

Police Accountability: Issues and Proposals

Black Lives Matter, Bloomington-Normal

Issue #1: Transparency & Information-Sharing

- Law enforcement is a public institution, and should be transparent and accountable to the community it serves. In Bloomington, requests for specific data are routinely denied and current information about policing outcomes and protocols within the department are not accessible.
- Currently, the Bloomington police department does not:
 - Disclose departmental protocols and practices to the public, including: details about hiring requirements, officer evaluation standards and measures for advancement and promotion, details about what training officers receive, department demographics, barriers to recruiting minority applicants or disciplinary protocols.
 - Regularly update and make available information about: stops made/interactions with residents, the cause of each detention/stop/arrest, arrests, searches, use of force, and other enforcement outcomes, as they relate to race and other demographic information.
- **Proposal #1: To ensure that information is current, and to better monitor and respond to trends in local policing, Black Lives Matter calls on the Bloomington Police Department to publish the data and information mentioned above on their website, and to update this information on a quarterly basis.**

Issue #2: Civilians' Right to Record

- Video recording is an important resource for police accountability, as well as a defense for civilians to protect themselves from police misconduct and false accusations.
- The Illinois Supreme Court has upheld that civilians have the right to record police so long as the duties of the officer are not obstructed. No officer can legally deny a civilian's right to record so long as there is no interference with their investigation. The problem is that they often do, sometimes with no reason, and other times with the excuse that the recording civilian is impeding their duties when they are not.
- **Proposal #2: Black Lives Matter calls on Bloomington the Bloomington Police Department to publicly affirm the right of the public to record police discharging their duties, to instruct every officer to allow residents to record them in the discharge of their duties without harassment, and to take disciplinary action against any officers who violate this right.**

Issue #3: Surveillance

- It has been confirmed that the Bloomington Police Department has placed hidden cameras in town, claiming that these "public safety cameras" help fight crime. BPD does not report to the public the camera locations, post signs to alert neighborhoods about them or publish a policy that sets limits on how they are used. People walking streets where recordings are made have no idea they are being observed.
- The Bloomington Police Department also has agreements with businesses that install surveillance cameras. The program is called the BPD Camera Registration Project. In many cases, people don't understand they are being recorded both inside and outside such businesses and that the police request, and frequently get, access to these video recordings.
- **Proposal #3: To protect the privacy and liberty of our community, and to ensure that marginalized people are not being disproportionately targeted, Black Lives Matter is calling on the Bloomington Police Department to publicly disclose the general locations of BPD hidden cameras and to work**

Police Accountability: Issues and Proposals

Black Lives Matter, Bloomington-Normal

with community members to reform, develop and/or clarify policy on the use of video surveillance.

Issue #4: Body Cameras for Police Officers

- In February of this year, the Bloomington Police Department began a pilot program for the use of officer body cameras. While we know the BPD has a body camera pilot program, the department hasn't released policy for the new technology.
- Body cams could be a great tool for increasing police accountability and transparency in Bloomington, but only if implemented under a policy that includes protections for civilian privacy, parameters regarding the storage and deletion of data, protocol for release of footage, as well as a disciplinary matrix for officer accountability.
- Further, Body cameras are a public investment, and the community should be involved in deciding how they are best used.
- **Proposal #4: Black Lives Matter calls on the Bloomington Police Department to work with Black Lives Matter, as well as other community groups and residents, to develop and/or refine a body camera policy that ensures police accountability, civilian privacy, and integrity of recordings.**

Issue #5: Training

- Currently, the majority of hours spent training officers is focused on firearms use. Far less time, if any, is required for de-escalation, mediation, and sensitivity trainings.
- Prioritizing firearms training without adequate de-escalation and sensitivity trainings perpetuates a culture of force and leaves officers ill equipped to peacefully resolve situations and prone to react with aggression.
- In order to create a more positive community policing environment Black Lives Matter Bloomington Normal proposes required police-officer training in the following areas:
 - Implicit bias
 - De-escalation and minimizing the use of force
 - Relationship-based policing
 - Crisis intervention, mediation, conflict resolution, and rumor control
 - Community interaction
 - Appropriate engagement with communities of color, youth, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, individuals from different religious affiliations and people who are english language learners
- With appropriate training geared towards de-escalation and countering officer bias, officers can better navigate interactions with civilians, keeping both the officer and the civilian safe without the use of force.
- **Proposal #5: Black Lives Matter Bloomington-Normal is calling on Bloomington Police Department to build a training regimen that reflects a desire for peaceful and equitable outcomes in police encounters, and work with the community in designing the necessary curriculum.**

Issue #6: Broken Windows Policing

- The Bloomington Police Department has subscribed to a decades-long focus on policing minor crimes and activities - a practice called Broken Windows policing. This has led to the criminalization and over-policing of communities of color.
- In Bloomington, we know that black people make up about **10% of the driving population** but in the last reporting period made up **20% of all traffic stops, 21% of all consent searches and 46% of all K9 sniffs.**

Police Accountability: Issues and Proposals

Black Lives Matter, Bloomington-Normal

In contrast, white people, who make up 79% of the driving population in Bloomington, only accounted for 71% of all traffic stops, 70% of all consent searches and 48% of K9 sniffs.

Issue #6: Broken Windows Policing (Continued)

- As you can tell, black people in Bloomington are being stopped, searched, and subjected to K9 sniffs at a rate that is significantly disproportionate to the population. The disproportionate amount of searches against black people is not justified by a higher rate of seized contraband.
- Over-enforcement of non-violent offenses has resulted in excessive force and fatalities. In 2014, police nationwide killed at least 287 people who were involved in minor offenses. Michael Brown was first confronted by police in Ferguson for walking in the street instead of the sidewalk. Eric Garner in New York was confronted by a police unit that was designated to address quality-of-life conditions as part of the Broken Windows strategy
- The BPD practice of Broken Windows, also known as Problem Oriented Policing, creates disproportionate enforcement outcomes and increases the risk of negative encounters with law enforcement.
- **Proposal #6: Black Lives Matter calls on the Bloomington Police Department to de-prioritize enforcement of minor offenses and instruct officers to act accordingly.**

Issue # 7: Community Policing and Oversight

- The Bloomington Police Department and our local officials share an expressed interest in establishing community policing. However, current efforts described as “community policing” have not afforded the community the power to make meaningful reforms or hold officers accountable.
- Black Lives Matter Bloomington-Normal defines community policing as a holistic, integrated philosophy and organizational strategy to transform the way law enforcement and the community interact, share power, and work together to improve the quality of life throughout the community.
- Community policing (1) redefines who is considered a community expert, (2) empowers community members to participate in decision-making, and (3) shifts the focus of policing away from a reactive, enforcement-centered approach to a more proactive, community-centered, solution-focused effort.
- Bloomington officials should honor their expressed commitment to community policing by creating a body made up of community members, that is accessible to residents to receive and resolve grievances, and is empowered to put forth policy reforms and hold the police accountable.
- **Proposal #7: Black Lives Matter is calling for the creation of a community oversight committee that receives and investigate complaints, makes disciplinary recommendations for officers, and recommends and enacts policies for police conduct and training.**