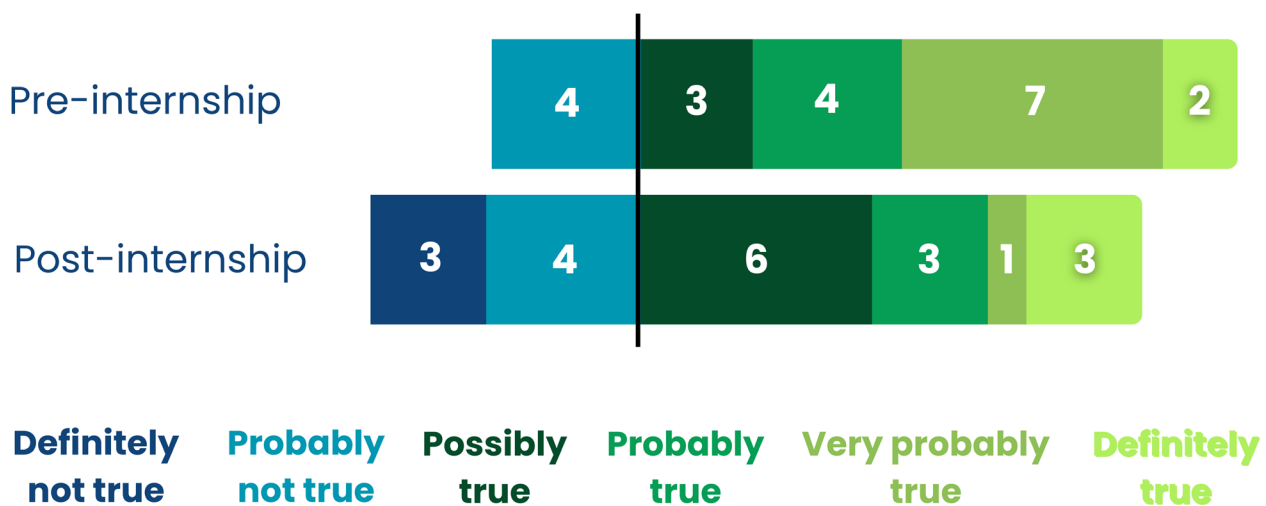
Source: PERF Survey

## Figure 7: Officers on duty help individuals who are overdosing or have substance abuse issues find treatment



Source: PERF Survey

## Figure 8: Officers on duty frequently encounter homeless people, with limited options for helping them



Source: PERF Survey

# Intern Spotlight: Eberechukwu Nwanegwo

**Baltimore Police Department (MD);  
Lincoln University (PA)**

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Eberechukwu “Ebere” Nwanegwo spent part of her childhood in Nigeria before returning to Baltimore. Upon graduating from high school, Ebere attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, where she earned a nursing degree in May 2023.

As she studied for her nursing licensure exam, Ebere learned about the summer internship program. “I needed to work, and I saw the PERF internship and thought to myself, I wonder what a police officer does? I was just interested to see what I was going to get out of it.”

When she began her internship with the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), Ebere said she was embarrassed to tell any of her friends about it and was prepared to “let [BPD] know it’s not for me” if she didn’t like it after the first week. To her surprise, she was soon telling everyone about the internship and singing the department’s praises. “Everyone is so respectful and kind,” she said.

One of the most meaningful moments for Ebere occurred when she was riding with a patrol officer:

*The officers got a call, and when we arrived, there was a woman who didn’t have shoes on. She looked frantic. And she was like, “We really need you.” So the officer waited for backup to come, and then the three officers walked into what looked like an apartment. There was a guy on the ground, with two guys holding him down. The woman was explaining that he’s in the foster system and they’re social workers. And he had just had an episode. He was 16 years old, but he was 6’4”, and like 240-something pounds. So he was a really big guy. . . . I watched the officers and, instead*



*of springing into action, they talked to the guy. They said, “Are you okay? Do you think about harming yourself? Or are you thinking about harming others?”*

*So they just started talking to him, like a casual conversation. I thought maybe it was going to be something violent, but it wasn’t. They spent about two hours talking to him and hearing how he felt and what he wanted to do. And at first, he was a bit aggressive. He didn’t want to talk to the officers. He said, “Leave me alone. I don’t want you guys here.” But they were just very patient with him. They let him know that he had options. There came a point where he became compliant, and he followed the officers out the door to be escorted back home.*

*I was surprised because I did psychiatric rotations [in college], where we’re taught how to handle psychiatric patients. I would have never thought a police officer would have the training or the background to be able to calm down or de-escalate a situation that I’m spending like three years learning how to do.*

*I didn’t think it was going to go well. So I stood as far away as possible. I was just watching them handle it with so much grace. And they were so patient with him. At one point one of the officers asked him, “Do you need anything from us? Do you want us to bring you anything?” I was just so surprised that they were so worried about his health. And I was like, Wow, this is beautiful, the way they serve their community. I have so much more respect for police officers.*

Ebere previously held internships with the U.S. Department of Education, the NAACP, and several other organizations, but she says the one with the BPD was the best. “It’s been shocking to me and my family, but I’ve been so happy.” In fact, as her internship drew to a close, Ebere began exploring how she could align her nursing credentials with a career in the BPD.

To learn more about Ebere’s internship experience, listen to her PERFcast episode with Chuck Wexler at <https://www.policeforum.org/HBCUInternship>.



## Perceptions of Careers in Policing

The internship program had a striking impact on interns' perceptions of policing as a career. In fact, every respondent to the post-internship survey agreed the internship changed their opinion of policing as a career, and 60 percent "strongly agreed" (see Figure 9).

Interns were asked what perceptions of policing would make them most likely to consider a career as a sworn police officer. The top answers, both before and after the internship, were: (1) helping people and the community, (2) protecting people, and (3) improving policing from within a police agency.

They also were asked what perceptions of policing would keep them from considering a career as a sworn officer. Pre-internship, the top response was negative perceptions of people who are officers, followed by a three-way tie between the danger of the job, the lack of work-life balance, and opportunities in another field. Post-internship, the danger of the job and lack of work-life balance were tied for the top answer, followed by a tie between opportunities in another field and potential exposure to trauma. Importantly, while 12 respondents to the pre-internship survey cited negative perceptions of police officers as a top factor that would keep them from considering a career in policing, only 6 respondents to the post-internship survey cited that factor.

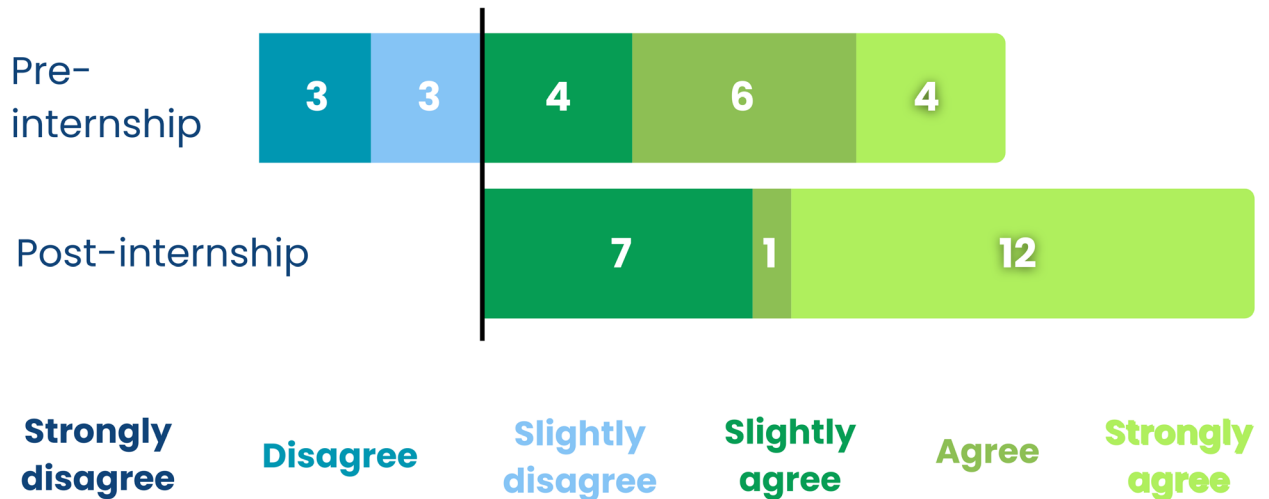
Interns appear more interested in non-sworn careers with police agencies than sworn careers; 80 percent agreed that the internship increased their desire to apply for a non-sworn position (see Figure 10), compared to 65 percent for sworn positions. For example, Jasmine Slide, an intern in the pilot program, sought a professional staff position with the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) as a Safety Resources Coordinator. BPD hired her, and she now works with Neighborhood Coordination Officers (sworn police officers) and stakeholders in City Hall to engage Baltimore's communities and neighborhoods as a part of the city's Community Policing Plan.



Jasmine Slide  
(2022 intern,  
Coppin State  
University)  
was hired as  
a full-time  
BPD employee  
following her  
internship

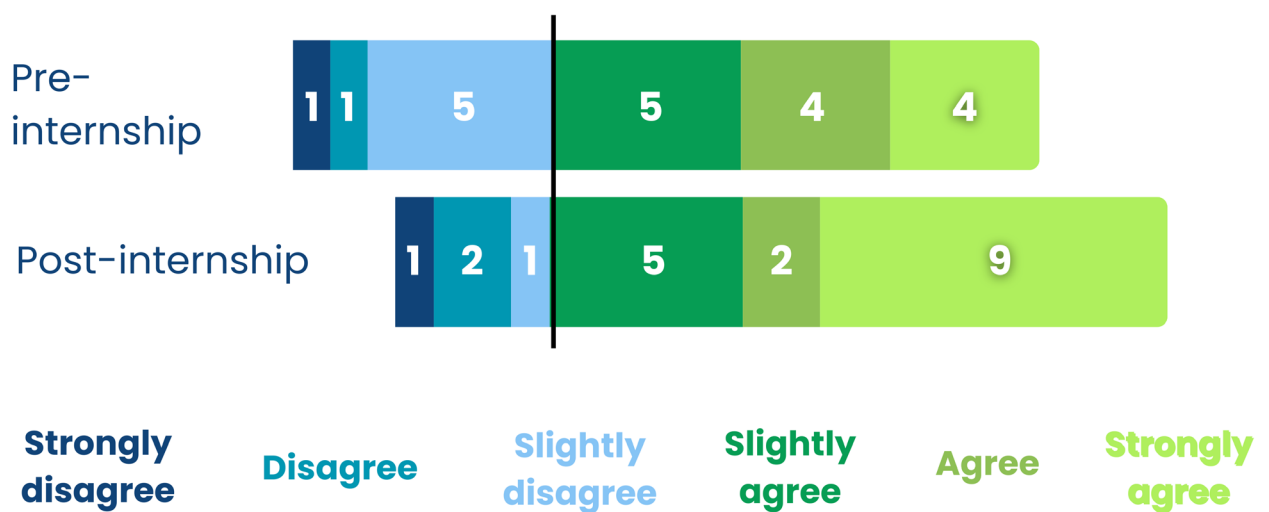


### Figure 9: The internship will change/changed my opinion of policing as a career



Source: PERF Survey

### Figure 10: The internship will increase/did increase my desire to apply for a non-sworn position



Source: PERF Survey



# Other Internship Programs

As previously mentioned, some of the agencies where PERF interns were assigned had pre-existing internship programs. These programs, which vary greatly, provide other options for structuring a student internship program in policing.

The internship program at the **Metropolitan (DC) Police Department (MPD)**, like the PERF-HBCU program, is geared toward college students and features a capstone project. The program is unpaid but graduating seniors in the program “can complete the sworn hiring process during the second half of their internship” as part of the Partnership for Experiential Learning track.<sup>36</sup> MPD interns are assigned to a variety of units, including crime suppression, violence reduction, carjacking, and recruiting. MPD’s program is offered year-round: spring and fall semester internships require students to work at least 16 hours per week for at least 14 weeks, while summer internships require at least 24 hours per week for at least eight weeks.

The **Glendale (CA) Police Department** is the site of the Verdugo Regional Crime Laboratory (VRCL), which offers an internship program focused on forensic sciences. VRCL interns must be at least 18 years old and have at least a 3.0 GPA. The VRCL program is unpaid but introduces interns to careers in a crime laboratory and engages them as assistants to crime scene technicians, laboratory analysts, and researchers.<sup>37</sup> The VRCL internship does not operate on a specific timeframe; interns typically stay with the lab until they gain full-time employment in the field, though the VRCL occasionally accommodates interns for set periods in the summer if a student needs to fulfill an internship requirement for coursework.<sup>38</sup>

The **Austin (TX) Police Department’s (APD)** internship program lasts five months (with a minimum of 20 hours per week) — a significant time investment for an unpaid program

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<sup>36</sup> Metropolitan Police Department, “Metropolitan Police Department College Internship Program,” <https://joinmpd.dc.gov/metropolitan-police/collegiate-internship-program>.

<sup>37</sup> City of Glendale, California, “Verdugo Regional Crime Laboratory - Internship Program,” <https://www.glendaleca.gov/government/departments/police-department/verdugo-regional-crime-lab/internship-program>.

<sup>38</sup> Email correspondence with Michelle Metchikian, Criminalist II — Verdugo Regional Crime Laboratory, October 16, 2023.



“One thing I truly enjoyed was going to the academy and experiencing the use of force training and simulation. It gave me insight into the split-second decisions officers are expected to make.”

**Aaniyah Hicks,**  
**2023 intern,**  
**Howard University**

— but is designed as a direct pathway to employment for students in their last semester of college. APD interns are expected to start the next available academy class following their internship; they receive priority acceptance into the Austin Police Academy.<sup>39</sup>

A number of agencies that were not involved in the PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program have well-established internship programs. For example, the **Glendale (AZ) Police Department (GPD)** has a robust 15-week, unpaid internship program that partners with several local colleges and universities. It is also open to applicants through the U.S. Department of Defense’s SkillBridge program, which connects military members to on-the-job training as they transition to non-military careers.<sup>40</sup> GPD interns get hands-on work experience through assignments such as fielding non-emergency 911 calls, conducting public fingerprinting services, processing and inventorying property and evidence records, and assisting forensic scientists both on-scene and in the lab.<sup>41</sup>

The **New York Police Department (NYPD)** describes its college internship program, the Cadet Corps, as “a great way to acquire valuable skills, earn a competitive salary, [and] receive up to \$20,000 in tuition assistance, all while working a flexible schedule.”<sup>42</sup> A candidate must be 18 to 33 years old, a New York City resident, and a full-time college student; they must not have been convicted of a felony and must have U.S. citizenship or obtain citizenship within two years of hire or college graduation.<sup>43</sup> Interns must attend monthly training, work full-time during the summer, and take the exam to become a police officer at the first available opportunity. In return, the NYPD provides up to \$20,000

39 The program is currently suspended.

40 DOD SkillBridge, “Program Overview,” <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/program-overview.htm>.

41 City of Glendale, Arizona, “Interns,”

[https://www.glendaleaz.com/live/city\\_services/public\\_safety/police\\_department/join\\_our\\_team/interns](https://www.glendaleaz.com/live/city_services/public_safety/police_department/join_our_team/interns).

42 New York Police Department, “NYPD Cadet Corps,” <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/careers/cadets/police-cadets-landing.page>.

43 New York City Police Department, “Cadet Corps Requirements & Benefits,” <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/careers/cadets/police-cadets-program.page>.

in tuition assistance, pays an hourly wage of \$16.79, and offers a flexible work schedule during the school year.<sup>44</sup>

While many agency-based internship programs require applicants to be college students and/or at least 18 years old, the **Maryland State Police (MSP) Internship Program** is open to students or recent graduates of high school, college, or graduate school, with a minimum age of 16.<sup>45</sup> The program is unpaid, and interns are expected to work at least 10 hours per week for eight weeks. Interns work in one of the agency's three bureaus (Field Operations, Criminal Investigations, and Support Services) or the Office of the Superintendent.<sup>46</sup> Each intern is assigned a mentor, who may be a trooper, an investigator, or a member of the professional (non-sworn) staff. The mentor serves as the intern's first-line supervisor, facilitates assignments and learning experiences, and conducts performance evaluations.



2022 interns discuss their experiences in the program during their final capstone presentations

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44 *Ibid.*

45 Maryland State Police, "Intern Position Information," <https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Careers/Pages/Intern.aspx>.

46 MSP provides detailed information online about what interns can expect from the experience. See [https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Careers/Documents/FOB%20INTERN%20PACKET%20\\_edited%2021\\_23.pdf](https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Careers/Documents/FOB%20INTERN%20PACKET%20_edited%2021_23.pdf).



# Ten Essential Steps Every Agency Should Follow in Creating and Operating an Internship Program

Our experience with the PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program has taught us many lessons about what it takes for police agencies to develop and administer a quality internship program. Although this list does not represent everything agencies must do, we have identified ten essential steps every agency should follow.

## **1. Create or Expand Partnerships With Local Universities, Colleges, and High Schools**

An internship program is a great way to begin or strengthen partnerships with local universities and colleges. To establish the program's importance and promote buy-in from both sides of the partnership, the agency's chief executive should contact the university's president directly to propose the program. In Baltimore, Police Commissioner Michael Harrison had a pre-existing relationship with the presidents of Coppin State University and Morgan State University, so he simply phoned them to pitch the PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program. In agencies where such relationships have not already been established, the chief or sheriff might consider taking the university president to breakfast or lunch to introduce themselves and discuss the proposal.

While administration of the program can be handled by the agency's human resources, recruitment, or other similar office, the initial direct engagement should set mutual expectations. The police chief and university president may even want to consider signing a memorandum of understanding that spells out commitments and responsibilities such as hosting program events, marketing the internship, assigning faculty advisors and staff mentors, soliciting funding to cover the cost of paying interns, establishing desired work duties and internship experiences, and attending capstone presentations.

Once a program is established, direct communication with academic departments may help to recruit standout students. While many of the PERF-HBCU interns came from criminal justice programs, others were immersed in non-traditional disciplines like music, information technology, and the humanities. Students from these "alternative" programs can still bring tremendous strengths to policing, including critical thinking and analytical skills, knowledge of new and emerging technologies, and fresh ideas for crime prevention and community outreach. Engaging students with non-traditional majors



2022 intern  
De'Shawndra  
McDonald  
with Baltimore  
Deputy Police  
Commissioner  
Monique Brown

and interests can create pathways to police agencies for students who had not previously considered a career in policing.

## 2. Develop Clear Timelines

Establishing and adhering to well-defined timelines are essential to program success. Police agencies should begin planning the internship program at least six months before the identified start date to recruit the best applicants, give students sufficient time to plan their schedules, and determine how the program will be administered. Information should be shared well in advance of the application period and start date of the program to provide sufficient time for schools to market the program, for students to complete their applications, and for agencies to conduct interviews, perform background investigations, and select interns.<sup>47</sup>

An agency timeline may include deadlines for the following tasks.

- Contact universities and colleges that are likely to be a good fit for partnership. Considerations may include geographic proximity, size and diversity of the student body, primary academic programs, experience facilitating internship programs with non-traditional employers, a mission statement that promotes civic and community engagement, and commitment to promoting an internship program with a police agency. Agencies should consider discussing these issues with deans of criminal justice departments and staff who work in university career centers.
- Create a web-based application for prospective interns to complete. To avoid discouraging participation, we recommend a short application that collects the minimum amount of information sufficient to preliminarily assess an applicant's interest and to facilitate follow-up contact. For the national internship program,

<sup>47</sup> To create a summer internship program, PERF recommends communicating with colleges and universities in January or February, approximately five months before the internship begins.

PERF obtained the following information from each student on the initial application form: name, age, email address, cell phone number, university of enrollment, academic year, declared major, dates of availability, and a personal interest statement (not to exceed 300 words) that answered two questions: How would this internship benefit your academic and career goals? What do you hope to take away from the experience? As another example of an application, the **Atlanta Police Department** posts online the forms it requires all internship applicants to complete.<sup>48</sup>

- Designate staff to develop and administer the program. Depending upon the size of the agency, this may include a command staff member to provide executive management of the program, a mid-level administrator to coordinate the development of the program's policies and procedures and facilitate communication between the units where interns are assigned, and front-line supervisors and mentors who will interact with the interns daily. Too often with internship programs, staff assigned to oversee the interns don't know what the interns are supposed to do or even when they will first arrive. Poor planning of this nature can result in an isolated, unchallenged, and dissatisfied intern and a lost opportunity for the organization. It is therefore critically important to ensure all personnel assigned to work with the interns know, in advance of their start date, what the interns will be expected to do, their work schedule, and the program's objectives.

In the pilot PERF-HBCU program, the Baltimore Police Department established a clear chain of command to oversee the internship. Kimberly Stevens, assigned to the Equity Office, served as program manager and interacted daily with the interns and their unit supervisors and mentors; Director Leslie Parker Blyther, also of the Equity Office, coordinated the development and administration of the program; and Chief of Staff Eric Melancon provided executive oversight.

- Create a schedule of assignments and activities to fully engage the interns' time and abilities and support achievement of the program's objectives. This schedule should include when the interns will rotate between assignments within the agency (e.g., from the recruitment unit to the training academy, or from the child abuse unit to the crime lab), attend special events (e.g., a community cookout, ride-along with a patrol officer, or autopsy with a homicide detective), and meet with allied organizations and community partners (e.g., crisis response clinicians, prosecutors, violence interrupters, youth diversion programs, and victim advocates). The interns appreciate knowing what they will be doing week-to-week, and appropriate planning makes it more likely the interns will experience a wide range of activities inside and outside the agency.
- Publish a brief policy or memorandum governing the internship program and ensure employees review it before interns are onboarded. This document should provide personnel with clear and consistent direction to prevent the information vacuum that commonly attends internship programs. An example is the **Milwaukee Police Department's** Standard Operating Procedure 590 – Internship Program.<sup>49</sup>
- Host in-person information sessions and webinars for university staff and prospective interns. Along with writing policy, these sessions should be scheduled

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48 Atlanta Police Department, "Internship," <https://www.atlantapd.org/i-want-to/internship>.

49 Milwaukee Police Department, "Standard Operating Procedure 590 – Internship Program," August 27, 2021, <https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/mpdAuthors/SOP/590-INTERNSHIPPROGRAMI.pdf>.

several months before the internship begins to increase the size of the applicant pool and foster informed decision-making by students and police agencies. (See Appendix D for the slides PERF showed during its webinar on the national internship program.)

- Publicize the internship program in coordination with university partners. Using social media applications such as Handshake and discussing with university officials the optimal time for posting the internship positions are essential actions for reaching the target audience.

### 3. Establish Screening and Eligibility Criteria

Many of an agency's eligibility requirements for employees will also apply to interns. However, agencies should review their requirements and determine whether some can be waived for interns.

Once the hiring criteria are established (e.g., age, citizenship status, enrollment status as a full-time college student in good academic standing, and authorization to conduct a background check and fingerprinting), the agency should share them with the partnering universities and colleges so they can include the requirements when they market the program to their students.

Intern applications should include a resume, cover letter and/or statement of purpose, and areas of interest. Agencies may also want to consider requiring a letter of recommendation, minimum grade point average, or specific academic major or career ambition.

When evaluating applicants, agencies should use a standard, neutral set of criteria (such as a rubric) and should initially screen applicants for disqualifiers to reduce unnecessary labor and efficiently identify qualified applicants.

### 4. Develop Program Objectives

Defining clear program objectives is an essential step in creating an internship program that delivers value to both the intern and the host agency. Objectives are brief, clear statements that define the purpose of the internship program and should be supported by specific action steps needed to accomplish them.

To identify objectives for the internship program, first consider:

- What is the purpose of the internship program?
- What are the intended benefits to the intern?
- What are the intended benefits to our agency?
- What competencies should the intern gain by the end of the program?

The SMART strategy is a helpful way to ensure that objectives provide clear guidance on what is to be accomplished and how you will know when it is done. SMART is an acronym that describes the qualities of a well written objective: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Hope Gilbert, "Let's Get S.M.A.R.T. ... Steps to Create Program Objectives," University of Mississippi Center for Research Evaluation (blog), December 3, 2021, <https://cere.olemiss.edu/lets-get-s-m-a-r-t-steps-to-create-program-objectives/>; "SMART Goals: A How To Guide" (University of California, 2016), [https://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/\\_files/performance-appraisal/How%20to%20write%20SMART%20Goals%20v2.pdf](https://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/_files/performance-appraisal/How%20to%20write%20SMART%20Goals%20v2.pdf).





2022 intern  
Fortune  
Olayinka,  
Morgan State  
University

**PERF strongly recommends that agencies consider requiring each intern to complete a capstone project, which will encourage interns to think about how their agency could improve the delivery of police services.** The project could be in the form of an oral presentation or a written paper, infographic, or other visual. Ongoing staff support may be necessary to help interns choose a topic, and the agency may want to develop a working relationship with university faculty members to mentor students as they prepare their projects. Examples of capstone projects are listed in Appendix C; they include topics such as building public trust, staffing in the forensic sciences, improving case solvability, developing partnerships for crisis intervention, and improving employee retention.

Agency executives and school officials are encouraged to attend an intern presentation session. By allowing interns to demonstrate their acquired knowledge and share their experiences, these presentations affirm their contribution to the agency and increase their level of engagement. These sessions are also helpful to the agency, as interns can offer a valuable perspective on an agency's strengths and weaknesses.

## 5. Create a Compensation Policy

Agencies should compensate their interns. Paid internships open opportunities to young people who can bring innovative ideas and the benefits of diversity to the department but may not otherwise be able to participate.

Unpaid internships can be prohibitively expensive for some students due to the associated costs of housing, relocating, commuting, and professional attire, among other things.<sup>51</sup> It is also worth noting that students who participate in paid internships receive on average more job offers, shorter post-graduation job searches, and higher starting

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<sup>51</sup> Collins; Angela Yang, "For Students, the Cost of Living Figures Into Internship Decisions," *Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/for-students-the-cost-of-living-figures-into-internship-decisions-11657458002>.



2023 interns and PERF staff at the annual meeting in New York City

salaries than students in unpaid internships or students without any internship experience.<sup>52</sup> Police agencies should be mindful of these facts as they seek to recruit the most qualified personnel during an unprecedented staffing crisis, when a diverse workforce is more important than ever.<sup>53</sup> (Police executives could also use these facts to help make the case for funding police internship programs.)

By compensating interns, an agency can target inequity-related issues, while benefiting from the talents and energy that these interns – and potential future hires – can bring to the workplace. Agencies could raise the needed funding by soliciting donations from corporations and philanthropic organizations.

## 6. Provide a Formal Intern Orientation

Police internships can expose students to potentially dangerous or traumatic situations while participating in ride-alongs, viewing active shooter drills, observing victim interviews, responding to crime scenes, and viewing autopsies. It is important to inform interns of the potential risks associated with these experiences and the available support services if they experience a traumatic event or psychological distress. Where possible, interns should be able to opt out of activities they find unsettling. Also, if the agency requires waivers for activities such as ride-alongs, having those prepared at the beginning of the internship can help inform the interns of what to expect. (Appendix E provides one example: the application and waiver form from the **San Bernardino County (CA) Sheriff's Department** requires all ride-along participants to sign.)

Orientation is also an opportunity to brief interns on the agency's mission, values, and culture and outline expectations for their behavior. The agency may want to invite community partner organizations to meet with the interns to present their perspectives on

52 Mimi Collins, "Open the Door: Disparities in Paid Internships," National Association of Colleges and Employers, November 1, 2020, <https://naceweb.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/trends-and-predictions/open-the-door-disparities-in-paid-internships/>.

53 Collins; Ilana Hamilton, "56% of All Undergraduates Are First-Generation College Students" Forbes Advisor, June 13, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/education/first-generation-college-students-by-state/>.



“I was able to attend the annual meeting in New York, and I loved it. Being in a room with so many leaders and chiefs from departments all over was surreal.”

**Jayla Hall, 2023 intern,  
Alabama A&M University**

the role of the police in the community. Doing so can provide important context for interns as they observe the department’s work.

## 7. Give Interns Meaningful Assignments

**A common general criticism of internships is that interns are often given menial tasks, restricted to performing administrative duties or observing rather than participating, and/or isolated from the organization’s employees, which reduces the value of the internship for the intern and employer alike.**

An internship should be an educational experience. Agencies should engage interns throughout the program by giving them various assignments, rotating them between units if possible (and if desired by the interns), and providing them with interesting and challenging tasks. Although there may be some administrative duties for the intern to complete, the internship should expose the intern to a variety of police functions that align with their interests. Examples include participating in community engagement events, riding along with patrol officers and crime scene technicians, watching court hearings, attending meetings with other agencies, observing in-service training and recruit training, shadowing detectives as they investigate cases, and reviewing policy for compliance with best practices. With these kinds of experiences under their belts, completing a capstone project allows the student to think critically about issues facing the agency, analyze options, and propose a realistic strategy for addressing an organizational need.

An example of a robust internship was the experience of Cierra Isaac, a Harris-Stowe State University student who worked for the **Chattanooga Police Department**. Cierra worked in units such as missing persons, special victims, homicide, auto crimes, toxicology, crime scene, training, crime analysis, courts, and the chief’s office. During these rotations, she accompanied detectives on a search warrant, observed interviews with crime victims, learned how investigators track stolen vehicles, met with a federal judge, attended meetings with district attorneys, attended the PERF annual meeting in New York, and participated in reality-based active shooter training.

## 8. Start Small

PERF learned a tremendous amount from its pilot program with BPD, CSU, and MSU. These lessons — covering everything from onboarding processes to intern assignments, program oversight, communication, university partnerships, and the abundant rewards of an internship program — greatly informed the decision-making process for year two of the program, when it expanded from eight interns, one police department, and two universities to 30 interns, 29 police agencies, and 13 colleges and universities. PERF strongly encourages police agencies to start small and scale internship programs to their optimal capacity over time. Hiring even one intern is a good start. This approach mitigates the effects of any missteps and maximizes the likelihood of successes.

## 9. Build An Intern Cohort

The interns repeatedly cited the opportunity to work with fellow interns and share their experiences with one another as one of the greatest benefits of the program. During the pilot, the interns all worked in the Baltimore Police Department, started and ended their internship on the same dates, and attended all program events together. This created the conditions to form a highly cohesive group.

It was challenging to create a similar cohort experience with the national program because the interns were assigned to 29 different agencies in 15 states. To overcome these challenges, PERF assigned each intern to one of three groups and facilitated weekly virtual meetings with them to discuss their assignments, duties, perceptions, surprises, difficulties, and upcoming plans. PERF also invited the national program interns to attend PERF conferences in Washington, DC, and New York City, which allowed them to meet in person and participate in program events together.

## 10. Provide Ongoing Opportunities for Interns to Give Feedback

Agencies should have comprehensive feedback mechanisms before, during, and after the internship. For example, pre- and post-internship surveys can show how the internship is affecting interns' attitudes toward the agency and the profession (see Appendix F). **Weekly check-ins with a primary supervisor and weekly feedback surveys can promptly identify interns' concerns and give officials an opportunity to address them.** (Note: It is recommended the administrator and commander in charge of the internship program receive the weekly survey responses and be prepared to address any potential morale, assignment, supervisory, or disciplinary issues.) Exit interviews can identify high-level programmatic issues and opportunities for improvement. And maintaining open lines of communication with colleges and universities can be useful for receiving constructive feedback, strengthening the partnership, and recruiting the most qualified students.



# Conclusion

This is a defining moment for the policing profession, which faces several related challenges: recruiting and retaining sufficient personnel, improving diversity, and building public trust in police. The PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program has shown that well-designed, immersive internship programs can have a positive impact in all three areas. This finding has important implications for police agencies across the country, both large and small.

By “going upstream” to identify college students currently interested in policing or cultivate an interest in students to move into the field, agencies can invest in their future and attract some of the next generation’s best and brightest to a career in the policing profession. Of course, this strategy alone won’t fully address the profession’s staffing shortage, which is both severe and widespread. But it can be an important part of a larger effort to strengthen officer recruitment and retention.

Internships allow students to experience the positive attributes of policing firsthand: the ability to positively influence the community, plentiful opportunities for career growth and advancement, a variety of assignments and career paths for sworn personnel and professional staff to meet individual interests, and a focus on problem-solving over arrest and incarceration. As our intern surveys showed, internships also correct students’ misconceptions about the daily realities of police work, such as the belief that it consists mostly of responding to 911 calls.

In addition, perhaps more effectively than any other program, internships allow students to get to know police officers as human beings. As they work alongside officers, some interns begin to identify with the profession, imagining themselves having their own career in policing — if not in uniform, then as a member of an agency’s professional staff.

By helping students gain a better understanding of both policing and police, internships can also help build public trust in the profession, as the PERF-HBCU Internship Program showed. Many students entered their internship with skeptical views of policing; nearly half described the quality of the relationship between their community and the police as “poor” or “very poor.” Yet at the end of their internship, most interns strongly agreed that the experience had positively changed their opinion of policing. Also, several interns told us they have communicated this more positive image of policing in conversations with friends and family, so the trust-building benefits of an internship program can extend well beyond the interns themselves.

With focus and creativity, police departments and sheriffs’ offices can build internship programs that strengthen their agencies and repair public trust. We hope this report will help them in this effort.



# Appendices

# Appendix A: Letter of Invitation to University Presidents

March 27, 2023

Name  
Street  
City State Zip



Dear President \_\_\_\_\_:

Last summer, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) created a very successful partnership with Coppin State University (CSU) and Morgan State University (MSU) by piloting an [internship program with the Baltimore Police Department](#) (BPD). The program provided paid internships to eight current students or recent graduates to spend 10 weeks serving with the BPD.

By all accounts, the internship was an extraordinary success. Working in units such as Forensics & Evidence Services, Information Technology, Governmental Affairs, Legal Services, Victim Services, and Education & Training, the interns waded deeply into the culture of a large urban police department; along the way, they made original contributions to the administration and operations of the department through the completion of capstone projects. At the conclusion of the program, the interns spoke glowingly of their experiences, held more positive and nuanced opinions of the policing profession, and contemplated future careers in law enforcement.

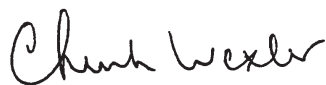
Yasmine Bryant, a sophomore at MSU, said she “will remember this internship for the rest of her life.” Cheikh McKissic, a recent college graduate who attended MSU for three years, characterized the experience as “very insightful and profound.” Because of the interns’ enthusiastic responses to this pioneering program, PERF is eager to expand it to as many HBCUs as possible this summer.

Now more than ever, PERF is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the law enforcement profession. And in this historical moment of widespread demands for police reform, multiple years of increasing homicides, and a shortage of police officers, our institutions are uniquely positioned to partner together to empower bright young men and women who desire to serve their communities justly, selflessly, and courageously.

I want to encourage your university to participate in this summer’s internship program. The internship will be paid and PERF will assume the costs of the interns. There will be a limited number of internships positions available, and selection will be based on our ability to match qualified, prospective interns with participating police departments. If you would like to avail your students of this opportunity, send to Senior Research Assistant Zoe Mack ([zmack@policeforum.org](mailto:zmack@policeforum.org)) by **Wednesday, April 5, 2023**, the **name, email address, and phone number of a university point of contact** with whom she can coordinate.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact me personally at [cwexler@policeforum.org](mailto:cwexler@policeforum.org).

Sincerely,



Chuck Wexler  
Executive Director

# Appendix B: Letter From Presidents of Coppin State and Morgan State Universities

March 27, 2023

Name  
Street  
City State Zip



Dear President \_\_\_\_\_:

Around this time last spring, Executive Director Chuck Wexler of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and Police Commissioner Michael Harrison of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) called us with a question: Would we support a paid internship program for eight of our scholars to spend 10 weeks of their summer working with the BPD? Of course, we jumped at the opportunity for **paid internships!**

Humor aside, our agreement set in motion an experience far beyond our imaginations. PERF and BPD pulled out the stops for the interns, broadening their horizons, challenging their assumptions, and exposing them to an array of coaches, mentors, and leaders. Not only did the interns immerse themselves in formal roles with specific duties and responsibilities, but they also participated in a series of events that expanded their sense of possibility and stretched their growth.

Within the BPD, the interns had breakfast with Police Commissioner Harrison and Mr. Wexler, rode along on patrol with police officers, visited with members of the Baltimore City Consent Decree Monitoring Team, attended the weekly commanders' crime meeting, and toured the Equity Office, Education & Training Academy, Victim Services Unit, and Forensic Science & Evidence Services Division.

Outside the BPD, the interns visited PERF's offices in Washington, D.C.; met with U.S. District Court Judge James K. Bredar; spoke with a cast member from the documentary "Charm City"; spent the day with Baltimore City public school students at the Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound School; joined police academy recruits on a guided tour of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture; talked to the leaders of community-based organizations; and met with the directors of the Mayor's Office of Equity & Civil Rights and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety & Engagement.

The PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program is an extraordinary opportunity. We strongly endorse the program and encourage you to work with PERF, who will connect your students to paid internships with local police agencies. Just as our students raved about the program, we are confident this will be a tremendous learning experience for your students.

Sincerely,

---

Dr. David Wilson  
President, Morgan State University

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Dr. Anthony L. Jenkins  
President, Coppin State University



# Appendix C: PERF–HBCU Intern Capstone Projects

## Capstone Project Requirements

1. Collaborate with the unit supervisor to identify a process, system, or product that could benefit from improvement or replacement.
2. Submit a written proposal that is 2–3 pages long, double–spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman, structured in the following format:
  - A. Title Page (Centered): PERF–HBCU Internship Program Capstone Project  
Title of Project  
Name of Intern  
Name of HBCU Intern Attends/Attended  
Name of Police Agency  
Unit of Assignment  
Date of Submission
  - B. Describe the function of the assigned unit.
  - C. Describe the process, system, or product in its current form.
  - D. State the problem with the current process, system, or product.
  - E. Propose an improved process, system, or product, based on research of best practices.
  - F. Explain the anticipated impact/outcomes of the proposal.
3. Deliver an oral presentation (5 to 10 minutes).
  - A. Provide a clear explanation of the project.
  - B. Explain why the process, system, or product to improve or replace was selected (problem statement).
  - C. Explain the assessment.
  - D. Explain the recommendations to improve or replace the process, system, or product.
  - E. Explain the anticipated impact/outcomes to the agency or community.
  - F. Describe the challenges faced in completing the project.
  - G. Describe the rewards experienced while completing the project.
  - H. Use appropriate visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint) as desired (not required).
4. Answer questions and listen to comments from fellow interns, PERF staff, police, and university officials (5 to 10 minutes).

## Student Capstone Projects

**Lanayiah Adams** (2023)

Kentucky State University / Louisville Metro Police Department (KY)  
*Integrating and Engaging the Victim Services Unit Department-Wide*

**Thomas Barnes** (2023)

Morehouse College (GA) / Chicago Police Department (IL)  
*Enhancing Forensic Analysis Efficiency and Accuracy: A Proposal for Modernizing the Chicago Police Department's Forensics System*

**Cylah Bass** (2023)

North Carolina A&T State University / Philadelphia Police Department (PA)  
*Recruitment and Background Investigations: Enhancing Technology, Showcasing Diversity, and Condensing the Hiring Process*

**Yasmine Bryant** (2022)

Morgan State University (MD) / Baltimore Police Department (MD)  
*Quality Assurance in Victim Services*

**Jakiya Franklin** (2023)

North Carolina A&T State University / Greensboro Police Department (NC)  
*Police Engagement with the Community to Build Public Trust*

**Jessica Gray** (2023)

Savannah State University (GA) / Atlanta Police Department (GA)  
*The Impact: How Understaffing in Forensic Science Disciplines Affects Agencies and Communities*

**Jayla Hall** (2023)

Alabama A&M University / Minneapolis Police Department (MN)  
*Law Enforcement: Crafting Their Own Media Narrative*

**Patricia Harrell** (2023)

Lane College (TN) / Jackson Police Department (TN)  
*Teaching the Community about Policing: Building a Citizens' Academy*

**Taina Harris** (2023)

Harris-Stowe State University (MO) / Washington University, St. Louis Police Department (MO)  
*Bridging the Gap Between Community and Police Through Patrol, Operations Support, and Administrative Services*

**Aaniyah Hicks** (2023)

Howard University (DC) / Metropolitan Police Department (DC)  
*Youth Connect: Addressing Violent Crime Among Youth in the District*

**Cierra Isaac** (2023)

Harris-Stowe State University (MO) / Chattanooga Police Department (TN)  
*Improving Effective Communication to Increase Case Solvability*

**Albert Johnson** (2022)

Coppin State University (MD) / Baltimore Police Department (MD)  
*Outreach and Resource Opportunities for the Female Re-entry Population*

**Ariana Jones** (2023)  
Savannah State University (GA) / Chatham County Police Department (GA)  
*Civilian CSI: Improving Personnel Numbers by Hiring Civilians in the Crime Scene Unit*

**Kayla Keys** and **Jasmine Slide** (2022)  
Coppin State University (MD) / Baltimore Police Department (MD)  
*Lost in Plain Sight: Enhancing the Evidence Management System*

**Erika Laster** (2023)  
Lincoln University (PA) / Buffalo Police Department (NY)  
*Mental Health Concerns Among Police Officers*

**Andino LaVersa** (2023)  
Howard University (DC) / Austin Police Department (TX)  
*Recruiting and Retaining: Analyzing the Causes of High Vacancy Rates in the Austin Police Department and Implementing Strategies for Effective Recruitment*

**Immanuel Martin** (2023)  
Howard University (DC) / Prince George's County Police Department (MD)  
*Community Policing 101: A Guide to Bridging the Gap Between Community and Law Enforcement – Can We Meet in the Middle?*

**De'Shawndra McDonald** (2022)  
Coppin State University (MD) / Baltimore Police Department (MD)  
*Relational Equity: Bridge-Building in Communities*

**Javier McDonald** (2023)  
Lane College (TN) / Tennessee Bureau of Investigation  
*Case Tracking and File Management at TBI*

**Cheikh McKissic** (2022)  
Morgan State University (MD) / Baltimore Police Department (MD)  
*Baltimore City Police Department Recruitment and the Salesforce CRM Company*

**Sam Mensuphu-Bey** (2023)  
Coppin State University (MD) / Baltimore County Police Department (MD)  
*Showing Officers in a Positive Light: Humanizing the Police to Increase Recruitment*

**Ayiana Newcombe** (2023)  
Howard University (DC) / Elgin Police Department (IL)  
*Community Policing at the Elgin Police Department*

**Eberechukwu Nwanegwo** (2023)  
Lincoln University (PA) / Baltimore Police Department (MD)  
*Collaborative Care Meets Police Reform*

**Peace Odili** (2023)  
Morgan State University (MD) / Annapolis Police Department (MD)  
*Training of the Heart: Police Use of Force Impact on the Community and Increasing Officers' Access to Mental Healthcare*

**Fortune Olayinka** (2022)  
Morgan State University (MD) / Baltimore Police Department (MD)  
*Information Technology and Services: Vendor Management*

**Tkhai Pauling** (2023)  
North Carolina A&T State University / Raleigh Police Department (NC)  
*Recruitment, Retention, and the 30x30 pledge*

**Wesley Rice** (2022)  
Coppin State University (MD) / Baltimore Police Department (MD)  
*Hometown Heroes Act and the Pipeline to Policing*

**Maria Rosell** (2023)  
Harris-Stowe State University (MO) / St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (MO)  
*The Wanted System: An Analysis of The System, Its Consequences, and Efficacy*

**Sacha Shorter** (2023)  
Harris-Stowe State University (MO) / Glendale Police Department (CA)  
*Improving Efficiency in the Forensics Lab*

**Aaylia Smith** (2023)  
Southern University at New Orleans (LA) / New Orleans Police Department (LA)  
*Developing Partnerships for Crisis Intervention and Special Victims Units: Assisting Those With Co-Occurring Challenges*

**Aaron Szegedi** (2023)  
Tennessee State University / Metro Nashville Police Department (TN)  
*Health and Wellness Reform in Metropolitan Nashville Police Department*

**LaNiya Vargas** (2023)  
Howard University (DC) / Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (NC)  
*Bridging the Gap Between Officers and the Community*

**Darrius Williams** (2023)  
North Carolina A&T State University / Chapel Hill Police Department (NC)  
*Improving Employee Retention*

**Lauren Williams** (2023)  
Savannah State University (GA) / Savannah Police Department (GA)  
*Improving the Savannah Police Department Forensic Unit: Equipment, Growth, and Diversity*

**Zaria Wilson** (2023)  
Harris-Stowe State University (MO) / St. Louis Police Department (MO)  
*The Importance of Officer Morale*

## Appendix D: PERF Webinar on PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program

### PERF-HBCU Summer Internship Program

CHUCKWEXLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

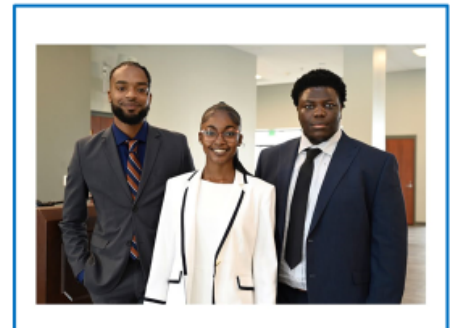


POLICE EXECUTIVE  
RESEARCH FORUM



### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Screen candidates
- Provide interns a primary unit of assignment
- Administer an orientation program
- Supervise interns
- Mentor interns
- Expose interns to a variety of experiences
- Set clear objectives, duties, and responsibilities
- Identify and oversee a capstone project



## EXPECTATIONS



- Complete pre-internship and post-internship surveys (2)
- Complete weekly check-in surveys
- Attend weekly meetings/seminars
  - Meet-and-greet with PERF staff
  - Roundtable conversation with police chiefs
- Attend PERF events
  - BWC Conference – Washington DC, June 29
  - Annual Conference – New York City, July 17-19
  - Capstone Presentations

## INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### Inside the Department (minimum of 3)

- Breakfast with Police Commissioner and PERF Executive Director
- Baltimore City Consent Decree Monitoring Team
- Police Commissioner and executive team
- Neighborhood patrol with officers
- Education and Training
- Officer Safety and Wellness
- Victim Services Unit
- ComStat
- Forensic Science and Evidence Services Division
- Officer Affinity Groups: 30x30 Initiative; Hispanic Officers Law Enforcement Association; LGBTQ+

### Outside the Department (minimum of 3)

- PERF in Washington, D.C.
- Anne Arundel Co. PD Training Academy
- U.S. District Court Judge James K. Bredar
- Mayor's Office of Equity & Civil Rights
- *Charm City* documentary discussion
- Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety & Engagement
- Baltimore City Detention Center
- Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture
- Project Pneuma
- Roca, Inc.
- Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound
- No Boundaries Coalition



# CAPSTONE PROJECT

## Requirements

- ❑ Identify a specific operation or function in the unit of assignment, conduct an analysis, research best practices, and offer recommendations for improvement.
- ❑ Complete a written report, 2 – 3 pages.
- ❑ Deliver a presentation, 5 – 10 minutes.

## Possible Topics

- *Quality Assurance in Victim Services*
- *Outreach and Resource Opportunities for the Female Reentry Population*
- *Lost in Plain Sight: Enhancing the Evidence*
- *Relational Equity: Bridge Building in Communities*
- *Recruitment and Background Investigation Information Systems*
- *Information Technology and Service Vendor Management*
- *The Hometown Heroes Act and the Pipeline to Policing*



# PARTICIPATING LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

1. Annapolis Police Department
2. Anne Arundel County Police Department
3. Atlanta Police Department
4. Austin Police Department
5. Baltimore County Police Department
6. Baltimore Police Department
7. Brentwood Police Department
8. Buffalo Police Department
9. Chapel Hill Police Department
10. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department
11. Chatham County Police Department
12. Chattanooga Police Department
13. Chicago Police Department
14. Elgin Police Department
15. Glendale Police Department
16. Greensboro Police Department
17. Houston Police Department
18. Jackson Police Department
19. Louisville Police Department
20. Metro Nashville Police Department
21. Minneapolis Police Department
22. New Orleans Police Department
23. Philadelphia Police Department
24. Prince George's County Police Department
25. Raleigh Police Department
26. Savannah Police Department
27. St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department
28. Tennessee Bureau of Investigation



# Appendix E: Example of Ride-Along Application and Waiver

## RIDE-ALONG APPLICATION & WAIVER San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department



Applicant Name _____	Phone _____
Address _____	
Date of Birth _____	Driver's License # _____
Parent/Guardian Signature <i>(if under 18)</i> _____	
Emergency Contact / Relation _____	
Name _____	Phone _____
Address _____	
Alternate # _____	Cell Phone # _____
<p>What is your interest as an observer?</p> <p>Interested Citizen <input type="checkbox"/>                      Police Science Student <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Student and the Law Program <input type="checkbox"/>                      Other Agency <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Other _____</p>	
<p><b>AGREEMENT ASSUMING RISK OR INJURY OR DAMAGE/WAIVER AND RELEASE OF CLAIMS:</b> I fully understand that my participation in a ride-along event with the San Bernardino county Sheriff's Department exposes me to the risk of personal injury, property damage, or death. I hereby acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in the ride-along, and expressly agree to assume any such risks.</p> <p>In consideration for being permitted to participate in the ride-along, I hereby release and forever discharge the Sheriff of San Bernardino County, the County of San Bernardino, its officers, employees, agents, and volunteers for any injury, death, or damage to loss of personal property arising out of or in connection with my participation, including active or passive negligence of the Sheriff of San Bernardino County, the County of San Bernardino, its officers, employees, agents, volunteers or any other participants in the event.</p> <p>In further consideration for being allowed to participate in the ride-along, I hereby agree for myself, my heirs, administrators, executors, and assigns, that I shall indemnify and hold harmless the Sheriff of San Bernardino County, the County of San Bernardino, its officers, employees, agents, and volunteers from any and all claims, demands, actions, or suits arising out of or in connection with my participation in the event brought by any third party.</p> <p><b>I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS WAIVER AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS. DURING MY PARTICIPATION IN THE RIDE-ALONG EVENT, I HEREBY AGREE TO FOLLOW ALL OF THE LAWFUL COMMANDS OF THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES AND FURTHER AGREE THAT I WILL NOT BRING WITH ME ANY FIREARMS, WEAPONS OR ILLEGAL ITEMS. I AM AWARE THAT IT IS A FULL RELEASE OF ALL LIABILITY AND SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.</b></p>	
Signature _____	Date _____
Parent/ Guardian <i>(if under 18)</i> _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> CNI <input type="checkbox"/> DMV <input type="checkbox"/> ATTACHED    EMP # _____    DATE _____	
Application Reviewed By _____ Date _____	
Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reason <i>(for "Not Approved" only)</i> _____	
Assigned to _____	Emp # _____ Date _____
Shift _____	<b>**{ Make any additional comments on the reverse side of this form }**</b>

REV. 03/2014



## Appendix F: Weekly Internship Survey

Overall, how satisfied were you with your internship?

- Not at all satisfied
- Not too satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

Within the past work week:

How satisfied were you with each of the following?

	Not at all satisfied	Not too satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied
Your day-to-day tasks					
Your opportunities to learn/observe things of interest to you					
Your relationship with your manager or supervisor					
Your relationship with personnel (other than your manager or supervisor)					
Your opportunities for training or ways to develop new skills					

How often did you find your internship to be:

	Never	Rarely	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Frustrating					
Interesting					
Worthwhile					
Boring					
Satisfying					
Exciting					
Stressful					
Worrying					
Overwhelming					
Enjoyable					
Fulfilling					

Would you have preferred to be in more frequent contact with PERF?

- Yes
- No

What was most satisfying about your job and/or the internship experience?

What was least satisfying about your job and/or the internship experience?

Is there something you think you could have done to improve your experience?

What suggestions do you have to help improve the overall program and experience?

## Appendix G: Pre-Internship Survey

### PERF Internship Program Pre-internship Survey

The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) is sponsoring the policing internship you are participating in this summer. Policing is a challenging career, and PERF has invested in the internship program to help introduce more students to policing. The internship program is a way to reach individuals who may not have otherwise considered a career in policing.

PERF also wants to learn how the internship program may change your view of policing as a way to make a difference in your community. To do that, PERF is surveying all interns in the summer police internship program. With the survey, PERF hopes to learn more about interns' career planning process and their career plans after college. Most importantly, we hope to learn more about what you like and don't like about your internship so that we can make improvements for future interns.

Your answers to the survey questions will remain confidential; only researchers at PERF will have access to your data. Your responses will not be shared with anyone outside the PERF research team. Your responses will be combined with others' survey responses and analyzed as a group. PERF researchers will also invite you to respond to a survey again at the end of the internship.

***This survey is different from the weekly survey you will be asked to take during your internship. Please complete this survey regardless of whether you have already responded to any of the short weekly surveys.***

PERF appreciates your participation in this groundbreaking national internship program and believes that together, we can strengthen the relationship between police and the communities they serve. Through your candid responses, you are playing an important role in providing insights and lessons learned, which are invaluable and will strengthen the internship program for the future.

Please provide your email address:

-----

How do you describe your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Are you Hispanic or Latino/a?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

What is your race?

- American Indian, Native American, First American, Alaska Native
- Asian, Asian-American
- Black, African American
- Hispanic, Latino, Latinx, or Chicano
- Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander
- White, Caucasian American

- Two or more races/ethnicities
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your academic major?

- Arts and Humanities (e.g., Fine arts, English, other languages, history, philosophy)
- Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources
- Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Science
- Social Sciences (e.g., Anthropology, economics, geography, psychology, sociology)
- Business (e.g., Accounting, finance, marketing, business administration)
- Communications, Media, and Public Relations
- Education
- Engineering
- Health Professions (e.g., Medicine, nursing, pharmacy, nutrition)
- Social Service Professions (e.g., criminology, law, public administration, social work, planning)
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider yourself to be a first-generation college student (someone who is the first in their family to attend a four-year college/university and attain a bachelor's degree)?

- Yes
- No

While enrolled at your current college, have you been:

- Full-time or mainly full-time
- Part-time or mainly part-time
- An equal mix of full- and part-time?

How did you initially learn about this internship opportunity?

- Through informal networks (e.g., professors, family, friends, etc.)
- Through public advertisements and/or forums (e.g., job board, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Through my campus career services (e.g., website, job/internship fair, resource center)

Are you currently in an academic program that requires you to participate in an internship in order to graduate?

- Yes
- No

In the past 12 months, have you participated in another internship?

- Yes
- No

What is your main purpose for participating in this internship?

- Exploring different career options because I am not yet sure about my chosen profession
- Gaining experience in a specific career that I plan on pursuing as my chosen profession
- Needed employment over the summer
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This survey uses the terms **sworn** and **non-sworn/civilian** to describe different positions in police agencies. People in sworn positions are officers and typically attend a police academy,

carry a firearm, have arrest powers, and have a badge. People in non-sworn/civilian positions are not called officers and do not have arrest powers. Non-sworn positions include jobs like crime analysts, dispatchers, crime scene technicians, and crime lab personnel.

We want to understand your perspectives on what police officers do. Based on your current impressions about what police do on a day-to-day basis, please tell us how true you think the following statements are about a police officer's job.

A police officer who is on duty...

	Definitely not true	Probably not true	Possibly true	Probably true	Very Probably true	Definitely true
...has a lot of leeway in deciding whether to arrest someone.						
...spends the majority of their time enforcing the law rather than providing services to the community.						
...often sees and stops crimes in progress.						
...tries to mediate solutions between people who are arguing / disagreeing.						
...has a supervisor telling them what to do while on patrol.						

	Definitely not true	Probably not true	Possibly true	Probably true	Very Probably true	Definitely true
...is often asked to help detectives with their investigations.						
...solves most issues by making an arrest.						
...spends most of their shift responding to 911 calls, with very little time for community-related activities.						
...frequently encounters homeless people with limited options for helping them.						
...is expected to respond to individuals with mental health issues.						
...helps individuals who are overdosing or who have substance use issues find treatment.						

I expect the internship program will...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...increase my knowledge about what a career in policing is like.						
...be a valuable way to spend my summer.						
...improve my resume so that I look better as an applicant for future jobs (whether in policing or not).						
...teach me new skills that will help me get a job after graduation.						
...change my opinion of policing as a career.						
...increase my desire to apply for a <b>sworn</b> position in policing.						
...increase my desire to apply for a <b>non-sworn / civilian</b> position in policing.						
...create an opportunity to work in my internship agency after graduation.						
...change my opinion of policing in general.						

What perceptions of policing would make you **most likely to consider** a career as a sworn police officer? Check your top three reasons:

- Excitement
- Serving justice
- Protecting people
- Helping people and the community
- Teamwork with other officers

- Prestige
- Power and authority
- Not being in an office
- Physical demands
- Steady salary
- Benefits
- Improving policing from within a police agency
- Making my family/friends proud
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

What perceptions of policing would **keep you from considering** a career as a sworn police officer? Check your top three reasons:

- Danger of the job
- Shift work
- Lack of work/life balance
- My general negative perception of policing
- My family and friends' negative perceptions of policing
- My family/friends would disapprove of my job
- Unpredictability of job
- Lack of power and authority as an entry-level officer
- Low salary
- Physical demands
- Negative perception of people who are police officers
- Difficulty of job
- Potential exposure to trauma
- Opportunity in another field
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a close friend or family member who is currently a police officer or was a police officer in the last ten years?

- Yes
- No

How likely are you to apply for a **police officer position** with your internship agency upon graduation from college?

- Extremely unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely

How likely are you to apply for a **professional** staff position (e.g., crime analyst, HR) with your internship agency upon graduation from college?

- Extremely unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely



How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have a good understanding of what a police officer does on a day-to-day basis.						
I have a good understanding of the types of non-sworn/ civilian jobs available in police agencies.						
My family would support me if I became a police officer.						
My family would be proud of me if I became a police officer.						
My family would support me if I chose a non-sworn / civilian job in a police agency.						
My family would be proud of me if I had a non-sworn job in a police agency.						

Overall, how would you rate the quality of the relationship between the police and people in the neighborhood where you grew up (think about the place where you spent the most time while growing up)?

- Very poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

When thinking about your career path after college, how important are the following considerations?

	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Income potential						

	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Expressing personal values						
Work-life balance						
Job availability						
Family needs						
Service to community						
Family expectations of my career						

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I will be able to choose jobs that I want.						
I feel total control over my future job choices.						
I will be able to do the kind of work I want to, despite external barriers.						

Please indicate how well each of the following statements describes you.

	Not at all like me	Very slightly like me	Slightly like me	Moderately like me	Very much like me	Exactly like me
I believe there are injustices in my ethnic/racial/cultural community.						
I believe there are injustices in my neighborhood or where I grew up.						
I believe racism is a major factor for issues in society.						

	Not at all like me	Very slightly like me	Slightly like me	Moderately like me	Very much like me	Exactly like me
I want to make a difference in the broader society.						
I want to make a difference in my racial/ethnic/cultural community.						
I believe I will be able to make a difference in society.						

# Appendix H: Post-Internship Survey

## PERF Internship Program Post-Internship Survey

The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) sponsored the policing internship you participated in this summer. PERF wants to learn how the internship program may have changed your view of policing as a way to make a difference in your community. To do that, PERF surveyed all interns at the start of the internship period and is surveying all interns now for a second time.

With the survey, PERF hopes to learn more about your career planning process and your career plans after college. Most importantly, we hope to learn more about what you like and don't like about your internship so that we can make improvements for future interns.

Your answers to the survey questions will remain confidential; only researchers at PERF will have access to your data. Your responses will not be shared with anyone outside the PERF research team. Your responses will be combined with others' survey responses and analyzed as a group.

***This survey is different from the weekly surveys you took during your internship. Please complete this survey regardless of whether you have already responded to any of the short weekly surveys.***

PERF appreciates your participation in this groundbreaking national internship program and believes that together, we can strengthen the relationship between police and the communities they serve. Through your candid responses, you are playing an important role in providing insights and lessons learned, which are invaluable and will strengthen the internship program for the future.

Please provide your email address:

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Note: This survey uses the terms **sworn** and **non-sworn/civilian** to describe different positions in police agencies. People in sworn positions are officers and typically attend a police academy, carry a firearm, have arrest powers, and have a badge. People in non-sworn/civilian positions are not called officers and do not have arrest powers. Non-sworn positions include jobs like crime analysts, dispatchers, crime scene technicians, and crime lab personnel.

We want to understand your perspectives on what police officers do. Based on your current impressions about what police do on a day-to-day basis, please tell us how true you think the following statements are about a police officer's job.

A police officer who is on duty...

	Definitely not true	Probably not true	Possibly true	Probably true	Very Probably true	Definitely true
...has a lot of leeway in deciding whether to arrest someone.						

	Definitely not true	Probably not true	Possibly true	Probably true	Very Probably true	Definitely true
...spends the majority of their time enforcing the law rather than providing services to the community.						
...often sees and stops crimes in progress.						
...tries to mediate solutions between people who are arguing / disagreeing.						
...has a supervisor telling them what to do while on patrol.						
...is often asked to help detectives with their investigations.						
...solves most issues by making an arrest.						
...spends most of their shift responding to 911 calls, with very little time for community-related activities.						
...frequently encounters homeless people with limited options for helping them.						
...is expected to respond to individuals with mental health issues.						
...helps individuals who are overdosing or who have substance use issues find treatment.						

The internship program...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...increased my knowledge about what a career in policing is like.						

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...was a valuable way to spend my summer.						
...improved my resume so that I look better as an applicant for future jobs (whether in policing or not).						
...taught me new skills that will help me get a job after graduation.						
...changed my opinion of policing as a career.						
...increased my desire to apply for a <b>sworn</b> position in policing.						
...increased my desire to apply for a <b>non-sworn / civilian</b> position in policing.						
...created an opportunity to work in my internship agency after graduation.						
...changed my opinion of policing in general.						

What perceptions of policing would make you **most likely to consider** a career as a sworn police officer? Check your top three reasons:

- Excitement
- Serving justice
- Protecting people
- Helping people and the community
- Teamwork with other officers
- Prestige
- Power and authority
- Not being in an office
- Physical demands
- Steady salary
- Benefits
- Improving policing from within a police agency
- Making my family/friends proud
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

What perceptions of policing would **keep you from considering** a career as a sworn police officer? Check your top three reasons:

- Danger of the job

- Shift work
- Lack of work/life balance
- My general negative perception of policing
- My family and friends' negative perceptions of policing
- My family/friends would disapprove of my job
- Unpredictability of job
- Lack of power and authority as an entry-level officer
- Low salary
- Physical demands
- Negative perception of people who are police officers
- Difficulty of job
- Potential exposure to trauma
- Opportunity in another field
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

How likely are you to apply for a **police officer position** with **your internship agency** upon graduation from college?

- Extremely unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely

How likely are you to apply for a **police officer position** with **any agency** upon graduation from college?

- Extremely unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely

How likely are you to apply for a **professional** staff position (e.g., crime analyst, HR) with **your internship agency** upon graduation from college?

- Extremely unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely

How likely are you to apply for a **professional** staff position (e.g., crime analyst, HR) with **any agency** upon graduation from college?

- Extremely unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have a good understanding of what a police officer does on a day-to-day basis.						
I have a good understanding of the types of non-sworn / civilian jobs available in police agencies.						
My family would support me if I became a police officer.						
My family would be proud of me if I became a police officer.						
My family would support me if I chose a non-sworn/civilian job in a police agency.						
My family would be proud of me if I had a non-sworn job in a police agency.						

Please describe the primary tasks you performed for this internship:

Which of the following best describes how you engaged in workplace tasks during your internship?

- **Job shadowing:** I mostly shadowed my supervisor and observed them perform tasks
- **Low-skill tasks w/supervision:** I mostly engaged in relatively low-skill tasks after being trained by my supervisor
- **High-skill tasks w/supervision:** I mostly engaged in relatively high-skill tasks after being trained by my supervisor, who would then review and approve my work
- **Autonomous work:** I mostly worked on my own project(s) independently with support from a supervisor only as needed
- I experienced **a mix of these different approaches** to tasks.



How much do you agree with the following statements about expectations of you during the internship:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
It was clear right from the start what I was expected to learn from the internship.						
It was easy to know the standard of work expected of me in the internship.						
I usually had a clear idea of what I was supposed to be doing during the internship.						
I was given useful feedback on my work.						

How much do you agree with the following statements about your supervisor during the internship? If you had more than one supervisor, think about your experience with the supervisor with whom you worked most closely.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My supervisor tried to make the work experience interesting.						
My supervisor motivated me to do my best work.						
My supervisor clearly described the tasks that I was responsible for during the internship.						
My supervisor cared about my well-being at work.						
My supervisor cared about my satisfaction at work.						
My supervisor was willing and able to answer my questions about tasks.						

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My supervisor was available when I had questions about my tasks.						
My supervisor discussed my future career goals with me.						
My supervisor discussed the benefits of a career in policing with me.						
My supervisor discussed with me the challenges of a career in policing.						
Employees other than my supervisor supported having an intern in the agency.						
Employees other than my supervisor were welcoming.						

How much do you agree with the following statements about your experiences during the internship?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The internship helped me to clarify my career goals.						
The internship helped me to prepare for graduate school.						
The internship was interesting and engaging.						

During your internship, how often were you in contact with PERF, the agency that organized the internships?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Twice a month
- Monthly
- Less than once per month
- Never

Within the past work week:

Can you share anything particularly noteworthy, interesting, exciting, positive, etc.?

- Yes (Briefly explain):

- No

Is your internship meeting your expectations?

- Yes
- No (Briefly explain):

Would you like to speak with someone from PERF about your internship experience or any of your responses to this survey?

- Yes (Please provide the email address or telephone number where you would like to be contacted):

- No

## Appendix I: Internship Resources

### The PERF-HBCU Program in the Press

- Ya-Marie Sesay, "Howard University student aims to bridge gap between Prince George's County community and police," DC News Now, November 3, 2023, <https://www.dcnewsnow.com/news/local-news/maryland/prince-georges-county/howard-university-student-aims-to-bridge-gap-between-prince-georges-county-community-and-police/>.
- Reg Chapman, "Minneapolis Police Department wants to recruit more from HBCUs," WCCO (CBS News Minnesota), October 5, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/minneapolis-police-department-seeks-to-recruit-from-more-hbcus>.
- Rick West, "From Howard U. to Elgin: Police internship welcomes students," *Daily Herald* (Arlington Heights, IL), August 28, 2023, <https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20230828/from-howard-u-to-elgin-police-internship-welcomes-students-from-historically-black-colleges>.
- Gloria Casas, "Internship with Elgin police an eye-opening experience for Black college student: 'I definitely had a shift in perspective,'" *Chicago Tribune/Elgin Courier-News*, August 18, 2023, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/elgin-courier-news/ct-ecn-howard-student-intern-elgin-police-st-0820-20230818-a3j4trq5zzcrdc6pbetr2ycrje-story.html>.
- Jonathan Hunter, "Baltimore County Police participate in HBCU Internship program," WMAR 2 (ABC News Baltimore), August 18, 2023, <https://www.wmar2news.com/baltimore-county-police-participate-in-hbcu-internship-program>.
- Caroline Foreback, "College students learn about Baltimore County Police through HBCU internship," WJZ (CBS News Baltimore), August 17, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/college-students-learn-about-police-through-hbcu-internship-baltimore-county/>.
- Claudine Ewing, "BPD participates in national internship program to give college students police experience," WGRZ (Buffalo, NY), August 14, 2023, <https://www.wgrz.com/article/news/local/buffalo/bpd-participates-in-national-internship-program-to-give-college-students-police-experience-dc-program/71-d7b11a7e-9b80-468c-b10f-7e417b981ca8>.
- Caleb Figgures, "CPD concludes first internship in Chattanooga," WDEF (Chattanooga, TN), August 10, 2023, <https://www.wdef.com/cpd-concludes-first-internship-in-chattanooga/>.
- Nixon Norman, "College internship program builds trust between law enforcement and the people they serve," WFMY (Greensboro, NC), August 8, 2023, <https://www.wfmynews2.com/article/news/community/perf-college-internship-greensboro-police-department-north-carolina-at-police-executive-research-forum/83-2e3401f2-4a0f-471b-8a48-fe5fa0461ab1>.
- Reg Chapman, "'I'm not going to know, unless I go there myself': HBCU student interns for the Minneapolis Police Department," WCCO (CBS News Minnesota), August 4, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/im-not-going-to-know-unless-i-go-there-myself-hbcu-student-interns-for-the-minneapolis-police-department/>.
- Lea Skene, "Interns see Baltimore Police Department with 'fresh eyes' – and suggest wide-ranging reforms," *Baltimore Sun*, August 19, 2022, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-md-ci-cr-bpd-internship-capstones-20220819-p6blpcwnm5bf7bgbhalwxflx4-story.html>.
- Lea Skene, "Baltimore Police interns could help ease recruitment woes, improve community relations as pilot program launches," *Baltimore Sun*, June 24, 2022, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-md-ci-cr-police-internship-20220621-xfuzsnxdovaa3ire5cgv22tmji-story.html>.

## **PERF-HBCU Intern PERFCast Episodes:**

All three episodes are available at <https://www.policeforum.org/HBCUInternship>.

## **Detailed Intern Information Packets/Webpages (Samples):**

- **Cranston (RI) Police Department:**  
<https://cranstonpoliceri.com/Documents/InternshipPackageFillable.pdf>
- **Metropolitan (DC) Police Department:**  
<https://joinmpd.dc.gov/metropolitan-police/collegiate-internship-program>
- **Maryland State Police:**  
[https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Careers/Documents/FOB%20INTERN%20PACKET%20edited%2021\\_23.pdf](https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Careers/Documents/FOB%20INTERN%20PACKET%20edited%2021_23.pdf)
- **Normal (IL) Police Department:**  
<https://www.normalil.gov/699/Internship>

# About the Police Executive Research Forum

**The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)** is an independent research organization that focuses on critical issues in policing. Since its founding in 1976, PERF has identified best practices on fundamental issues such as developing community policing and problem-oriented policing; using technologies to deliver police services to the community; and developing and assessing crime reduction strategies. Over the past decade, PERF has led efforts to reduce police use of force through its guiding principles on use of force and innovative Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) training program.

PERF strives to advance professionalism in policing and to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership; public debate of police and criminal justice issues; and research and policy development.

The nature of PERF's work can be seen in the reports PERF has published over the years. Most of these reports are available without charge online at <http://www.policeforum.org/free-online-documents>.

In addition to conducting research and publishing reports on our findings, PERF conducts management studies of individual law enforcement agencies; educates hundreds of police officials each year in the Senior Management Institute for Police, a three-week executive development program; and provides executive search services to governments that wish to conduct national searches for their next police chief.

All of PERF's work benefits from PERF's status as a membership organization of police officials, academics, government leaders, and others with an interest in policing and criminal justice.

All PERF members must have a four-year college degree and must subscribe to a set of founding principles, emphasizing the importance of research and public debate in policing, adherence to the Constitution and the highest standards of ethics and integrity, and accountability to the communities that police agencies serve.

PERF is governed by a member-elected President and Board of Directors and a Board-appointed Executive Director.

To learn more about PERF, visit [www.policeforum.org](http://www.policeforum.org).





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