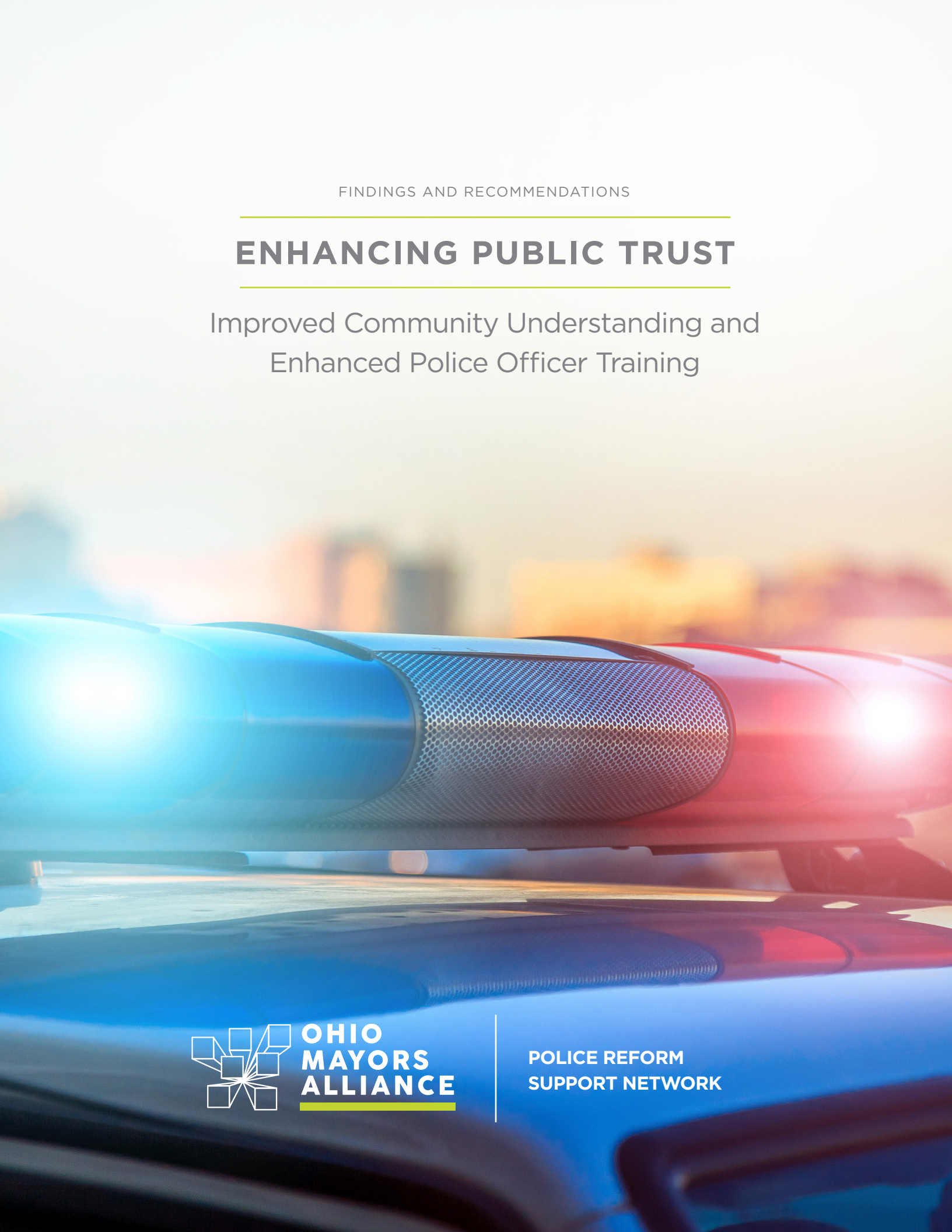
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ENHANCING PUBLIC TRUST

Improved Community Understanding and Enhanced Police Officer Training



OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE

POLICE REFORM SUPPORT NETWORK

OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE

FORMING THE OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE
POLICE REFORM SUPPORT NETWORK

On June 17, 2020, the Ohio Mayors Alliance announced that it was forming a Police Reform Support Network to help cities across Ohio assess, share, and support efforts to implement best practices to address racial bias and improve community-police relations.

The Ohio Mayors Alliance brought Todd Bradley on board to serve as Policy Director and lead the newly-formed Police Reform Support Network.

In addition, a police reform advisory committee, comprised of mayors and police chiefs from our member cities, was established to provide additional expertise.

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POLICE REFORM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mayor Steve Patterson
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Chief Jack Angelo
Canton Police Department

Chief Adam Pillar
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Chief Kevin Martin
Lima Police Department

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Enhancing Public Trust: Improved Community Understanding and Enhanced Police Officer Training

In June of 2020, the Ohio Mayors Alliance (OMA), a bipartisan coalition of mayors in over two dozen of Ohio's largest cities, created the Police Reform Support Network. The purpose was to provide support to mayors in Ohio cities attempting to address the urgent calls for change following the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

In consultation with an advisory committee that was formed from mayors and police chiefs within OMA, along with input from subject matter experts from Accenture and state officials from the Ohio Department of Public Safety, OMA developed an *Internal Assessment of Police Reform Efforts* earlier this year. The report summarized the results and findings of a survey OMA conducted of its member communities and focused on three categories:

Renewing Public Trust

Renewing Public Trust addressed the foundational principles of trust and legitimacy and the importance of improved training and recruitment to address these foundational issues.

Transforming Public Safety Operations

Transforming Public Safety Operations highlighted reforms and common themes from the survey on certain policing practices, policies, and tactics OMA cities were considering.

Building Stronger State and Local Partnerships

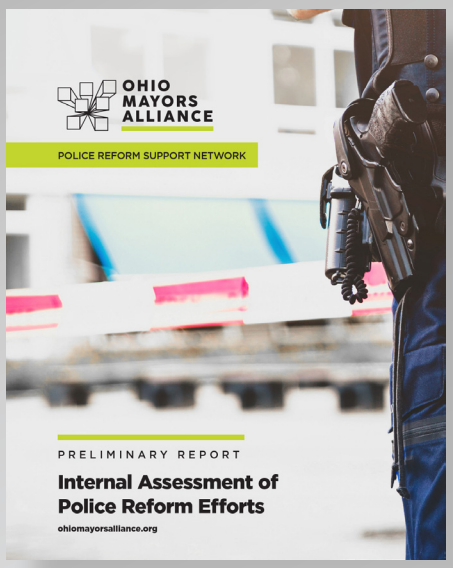
Building Stronger State and Local Partnerships considered ways in which OMA can advocate for changes at the state level and foster better information sharing between partners.

The survey results from our communities assessed a variety of operational measures such as use of force and crowd control practices, data collection and reporting, transparency measures such as use of body-worn cameras, accountability and oversight reforms around investigations and citizen input, as well as recruiting and training efforts. The items surveyed and the aggregated results can be reviewed in Appendix 1: *Internal Police Reform Survey Results*.

These operational measures and policies are critically important, but the ongoing challenge of maintaining and enhancing public trust is more complex. The findings in this report focus on the underlying challenges of trust and legitimacy, and the nexus between community understanding, training, and trust. The recommendations outlined emphasize the role OMA, as a statewide association, can play in fostering greater collaboration between state and local governments, as well as policy-making considerations between elected leaders and law enforcement professionals.

Bridging the Trust Gap

It is important to recognize the tension between the notion of police reform and the need to restore and improve public trust. The widespread demonstrations throughout the state and country strongly suggest that a trust gap exists between communities of color and law enforcement. Mayors in cities throughout the state and country find themselves squarely in the middle of these two dynamics. Mayors have been working to bridge this trust gap by respecting the challenges that officers face while also being responsive to the urgent calls for change. OMA's Police Reform Support Network was formed to help mayors navigate these unique and unprecedented challenges.



With the formation of the Police Reform Support Network, one of the first actions taken was conducting a survey of Ohio Mayors Alliance member cities to gain a better understanding of the policing strategies and tactics across the state. Based on this survey, OMA released their *Internal Assessment of Police Reform Efforts*. This report can be found on the Ohio Mayors Alliance website.

CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE REPORT
ohiomayorsalliance.org/research_police-reform-support-network/

"Effective policing practices are built on a foundation of trust and legitimacy."

ENHANCING PUBLIC TRUST

Improved Community Understanding and Enhanced Police Officer Training

As highlighted in OMA's *Internal Assessment of Police Reform Efforts*, effective policing practices are built on a foundation of trust and legitimacy. This principal was also emphasized in the U.S. Conference of Mayors report on Police Reform and Racial Justice released earlier this year. This report was released by the Mayors and Police Chiefs Task Force, which **Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley** co-chairs and **Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz** serves on. The report noted that:

> "Animating all of our recommendations is the fundamental principle of Trust and Legitimacy: that the public must have a reason to trust the police, as public approval and acceptance are the basis of effective policing. The police serve the public interest and must earn public trust and legitimacy by acting as faithful guardians of the community who work to prevent crime and promote safety."
>
> *US Conference of Mayors report on Police Reform and Racial Justice*

If the number and intensity of protests around the state and country this year are any indication, this foundational principal of trust and legitimacy in law enforcement is in jeopardy. In fact, many of Ohio's larger urban police departments have adopted reforms to policing practices long before 2020, yet these same departments are still the subject of some of the most strident protests and are grappling with the deepest trust deficits among communities of color. This suggests that reforming and improving policing practices aren't enough and that more must be done to rebuild trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

While reforms are important steps to address the urgent calls for change, it is important to also examine the differences, cultural barriers, and skill limitations that contribute to this trust deficit. This report examines additional ways to **restore the foundational principals of trust and legitimacy by providing officers with the tools to better understand the communities they serve. It also emphasizes the need to better equip officers with the skills they need to deal with the complex human interactions that traditional policing tactics can't solve.** This report is organized into three pillars: Improving Policing Practices and Policies, Building Stronger Community Connections, and Enhancing and Supporting Comprehensive Police Training.

THREE PILLARS OF A
FOUNDATION OF TRUST AND LEGITIMACY

Improving Policing Practices and Policies

This includes a wide range of reforms to policing practices, policies, and tactics, such as use-of-force polices, crowd control tactics, equipment, body-worn cameras, transparency and accountability measures, due process, oversight, and many others.

Building Stronger Community Connections

This focuses on building better community understanding and providing tools to bridge cultural differences by recruiting more officers of color and more women. This has become especially important as fewer officers live in the communities they serve.

Enhancing and Supporting Comprehensive Police Training

This focuses on ways to enhance and improve a full complement of training options for police officers, with a special focus on implicit bias training, cultural competency, and other "soft" skills that traditional police training does not address.

1 Improving Policing Practices and Policies

The OMA survey conducted for this research, indicated that many Ohio cities have enacted or are considering policy changes like those highlighted in the "8 Can't Wait" police reform campaign, as well as those reforms proposed through the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police initiative. The policies that OMA surveyed were grouped under the six categories listed below. You can find a comprehensive list of the tactics and policies that were included in the survey along with the aggregated results of how our cities responded in Appendix 1 on page 13 of this document.

Limits on Use of Force

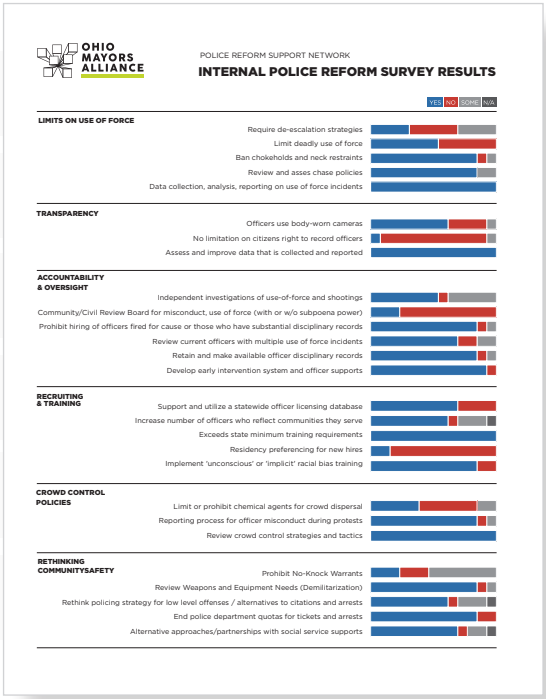
Transparency

Accountability and Oversight

Recruiting and Training

Crowd Control Policies

Rethinking Community Safety



View the results in Appendix 1 on page 13.

OMA will continue to support the work our cities and their police departments are doing to reform, improve, and modernize policing practices and policies. This includes providing additional research support, facilitating information sharing between cities and subject matter experts, and working with state officials and statewide association leaders to advocate for and support reforms at the local level.

2 Building Stronger Community Connections for Law Enforcement

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Since the Ohio Supreme Court upheld a 2006 law that banned local residency requirements for municipal employees, fewer police officers live in the cities where they work. Today, a much larger percentage of officers commute into the cities they serve from neighboring communities, which often have different cultural identities and are less racially diverse. To reverse this trend, communities can offer certain incentives for law enforcement to live in the city they work through housing credits or local tax incentives. In the OMA survey, only two out of 17 respondents indicated that they have a residency preference for new hires.

Additional research is needed to better understand what incentives cities are providing and what impact it is having on improving community connections for law enforcement officers.

DIVERSITY AND RECRUITMENT

In the OMA survey, recruiting and training a more diverse pool of officers was a consistent priority for local and state law enforcement agencies. Every respondent (17 of 17) indicated that they are seeking to "increase the number of officers who reflect the communities they serve." Earlier this year, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and the Department of Public Safety announced the formation of the Ohio Office of Law Enforcement Recruitment. While law enforcement leaders recognize the need to recruit a more diverse pool of candidates, they also recognize that there are challenges to doing this successfully.

Opportunities exist to improve the collaboration among state and local officials, as well as other state association and community partners to support improved diversity recruitment of law enforcement officers.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING

Giving officers tools to better understand the communities they serve is an important component to building stronger community connections for law enforcement. However, resource limitations for training create barriers to implementing and emphasizing such trainings. Cultural Competency training "goes beyond a traditional approach to the topics of diversity, inclusion, equity, and bias." Cultural competency training "provides a fresh perspective through the lens of culture, not law or politics." The purpose of these training programs are to help officers better "understand (anew) cultural diversity among different populations of people and provides skills to interact with people of diverse cultures, especially in conflict management." (source)

Establishing a dedicated, statewide funding source for additional law enforcement trainings such as this can help officers improve their connections with the communities they serve.

Enhancing and Supporting Comprehensive Police Training in Ohio

Ohio does not have a meaningful, statewide funding stream to support police officer training and the state minimum requirements are woefully inadequate. While many law enforcement agencies across Ohio go above and beyond the state minimum requirements, and in some cases are incredibly innovative, many other agencies lack the necessary resources. This has resulted in a patchwork of law enforcement training in Ohio that is difficult to fully assess, and is often under-resourced. Current training programs primarily focus on the traditional policing tactics and not the broader skills that are required to address the variety of complex challenges officers face.

Enhancing and supporting a more comprehensive approach to police officer training in Ohio would allow for a deeper investment in essential programs like cultural competency and implicit bias training. Implicit bias, or implicit social cognition, refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. (See Appendix 3 for more information.)

According to the *National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice*, "reducing the influence of implicit bias is vitally important to strengthening relationships between police and minority communities." The *Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University* has also examined the importance of implicit bias training in policing. It notes that "implicit biases are pervasive. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges. However, these biases are malleable. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques."

Making these trainings and other bias-free policing strategies a priority for law enforcement agencies is critically important. These trainings must complement the other two pillars of improving the procedural reforms above and strengthening the community connections for law enforcement officers. These three pillars together can restore the foundation of trust and legitimacy between law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve.

To address the resources limitations for enhanced training and bring more cohesion and standardization, the Ohio Mayors Alliance, along with other state and local leaders should begin exploring a statewide, dedicated funding model for improved law enforcement training in Ohio. This additional funding stream could also support critical enhancements for local law enforcement such as body-worn cameras.

OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the OMA survey results indicate, many cities have been reviewing and updating policing practices throughout this year and continue to focus on reform. In many cases, these efforts have taken place before this year as many of our larger police departments have long grappled with racial tensions and policing practices.

A number of OMA cities have or are close to complying with the reforms recommended by the "8 Can't Wait" campaign (8cantwait.org). OMA mayors have also taken the Obama Foundation Reimagining Policing Pledge which asks mayors to review police use-of-force policies; engage communities by including a diverse range of input, experiences, and stories; report the findings to the community and seek feedback; and reform police use-of-force policies (obama.org/mayor-pledge).

There are three actions that could ensure broader statewide impact. OMA staff will continue to support individual cities through research and information sharing, but as a bipartisan coalition of mayors, the Ohio Mayors Alliance should consider the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Explore a statewide, comprehensive model for funding police officer training

Ohio's overall police officer training approach is a mix of state minimum standards, voluntary certification programs, and a wide range of different trainings provided by local law enforcement agencies and community colleges.

While it is true that Ohio requires fewer hours of training to become a police officer than a barber – a minimum of 737 hours for police officers compared to 1,800 for barbers – many local police departments require training well beyond the state's minimum and run their own comprehensive police officer training academies.

The state of Ohio also provides training for local law enforcement-related agencies through the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA). Earlier this year, Ohio Attorney General David Yost announced efforts to redesign OPOTA, including no longer offering advanced training to law enforcement officers at its central facility outside Columbus. This redesign was intended to "better meet the evolving needs of Ohio law enforcement and sharpen OPOTA's focus on law enforcement techniques proven to reduce harm in communities." (source).

Currently, Ohio does not have a meaningful, dedicated funding stream to support law enforcement training statewide. This has contributed to a patchwork of training types and standards within regions and across the state. This lack of funding has also made it difficult for local agencies to truly invest in efforts that go beyond the traditional tactical trainings, such as implicit bias and cultural competency trainings, that would give officers the tools they need to build trust within the communities they serve.

One model to consider is the Kentucky Law Enforcement Foundation Program Fund (KLEFPF). Established in 1972, this fund provides resources for the training of Kentucky law enforcement officers. It also provides an annual training-incentive stipend to officers whose agencies adopt established KLEFPF standards. It is funded through a surcharge on casualty insurance premiums.

OMA should explore and advocate for a statewide funding model dedicated to a more comprehensive, standardized law enforcement training regimen in Ohio. Bringing in new resources to support local agencies would allow for greater prioritization of such things as cultural competency and implicit bias training, which are critical tools for enhancing public trust. If used by the state to incentivize certain certifications, it could also increase standardization and best practices among Ohio's myriad law enforcement entities. (source)

RECOMMENDATION #2

Establish a Mayors and Police Chiefs Leadership Committee and expand coalition's policy priorities to include racial equity and criminal justice reform

The Mayors and Police Chiefs Leadership Committee would be a permanent subgroup within the Ohio Mayors Alliance and would serve as a place to bring elected leaders and law enforcement experts together to address state and local policy-making decisions that impact law enforcement and the communities they serve.

This Leadership Committee would bring together elected leaders and law enforcement experts. It would promote more engagement between municipal and statewide elected officials, law enforcement agencies and N.O.B.L.E. (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives), and other potential collaborations between state and local leaders and law enforcement associations (e.g., City Law Directors, the Ohio Prosecutors Association, the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Buckeye State Sheriffs Association).

In 2020, OMA expanded its policy priorities to include "public safety and gun violence prevention." This recommendation would further expand the coalition's focus to include issues of racial equity, improved policing practices, and criminal justice reform. This could include actions such as strengthening OMA's state legislative advocacy on criminal justice policies like HB 1 (Criminal Sentencing: To modify the requirements for intervention in lieu of conviction and for sealing records of conviction), and HB 703 (Improve law enforcement training, as well as increase police officer diversity and better police officer disciplinary procedures).

RECOMMENDATION #3

Build stronger mutual support for public safety initiatives at the state and local level

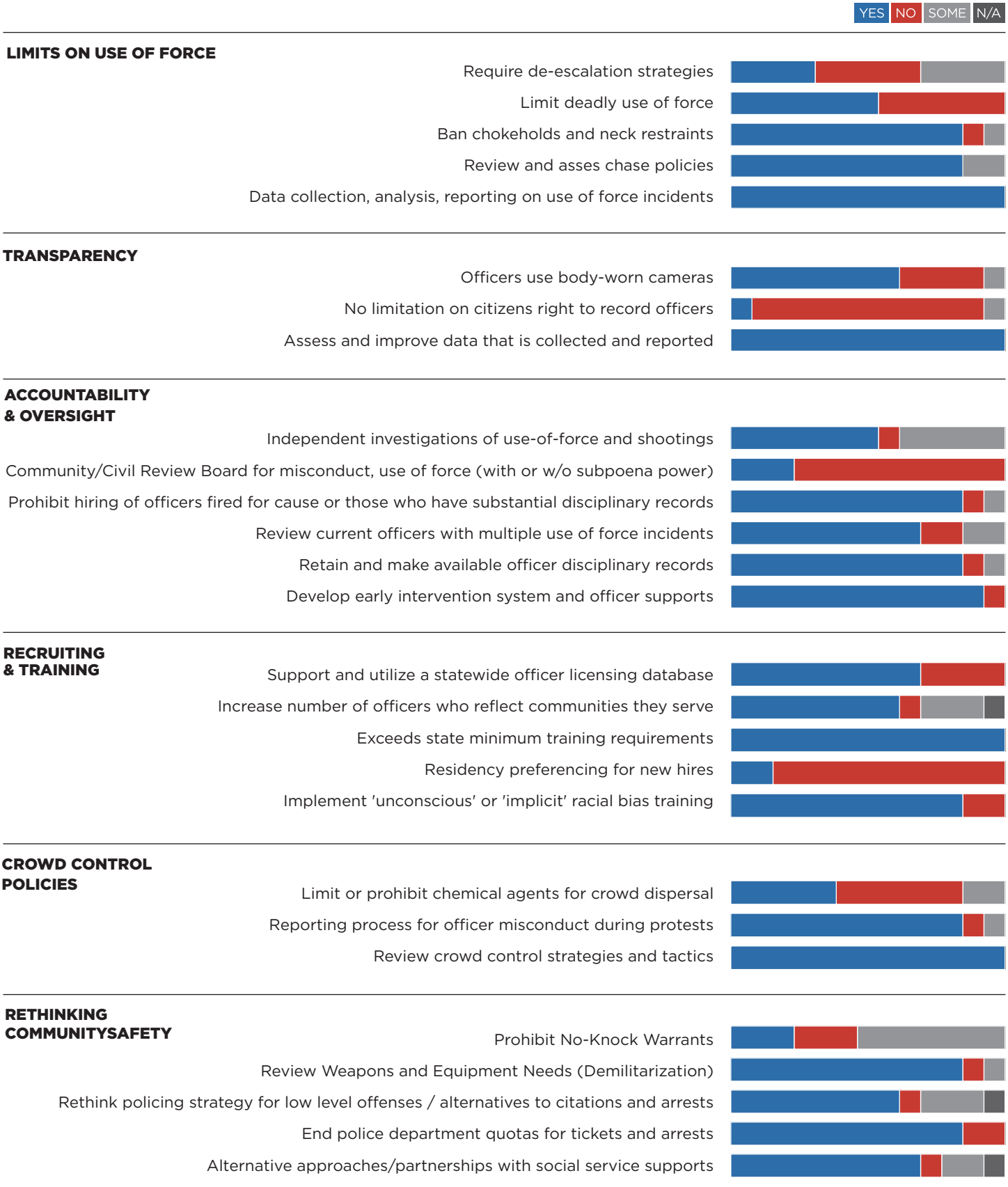
While there is ongoing collaboration between state and local law enforcement agencies and associations, there needs to be a greater collaboration that includes both elected leaders and law enforcement professionals. This added collaboration will enhance opportunities for mutual support of public safety initiatives. Through this effort, OMA will also work to identify opportunities for state and federal resources to better serve local needs.

This effort could also increase support and participation in the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board (Collaborative). This statewide board is comprised of a multidisciplinary group of Ohioans that include law enforcement, community members, elected officials, academia, and the faith-based community. The Collaborative was created by Executive Order 2015-04K in 2015, after the Governor's Task Force on Community-Police Relations produced a report with recommendations on how to improve the important relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve. These recommendations and standards for local law enforcement agencies "provide a roadmap and best practices in police reform throughout the State of Ohio, and they are intended to help restore trust, accountability and transparency in community-police relations." (See Appendix 3 on page 14.)

OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE

POLICE REFORM SUPPORT NETWORK

INTERNAL POLICE REFORM SURVEY RESULTS



The Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board

The Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board is comprised of a multidisciplinary group of Ohioans that include law enforcement, community members, elected officials, academia, and the faith-based community.

The Collaborative was originally created by Executive Order 2015-04K on April 29, 2015, after the Governor's Task Force on Community-Police Relations produced a report with recommendations on how to improve the important relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

The executive order charged the Collaborative with creating uniform minimum standards for all law enforcement agencies in Ohio regarding use of force and hiring and recruitment. Additional uniform minimum standards were subsequently adopted by the Collaborative. The standards are broken down into three groups as outlined below:

GROUP 1 STANDARDS

- Proper use of force including deadly force
- Recruiting, hiring and screening of potential law enforcement officer candidates

GROUP 2 STANDARDS

- Implementation of community engagement
- Appropriate use of body-worn cameras
- Essential training for law enforcement telecommunicators

GROUP 3 STANDARDS

- Collection of data to demonstrate bias-free policing
- Investigation of employee misconduct

For more information on these standards and the Collaborative, please visit:

The Office of Criminal Justice Services
https://www.ocjs.ohio.gov

The Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board
https://www.ocjs.ohio.gov/links/Ohio-CollaborativeReport2020.pdf

Implicit Bias and Training

Implicit bias poses a unique challenge because it suggests the possibility that people are treating individuals (or groups) differently, because of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, class or sexual orientation, even when they are unaware that they are doing it. As a result of such stereotyping, creating or restoring trust becomes more difficult between police and community. Moreover, various other pillars of police reform such as accountability, transparency, and community engagement become more difficult because the foundation of trust is not evident. The ripple effect of the lack of trust has many negative consequences on the impacted communities. For example, "without police legitimacy, or community trust and buy-in to police authority, police organizations cannot be as effective; citizens who perceive law enforcement as less legitimate are less likely to call the police for help, aid the police in an investigation, or stand by the agency as a source of community protection" (The Impacts of Implicit Bias Awareness Training in the NYPD July 2020, Center For Police Research and Policy, p. 15). Implicit bias presupposes that identity features (e.g., race and gender) are threatening, which feeds individual and group stereotyping of the impacted communities, especially communities of color. Therefore, implicit bias training in law enforcement is a primary precursor, if we are seriously concerned about rebuilding trust between police and communities of color, especially in the post-George Floyd era.

Implicit bias training includes reducing the racial and ethnic disparities between law enforcement and communities of color. Implicit bias "training levels include educating personnel about the science of implicit bias and its potential implications for police work, outlining the consequences that could possibly result from biased policing, and describing a number of specific skills sworn personnel can employ to manage their biases" (The Impacts of Implicit Bias Awareness Training in the NYPD July 2020, Center For Police Research and Policy, p. 14). Specific skills include "knowing your audience," i.e., your customers. In this case, the customers are the communities where police officers protect and serve. Implicit bias training must be ongoing, sustained and training must include all ranks in the police force. Implicit bias training will create better awareness of the communities in which the police officers serve, as well as create a better understanding of the unique daily challenges that many communities of color face. We understand that minimizing implicit bias in policing will not happen overnight, but with consistent training, bias-free policing can become the norm, as it undergirds public trust.

ENHANCING PUBLIC TRUST

Improved Community Understanding and Enhanced Police Officer Training

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