

The BJA Executive Session on

# Police Leadership

2016

*The BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership* is a multi-year endeavor started in 2010 with the goal of developing innovative thinking that would help create police leaders uniquely qualified to meet the challenges of a changing public safety landscape.

In support of an integrated approach to creating safe and viable communities across America, the project directors recruited 20+ principals from a range of disciplines. The principals, in turn, led national field teams of practitioners focused on the work of policing and the organization of the future.

To gain new insights on leadership, the *BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership* engaged police chiefs in documenting their own paths and invited leaders to participate in various audio and video forums to tell their stories and discuss the future of policing and police leadership.

Please visit our website, [www.bjaleader.org](http://www.bjaleader.org), to learn more about this project and to access a broad array of interactive, multimedia resources.

The principals are supported in their work by a team that includes project co-directors Darrel W. Stephens and Nancy McKeon, and BJA Senior Policy Advisor Steve Edwards.

## Leaders Step Up to Reinforce Values During Police Academy Training

by  
Os Flores

With recent major incidents challenging relationships between police and the community, the law enforcement profession is on the forefront of national discussions about the use of force, transparency and fairness. These incidents can influence public trust and the perception of police. It is becoming increasingly important that departments recruit officers with values similar to the organization and are reflective of the community they serve. The basic police officer academy is an opportunity for the organization to reinforce its core values and instill a culture of excellence in the service that is provided to citizens. This cannot always be communicated in recruiting brochures or department memorandums, but must be clearly communicated and demonstrated by department leadership throughout the police academy. During this time, the Arlington Police Department has invested in recruits by providing key perspectives of the organization through the tenured lens and leadership of the executive staff.

In the past, executive staff members would introduce themselves and provide a few comments to the recruits on their first day of the academy. Many times, this may be the only time in which a new recruit would speak with executive leadership before graduating. Beginning in 2014, executive team members met recruits on their first day. That was followed by hosting executive sessions with the class throughout the academy that provided further opportunities for developing relationships. The purpose of these executive sessions is to create meaningful dialogue with recruits on a variety of key topics that support the values and culture of the organization. Over lunch sessions, executive staff and recruits discuss topics such as: vision and values of the organization, procedural justice, community engagement, emerging issues in law enforcement and constitutional policing, the department discipline process, role of executive management, culture of the department and the Arlington Police uniform, strategic planning process, modeling driving behavior, use of force perspectives and connectivity to national forums and conversations occurring in policing.

Held during a lunch hour, the design of the executive sessions provides an invaluable opportunity to share the culture, vision and values of the organization from department leadership and supports the ongoing process to invest in employees at the onset of their career. Feedback from recruits and academy personnel has been positive. These sessions provide a platform for discussion of nationally highlighted incidents involving police. At a time when communities across the country may be struggling with trust and dialogue with local police departments, it is a valuable investment in our employees and our local community to mentor new recruits in meaningful and innovative ways which equate to better officers being released into field training.

This paper was developed by the “Leader of the Future” initiative of the BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership.

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