College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice:
Analysis and Rating of Police Reform Plans in Oneida County Jurisdictions

February 2022

Executive Summary

In the aftermath of the George Floyd murder, former Governor Andrew Cuomo issued Executive Order 203 requiring all New York State jurisdictions to report plans for police reform and racial justice by April of 2021. In response, six Oneida and Herkimer county higher education institutions, together with community leaders, formed the College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice ("The Partnership") to engage with police and other local officials to consider research-based best practices for law enforcement. The Partnership, with the Levitt Center for Public Affairs at Hamilton College, hosted a webinar series, conducted a community survey of attitudes and experience with the police, and prepared a comprehensive analysis of best practices in policing.

Most recently, the Partnership and the Levitt Center examined the reform plans submitted by municipalities in Oneida County, utilizing New York State guidelines and published research to produce a list of 10 criteria for reform (see *Appendix B*). These criteria formed the basis of a scoring matrix to compare across reform plans and to identify trends across municipalities. For the purposes of the analysis, The Partnership chose to distinguish between smaller and larger municipalities within Oneida County and group them accordingly to account for substantial differences in the ability of departments to respond to Executive Order 203.

Analysis

The Partnership finds that smaller municipalities (Village of Boonville, Village of Camden, Town of Kirkland, Village of New York Mills, Village of Oriskany, City of Sherrill, Village of Vernon, Village of Whitesboro, Town of Whitestown, Village of Yorkville) meaningfully addressed issues pertaining to Community Engagement and partly addressed Training and Agency Control of Use of Force. Smaller municipalities did little to address the remaining seven criteria: Accreditation; Police Culture; Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Diverse Police Officers; Citizen Oversight; Shared Responsibility for Community Wellness; and Officer Wellness.

The Partnership finds that larger municipalities (Oneida County Sheriff's Department, City of Rome, City of Utica, Town of New Hartford) largely addressed 7 of 10 criteria, offering the most detailed plans to address Accreditation and Community Engagement. Larger municipalities may have mentioned Police Culture, Citizen Oversight, and Anti-Racism work but did less to address these criteria. Both the City of Rome and City of Utica deserve recognition for taking this reform and reinvention planning process seriously and doing so thoroughly, with only a few areas to consider more deeply.

Table: Ranking and average scores of police reform criteria for small and large Oneida County municipalities

Small Municipalities [1]

Rank	Criteria[3] (average score)
1	Community Engagement (*2.1*)
2	Training (1.5)
3	Agency Control of Use of Force (1.3)
4	Anti-Racism (1.1)
5	Officer Wellness (0.9)
6	Shared Responsibility for Community Wellness (0.7)
7	Citizen Oversight (0.6)
8	Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Diverse Officers (0.3)
9	Police Culture (0.2)
10	Accreditation (0.1)

Large Municipalities [2]

Rank	Criteria (average score)
1	Accreditation (2.75)
2	Community Engagement (2.5)
3	Shared Responsibility for Community Wellness (2.25)
4	Training (2.25)
5	Officer Wellness (2.25)
6	Agency Control of Use of Force (2)
7	Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Diverse Officers (2)
8	Anti-Racism (1.5)
9	Citizen Oversight (1.5)
10	Police Culture (1.25)

- **Green:** Average scores of two and above, denoting State criteria are met or exceeded on average for the specified criterion
- **Blue:** Average scores of below two, denoting State criteria are unmet on average for the specified criterion

Notes:
1. *Small municipalities include: Village of Boonville, Village of Camden, Town of Kirkland, Village of New York Mills, Village of Oriskany, City of Sherrill, Village of Vernon, Village of Whitesboro, Town of Whitestown, Village of Yorkville*
2. *Large municipalities include: Town of New Hartford, Oneida County Sheriff's Office, City of Rome, City of Utica*
3. *The scores presented above are averages across police reform plans by the size of the municipality; the full set of scores by municipality is presented in the appendix.*
4. *Each police reform plan is evaluated based on a set of 10 criteria derived from State guidance and best practices research. Criteria are graded on a scale of 0-3, with the following definitions for each municipality's police reform plan:*
    a. *A score of **ZERO** means that nothing about the criterion is stated in the plan.*
    b. *A score of **ONE** means that the criterion is mentioned.*
    c. ***TWO** means that the criterion was specified according to State guidance.*
    d. *A **THREE** indicates that practical steps to achieve the criterion are specified.*

Conclusion & Next Steps

The Partnership's intention is to constructively engage municipalities about police reform and reinvention, offering citizen perspective and expertise when appropriate. The Partnership recognizes that each municipality is distinct, and that smaller municipalities in particular bear a larger relative burden to respond to Statewide orders such as E.O. 203. In addition, The Partnership acknowledges that many smaller municipalities expressed concerns about a lack of resources to meet State demands for reform and reinvention. This report is in part an invitation to further understand the reform planning process of police forces in Oneida County and to serve as an additional voice in advocating for resources for reform and reinvention.

The process of developing criteria and evaluating municipal police reform plans has helped The Partnership identify areas where municipalities large and small can focus efforts to strengthen the reform process. Upon release of this report and the scores, The Partnership will seek to consult with local elected representatives and police officials about their scores and identify barriers to engaging in the reform process. The Partnership will also share this report with New York State officials in the Division for Criminal Justice and State legislators. The Partnership is interested to learn what actions State officials have taken thus far to review these plans, and what possible resources and solutions may be available to help strengthen municipalities' commitments to the reform process.

The Partnership has also identified areas across all municipalities where community members can play a bigger role. Specifically, The Partnership is exploring the possibility of launching a local Human Rights Commission (HRC) to strengthen awareness of NYS Human Rights Laws and possibly aid in the investigation and arbitration of human rights complaints. Though the scope of an HRC goes well beyond policing, an HRC can help to "foster mutual respect and understanding" among all groups in the community, ease tensions, and conduct outreach and education for the general welfare of the community - including on the topic of policing and police relations.[1]

---

[1] "2015 New York Laws GMU - General Municipal Article 12-D - (General Municipal) COMMISSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS." Justia. Accessed July 13, 2021. https://law.justia.com/codes/new-york/2015/gmu/article-12-d/.

<u>Sources for Further Reading:</u>

College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice. (n.d.). *A Citizen's Agenda for Public Safety: An Update on Local Police Reform*. College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from https://community4justice.org/

College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice. (2021, February). *Best Practices for Police Reform*. Community 4 Justice. https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/BEST%20PRACTICES%20FOR%20POLICE%20REFORM%20Feb%2021%20(1).pdf?ver=1625148914461.

The College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice. (2021, February). *Policing Reform: A Short Guide for Local Governments in Oneida and Herkimer Counties*. Community 4 Justice. Retrieved from https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/Short%20Guide%20to%20Police%20Reform%202-28-21.pdf?ver=1616080922867

Governor Andrew Cuomo. (2020, June 12). *No. 203 New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative*. New York State. Retrieved from https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/No.%20203_%20New%20York%20State%20Police%20Reform%20and%20Rein.pdf?ver=1635777811878

Kuczek, C. (2021, December). *Models of a Local Human Rights Commission*. Community 4 Justice. Retrieved from https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/Police%20Reform%20Plan%20Criteria%2C%20College%20Community.pdf?ver=1634843147162

New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Resources & Guide for Public Officials and Citizens. (2020, August). https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/Police_Reform_Workbook81720.pdf?ver=1622140262761.

Police Reform Plans. Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://policereform.ny.gov/police-reform-plans

"2015 New York Laws GMU - General Municipal Article 12-D - (General Municipal) COMMISSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS." Justia. Accessed July 13, 2021. https://law.justia.com/codes/new-york/2015/gmu/article-12-d/.

Appendix A:

		Agency Control of Use of Force	Community Engagement	Anti-Racism	Shared Responsibility for Community Wellness	Citizen Oversight	Police Culture	Accreditation	Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement of Diverse Police Officers	Training	Officer Wellness	Total
	Village of Boonville	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	10
	Village of Camden	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
	Town of Kirkland	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	7
Smaller Municipalities	Village of New York Mills	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	8
(Scored Out of 30)	Village of Oriskany	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	13
	City of Sherrill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Village of Vernon	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	10
	Village of Whitesboro	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	10
	Town of Whitestown	2	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	10
	Village of Yorkville	2	3	1	2	0	0	0	1	3	3	15
	Column Totals	13*	21*	11	7	6	2**	1**	3**	15*	9	
Larger Municipalities	Town of New Hartford	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	18
	Oneida County Sheriff's Office	2	2	1	1	1	0	3	1	2	2	15
(Scored Out of 12)	City of Rome	2	3	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	23
	City of Utica	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	25
	Column Totals	8	10*	6**	9	6**	5**	11*	8	9	9	

*High-Ranking Categories
**Low-Ranking Categories

Appendix B[2]: College Community Partnership Criteria for Evaluating New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Plans in Response to Executive Order 203

Criteria	Contextual Meaning	Examples
Agency Control of Use of Force	Within police departments, officers and personnel hold each other accountable for their actions. Officers are expected to intervene if they observe misconduct. Use of force is a term used by police that describes the amount and degree of effort that an officer uses in a situation. The concept originated in the 1960s when situational guidelines for force were developed.[3] Levels include verbal commands, less-lethal force, and lethal force. The level of force used is expected to correspond to the level of offender resistance and/or threat.	-Early Intervention System[4] -Included in performance reviews[5] -Internal review of all incidents[6] -Duty of Fellow Officers to Intervene[7]
Community	Municipalities find ways to engage citizens and	-Community policing plan[9]

[2] This rubric follows guidance for police reform in New York State published in Executive Order 203 and the *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative: Resources and Guides for Public Officials and Citizens*, distributed in August, 2020. Each police reform plan submitted to the State by local governments is examined using this rubric and graded on ten criteria from 0-3 with a final score out of a possible 30.
- A score of **ZERO** means that nothing about the criterion is stated in the plan.
- A score of **ONE** means that the criterion is mentioned.
- **TWO** means that the criterion was specified according to State guidance.
- A **THREE** indicates that practical steps to achieve the criterion are specified.

[3] Rizer, A., & Mooney, E. (2020, May 21). *The Evolution of Modern Use-of-Force Policies and the Need for Professionalism in Policing*. The Federalist Society. https://fedsoc.org/commentary/publications/the-evolution-of-modern-use-of-force-policies-and-the-need-for-professionalism-in-policing.

[4] *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Resources & Guide for Public Officials and Citizens*. (2020, August). 59. https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/Police_Reform_Workbook81720.pdf?ver=1622140262761.

[5] *NYS Guide.* 58.

[6] *NYS Guide.* 57-58.

[7] *NYS Guide.* 60-61.

[9] *NYS Guide.* 23.

Engagement	amplify their voices. The police program time and methods to understand the people they serve, particularly those in marginalized groups, in order to build relationships and trust through sustained dialogue. "Community engagement is imperative to forming trust between officers and the citizens in the neighborhoods they police."[8]	-Community policing measures in performance review[10] -Periodic assessment of public opinion and experience (meetings, surveys)[11]
Anti-Racism	Anti-racism acknowledges historical bias and exclusion of racial and ethnic minorities. The municipality and police department change policies and create new ones to address and prevent bias in law enforcement. This criterion refers to practices both internal and external to the police department.	-Human rights commission or agency in the jurisdiction[12] -Civil rights or procedural justice committee of jurisdiction's legislature[13] -Racial justice programming in the jurisdiction[14]
Shared Responsibility for Community Wellness	Community wellness is a holistic approach to political, economic, and social needs in a given jurisdiction. The *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative: Resources and Guides for Public Officials and Citizens* refers to this as "adjusting the scope of responsibilities assigned to the police department and adjusting its budget correspondingly, shifting resources to social services, community programs, housing, and education to focus on crime reduction."[15] "Some stakeholders have suggested that	-Mental health and/or domestic violence co-response teams[17] -Non-police control of school discipline[18] -Non-police intervention in drug addiction and low-level drug dealing[19]

[8] *NYS Guide.* 42.
[10] *NYS Guide.* 23.
[11] *NYS Guide.* 71.
[12] *NYS Guide.* 61-62.
[13] *NYS Guide.* 66-67, 69.
[14] *NYS Guide.* 98-100.
[15] *NYS Guide.* 9.
[17] *NYS Guide.* 13.
[18] *NYS Guide.* 18-19.
[19] *NYS Guide.* 13.

	functions currently performed by uniformed officers could instead be assigned to civilian employees in the police or other departments, particularly functions that involve interactions with citizens and that do not call for an arrest or potential use of force."[16]	
Citizen Oversight	Independent, citizen led oversight of the police is the cornerstone of democratic accountability of law enforcement. The *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative: Resources and Guides for Public Officials and Citizens* adds that "civilian oversight entities have formal duties and authorities."[20]	-Appointed or elected citizen board to review complaints[21] -Referral of complaints to independent third party for investigation e.g. independent investigator, Human Rights Commission, etc[22]
Police Culture	The culture of a police department is critical to developing trust and mutual respect between law enforcement and the community. Organizational cultures develop patterns and perspectives over time that may be unnoticed by those working within them. Formal review is required to evaluate the effects of police culture on officer	-Internal review of police agency culture (informal procedures and 'locker-room' culture)[23] -External review of police agency culture (informal procedures and 'locker-room'

---

[16] *NYS Guide.* 19.

[20] *NYS Guide.* 64.

[21] College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice. (2021, February). 60-64. *Best Practices for Police Reform*. Community 4 Justice.
https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/BEST%20PRACTICES%20FOR%20POLICE%20REFORM%20Feb%2021%20(1).pdf?ver=1625148914461.

[22] *NYS Guide.* 62.

[23] College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice. (2021, February). 104-105. *Best Practices for Police Reform*. Community 4 Justice.
https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/BEST%20PRACTICES%20FOR%20POLICE%20REFORM%20Feb%2021%20(1).pdf?ver=1625148914461.

	behavior and community relations.	culture)[24]
Accreditation	Accreditation is "a useful tool that enables external review of agency policies, procedures, and practices to improve the standards of your police department and quality of your policing services."[25] To become accredited, a police department goes through steps including self-assessment and an external commission review.[26] Accreditation increases accountability through requirements that ensure transparency and build trust.[27]	-CALEA accreditation[28]
Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Diverse Police Officers	A police agency that mirrors the population it serves includes perspectives that help counteract negative, harmful stereotypes and biases. This criterion addresses "obstacles to promotion, ranging from outright bias and discrimination to less insidious but no less harmful factors such as a lack of transparency about the promotion	-Outreach to youth in diverse communities[30] -Creation of cadet corps[31] -Police athletic leagues in communities of color[32] -Cluster hiring[33] -Mentorship of minority recruits[34]

[24] College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice. (2021, February). 105. *Best Practices for Police Reform*. Community 4 Justice. https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/BEST%20PRACTICES%20FOR%20POLICE%20REFORM%20Feb%2021%20(1).pdf?ver=1625148914461.

[25] *NYS Guide.* 69.

[26] CALEA Accreditation. (n.d.). https://www.chp.ca.gov/home/about-us/accreditation/calea-accreditation.

[27] Accreditation is a resource intensive process that often requires more personnel. This often makes it more difficult for smaller departments to obtain.

[28] CALEA Accreditation. (n.d.). https://www.chp.ca.gov/home/about-us/accreditation/calea-accreditation.

[30] *NYS Guide.* 15, 38.

[31] *NYS Guide.* 87-88.

[32] *NYS Guide.* 45.

[33] College-Community Partnership for Racial Justice. (2021, February). 110-111. *Best Practices for Police Reform. Community 4 Justice.* https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ce52a1be-8002-4cee-b3c7-7e8a1757ab6d/downloads/BEST%20PRACTICES%20FOR%20POLICE%20REFORM%20Feb%2021%20(1).pdf?ver=1625148914461.

[34] *NYS Guide.* 85.

	process, or inadequate mentoring relationships and professional development opportunities."[29]	
Training	Enhanced academy and in-service training should address situations that are conducive to unfair or presumptive interactions with citizens. This includes implicit bias training. Such training will reinforce "values such as accountability, transparency, and fairness in all aspects of policing."[35]	-Procedural justice training[36]
Officer Wellness	"Law enforcement is inherently a physically and emotionally dangerous career. Studies show that people working in law enforcement are at an elevated risk of physical and mental health issues when compared to the general population."[37] In order to support officers, a counselor should be available to help officers understand the stress and mental demands of the job and to support officers after traumatic incidents.	-Annual physical and psychological evaluation[38] -Retained counselor[39] -Support for college education[40] -College degrees can benefit police officers in many areas, including their attitudes[41]

[29] *NYS Guide.* 88.

[35] *NYS Guide.* 89.

[36] *NYS Guide.* 91.

[37] *NYS Guide.* 103.

[38] Roufa, T. (2021, July 6). *Learn About the Psychological Tests and Screening for Police Officers*. The Balance Careers. https://www.thebalancecareers.com/psychological-exams-and-screening-for-police-officers-974785.

[39] *NYS Guide.* 106-107.

[40] Commentary, G. (2021, March 26). *Mandate higher education for California police officers*. CalMatters. https://calmatters.org/commentary/my-turn/2021/03/mandate-higher-education-for-california-police-officers/.

[41] Basham, S. (n.d.). *Education Offers Best Solution for Police Misconduct*. policechiefmagazine.org. https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/education-offers-best-solution-for-police-misconduct/.