

COMMUNITY POLICING CHECKLIST

How does your department measure up?

Apply this checklist to your department periodically to gauge your progress in maximizing community policing:

Vision/Values/Mission

- Has the organization written or revised these statements to reflect an organization-wide commitment to the philosophy and principles of community policing?
- Does the process include soliciting input from all levels of the police department, including sworn, non-sworn, and civilian personnel?
- Does the process include soliciting input from outside the police department: the community, business, civic officials, public agencies, community institutions (schools, hospitals, the faith community), non-profit agencies, formal and informal community leaders, and community residents?

Code of Ethics

- Has the organization written or revised a Code of Ethics that reflects the principles of community policing?
- Does producing a new Code of Ethics encourage input from inside and outside the organization?
- Does the Code of Ethics discuss issues such as civility, courtesy, respect for civil rights (including the right to privacy), and sensitivity to diversity?

Leadership & Management Style

- Does the department support and exhibit leadership at all levels in implementing, institutionalizing, and maintaining the momentum of community policing? Does the department empower the community to support and exhibit leadership in this regard?
- Does the implementation plan reflect inverting the power pyramid, shifting power, authority, and responsibility to line-level?
- Do managers serve as facilitators who access resources from inside and outside the department in service of community building and problem solving?
- Do managers act as models for the behavior that they want others to follow? Does this include demonstrating sensitivity to diversity?
- Do managers act as coaches who inspire and instruct?
- Do managers act as mentors who guide and support?
- Does the internal management style exhibit a striving for collaboration and consensus?
- Does the department have a mechanism to prevent, identify, and deal with burnout?

Role of Chief Executives

- How does the chief executive exhibit leadership internally and externally for the commitment to and changes required by implementing community policing?
- Does the CEO understand and accept the depth of change and the time required to implement community policing, as framed by the principles of community policing?
- Does the CEO practice the philosophy of community policing by collaborating with others in the department?
- Has the CEO succeeded in assembling and educating a management team committed to translating the new vision into action?

- Is the CEO a consistent internal and external advocate for community policing? Is he or she ready with the "stump speech" and success stories for any group or occasion?
- How does the CEO express commitment to risk-taking within the organization?
- What kinds of leadership does the CEO provide in support of community building and community-based problem solving?
- How will the CEO deal with the internal resistance/backlash, particularly from middle managers, first-line supervisors, and others who perceive community policing as a rejection of the prevailing police culture?
- How can the CEO cut red tape and remove bureaucratic obstacles that stifle creativity?
- How does the CEO express openness to new ideas from all levels of the organization, including line-level personnel?
- Does the CEO back those who make well-intentioned mistakes?
- Does the CEO jump the chain of command on occasion to reinforce the commitment to community policing within the organization?
- How has the CEO committed the organization to deal with the small percentage of "bad apples" whose actions can undermine the trust of the community?
- How will the CEO deal with marginal employees who are unwilling or unable to translate the community policing practice into the hard and risky work of effecting real change?

Role of Top Command

- How does top command exhibit leadership internally and externally for the commitment to and changes required by implementing community policing?
- How does top command express the philosophy and 10 principles in their work - leading by example?
- How will they translate the vision into practice? How will that planning process model community building and problem solving internally?
- How will top command plan for dealing with the internal resistance?
- Does top command cut red tape and remove bureaucratic obstacles that stifle creativity?
- How does top command create a structure to allow new ideas from all levels of the organization, including line-level personnel, to bubble up to the top?
- Does top command back those who make well-intentioned mistakes?
- Does top command jump the chain of command on occasion to reinforce the commitment to community policing within the organization?
- How has top command operationalized and institutionalized zero-tolerance for abuse of authority and excessive force?
- How does top command deal with marginal employees who are unwilling or unable to translate the community policing practice into the hard and risky work of effecting real change?

Role of Middle Management & First-Line Supervisors

- How do middle management and first-line supervisors exhibit leadership internally and externally for the commitment to and changes required by implementing community policing?
- How do middle management and first-line supervisors express the philosophy and 10 principles in their work -- leading by example?
- Are middle management and first-line supervisors as supporting the organization's transition to community policing?
- How do middle managers and first-line supervisors practice the principles of community policing internally within the organization?

- Are middle managers and first-line supervisors encouraged and supported for cutting red tape and removing barriers that inhibit implementing community policing as outlined in the community policing principles?
- Are middle management and first-line supervisors open to communication, ideas, and decision-making at all levels of the organization?
- Are middle managers and first-line supervisors given the autonomy to innovate?
- How do middle managers and first-line supervisors express their roles as facilitators, models, coaches, and mentors?
- How does the organization support their efforts at innovation, including support if well-intentioned efforts fail?
- How does the organization support middle managers and first-line supervisors who are attempting to redefine success in terms of positive, qualitative change achieved in the community?
- How does the organization address their typical concerns that the transition to community policing threatens to reduce their power and authority? (This may become a reality in organizations that "flatten" during the change to decentralization.)

Role of Line Officers

- How do line officers exhibit leadership internally and externally for the commitment to and changes required by implementing community policing?
- How do line officers express the philosophy and 10 principles in their work?
- Do line-level officers engage in community building and problem solving in their work? Are they given the time, freedom, autonomy, and opportunity to do so?
- Do line-level officers receive support from management in carrying out their commitment to community policing?
- How do ideas from line level move upward within the organization?
- Has the job really changed?

Role of Non-Sworn and Civilian Personnel

- How do non-sworn and civilian personnel exhibit leadership internally and externally for the commitment to and changes required by implementing community policing?
- How do non-sworn and civilian personnel express the philosophy and 10 principles in their work?
- Do non-sworn and civilian personnel engage in community building and problem solving within the scope of their work? Are they given the freedom, autonomy, and opportunity to do so?
- Do non-sworn and civilian personnel receive support from management in carrying out their commitment to community policing?
- How do ideas from line level move upward within the organization?
- Has the job really changed?

Information Management

- Does the organization have systems to collect, analyze, and share relevant information on problems in the community internally (among all levels of the organization, including sworn, non-sworn, and civilian personnel) and externally (with the broader community)?
- Does the organization gather and analyze information on social and physical disorder and quality-of-life concerns in addition to crime data? Is the information analyzed in terms of geographic area?
- Are data and analysis provided in their most useful forms?

- Are there formal and informal opportunities for information gathered at the line level to "bubble up" to the top within the organization? Is there a two-way flow of information?
- Are there formal and informal opportunities for officers assigned permanently in beats to share information with other patrol officers who patrol the same areas? Are such opportunities encouraged at all levels?
- Has the organization developed a means of capturing and documenting (tracking) problems solved in neighborhood areas including solutions that do not involve arrest?
- Does the management style support exhibiting greater sensitivity to issues of diversity within the department?
- Is the department taking full advantage of new technologies, such as the Internet and the World Wide Web, to interact with the community?

Planning/Evaluation

- Has the organization devoted sufficient time and resources to make the most of strategic planning to implement community policing?
- What mechanisms are employed to solicit input from inside and outside the organization to ensure input from line-level police personnel and community residents?
- Does the strategic planning process itself provide opportunities to begin building new partnerships?
- Does the strategic planning process itself provide opportunities to empower line-level personnel?
- As a "reality check," can the participants involved in planning clearly describe what the plan is designed to achieve?
- How does the organization inject objectivity into the process, as a guarantee that the tough questions will be asked?
- Does the monitoring process include capturing qualitative as well as quantitative outcomes?
- Can the planning/program evaluation staff cross organizational lines and coordinate directly with management information system staff?
- Have program assessments changed to reflect the many different kinds of success, such as overall harm reduction?
- Is there a plan to keep modifying and "tweaking" the implementation plan? Is there a strategy to stay abreast of new opportunities and new problems?

Resources/Finances

- Have funding priorities been revised to reflect community policing's priorities?
- Has the department realistically analyzed its resource needs to implement community policing? Has the police agency clearly justified the need for additional resources?
- Are residents of the jurisdiction willing to pay more in taxes to obtain community policing?
- Has the police department fully explored local, state, and federal grants available for community policing?
- Has the police department fully explored private sources of funding (businesses, foundations, etc.)?
- Has the police department restructured and prioritized workload and services to free up patrol time for community policing? Has the department worked with the community on developing alternatives to traditional handling of calls for service?
- Has the police organization considered flattening the management hierarchy as a means of creating more patrol positions for community policing?
- Has the police organization considered despecializing (eliminating, reducing, or restructuring specialized units) as a means of creating more patrol positions for community policing?

- Has the police organization made the best possible use of civilians and volunteers as a means of freeing up patrol officer time for community policing?
- What mode of transportation is the best for officers doing community policing in different areas with different needs (e.g., patrol cars, scooters, bicycles, etc.)?
- Are officers outfitted with appropriate technology (e.g., cellular phones, pagers, answering machines/voice mail, FAX machines, laptop/notebook computers, access to computer network, etc.)?
- Do neighborhood-based officers require office space? Is free space available? What about furniture? What about utilities?

Recruiting

- Has the organization considered expanding its recruiting efforts to reach college students in non-traditional fields, such as education and social work, to educate them about how community policing might provide an appealing alternative?
- Has the organization succeeded in finding ways to attract women and minorities?
- Does recruiting literature explain the new demands required by a community policing approach? Does it also discuss job satisfaction?

Selection & Hiring

- Has the organization conducted a job-task analysis of the new "community policing" entry-level officer position and developed a new job description?
- Do individuals and groups inside and outside the department have opportunities for input in developing criteria for the selection process?
- Do selection criteria emphasize verbal and written communication skills, the ability to work closely with people from all walks of life, and interest in developing skills in conflict resolution and creative problem solving?
- Do civil service requirements reflect the principles of community policing?
- Are candidates directly informed about the expectations of officers involved in community policing?
- Is the screening process designed to weed out those who categorically reject the principles of community policing?

Training

- Do plans include the eventual training of everyone in the department, sworn, non-sworn, and civilian, in the philosophy, practice and principles of community policing?
- Do plans include building community policing into all training opportunities: recruit, field training, in-service, roll call, and management?
- Has the organization recently conducted a comprehensive training skills needs assessment to determine the actual knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform community policing as an officer?
- Does the organization provide new and existing line-level personnel sufficient skills training in communication, interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, problem solving, and sensitivity to diversity?
- Do field training officers "practice" the principles of community policing so that recruits see how they are put into practice?
- Are middle managers and first-line supervisors trained concerning how their role changes in a community policing organization?
- Is there a system in place to capture suggestions and recommendations on training from individuals and groups inside and outside the department?
- Has the organization considered bringing culturally representative residents in to recruit training to work with recruits on "real life" problem-solving exercises?

- Does the department maintain a library of information on a wide range of topics that can broaden experience and understanding? Does the department provide opportunities for further learning through the Internet and the World Wide Web?

Performance Evaluation

- Are performance evaluations based on job descriptions that reflect the principles of community policing and that emphasize taking action to make a positive difference in the community as the yardstick for success?
- Did the process of developing performance evaluations reflect broad input from inside and outside the organization?
- Are performance evaluations written from the "customer's" point of view (the public who are the recipients of police service), rather than to serve the organization's bureaucratic needs?
- Do performance evaluations encourage risk-taking, by avoiding penalties for well-intentioned mistakes and by rewarding creativity?
- Do performance evaluations for managers and supervisors reflect the shift from "controller" to "facilitator", as well as the roles of model, coach, and mentor?
- Do performance evaluations for managers and supervisors reward efforts to delegate not only responsibility but authority?
- Do performance evaluations for managers and supervisors reward them for cutting red tape and removing bureaucratic obstacles that can stifle creativity?
- Do performance evaluations for managers and supervisors reward their efforts to secure resources for community building and community-based problem solving?
- Do performance evaluations for managers and supervisors reward them for developing collaborate partnerships with individuals and groups outside the organization?
- Do performance evaluations for managers and supervisors reward them for efforts to generate internal support for community policing?
- Do performance evaluations for managers and supervisors reward actions taken to reduce internal friction/backlash?
- Do performance evaluations for special units (e.g., detectives, traffic officers) reward members for initiating, participating in, and/or supporting community policing, specifically community building and community-based problem solving?
- Do performance evaluations for non-sworn and civilian personnel reward them for initiating, participating in, and/or supporting community policing, specifically community building and community-based problem solving?
- Do performance evaluations for patrol officers reward them for using their free patrol time to initiate community building and community-based problem solving?
- Do performance evaluations for officers reward meeting the special needs of specific groups – women, the elderly, minorities, juveniles?
- Do performance evaluations for officers reward sensitivity to diversity?
- Do performance evaluations for officers reward developing and strengthening collaborative partnerships?
- Does the performance evaluation process allow the community opportunities for formal and informal input into the assessment?
- Do performance evaluations for officers reward them for initiating and maintaining community building and community-based problem solving initiatives? Creativity? Innovation? Risk-taking? Preventing problems?
- Do performance evaluations for officers gauge success on whether their efforts attempted to improve life in the community?

Promotions

- Did the development of promotional criteria include broad input from inside and outside the organization?
- Do promotional criteria reflect qualitative and well as quantitative measures?

Adapted from **Community Policing: How to get started** – Robert C. Trojanowicz & Bonnie Bucqueroux (Anderson Publishing/Lexis-Nexis)

- Do promotional exams, interviews, and oral boards require candidates to express their knowledge of and support for the philosophy and principles of community policing?
- Do civil service requirements reflect the philosophy and principles of community policing?
- Does the process allow one or more representatives from the community to sit on oral board panels?
- Does the promotional process result in managers and supervisors able and eager to make the transition from the "controller" to "facilitator" model? Does it produce managers who act as models, coaches, and facilitators?
- Do officers who work directly in the community receive credit in the promotional process for the skills and expertise acquired by serving in this capacity?
- Does the promotional process recognize that well-intentioned failures or mistakes should not necessarily be a minus? just as a clean slate is not necessarily a plus if it is indicative of a rote and perfunctory performance?
- Are the right people being promoted?

Honors/Awards

- Does the formal and informal honors and awards process allow those who do an extraordinary job of community-based problem solving to be recognized for their efforts?

Discipline

- Has the organization adopted a determined leadership approach toward those whose behavior has the potential to undermine community policing?
- Does the organization provide formal and informal support for "whistleblowers" on this issue?
- Does the organization reject the excuse that trivial infractions do not warrant the time expended on paperwork required to enforce discipline?
- Is the community a partner in accountability?
- Has the department adopted a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of authority and use of excessive force?

Unions

- Are unions directly and immediately involved as partners in the planning process to implement community policing?
- How does the police organization plan to educate union representatives about the need to change some terms in the contract to implement community policing (e.g., providing officers greater autonomy and flexibility, assigning officers to permanent beats and work hours)?
- Should the union address the issue of whether community policing is implemented as a change for all patrol officers or as a specialized assignment?

Structuring the Delivery of Patrol Services

- The CEO must decide whether to deliver neighborhood level community policing with a generalist or specialist approach?
- Does the police organization prioritize calls to free up patrol time for community building and community-based problem solving by all patrol officers?
- Has the department involved the community in decisions about prioritizing calls for service? Are call takers and dispatchers trained with an acceptable protocol to explain to callers why they may have to wait for a response to a non-emergency call or have

- their call handled by an alternative? Are communications personnel trained to use discretion in these situations?
- How do various levels of the police organization address the need to educate the public about the rationale for prioritizing calls as a means of enhancing opportunities for community engagement and problem solving?
- Does the police organization have a range of alternatives ready to handle non-emergency calls for service to relieve officers of the responsibility?

Beat Boundaries (where applicable for community policing officers and teams)

- Do beat boundaries correspond to neighborhood boundaries?
- Do other city services recognize the police beat boundaries?
- Considering the severity of the problems in the area, is the size of the beat manageable?
- Are patrol officers/teams assigned to a specific area long enough to make a difference?
- Does the police organization have a policy to reduce or eliminate cross-beat dispatching? Are dispatchers adhering to the policy?
- Are patrol officers assigned to beats assured that they will not be used to substitute whenever temporary or permanent vacancies occur elsewhere in the organization?
- Does the organization avoid pulling these officers for special duty?parades, special events, etc.?
- Are patrol officers/teams assigned to permanent shifts long enough t make a difference?
- Do work rules permit officers to change their hours of work as needed with a minimum or no red tape?
- Do officers/teams assigned to beats have the same opportunities to receive overtime for appropriate activities, such as attending important evening community meetings, as other patrol counterparts do for activities considered essential to effectiveness in their job?

Assignment Issues

- Has the organization clarified and documented that putting in unpaid overtime hours in the community is appreciated, but that such dedication is not a requirement of the job or is it considered in the performance review and promotional process?
- Does the assignment process ensure that such duty is not used as punishment or as a "dumping ground" for problem officers?
- How has the department addressed the perception that this is "special duty" with special perquisites? What strategies are used to reduce internal dissent?

Integration of Other Systems

- Has the department considered ways of integrating its efforts with other elements of the criminal justice system – prosecutors, courts, corrections, and probation and parole? Has the department explored opportunities to work toward a Community Criminal Justice system?
- Has the department considering ways of integrating its efforts with other agencies that deliver public services – social services, public health, mental health, code enforcement? Has the department explored opportunities to work toward Community Oriented Public Service/Community-Oriented Government?
- Are the police and the community prepared to serve as the catalyst to integrate community criminal justice and community-oriented public service into a total community approach?

- Has the department explored strategies such as the Neighborhood Network Center concept as a means of encouraging a total community approach?
- Is the department planning to take full advantage of new technology, including the Internet and World Wide Web as a means of interacting with the community?