

Police and Youth Relationships in Everett, MA

A Stakeholder Assessment



Summary of Report

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“An enemy is one whose story we have not heard.”

- Gene Knudsen Hoffman

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INTRODUCTION

The Everett Police Department (EPD) asked our team, a group of students from the Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Project (HNMCP), to assess perceptions of current EPD practices and address any potential sources of tension or conflict between police and local youth. The timing of this assessment is particularly important given the national dialogue on police-community relationships. The assessment involved conducting interviews and focus groups with a number of stakeholders in the community, including members of EPD, youth in Everett aged 13-18, and adult community members. Based on this assessment and outside research, our team identified several key findings and analyzed those findings to develop five recommendations for improving the relationship between members of EPD and Everett's youth.

This report is a distillation of a much longer report generated for and presented to Chief Steven Mazzie and other members of EPD.

BACKGROUND

A. COMPOSITION OF EVERETT

Everett, Massachusetts is a small town (*i.e.*, approximately three square miles), and one of Boston's many suburbs. Up until fairly recently, Everett was a predominantly Irish and Italian, white, and middle class town. About ten years ago, several groups of immigrants, including Haitians, Brazilians, and Central and South Americans, began to settle in Everett in large numbers. Between the arrival of these immigrant groups and the subsequent exodus of many white families, the demographics in Everett shifted dramatically. What was a predominantly white town is now approximately 54% white, 22% Latino, 14% black (mostly Haitian), 4% Asian, and 4% two or more other races, making Everett one of the most diverse cities in Massachusetts.¹ In part due to the slow turnover rate and infrequent hiring periods of EPD,² the diversity of EPD remains predominately white.³

In addition, the main ethnic minority populations in Everett tend to be significantly younger than the white population by an average of 8-11 years.⁴ Thus, the changes in the town's racial makeup are even more pronounced among Everett's teen population. At Everett High School, 41% of students are white, 30% are Latino, 23% are black, and 5% are Asian, making the minority population the collective majority amongst Everett's youth.⁵

¹ *City Data – Everett, MA 2013*, CITY DATA, <http://www.city-data.com/city/Everett-Massachusetts.html> (last visited Nov. 29, 2015), (describing Everett demographics [hereinafter *City Data*]).

² According to the Everett Police Department Annual Reports 2009-2014, EPD has added twelve new officers and lost six officers to retirement in that six year span. *See* EVERETT POLICE DEP'T, ANNUAL REPORTS, 2009 – 2014.

³ Although we were unable to obtain specific information regarding the racial diversity at EPD, several police officers informed us that, with the exception of a handful of recently hired minority officers, the vast majority of EPD officers are white.

⁴ The average difference for Everett's Black residents was eight years whereas the average age for Latino residents was eleven years. *City Data*, *supra* note 1.

⁵ *Everett High School Student Body*, U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT: EDUCATION, <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/massachusetts/districts/everett/everett-high-school-9357/student-body> (last visited Nov. 29, 2015), (noting Everett High School ethnic and socio-economic composition) [hereinafter U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT].

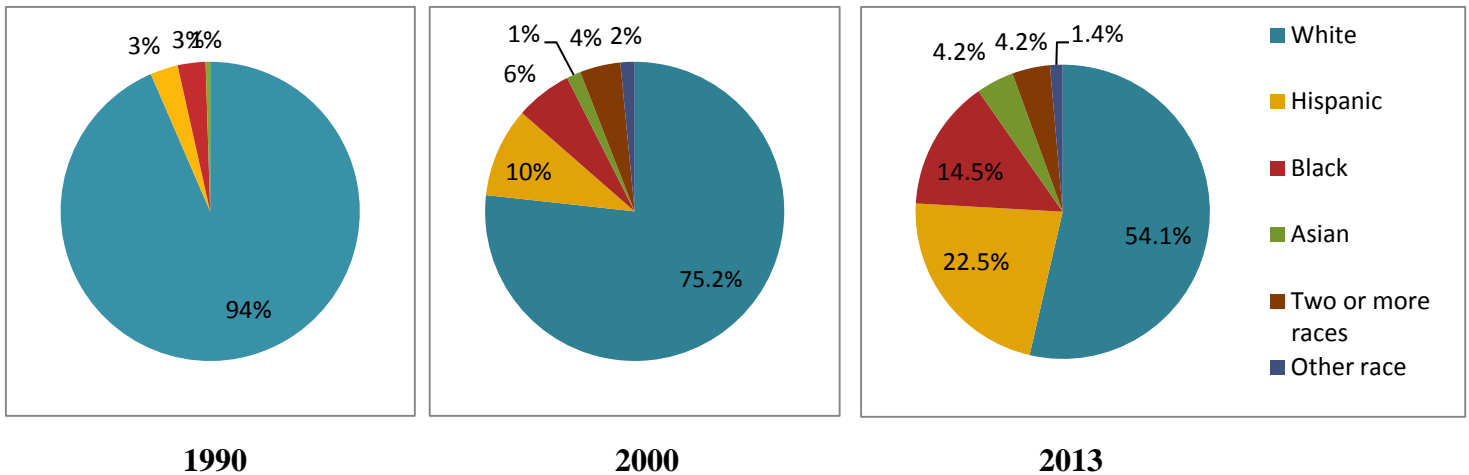


Figure 1. Everett, MA Demographics, 1990-2013.⁶

B. NATIONAL EVENTS

Over the past year, there has been an increase in public scrutiny of the police nationwide.⁷ Starting with the events in Ferguson, Missouri and subsequent media coverage, a growing chorus of voices has criticized perceived abuses of force by police officers. These events have awakened a heated conversation about police use of force and potential racism in police departments across the country. As a result, more and more people have begun to film police interactions, thereby enabling more people to second-guess, criticize, and occasionally condemn police actions.

A conflict between a school resource officer and a student in Spring Valley, South Carolina, in which the officer physically picked up and threw the student across the classroom in response to her perceived insubordination, has sparked another conversation on police-youth interactions, specifically in schools.⁸

These national events have exacerbated distrust between minority communities and police that has seeped into interactions far removed from those portrayed in the media. For many people, these events, and the officers involved, have created a negative perception of police that transfers

⁶ U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, 1990 CENSUS POPULATION: GENERAL POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS; U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, 2000 CENSUS POPULATION; *City Data*, *supra* note 1.

⁷ See, e.g., Charles M. Blow, *Laquan McDonald and the 'System,'* N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 30, 2015), http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/30/opinion/laquan-mcdonald-and-the-system.html?_r=0; Q&A: *What Happened in Ferguson?* N.Y. TIMES (August 10, 2015) http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/08/13/us/ferguson-missouri-town-under-siege-after-police-shooting.html?_r=0, (explaining the events surrounding Michael Brown's death and the aftermath in Ferguson, MO); Matt Apuzo & Timothy Williams, *Video of Walter Scott Shooting Reignites Debate on Police Tactics*, N.Y. TIMES (APR. 8, 2015), <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/09/us/video-of-fatal-shooting-of-walter-scott-reignites-debate-on-police-use-of-force.html>, (highlighting debate in the wake of a police killing of an unarmed black man in South Carolina).

⁸ *Spring Valley High School Officer Suspended after Violent Classroom Arrest*, CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/27/us/south-carolina-school-arrest-video/> (last updated Oct. 27, 2015) (explaining Spring Valley High incident and aftermath).

to all officers across the country. Many officers have spoken out or internalized resentment about this overgeneralization, which they believe is an unfair and untrue narrative. As a result, these national events and the media coverage of them have significantly affected police-youth interactions in towns like Everett by creating or exacerbating tensions on the local level.

C. PROJECT PURPOSE

In light of Everett's changing demographics and recent national events involving police use of force against minority youth populations, EPD commissioned HNMCP to assess police and youth relationships in Everett. This report is not intended to apply to police and youth interactions on a national scale. Rather, we set out to collect and analyze data as a neutral party and assess the relationship that exists between youth and police within the city of Everett. The following report reflects our impartial analysis of youth and police relationships in Everett, Massachusetts.

METHODOLOGY

A. STAKEHOLDERS

HNMCP engaged in a *stakeholder assessment* to better understand the relationship between police and youth in Everett. A stakeholder assessment entails (1) identifying stakeholders, (*i.e.*, key members of the police department and community who are invested in the police-youth relationship and/or are particularly affected by it); and (2) assessing (a) these key stakeholders' interests, (*i.e.*, thoughts, feelings, and opinions, regarding the relationship), and (b) tensions that exist between key stakeholders.

For the purpose of this project, we parsed our stakeholders into three main groups: police officers, youths, and adult community members who serve in City Hall, represent ethnic minorities within Everett, or supervise teen groups in Everett. The following map represents the key groups we spoke with who have a vested interest in the police-youth relationship:

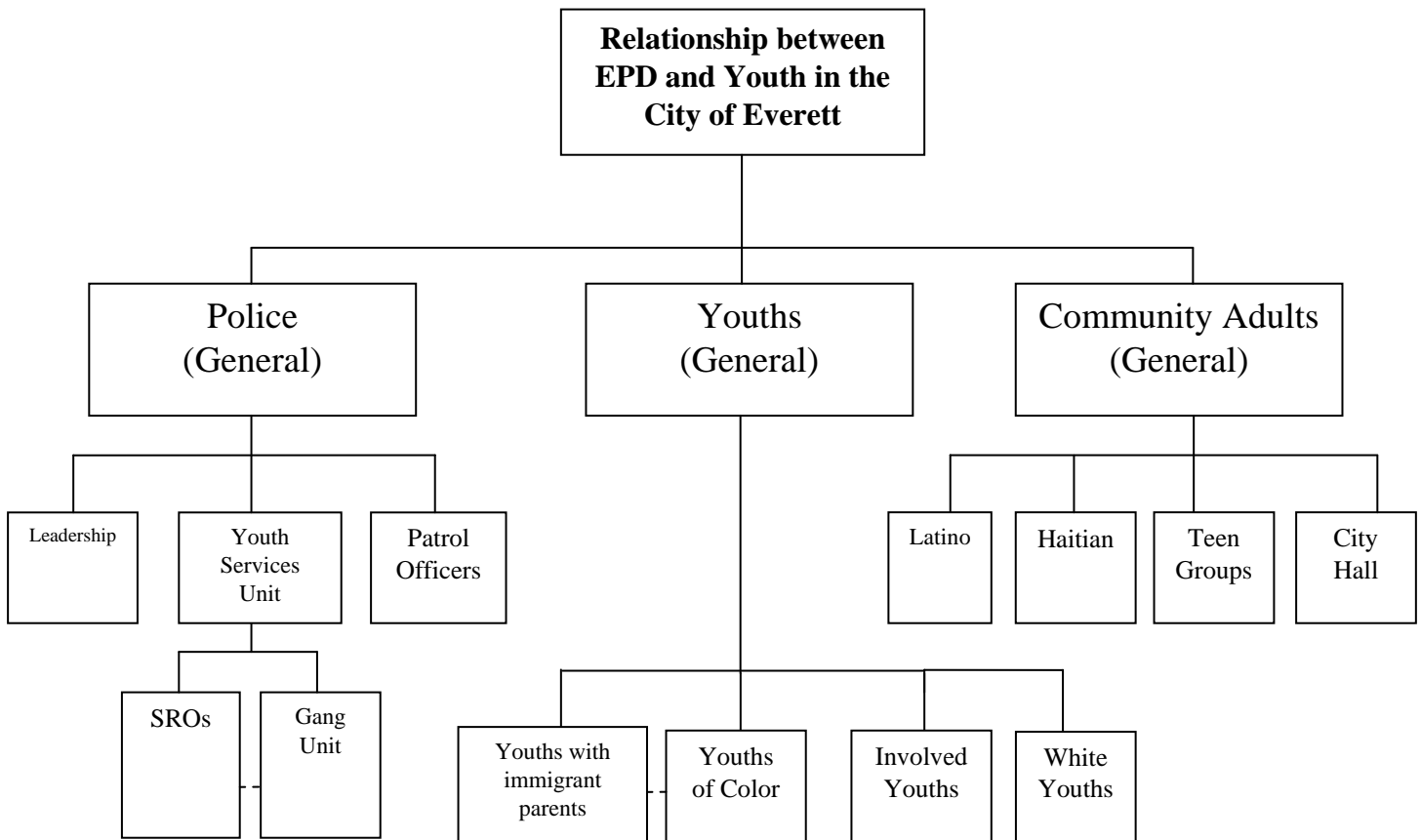


Figure 2. Map of Key Stakeholders in Everett Police – Youth Relationship Assessment.

B. DATA COLLECTION

HNMCP collected data for this project through two primary mechanisms: interviews and focus groups. These interviews and focus groups were conducted over the course of six weeks. Overall, HNMCP conducted interviews or focus groups with 69 individuals: 19 police officers, 33 youths, and 17 community members.

We used three different types of interview and focus group protocols for (1) police officers, (2) youth, and (3) community members. All protocols were intended to reveal the following information: (1) EPD and youth perceptions of each other; (2) the interests underlying both positive and negative interactions between EPD and youths; (3) tensions that exist between EPD and youth; (4) changes in police and youth perceptions since the Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson, Missouri; and (5) recommendations for maintaining and improving positive relationships between EPD and youth.

FINDINGS

A. FINDING #1: THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERACTIONS

Each interaction between police officers and youth matters.

- ✚ **Certain EPD practices, espoused particularly by members of the Youth Services Unit (YSU), aimed at fostering relationships with youth are working well and have a positive impact on youth perceptions of the EPD. Additionally, youths who have sustained positive contact with EPD tend to like police officers as a whole.**

What we found:

The most frequently mentioned concerns among all youths interviewed with regard to police interactions were respect, a desire to be heard, an interest in transparency, and a hope to have more interactions with officers in social settings. Overall, our data shows that some officers, especially those in the Youth Services Unit (YSU), engage in practices that meet these interests. Their efforts to connect with and relate to youths are both noticed and appreciated.

What we heard:

*One youth told us a particularly compelling story, in which he was detained for shoplifting. The officer who arrived on the scene was **calm** with him, **explained** to him that he could not come back to the store, and **issued him a warning**. The youth called this story a “surprisingly positive experience” and admired the officer’s **kind demeanor** and **willingness to cut him a break**.*

*Another youth we spoke with used to dislike the police because of a past negative interaction with them involving her immigrant parents. However, **she volunteered at the Junior Police Academy (JPA) and got to know several police officers on a personal level**. Through this experience, **she developed positive relationships with those officers and a positive view of the police overall**.*

- ✚ **Bad individual interactions between EPD officers and youths have an outsized effect on youth perceptions of police officers and can lead to a negative view of police as a whole.**

What we found:

Youths tend to magnify negative experiences with police officers, which results in one of the biggest sources of tension between Everett’s police and youth. When youths experience a bad interaction with police officers, (*i.e.*, the police were rude to them, “laid hands” on them, or treated them callously), it affects youths’ perception of the entire police force. Unfortunately, one recent event involving police using force on a youth has diminished some youths’ trust of the department as a whole. In addition, even when youths have good interactions or relationships

with certain officers, those lone interactions often cannot make up for their overall negative view of police.

What we heard:

*Many youths told us about one incident with one or two officers that caused them to make sweeping generalizations about Everett police. For example, after one Latina youth described her experience with an officer racially profiling her, she stated that “all of these cops are so racist.” **The other youths in the group agreed with her assertion, based on this one event.***

*Several youths in a focus group expressed deep admiration for one of the School Resource Officers (SROs). One youth told a story of a time when he was walking home late at night and an SRO pulled up next to him to offer him a ride home. On the way home, the SRO stopped at a fast food joint and got him some ice-cream. **Despite his, and the other youths, warm feelings toward the SRO, they all still expressed negative feelings toward EPD as a whole due to other negative interactions with unpleasant officers.***

📺 Media coverage of negative police interactions in different states and areas, such as Ferguson, Missouri, impacts the way youths perceive EPD officers.

What we found:

Youths of color have been deeply affected by the recent police shootings of black men, along with the ensuing social media coverage. Some youths are struggling to separate EPD from the events in Ferguson and elsewhere around the nation. Kids see images of white police officers hurting black youths on social media, and they become reluctant to build relationships with cops because they are afraid or angry. Whether these videos are covered by news networks or are just YouTube clips that pop up on Facebook, they give many youths negative perceptions of the police as a whole, even if they themselves have not had any negative interactions with the police. Youths mentioned that they had experienced, seen, or heard of negative interactions between police officers and youths twenty-four times; 29% of those negative interactions were viewed on social media.

What we heard:

*One black youth stated that he was afraid of the police: **based on what he has seen on the news, he knows that “the police can do anything. Everything I do can get me locked up or killed. Every time we interact, it’s a life or death situation.”***

✚ Youth and police officers want *more* positive interaction with each other.

What we found:

Throughout all of our data collection, increased interaction between police and youth was the most commonly raised request. Of the thirty-three youths we spoke to, eighteen (55%) expressed a desire for increased interaction. Police officers similarly expressed an increased desire to interact more with youths: fourteen of the nineteen (74%) police officers we spoke with wanted more interaction with youths. Patrol officers in particular voiced recommendations for certain programs that they would like to see between youth and the police.

What we heard:

Youths “want to get to know police officers more.” Some youths suggested that this could be achieved if police officers play sports with them. Others suggested that officers should “come to school more often and be noticeable around town” and one more thought that police officers should become more involved with school groups.

Several officers suggested increased engagement at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in an unofficial capacity.

B. FINDING #2: CYCLE OF DISRESPECT

Police officers and youths feel a mutual sense of disrespect, which creates a cycle of bad interactions.

- ✚ **Police officers define respect in terms of deference to their authority, whereas youths define respect in terms of understanding their identity and being treated like a human being.**

What we found:

One of the most cited concerns for both police and youths is receiving respect. Of the nineteen police officers we spoke with, nine officers (47%) explicitly mentioned that youths should show police officers more respect. Meanwhile, twelve out of thirty-three youths (36%) we spoke to wanted more respect from police officers. While this number may seem small, it is the second-most cited theme that youths discussed, beyond wanting more interaction with police officers.

However, respect means something different to police officers and youths. Police officers want to be treated with the same deference that they believe police received when they were younger; while youths want to feel like the police see them as people who deserve to be treated with dignity and fairness rather than just dismissed as immature kids.

What we heard:

*Many officers feel that youths today have none of the respect that they had for the police when they were young. Several officers expressed that they were “**raised differently, with respect for authority.**”*

*Said one youth, “**instead of looking at me like I’m a person, they see me as a statistic. Instead of coming up to me yelling, looking all angry, treat me like a person. When you come up to me like that, I feel disrespected and threatened because I feel like something will happen.**”*

- ✚ **Police and youths’ perceptions that they are not receiving the respect they deserve have lead both groups to make negative assumptions about each other.**

What we found:

The perceived lack of respect that exists between some police and youths has led each group to make assumptions about the other. Some police officers think that youths are “punks,” whereas youths think that police officers are overly aggressive and out to get them. Moreover, each group assumes that the other group holds certain assumptions about them. Many police officers think that youths hate them because of social media, while youths think that police officers assume that youths are rude and dangerous because they are young.

What we heard:

Some officers referred to youths categorically as “punks” and “rap kids.” Officers made statements such as, “Kids are more and more defiant,” and “These kids don’t want to be told no.”

Some youths also referred to police officers categorically when speaking about police lack of respect, making statements such as, “Police are way too authoritative,” “Police are so rude,” “There aren’t too many good police officers [because they have bad attitudes],” and “Police shouldn’t act that just because they’re older and have badges, they can act any old way.”

🚓 Police and youth assumptions about each other perpetuate a cycle of disrespect.

What we found:

EPD officers’ and youths’ preconceived notions about each other fuel a cycle of disrespect, in which the assumptions one group makes about the other prompts them to act in a certain way, which confirms what the other group thought and elicits certain behaviors from them. The assumptions that police officers hold about teenagers today being less likely to obey police directives and more likely to speak to officers in a discourteous manner make many officers more likely to restate the directive in a more authoritative tone and less likely to be courteous with the youth. For youths, many of them consider police officers to be inherently bad and scary. According to them, officers expect courtesy and deference, but fail to demonstrate those behaviors themselves. This perceived hypocrisy make youths more likely to talk back to officers and disobey their directives.

What we heard:

Said one youth, “We are rash to them because they are rash to us.”

One officer stated, “How they respond to me is how I respond to them.”

C. FINDING #3: CULTURAL AND GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Cultural and generational differences are impacting relationships between youths and police officers.

- ✚ **Youths of color feel that EPD officers monitor, target, and treat them unfairly based on their race and/or ethnicity.**

What we found:

Many youths of color feel that police in Everett treat them more poorly than their white counterparts based on their race and ethnicity. Youths with whom we spoke felt this way based on three main factors: (1) their own interactions with officers potentially racially profiling them, or interactions in which the police treated white people better than them; (2) police officers taking the side of white people over people of color; and (3) interactions in which they felt that their parents were mistreated by police due to their Haitian or Latino heritage.

What we heard:

One black youth said that “we could go out on the street and be arrested for anything because of our gait, clothes, and color. The officers see us and think we are going to do something.”

*Another black youth described a situation in which some white women in the community told them to get out of the park in the middle of the day. When the black youths refused to leave, the white women called the police. **The police only gave the white women an opportunity to speak, took her side, and commanded the black youths to leave the park.** Other youths agreed that these types of situations make them feel that police, who are predominantly white, are only there to protect white people.*

*One Latina girl described an encounter in which her family was all driving home together and an EPD officer pulled her dad over. The officer threatened to report her dad to ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement], called her dad a piece of shit, and cursed him out in front her entire family. But since technically the police in Everett aren’t allowed to report undocumented immigrants to ICE anymore, the officer just gave her dad a ticket and told him he better not see him driving around anymore. She was extremely angered by the encounter, but all she could do was cry. **She just assumed that the officer, or all officers, was racist.***

- ✚ **Police blame generational differences for much of the tension and misunderstandings with today’s youth.**

What we found: Police officers seldom mentioned race as a cause of tension. Instead, they attributed much of the tension to generational differences in today’s youths and parents.

What we heard:

*“When we were growing up, **no one in this room would talk to cops the way that kids talk to cops now.**”*

*Another officer claimed, “The reason for all this [trouble] is that **parents don’t bring the kids up properly.**”*

+ Youths and community members perceive police overreaction to immaturity as a source of tension.

What we found: Youths and community members feel that police officers sometimes do not allow room for youths to make mistakes.

What we heard:

*Several youths commented that “**teens to stupid stuff,**” but still felt that officers should cut teens breaks.*

*One community member would remind police that **youths are human and scared, but most of all are developing.** From his perspective, police can’t expect youths to know what to do and what not to do in a situation. It’s difficult to tell youths what to do and expect trust because **part of being a teenager is not listening to authority and rebelling.***

D. FINDING #4: INTENT VERSUS IMPACT GAP⁹

There are several instances of tension between youths and police officers attributable to one party's good intention having a negative impact on the other.

✚ **Police monitor youth activities for their safety, but youths feel harassed and targeted.**

What we found:

Police monitor youths for their safety and for the safety of the community, but youths feel that the police are targeting and harassing them based on their age and/or race.

What we heard:

Police:

*"I try to be a **constant presence** – not harassing, but just always there to possibly **disrupt any bad activity**. You know, the broken windows type thing."*

Youth:

*"When we're at the Walgreens next to the school, the **police just stare us down and look at us menacingly for no reason**. They don't even get out of their cars and talk to us or anything – just stare."*

✚ **Police are often curt with youths because they need to respond to other calls, but youths interpret this abrupt interaction as disrespectful.**

What we found:

Patrol officers want to deal with situations quickly and safely because they have to move onto the next call, but youths interpret these interactions as rude.

What we heard:

Police:


*"There are no violent confrontations, but **officers are rude to [youths] because the officers just need to move on to the next thing**."*

⁹ DOUGLAS STONE, BRUCE PATTON & SHEILA HEEN, DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: HOW TO DISCUSS WHAT MATTERS MOST 44-82 (2010).

Youth:

“Police are so rude. They should be trained to treat people politely from the get-go, then intensify if the situation is bad.”

“Police should be friendly to the community. If cops around here smiled more, people would feel more comfortable.”

 **Haitian youths express respect in a way that some police officers might interpret as disrespectful.**

What we found:

Sometimes, intent is misinterpreted due to cultural barriers. This is often a particularly acute problem for Haitian youth: some police officers may interpret their actions as willfully disrespectful or delinquent.

What we heard:

*In the Haitian culture, young people are trained to avert their eyes when speaking to people in positions of authority. According to a community leader, **some police officers think that Haitian youths are disrespectful because they don't look the officers in the eye, when in reality the youths are showing them the utmost respect.** This can escalate a situation or cause police officers to react more harshly to Haitian youths.*

E. FINDING #5: UNDERAPPRECIATION

Police officers feel underappreciated by youths and the community for their work and they are upset that people are mischaracterizing them based on portrayals of police in the media.

- ✚ EPD officers want to know that youths appreciate the actions officers take to protect them and keep them safe.

What we found:

Officers want to feel that the actions they take to protect youths and the community in general are appreciated. Six officers spoke directly to this point: two officers felt that youths did not acknowledge or appreciate when officers treated them with leniency, and four officers discussed positive experiences that revolved around youths expressing gratitude for their service.

What we heard:

*“I would like the kids to know that **the police are there to help**. No police officer is out to punish or ‘hassle’ them, but is ultimately there to help.”*

“Kids used to respect cops who protected and helped them. Now, kids don’t cut cops any slack.”

One officer liked a recent police-community forum because “people were really able to understand what police officers go through.” He especially liked that people came up to him afterward to tell him that they appreciated EPD’s struggles.

- ✚ EPD officers feel that the media portrayal of national events has unfairly affected youths’ perceptions of them.

What we found:

As we have already discussed, Ferguson and other national events has affected youths’ perceptions of EPD. However, many police officers felt this to be unfair. Overall, nine officers brought up the harmful effects that the media has had on their ability to police youths in the aftermath of Ferguson.

What we heard:

*One officer expressed anger at the media’s portrayal of Ferguson and similar situations. In general, he is anti-media because he believes that they do not get all of the facts. **The media’s coverage of Ferguson has made police officers’ jobs nationwide so difficult that he is averse to wearing his traditional police uniform now.***

“The issues that exist in Ferguson don’t really exist in Everett. It’s not fair to judge EPD based on what happened two thousand miles away.”

✚ Arrest data may undermine accusations of racial profiling.

What we found:

Several youths in Everett felt that EPD officers profile them and makes assumptions about them based on their race and ethnicity. The idea that police officers engage in racial profiling frustrates the officers: “The news more than ever sensationalizes police mistakes and people use that against us. They use the race card. They just hate cops.”

EPD arrest data of youths from 2013-2015 may undermine the perception that EPD arrests disproportionately more youths of color than white youths.

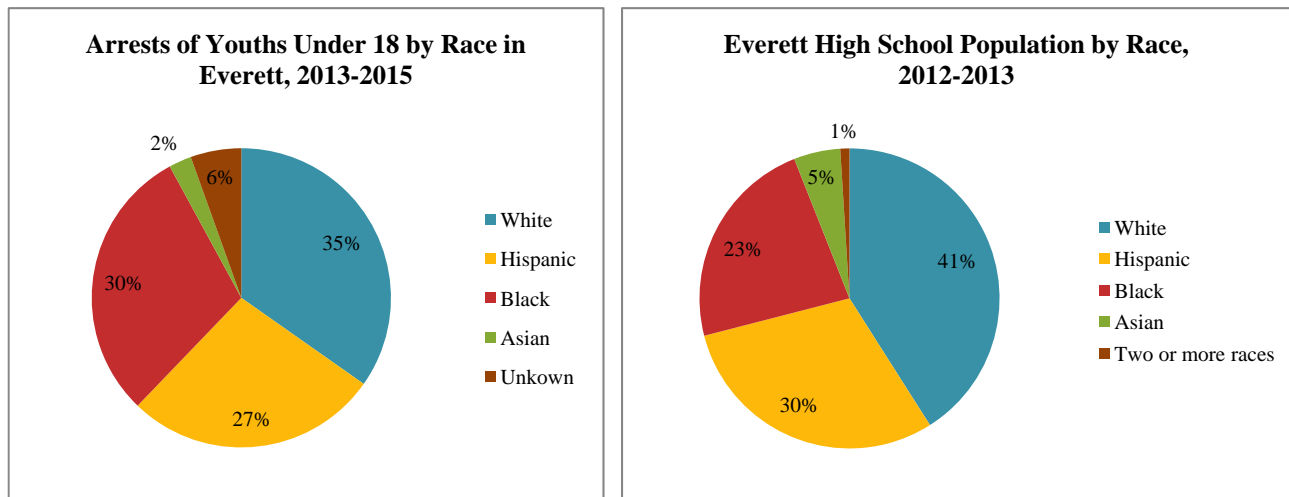


Figure 3. Arrests of Youths under 18 in Everett versus Everett High School Population.

***Note:** This arrest data does not take the manner in which EPD officers interact with youths of color into account, nor does it diminish the lived experience of feeling racially targeted. In addition, some differences in percentages deserve attention: 7% more black youths, 6% fewer white youths, and 3% fewer Asian youths are arrested than are represented in the population.

✚ Police officers have attempted to hold community events in the past that go unattended.

What we found:

Although EPD does host volunteer events such as National Night Out, only two youths we spoke with out of thirty-three volunteered at these events. EPD is trying to reach out to youths and community members and wants to provide more services, but does not appear to be successful.

What we heard:

*According to one of the community leaders we spoke with, EPD reached out to her relatively recently to coordinate more police-youth dialogues. However, she says, the youth interest “was not there.” Unfortunately, she said, **“I can’t make the kids talk.”***

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, we believe that EPD needs to (1) **repair the trust between officers and youths** and (2) **implement measures that ensure consistency in youth interactions**. Our five recommendations fall into those two categories and are as follows:

A. REPAIRING TRUST

- **RECOMMENDATION #1: *Implement programs that increase continuous, positive, voluntary interactions between police and youth.*** In order to re-build trust, the police should expand on what some of its most trusted and well-liked officers are already doing: increase interactions with youths so that officers get to know the youths personally. Our team recommends implementing programs (e.g., participating in school activities and having officers attend community events) to help encourage increased positive and continuous voluntary interactions without needing to dramatically change police officer's day-to-day job functions.
- **RECOMMENDATION #2: *Implement regular, facilitated dialogues between EPD and youth.*** To help correct assumptions that EPD officers and youths make about each other and to increase transparency in police practices, we recommend that EPD and youth community leaders hold regular, facilitated dialogues where all types of officers are represented. These dialogues will be particularly effective if EPD (1) engages youths and police officers in developing the dialogues and (2) holds the dialogues consistently over a long period of time.
- **RECOMMENDATION #3: *Change hiring practices to increase emphasis on personality and communication skills as well as increase diversity in the force.*** As a final, global recommendation for repairing trust, our team suggests that EPD take proactive measures in the hiring process to weed out what many police referred to as "bad apples." In changing its hiring practices, EPD should focus on: (1) emphasizing a candidate's personality and communication skills and (2) addressing the lack of diversity on the force.

B. ENSURING CONSISTENT INTERACTIONS

- RECOMMENDATION #4: *Implement changes to EPD policies to ensure respect during on-the-job interactions between police and youth.* Our team recommends that EPD implement very simple policy changes that target *how* officers approach youths in both ordinary interactions and when responding to calls (e.g., speaking to youths calmly in situations of conflict, introducing themselves, explaining why they are taking certain actions).

- RECOMMENDATION #5: *Implement regular trainings that incorporate evolving procedures and increase legitimacy.* Based on the findings, we feel that EPD officers should be trained in three areas in order to more positively engage Everett’s youth and increase legitimacy in the community: (1) procedural justice training; (2) de-escalation training; and (3) cultural sensitivity training.

CONCLUSION

The Everett Police Department is doing a lot of things very well. From its commitment to the JPA, to the positive interactions between YSU officers and youth, to certain officers' sustained efforts to build and maintain relationships with Everett youth, EPD makes meaningful efforts to engage community youth.

Despite EPD's current efforts, there is still a divide between the police and youth in Everett. This divide can be attributed to a few things: the overwhelming impact of bad police-youth interactions on youth perceptions; the sense of mutual disrespect that officers and youths feel; cultural and generational differences between police and youths; the intent/impact gap; and the police sense of underappreciation for their difficult role. The divide between EPD police and Everett youth is further exacerbated by the negative national narrative on police that is a constant presence due to social media.

Nevertheless, EPD can improve the relationship between officers and youth as well as reduce the impact of negative interactions and negative social media attention through a dedicated and sustained effort to build trust through positive interaction with youth, and with an emphasis on consistency in EPD officer behavior.