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**Criminal Justice and Community Professionals Survey Report**

**September 2017**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati (MARCC), an interfaith coalition of judicatories, made up of Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Jewish and Unitarian-Universalist faith traditions, requested an additional survey of criminal justice professionals be added to the Collaborative Refresh process. A sample of criminal justice professionals was surveyed on their perspective regarding community-police relations and the Collaborative Agreement. MARCC reported to and worked with the Citizens Complaint Authority, in the process contributed the resources for the survey, names to the interview list, and committed several volunteer interviewers. MARCC has worked on improving community-police relations since 1968 and with the Collaborative Agreement goals since its inception. It is a coalition that responds to social justice concerns to improve policies and in the process civil discourse.

Established in 2002 by City of Cincinnati Ordinance 149-2002, and codified in Cincinnati Administrative Code Article XXVII, the Citizens Complaint Authority's (CCA) purpose is to independently investigate serious interventions by police officers, including (but not limited to) shots fired, deaths in custody, and major uses of force, and to review and resolve all citizen complaints in a fair and efficient manner. An executive director who oversees CCA's functions and operations, including the direction of a team of investigators and administrative staff, leads CCA. CCA's Executive Director reports directly to the City Manager; the City Manager respects the need of the Executive Director to act independently, consistent with the duties of the Executive Director. There is also an advisory board of up to seven citizens appointed by the mayor and approved by city council; the board's purpose is to review and confirm the completeness of CCA's investigation.

In summer 2017, as part of a continuing evaluation of the CCA's work and larger, ongoing concerns about the state of CPD/community relations, a survey of 31 Cincinnati criminal justice and community professionals was fielded. The gender/racial breakdown was: 19 males and 12 females; 13 African American, 16 Caucasian, 1 Hispanic, and 1 Asian American. 26 of the respondents said they were aware of the CCA prior to taking the survey. Respondent occupations ranged from defense attorneys to court administrators to probation officers to business owners to interest group leaders.

Part One of the report provides a series of figures depicting respondents' views on issues relating to the CPD and community as measured by ordinal agreement/disagreement scales. Parts Two through Seven provide summary and analysis of responses to open-ended questions, with representative selections of respondent answers provided (see Table of Contents on following page).

Brian Calfano, Ph.D., of the University of Cincinnati's Departments of Political Science and Journalism, provided data analysis, and report production.

MARCC and its member jurisdictions want to extend our appreciation to all the respondents representing the various courts; professional criminal justice professions, advisory councils, and entrepreneurs - who took time to complete the surveys used to establish data for this study. In addition, MARCC would like to acknowledge the cooperation and input of the Citizen Complaint Authority. It is with everyone's assistance, that the data from this study has set the basis for the recommendations. Recommendations made range from increasing dialogue among several key groups within Cincinnati, to expansion of the use and reach of the Collaborative Agreement. Like most research, this study has uncovered several areas where additional research is needed to gain a better understanding of issues, concerns, and opportunities regarding the Collaborative Refresh process. As future survey opportunities become available, it is our hope that the readers of this study will be empowered to participate; and work to improve community-police relations in Metropolitan Cincinnati.

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#### **KEY FINDINGS FROM SURVEYS**

- 1) CPD is responsible for more than law enforcement functions in the community—positive community engagement must be a core CPD priority;
- 2) Community engagement is a necessary (if somewhat overlooked) tool to improve relations between CPD and community members;
- 3) Criticism of CPD notwithstanding, community members must understand CPD's responsibilities and constructively engage with the department to improve relations;
- 4) There is concern over the perceived lack of community awareness about the CCA and its authority;
- 5) Renewed efforts at studying and surveying community perceptions about the CPD and local residents are needed.
- 6) Communication or lack thereof, by CPD appears to be the root of citizens' perception.

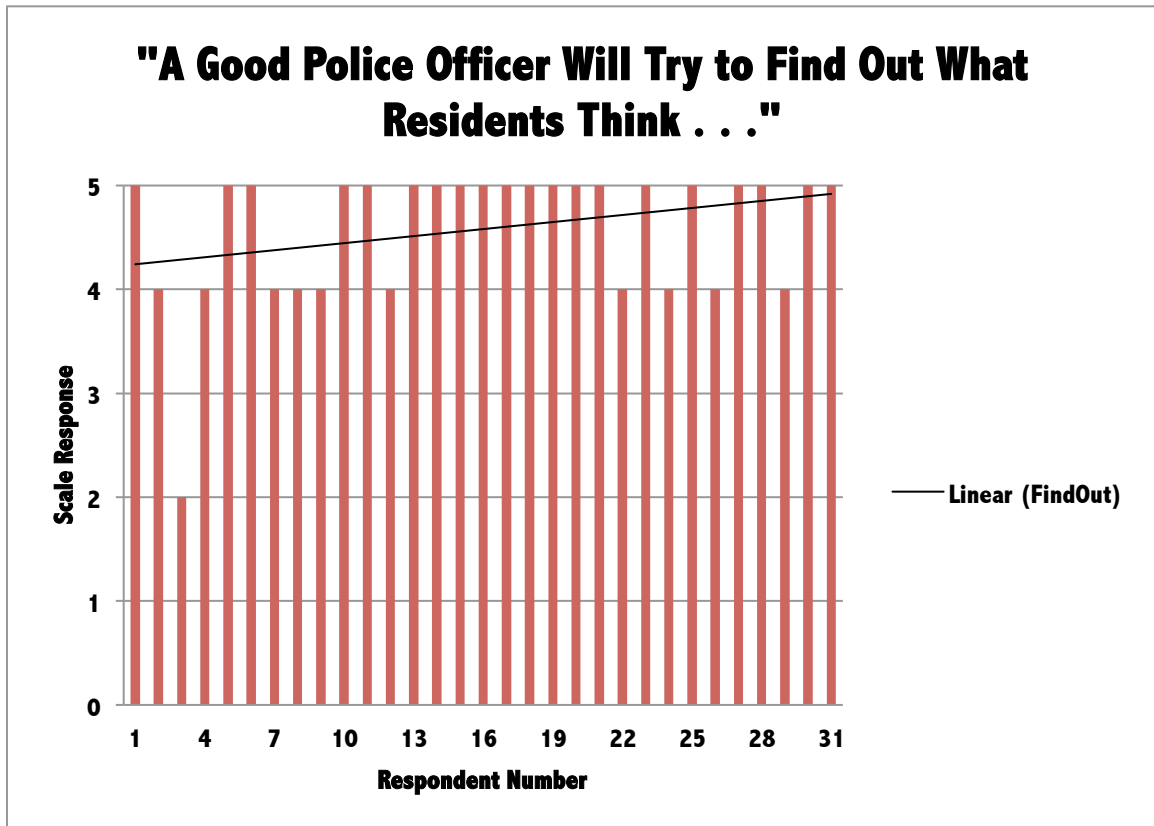
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### **PART ONE: RESPONDENT PERCEPTIONS**

This section assesses trends in respondents' reported levels of agreement with a series of survey items pertaining to CPD and the City of Cincinnati.

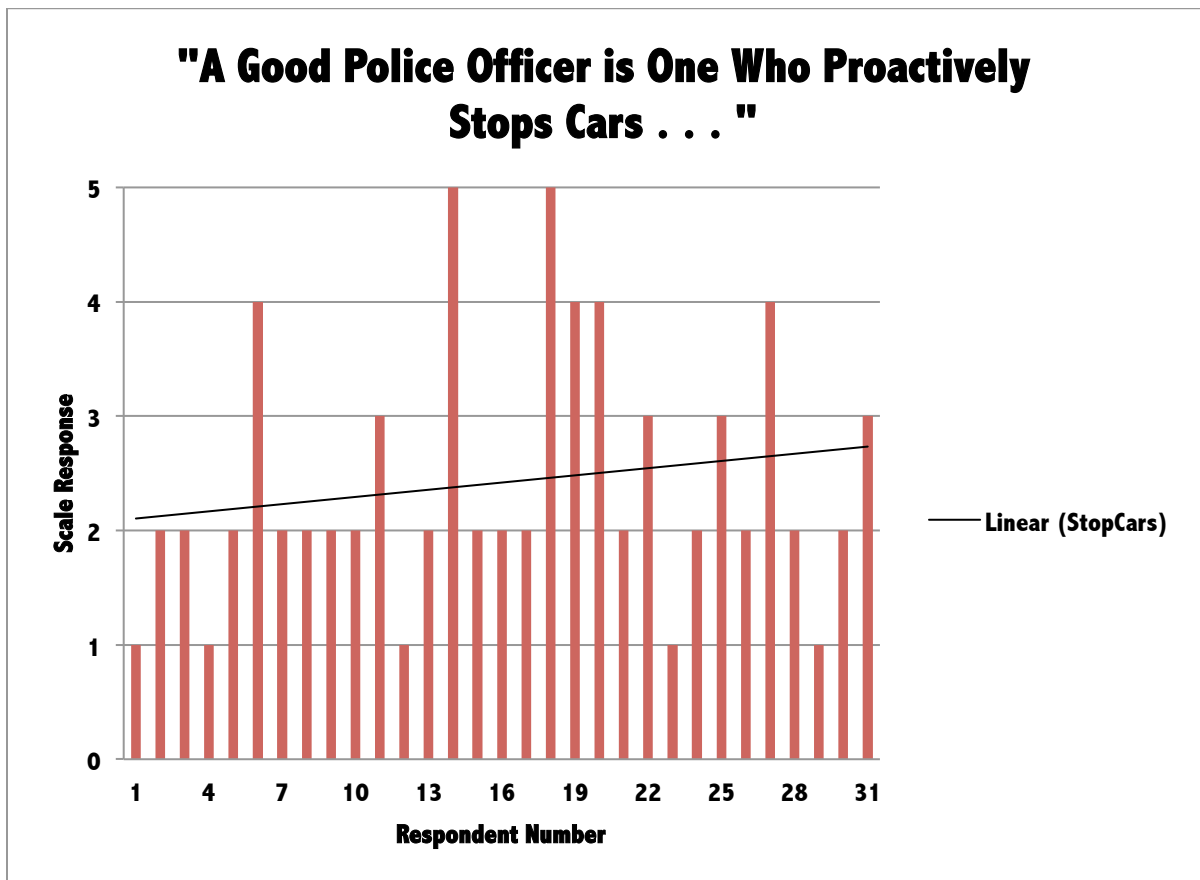
**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** depicts response to the statement: “A good police officer will try to find out what the residents think the neighborhood problems are and then will focus his/her efforts on these issues.” Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”

The clear majority of respondents either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, as seen in the linear trend line in Figure 1 (which is positive and relatively steep in moving from response category 4 to 5). Only one of the 31 respondents disagrees with the statement. The near uniformity in response underscores respondents’ expectation that CPD will exhibit a spirit of responsiveness and collaboration with the communities its officers serve.

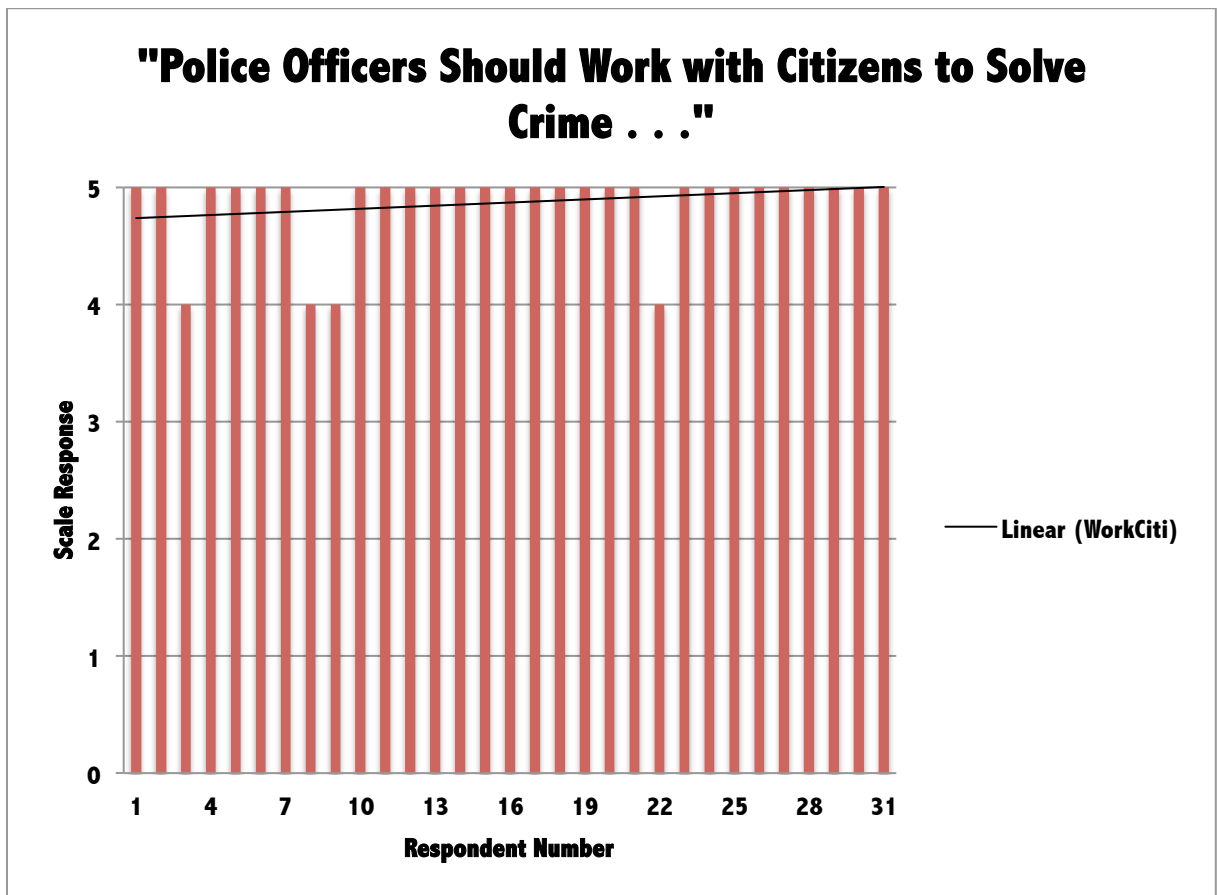
Figure 2



**Figure 2** depicts response to the statement: “A good police officer is one who works proactively stopping cars, checking people out, running license checks, etc.” Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”

In contrast to the previous item about CPD focusing on resident perceptions, the respondents are split on the question of whether “good” police officers do the kind of “proactive” items described in the statement. The majority of respondents either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the notion that “good” equals “proactive,” but six respondents either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the characterization. Meanwhile, and because of the split in respondent opinion, the liner trend is pulled in a positive direction and is relatively steep—from disagreement with the “good” = “proactive” statement (i.e., response category 2) to a neutral position (i.e., response category 3) on the 1-5 scale.

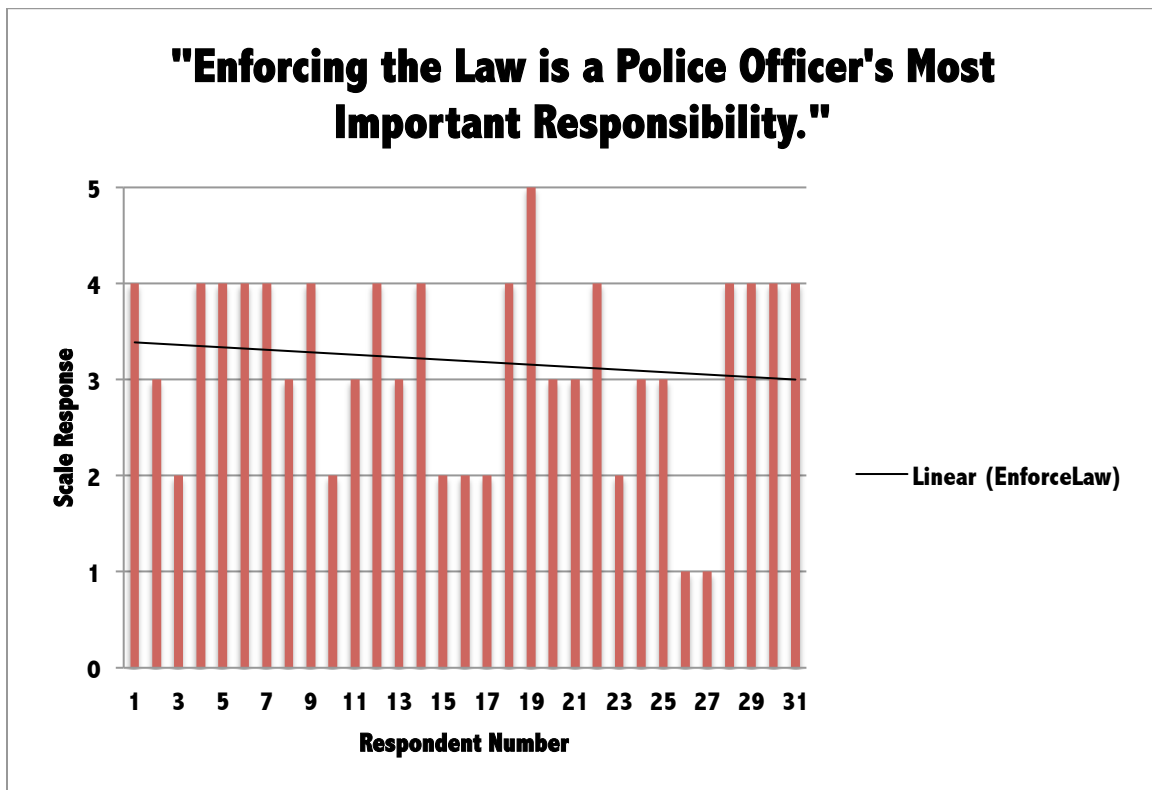
Figure 3



**Figure 3** depicts response to the statement: “Police officers should work with citizens to try and solve crime related problems in their district.” Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”

Here, respondents show near-universal agreement with the notion that CPD and citizens should collaborate in addressing crime. This is important because the qualitative data assessed in later sections of the report show a continuing preference among respondents for a local and collaborative approach to solving crime (and improving relations between CPD and the community). Given the uniformity of response, the linear trend line is upward, but does not feature a steep slope (since the respondents are in such overall agreement on this issue).

Figure 4

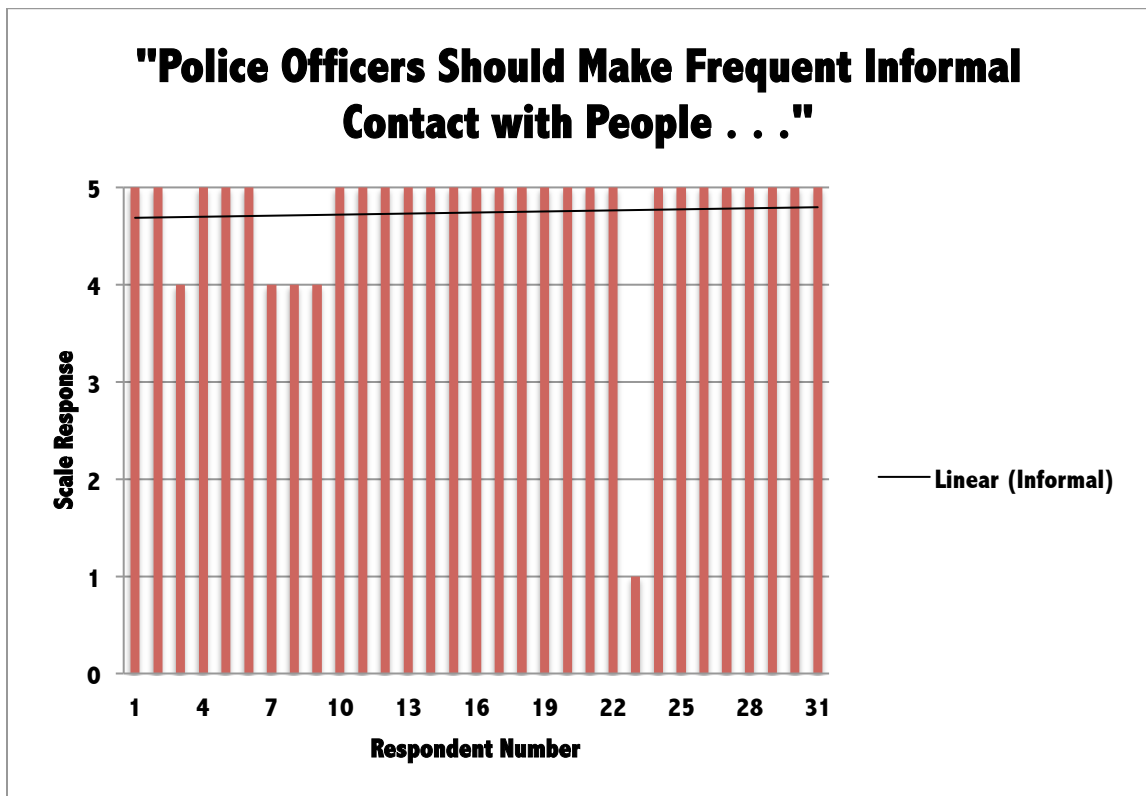


**Figure 4** depicts response to the statement: “Enforcing the law is a police officer’s most important responsibility.” Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”

On this item, respondents are clearly split over just what a law enforcement officer’s most important function is. Eight respondents either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the notion that law enforcement is an officer’s most important job, while fifteen “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement. However, the linear trend is pulled downward, in part, because of the eight respondents providing a “neutral” reaction to the statements. Overall, this suggests that respondents are hesitant to perceive law enforcement to be at the top of the list of officer functions.



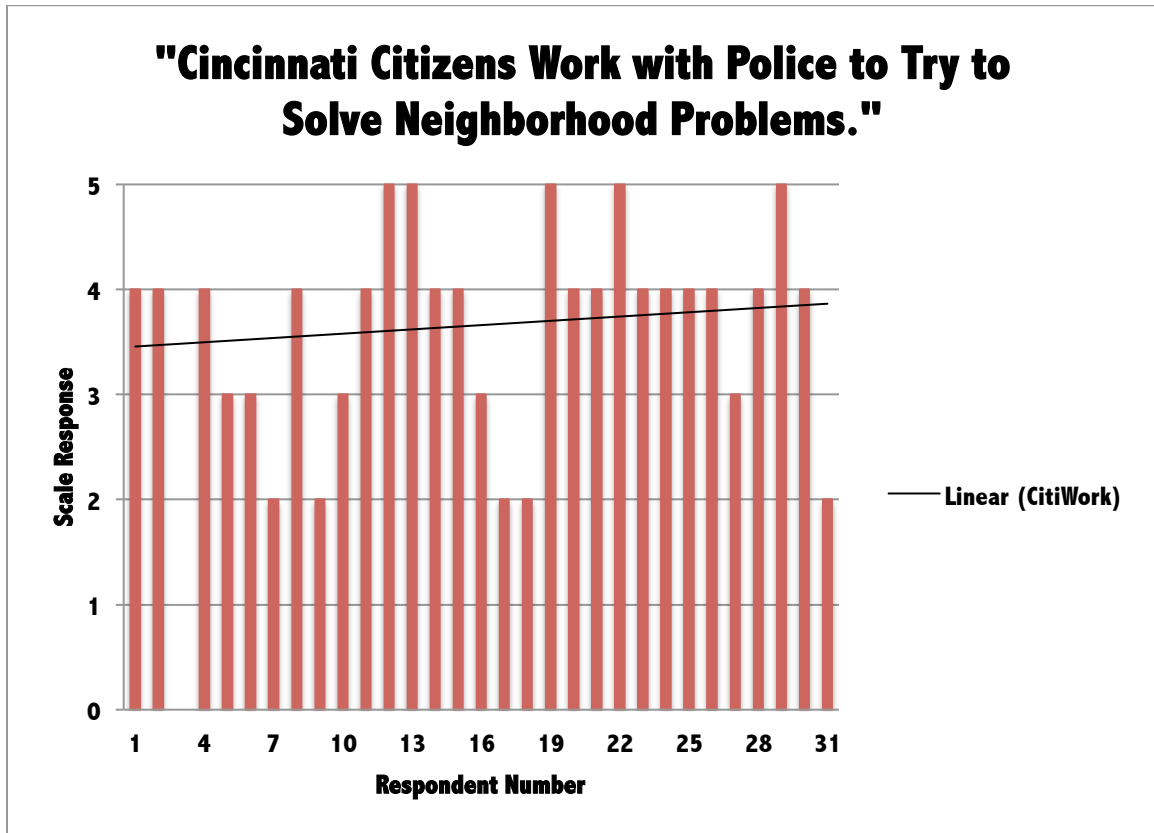
Figure 5



**Figure 5** depicts response to the statement: “Police officers should make frequent informal contact with people in their district to establish trust and cooperation.” Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”

With the near uniform level of agreement to the statement about police and citizens working together in Figure 3, it is logical to see respondents show such consistency in agreement with the idea that informal contact between police and community members—a key ingredient to working effectively together in solving crime-related problems—should occur. All but one respondent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 26 respondents said they “strongly agree” with the idea. This is why the linear trend line is positive but with only a slight slope (given the near uniform agreement levels).

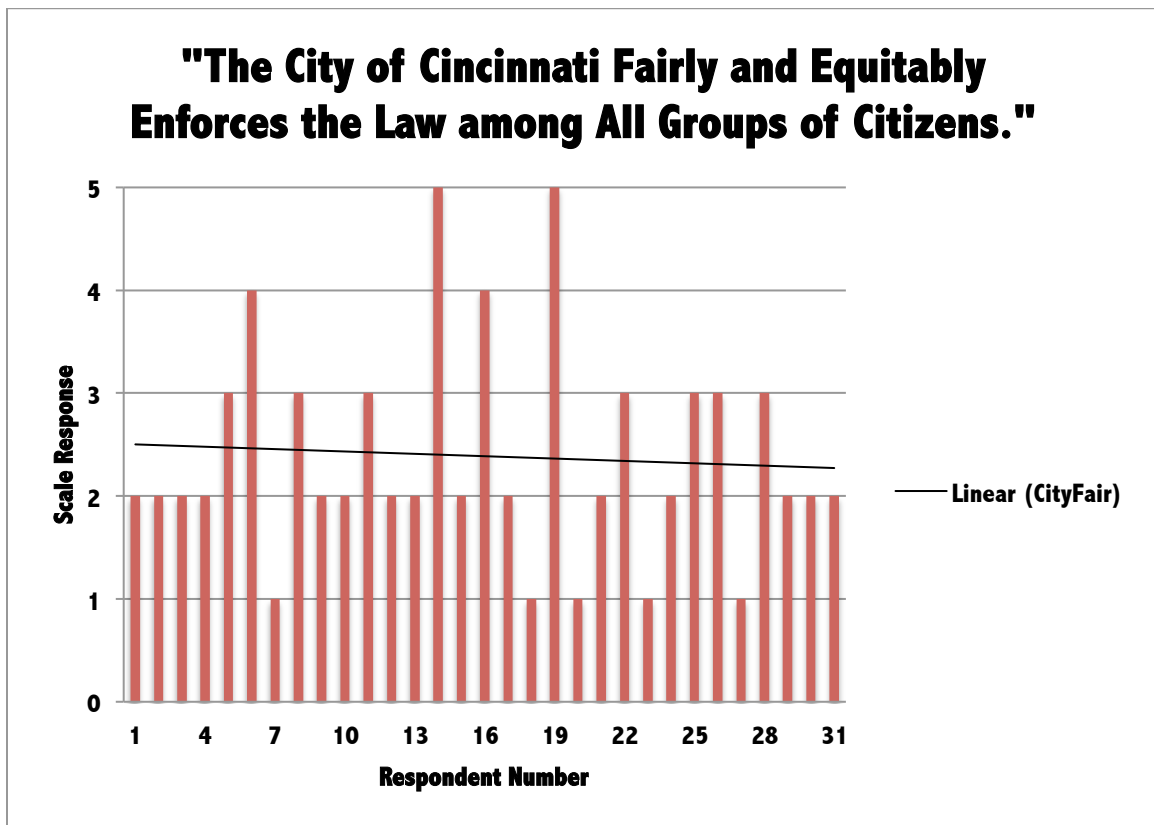
Figure 6



**Figure 6** depicts response to the statement: “Cincinnati citizens work with the police to try to solve neighborhood problems.” Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”

The diversity of response to this statement shows the extent to which respondents perceive the work of improving relations between the community and CPD as part of two-way street. Though the majority of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, five respondents are neutral in their assessment, and five “disagree,” suggesting that both sides need to improve their efforts for progress to be made. The diversity of response is why the linear trend, though positive and with a fairly steep slope, is moving from the “neutral” category (3) to the “agree” category (4). This is in contrast to the much more uniform levels of agreement found in Figures 3 and 5.

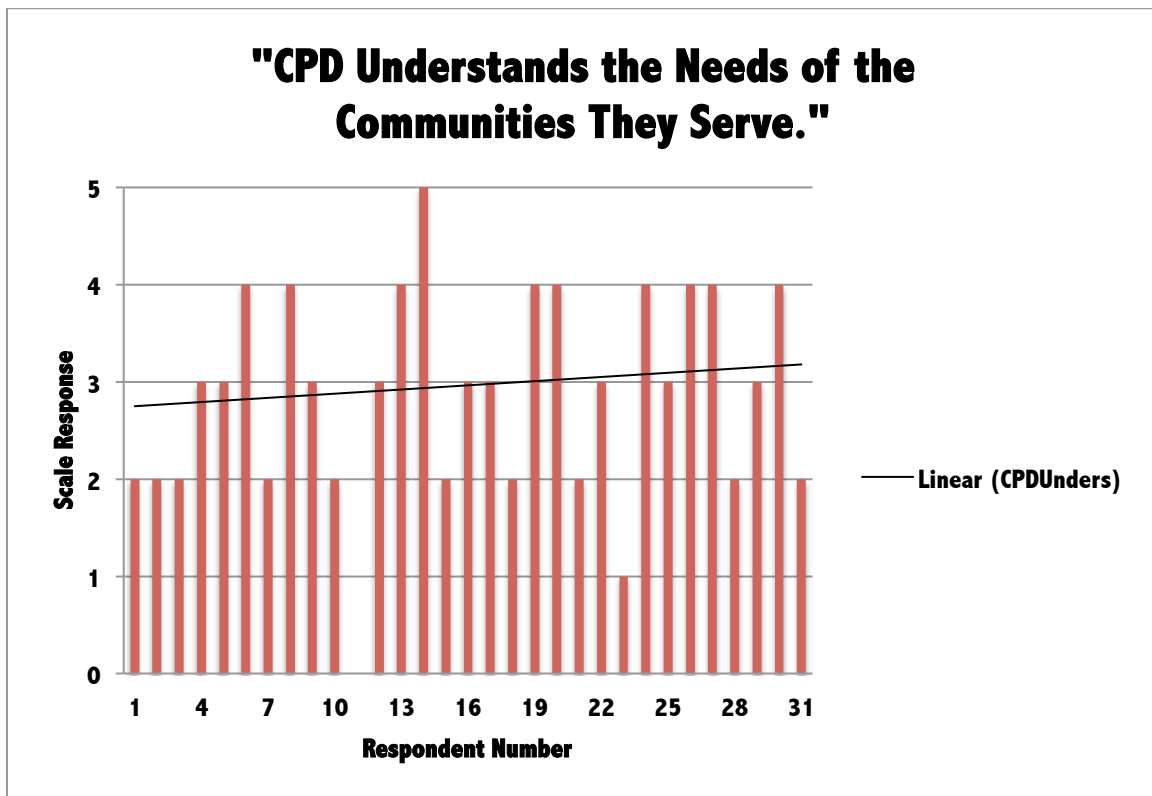
Figure 7



**Figure 7** depicts response to the statement: “The City of Cincinnati fairly and equitably enforces the law among all groups of citizens.” Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”

In this case, respondents are generally consistent in their disagreement with the notion of fair and equitable treatment of citizens by the city. Twenty respondents either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the notion of equitable treatment, while seven are neutral on the question. This has the effect of tilting the linear trend downward with a moderately steep slope that moves toward the “disagree” category. Whatever positive things the respondents have to say about the City of Cincinnati and CPD, the response distribution in Figure 7 suggests that the crux of perceived problems between community and police have to do with a lack of perceived equitable treatment by the latter.

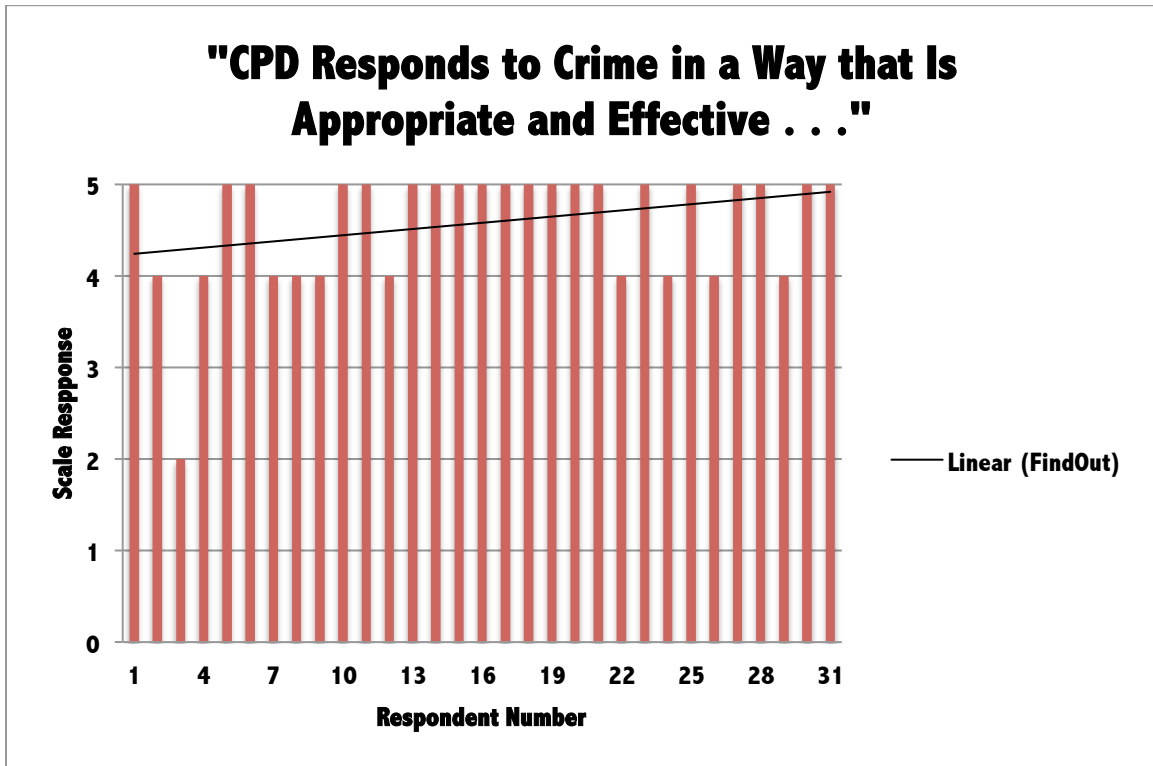
Figure 8



**Figure 8** depicts response to the statement: "CPD understands the needs of the community they serve." Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree."

Response distribution to this question is similar to its predecessor: respondents are generally not in agreement that the CPD understands the communities served, with eleven respondents saying they "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the statement. That said, ten respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" with the notion, which helps raise the linear trend into a positive, although not very steep, slope moving just into the "neutral" response category (3). Compared to the distribution for Figure 6, which showed some respondents disagreeing with the notion that local residents work with CPD to help solve neighborhood problems, Figure 8 tends to show that, fundamentally, respondents are more critical of CPD's efforts than those of local residents.

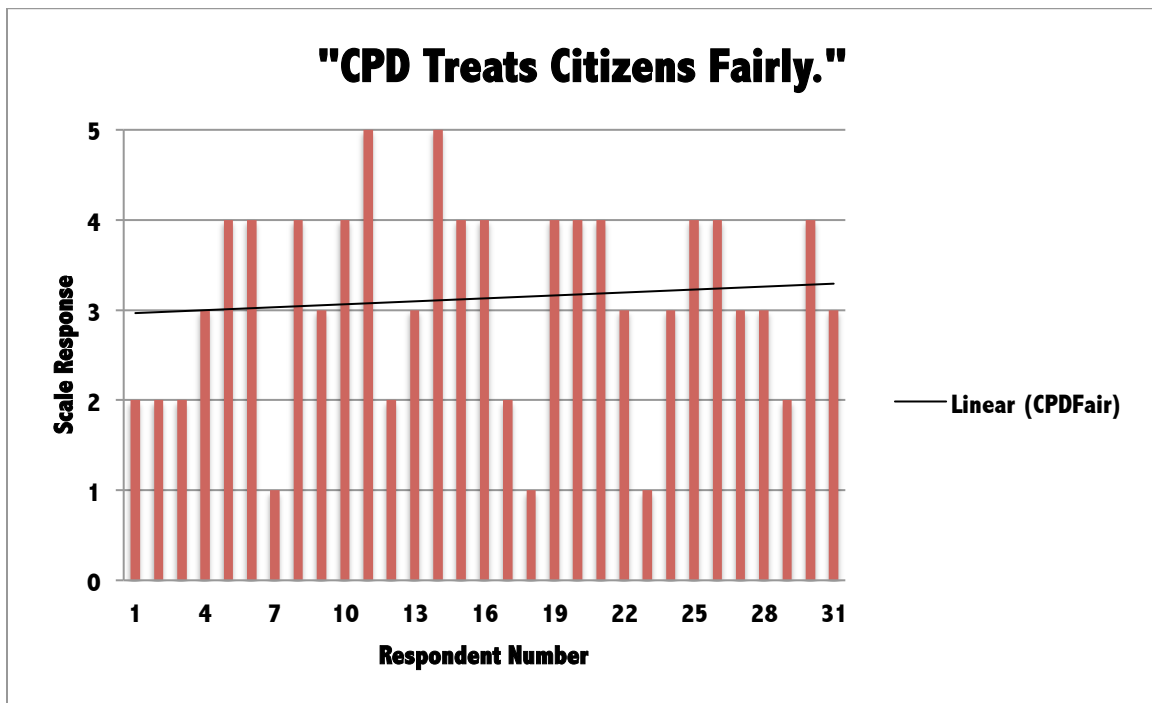
Figure 9



**Figure 9** depicts response to the statement: “CPD responds to crime in a way that is appropriate and effective using traditional versus nontraditional methods.” Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.”

The distribution to this item clearly shows that 30 respondents either “agree” or “strongly agree” in their assessment of CPD method effectiveness and appropriateness, while only one registers a “disagree” response. This suggests that, despite whatever criticism respondents have of CPD and the city, they are unwilling to disagree with a general assessment of the CPD’s performance as appropriate and effective, even if there are areas where the department can improve. In this instance, the linear trend line is positive, owing in large part to the substantial number of those who offered an “agree” or “strongly agree” answer to this statement.

Figure 10



**Figure 10** depicts response to the statement: "CPD treats citizens fairly." Responses were coded from 1-5, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree."

In contrast to Figure 9, the responses for the final item in this section shows a decided respondent split on the question of fair treatment by CPD. Nine respondents "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the statement about fairness, while fourteen respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement. This has the effect of pushing the linear trend upward with a slight positive slope, and suggests that, whatever criticisms respondents have of the CPD, they have a generally positive view of department attempts to provide fair treatment to citizens.

The difference between responses for the Figure 9 and 10 items suggest that respondents view the CPD's overall efforts at crime response to be appropriate (Figure 9), but that the department's treatment of specific citizens (and/or citizen groups) may not be as fair as it could be (Figure 10).

**PART TWO: OBSTACLES TO TRUST**

**QUESTION:** What Do You Perceive as the Biggest Obstacle to Overcome when Building Trust between the Cincinnati Police Department and the Community?

*Easily the most frequently expressed concern among respondents is the lack of communication between community, city, and CPD officials. Arguably, the respondents consider lack of communication to be a foundational problem that contributes to lack of trust between police and community residents.*

*But respondents also consider the CPD's larger culture to be a problem in that police are perceived to be resistant to external criticism and unwilling to reform their practices that target minority community members, particularly African Americans.*

**Selected Responses:**

"Getting community activists to accept when things are working and share that with the community."

"Lack of cultural sensitivity. The CPD is a culture and the communities have their own culture. We need to be aware of the varying cultures."

"Cincinnati Police Division reluctance to recognize poor police conduct."

"A lack of trust between the African-American community and CPD that stems from an over representation of AA people in arrests and jail. Also, that trust has eroded further in the past two years, due to cellphone video and police body cameras documenting police shootings of a number of black males, including the shooting of Sam DuBose by campus police officer Tensing followed by two mistrials."

"Ensuring the officers know the statutes and making sure they are charging people with the appropriate crimes instead of charging them with everything, making them sit in jail for two weeks and then letting the courts figure it out."

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“Getting different groups to sit down and talk to one another and to have empathy toward one another. . . . Need to get the partners around the table in an authentic way and listen to one another with compassion . . .”

“I believe that there is an unfortunate tendency for the police to feel that criticism of police procedure, and of certain officer conduct, as antipolice. . . . So for the people who have constructive criticism of the CPD, they should be listened to, and officers who do not hold up the proper standards are simply bad performers, and those critiquing are not anti-police.”

“Institutional racism within the force and lack of trust by the community and by the police.”

“There is a gap between the perception of crime and actual crime rates. Neighborhoods are safer than people realize. If the Cincinnati Police Department is not communicating that, trust is affected.”

“The biggest one is to hold police accountable when they shoot unarmed citizens. . . . If a policeman has an unarmed person, what is a person going to do? The level of accountability for the police is the biggest barrier.”



**PART THREE: STEPS TO IMPROVE**

**QUESTION:** What Steps Do You Think Police Officers and Citizens Respectively Could Take to Improve Community/Police Relations?

*Though critical of CPD, respondents are clear that any improvement in community/CPD relations will require sincere and sustained efforts from both the community and CPD. This dual emphasis is key, as it places responsibility for improvement not simply with CPD, but with community and individuals.*

*Respondents are also specific in expecting that, in addition to enhanced dialogue between parties, systematic policy changes within CPD are warranted. Specifically, how the department processes charges against suspects and approaches policing of groups without a perceived reliance on stereotypes, is essential. Respondents also call on the department to make greater use of community policing and scientifically evaluated policing techniques.*

**Selected Responses:**

“Respect for each’s position. To get back to having police assigned to neighborhoods and to have open dialogue about race relations and how to protect the neighborhoods.”

“Training on how to de-escalate issues that are driven by emotions rather than by the actual crime or incident itself.”

“More community engagement between the parties. Consistency in policing throughout all city neighborhoods.”

“Police and citizens need to acknowledge that there is a pattern of targeting minorities in metropolitan Cincinnati and other cities, suburbs, and rural areas. Both need to continue to participate in community oriented policing and problem solving.”

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“There has to be some accountability for the officers who overcharge individuals. The more felony charges they write, the better they look and there needs to be some discipline/accountability . . . with respect to the citizens, stop committing crimes; be compliant to the police officer.”

“Need to get CPD and residents talking to one another. CPD being in the community really listening to the community about what the issues are in their neighborhoods and understanding what the community perspective is about CPD.”

“Needs to be a rational and scientific approach to policing such as Community Oriented Policing because the same people who are antagonistic toward the police are usually the same people who need the police and these should go hand in hand.”

“The burden is not on the citizens. The police need to be fair and impartial and need to engage in Community Oriented Policing because I don’t feel we are doing that.”

“For police officers: it’s relationship building . . . In regards to interacting with people of different ethnic backgrounds: for police not to respond to criminal activity according to stereotypes; they have to be able to understand and acknowledge and work through their biases. . . . For citizens: it’s our responsibility to understand what the role of the police is and to understand the sacrifices they make. Not many of us would run towards gunfire. Not many of us would put our lives on the line. Some citizens don’t understand or respect that.”

“Humanize each other. The police need to understand everyone they encounter on their beat is not a criminal. Citizens need to understand officers are doing their job.”

**PART FOUR: HOW RESPONDENTS CAN HELP**

**QUESTION:** What Steps Do You Think You or Your Profession Could Take to Improve Community Police Relations?

*Respondents are clear that they see the need to do more to include CPD in the work done by community organizations to promote improved community relations. This includes working with individuals and families as an intermediary between the community members and CPD and encouraging increased community engagement.*

**Selected Responses:**

“I could invite police officers more often to the table so they could be more familiar with how neighborhoods work.”

“I’d like to invite police officers to schools to talk with kids more often. The key is to get to the kids so there isn’t a perception of being afraid of the police and in order to keep at risk kids from engaging in criminal activity in the first place.”

“We have done rides with police in the past, but it was discontinued due to money issues. We also can work with our youth and families on their interactions with police and explain to them how we work with police in our roles.”

“Advocate community involvement and try to educate and empower the community to be engaged.”

**PART FIVE: WHAT THE CITY CAN DO**

**QUESTION:** Is There Anything that You Feel The City Can Do More Effectively Regarding Building Trust between CPD and Citizens?

*For this item, respondents offer three general recommendations. First, the city should encourage opportunities for greater engagement between CPD and the community as a way to overcome stereotypes and any tendencies to treat groups monolithically. Second, the city needs to exercise greater oversight of CPD, including an auditing of procedures and data collected from body and cruiser cameras. Third, politicians need to do their part to lead by encouraging productive behavior aimed at improving relations by both CPD and community members.*

**Selected Responses:**

“The city needs to somehow create time in police officers’ day to engage in the community.”

“City should report on how problem solving actually helps reduce arrests while lowering crime in Cincinnati. . . . City should audit body and camera cruiser cams to identify cultural competence of officers during citizen interactions. . . . City should make sure CCA has authority to investigate all claims of officer misconduct. . . . City should reach out to regional criminal justice professionals for ideas on improvement. . . . City should add stronger endorsement to de-escalation in use of force policy—see Louisville policy and new UC policy. . . . City and collaborative stakeholders need to be creative about youth outreach so young people all know potential and are competent at problem solving.”

“I’d like to see more scheduled events to engage police and citizens to help build that relationship.”

“Equitable practices and enforcement of the law between communities, races, and gender.”

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“Not everyone in every community is the same, and the police need to understand those nuances and respond to them appropriately. The police department should value and measure community engagement as importantly as other job functions they measure with a police officer’s overall job performance.”

“Understand that citizen concerns are the most important to citizens—not what police think are most important.”

“Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses used to have police substation in our center, but it left around 2009. I’d like to see a police substation with officers positioned in our center.”

“Politicians should send a better message to both the community and the police as to what each does. Their message is not clear, which diminishes trust. Politicians should watch their tone.”

**PART SIX: THE CCA****QUESTION: What Are Your Thoughts Regarding CCA?**

*On this item, respondents are clear: the CCA is underutilized and lacks visibility as an instrument of accountability. There is also some push for an expansion of the CCA's scope to allow for public hearings and options for misconduct reviews, which may call for additional staffing.*

**Selected Responses:**

"I think the CCA is underused. The citizens that I work with fail to report issues. Some individuals have requested BWC footage, only to be told the BWC was not turned on and other have had negative interactions with police officers and fail to report police misconduct. Most police officers do a decent job to protect and serve, but there are a few bad officers that give the police department a bad name."

"I believe the CCA is unknown to a lot of people and not perceived as neutral. . . . If they have a complaint, they don't utilize the CCA. CCA needs better marketing."

"Not enough pattern review. Patterns need to be sought out. Community concerns need to be identified before they erupt. I think the CCA mandate is too narrow. Enabling legislation should be modified to charge it with the same scope as Internal for misconduct review and more public hearings should be held giving people a chance to speak up generally. Solely being complaint driven keeps many people away."

"CCA needs a higher level of visibility (e.g., having a booth at the Black Family Reunion). It has fallen off the radar some. If complaints are high, that is a good sign that there is faith in the system. If complaints are low, that means people don't have any confidence in it."

"I think the city could do much more with Black and White churches. The most segregated hour is 11 Sunday mornings. Churches are a powerful force in the community. They can take more responsibility to help with citizens who are disorderly. Church leaders could become partners with our city, with law enforcement to help citizens understand how they could participate to make our community safer and better."

**PART SEVEN: INCLUSION MOVING FORWARD**

**QUESTION:** How Can the Collaborative Agreement Partners Better Include those In Your Profession in Matters of Problem Solving and Community Engagement?

*On this question, respondents are clear: continue with the effort to survey and otherwise collect data on community perceptions about relations with CPD and focus on ways to encourage greater community collaboration with CPD.*

**Selected Responses:**

“Regular surveys—email and telephone. Regular report to community on problem solving.”

“Juvenile Court is always willing to engage the CPD and the community in issues involving juvenile justice in our community. We would be especially interested in discussing ways that we can assist in matters of juvenile arrests and detention.”

“There needs to be more outreach starting from the top and working all the way down.”

“Send us an invite.”

“I am strongly in favor of refreshing the Collaborative Agreement. It is my sincere hope that all parties from the original agreement come back to the table. We continue to grapple with those same issues that we faced back in 2003. We need to have that same commitments that we had in 2001 to work collaboratively to address the problems that we all face together.”

**PART EIGHT: RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on respondent perceptions shared as part of the survey, we offer the following recommendations.

- 1) Reestablish and perpetuate dialogue between community and CPD, particularly in neighborhoods where there is a more frequent department presence. Effective communication by CPD requires dialogue between the community members affected and CPD. Some examples include intake at the District's front desk, execution of warrants, or an internal investigation;
- 2) CPD must foster informal relationships and a more socially oriented form of community outreach to develop shared understanding of both CPD's law enforcement role and community perceptions of CPD's presence in neighborhoods;
- 3) Provide a viable and sustainable platform for the articulation of concerns about unfair or inequitable treatment by CPD, including a recurring opportunity for community and CPD representatives to meet to discuss perceptions, concerns, differences, and, importantly, areas of agreement;
- 4) Invest in a campaign to better publicize the Collaborative Agreement framework and the CCA's work. As part of this initiative, provide residents with information on how to quickly access CCA resources. Further staffing is needed to address outreach, information dissemination expansion of authority efforts, if its scope continues to increase;
- 5) The City Manager's Advisory Group (MAG) for the Collaborative Agreement should continue to research and study policing and crime patterns as well as the following issues: charging criteria, prosecutorial functions, court procedures, and jury pool selection. The MAG consists of community and criminal justice professionals who independently report to the City Manager.
- 6) The Community and Criminal Justice Professionals believe it is critical to receive citizen input regarding community-police relations.