

COMPENDIUM: COMMUNITY POLICING  
AND PROCEDURAL JUSTICE IN JAILS PART 1

# Adapting Community-Oriented Policing Strategies and Procedural Justice for Jail Communities

Karen L. Amendola, Carrie Hill, Maria Valdovinos Olson, and Ben Gorban



# Dedication

This compendium is dedicated to the memory of Fred Wilson of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA).

I first met Fred in the 1990s when he served at the Police Foundation, where he worked with the Community Policing Consortium of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office). Fred's long-time dedication to the law enforcement community was exemplified through the expansive list of friends and colleagues with whom he worked for decades. Fred's kind spirit touched everyone with whom he had the opportunity to work, and many of us called him our friend. Fred and I worked together to establish this idea of adapting community-oriented policing (COP) and procedural justice to jail settings, as well as highlighting and emphasizing how sheriffs and other jail officials use the underlying principles and associated practices (such as collaborative problem solving, community engagement, and treating people with dignity and respect), as he knew that many of the sheriffs with whom he worked had adopted these practices and principles, perhaps without calling them "community-oriented policing." Our goal was to obtain the funding to carry out this project from the COPS Office and work together across our respective organizations (National Police Foundation and National Sheriffs' Association) and in collaboration with the COPS Office to support sheriffs and jail officials by sharing practices and innovative programming designed to address current challenges in jails that coalesce around COP philosophy and practice and emphasize procedural justice and legitimacy.

Fred's dedication to this project was consistent with his ongoing commitment to those in the law enforcement community whom he worked hard to represent, support, and encourage in their leadership efforts. I was very excited to have the chance to work with Fred again on this important project, but shortly after the project was awarded, Fred's circumstances had begun to change. In a very thoughtful and dignified manner, Fred passed the torch on to his colleague Carrie Hill at the National Sheriffs' Association with his blessing. And of course, Ms. Hill carried that torch in a way that would make Fred proud. The incredible commitment by her and the NSA to see this project through is a testament to the great work that Fred had done to lay the groundwork for this effort. It is with both great sorrow and honor that I dedicate this Jails Compendium to Fred's memory. Those of us fortunate enough to have met him and worked with him are forever grateful to him for putting his heart into everything he did for all of us.



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# Letter from the Acting Director of the COPS Office

Colleagues:

The mission of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is to advance the practice of community policing, which begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between law enforcement and communities. When all stakeholders work together to address communities' crime and public safety challenges, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources. However, when we think of communities, we often neglect to consider jails, which are themselves communities made up of individuals who are incarcerated and those who are employed there—as well as having an impact on the larger communities where they are located.

The National Policing Institute and the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) have collaborated on this compendium of community policing and procedural justice principles in jails and jail-based programs throughout the United States. It includes a quick reference guide, a research brief, a guide to promising practices, a monograph on a survey sent to all NSA members, a focused strategy brief outlining jails' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and eight case studies of featured community-based programs operated by seven sheriffs' departments in their local jails, as well as appendices detailing the participating agencies and the script used for focus group interviews. It is a thorough examination of community-focused programming and practices in jails, and other agencies will find much in its pages that can be adapted for local use.

Jails are communities, and they are also located in and a part of the broader communities where we all live and which all our law enforcement agencies serve and protect. The COPS Office is pleased to present this compendium exploring ways to keep all these communities healthy and safe.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Chapman

Acting Director

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

# Letter from the President of the National Policing Institute\*

Colleagues:

The National Policing Institute's commitment to the principles of community policing has been long-standing. In 1993, we conducted the first nationwide survey of community policing to learn how the philosophy of community policing was being implemented throughout the nation's law enforcement agencies. In the years since, we have examined how excessive use of force and abuse of authority can undermine community policing efforts and how supervisors carry out their roles consistent with the community policing philosophy. We have also engaged in training and technical assistance to guide law enforcement agencies, government officials, and community leaders in managing the transition to a community policing approach. Through the Community Policing Consortium, we have worked to institutionalize community policing nationwide.

In our more recent work, we emphasize legitimacy and procedural justice in police-community interactions and in the broader administration of justice. The fundamental principles of community policing—community engagement, empowerment, collaborative problem solving, and organizational reform—“have been central aspects of law enforcement but are only recently being recognized as important in” jail settings.

We are grateful to the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) for providing the funding for us to explore the role of community policing and procedural justice in jails. In our work with the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) and many sheriffs' offices, we have identified dozens of jail-based practices, strategies, and programming employed by sheriffs and jail administrators across the country that are consistent with the community policing philosophy.

Understanding that jails are communities and justice-involved individuals are part of those communities (as well as the broader communities in which they live) is essential for addressing the conditions that give rise to safety, health, and wellness issues in confinement. The systematic use of partnerships and proactive problem-solving techniques in jails holds real promise. In these settings there is an opportunity to provide programming and services that can have a significant impact on individuals and communities and potentially interrupt the cycle of criminal activity and incarceration. Many of the nation's most innovative jail administrators already understand this and have taken on this challenge.

*\*Formerly known as Police Foundation and National Police Foundation*

While the purpose of this project was to examine ways to implement community policing in jails, we learned that in many agencies across the country, leaders have been doing this for some time under different headings such as “community-oriented programming,” “care-focused programming” and “community-based re-entry programming,” among others. Many of the innovative and core practices of some sheriffs and jail administrators are highlighted in this compendium as potentially promising practices that could be adapted to other agencies nationwide.

This *Community Policing in Jails Compendium* builds upon the experiences and involvement of the staff and leaders of the National Policing Institute and NSA. It demonstrates the importance of engaging the community in problem solving, treating individuals with dignity and respect, and building bridges toward reforming the criminal justice system in ways that promote healthier and safer communities and individuals.

We hope this compendium will be helpful to sheriffs, jail administrators, and jail personnel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JB II', with a large circular flourish at the end.

James H. Burch II

President

National Policing Institute



# Letter from the Executive Director of the National Sheriffs' Association

Colleagues:

It is certainly an opportune time for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), the National Policing Institute, and the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) to be highlighting some of the outstanding programming in our nation's jails.

Approximately 85 percent of the more than 3,000 jails in the United States are run by sheriffs' offices. Nearly 10 million individuals pass through our nation's jails annually, many of whom are experiencing challenges with mental health and substance use disorders. Providing medical and mental health services, along with treatment and programming geared toward the individual, is essential to help break the cycle of incarceration.

Thus, our thanks to the leadership of the COPS Office for adding "jail administration" as an area to be supported by the agency. Aligning with the COPS Office model, jails are not only a part of our communities but also a reflection of the communities we serve. In fact, jails are communities unto themselves, with sheriffs' offices responsible for the safety and care of all who live and work in them.

Finally, we at NSA especially extend our appreciation to the sheriffs and correctional staff who welcomed us into their facilities, shared information about their innovative programming, and participated in our focus groups. Their goal, like ours in developing this *Community Policing in Jails Compendium*, is to improve outcomes for justice-involved individuals and increase the likelihood of successful re-entry back into the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Thompson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jonathan F. Thompson  
Executive Director and CEO  
National Sheriffs' Association

# Acknowledgments

The authors wish to acknowledge the participation and cooperation of numerous sheriffs, jail officials, and their personnel who provided input into the content of the survey through focus groups and the 303 individual National Sheriffs' Association members who completed the survey. For a complete list of those agencies that provided permission to have their agency name included, see appendix A. We are also grateful to the remaining participants in the survey who were unable to have their agencies' names included. Finally, we are very grateful to the sheriffs and associated personnel whose programs resulted in Featured Programs (case studies on innovative programs in the field) for this compendium.

We would also like to thank the COPS Office program officials (Melissa Bradley, Toni Morgan-Wheeler, and LaToshia Butler) who worked with us every step of the way during this project. Melissa Bradley, former Policy Analyst, provided excellent guidance and support in the early stages of the project while we were conducting focus groups and designing and implementing the survey. Toni Morgan-Wheeler, Policy Analyst, stepped in when Ms. Bradley was detailed out for participation in the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. Ms. Morgan-Wheeler thoughtfully helped guide us through completion of all deliverables, facilitating discussions with the publications team, and helped us with adapting our strategy because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its significant impact on sheriffs' offices nationwide. Finally, Ms. Butler, Policy Analyst, Training & Partner Engagement Division, helped facilitate the final completion of the compendium for publication.

In addition, we thank the leadership of the COPS Office, National Policing Institute, and National Sheriffs' Association for their support of this important work and collaboration in addressing the philosophy, practices, and programming of community policing in jail settings.

# Introduction

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) of the U.S. Department of Justice has defined community-oriented policing (COP) as a “philosophy that promotes strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues, such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime” (COPS Office 2014, 1). COP represents both a philosophy of policing as well as a comprehensive approach or strategy for addressing public safety and improved quality of life for community residents (BJA 1994; Geller and Swanger 1995) that emphasizes mutual respect and trust (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1991).

More than 25 years ago, the Police Foundation (now known as the National Policing Institute) documented the importance of community policing as an innovation in American policing in a nationwide survey. Nearly all police executives who responded to the survey (98 percent) believed that police departments should pursue COP, and fully 85 percent of respondents from agencies with 100 or more officers claimed their agency had either adopted it or were moving in that direction (Wycoff 1994). A decade later, researchers noted that COP was “the most important development in policing over the past quarter century” (Skogan and Roth 2004) and that it was “perhaps the most widely adopted police innovation of the last decade” (Weisburd and Eck 2004).

Today, almost three decades later, COP is clearly widespread in law enforcement. However, former Fresno (California) Sergeant David Kurtze asserted that “Far too often, local jails are left out of the picture, when they should be identified as the missing piece of the community-policing paradigm” (Kurtze 2000, 16). This important assertion raised awareness of this gap and underscored the fact that jails are indeed communities.

Simply put, *community* has been defined by the MacMillan Dictionary as “a group of people living in the same place.” It is puzzling, then, that jails have not formerly been considered communities for the purposes of implementing COP. While incarcerated individuals are the only people who live in the jail 24/7, jail staff and those from supporting organizations spend significant amounts of time working in the jails and are therefore part of that community. In addition, jails are embedded in the broader communities in which they are located. Local communities have vested interests in the jails, their role, and the individuals who work in them. Moreover, formerly incarcerated individuals frequently return to their local communities—which in many cases are the communities surrounding jail facilities.

At the 2000 National Institute of Corrections’ (NIC) Large Jails Network Conference, attendees came to the realization that “the principles of [COP] can be implemented in correctional facilities” and that “there is a need to look at incorporating its philosophy into facility operations” (NIC 2000, 33). There have been

several studies conducted in prisons in which researchers have evaluated procedural justice in correctional settings or examined the extent of alignment between community corrections and community policing. For example, more than 30 years ago, Byrne argued that it was time to put “community” back into community corrections, noting that “police administrators across the country have begun the long, difficult, incremental change process that the development of community-oriented policing entails; it is time now for corrections administrators to do the same” (Byrne 1989, 494). Byrne noted the importance of community support in successful community corrections and further asserted the importance of “service brokerage” (485) for probationers in the community within the Massachusetts Intensive Probation Supervision program.

While researchers and public policy makers have acknowledged that the philosophies of COP, procedural justice, and legitimacy have been adopted in corrections (Lambert, Hogan, and Griffin 2007; LaVigne et al. 2006; Leitenberger, Semeyna, and Spelman 2003; Tyler 2010), there is limited evidence that COP principles have been applied in local jails. Nevertheless, Kurtze (2000) established the link between jails and communities and the important role community policing may play in delivering positive outcomes. For example, he noted:

The jail population mirrors that in the community, so if [COP] works on the outside, it should work inside the facility as well. It can improve inmate disciplinary problems and population management . . . and counter negative visions . . . [C]ooperating on projects can also improve the relations of law enforcement and corrections. Benefits to the officer include self-satisfaction achieved through solving problems . . . and a chance to make a real difference . . . (Kurtze 2000, 31).

Perhaps not surprisingly, Kurtze’s assertion has not been widely tested, but evidence from a recent study conducted in the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department appears to confirm it. After a COP program—the “town sheriff” model—was tested in one classification/floor of the LA Men’s Central Jail, inmate grievances and disciplinary actions were reduced (Amendola, Valdovinos, and Thorkildsen 2019).

While neither scientists nor practitioners have done much to emphasize the application of COP or procedural justice in jails, in this compendium we present practices and innovations in jails consistent with these underlying concepts. These examples of the application of COP and procedural justice in jails were derived from a variety of sources:

- A series of six focus groups with personnel from sheriffs’ offices and jails
- A national survey of sheriffs and jail administrators who are members of the National Sheriffs’ Association and are responsible for jails, yielding 303 responses



- A review of the scientific literature and other resources on community policing and procedural justice and its application to jail settings
- A series of case studies in seven different agencies resulting in eight Featured Programs that embody the principles of COP or procedural justice

The results reported herein are part of a broader effort to build upon and expand principles of COP as applied in jails. Although the COPS Office has supported unique jail-related community policing projects such as monitoring offenders on conditional release and prisoner re-entry (see COPS Office 2021), few, if any, research or public reports have emphasized the fact that jails have adopted practices and programs consistent with the underlying philosophy of COP.

Numerous interventions, practices, and programs consistent with COP or procedural justice have been identified in our research. As such, this comprehensive Jails Compendium is designed to emphasize and promote the philosophy and strategies of community policing as jail, personnel, and inmate management tools. Various innovative and routine ways in which sheriffs or other jail leaders have adopted the philosophy (or administered the principles) of COP are highlighted in this compendium. Associated strategies, such as engaging the external and internal jail community in problem solving to ensure safety and promote a greater quality of life for all who live and work in the nation's jails, underscore the extent to which COP has already been applied in jail settings.

The components of the Jails Compendium are as follows:

1. An executive summary and quick reference guide
2. A review of the scientific literature
3. A promising practices guide showcasing programs and practices consistent with COP
4. Eight featured programs that exemplify COP
5. A monograph of the survey results based on the 303 responding agencies
6. A strategy brief on pandemic preparedness in jails and its link to community preparedness

This compendium highlights some of the unique strategies and approaches employed nationwide in the hope that others may find useful in their jails. The lessons learned by those leaders who have participated in this project will reduce the challenges of implementing those strategies by shedding light on various considerations involved. Finally, it is hoped that agencies will continue to innovate and share their collective experiences and in doing so promote healthy and safe learning communities throughout jails nationwide.

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# About the Authors

**Karen L. Amendola, PhD**, is Chief Behavioral Scientist at the National Policing Institute, where she has worked for more than 25 years. She has worked with numerous law enforcement agencies at the local, state, and federal levels. Just a few examples include Arlington, Texas; Charlotte, North Carolina; Chicago; Detroit; Newark, New Jersey; Seattle; Travis County, Texas; and Washington, D.C. Dr. Amendola recently completed a study with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department on community policing and gender responsiveness and has worked with other sheriffs' offices on the *Hiring in the Spirit of Service* initiative. With her colleagues, she recently developed a work-family conflict scale published in *Policing: An International Journal* (2021). Currently she is the lead investigator (with her peers) on a study of organizational stress and its impact on police officers and sheriffs' deputies.

As an industrial/organizational psychologist, Dr. Amendola conducts research on officer safety, eyewitness identification, dog encounters, psychological measures, shift schedules, and community policing training and evaluation. She currently serves on the American Psychological Association's Presidential Committee on Use of Force against African Americans and recently served as the Chair of the Division of Experimental Criminology of the American Society of Criminology (2018–2019). Dr. Amendola is also a member of the American Society of Criminology, International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology. With her colleagues, she won the prestigious Outstanding Experimental Field Trial for her examination of the impact of 8-, 10-, and 12-hour shifts and the impact of hours on health, safety, performance, and quality of life.

**Carrie Hill, Esq.**, is an attorney and national criminal justice consultant. She has dedicated her career of more than 30 years to providing criminal justice consulting, policy development, and professional development seminars in correctional law to educate and empower those working in the correctional industry. She is the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association and the Chief Jail Advisor to the National Sheriffs' Association.

**Maria Valdovinos Olson** is a Senior Research Associate at the National Policing Institute and doctoral candidate in sociology at George Mason University. Ms. Valdovinos Olson's primary area of research focuses on issues of safety, health, and wellness in the administration of justice, and she has expertise in policing, jails, and re-entry. She is currently co-principal investigator on a National Institute of Justice-funded project investigating the adverse impacts of organizational stress on officer health and wellness.



Her portfolio of work spans the areas of safety and wellness in policing and corrections, community policing in the United States and Mexico, and the impact of a procedural justice intervention on crime hot spots and police legitimacy. Recent work on gender responsive programming in jails, impact of restorative justice programming on recidivism, and development of a work-family conflict scale for police officers and their families has been published in, respectively, *Women and Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, and *Policing: An International Journal*. Ms. Valdovinos Olson earned her BA from Northwestern University and her MA in sociology from George Mason University.

**Ben Gorban** is a Senior Project Associate at the National Policing Institute. Mr. Gorban works on incident reviews of public safety responses to mass violence and terrorism attacks and mass demonstrations, school security issues, operational assessments, and other law enforcement–related projects.

He has more than 10 years of experience supporting national-scope law enforcement–related projects including the provision of technical assistance and policy analysis support on projects related to community policing and the role of social media in law enforcement, countering violent extremism, officer safety and wellness, cybercrime, school security, and traffic safety. He has worked on projects with the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, as well as state and local governments and law enforcement agencies.

# About the National Sheriffs' Association

The **National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)** is a professional association, chartered in 1940, dedicated to serving the Office of Sheriff and its affiliates through police education, police training, and general law enforcement information resources. The NSA represents thousands of sheriffs, deputies, and other law enforcement agents, public safety professionals, and concerned citizens nationwide.

Through the years, the NSA has provided programs for sheriffs, their deputies, chiefs of police, and others in the field of criminal justice to perform their jobs in the best possible manner and to better serve the people of their cities, counties, or jurisdictions.

The NSA's headquarters is located in Alexandria, Virginia, and offers police training, police information, court security training, jail information, and other law enforcement services to sheriffs, deputies, and others throughout the nation. The NSA has worked to forge cooperative relationships with local, state, and federal criminal justice professionals across the nation to network and share information about homeland security programs and projects.

The NSA serves as the center of a vast network of law enforcement information, filling requests for information daily and enabling criminal justice professionals—including police officers, sheriffs, and deputies—to locate the information and programs they need. The NSA recognizes the need to seek information from the membership, particularly the sheriff and the state sheriffs' associations, to meet the needs and concerns of individual NSA members. While working on the national level, the NSA has continued to seek grass-roots guidance, ever striving to work with and for its members, its clients, and the community.

The NSA has through the years assisted sheriffs' offices, sheriffs' departments, and state sheriffs' associations in locating and preparing applications for state and federal homeland security grant funding. The NSA record and reputation for integrity and dependability in such public safety programs among government agencies is well recognized and has led to continuing opportunities to apply for grants on the national, state, and local levels as well as management of service contracts.

To learn more, visit the NSA online at [www.sheriffs.org](http://www.sheriffs.org).

# About the National Policing Institute (formerly known as the National Police Foundation)

The **National Policing Institute** is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to pursuing excellence through science and innovation in policing. As the country's oldest police research organization, the National Policing Institute has learned that police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best, the paradigm of evidence-based policing.

Established in 1970, the National Policing Institute has conducted seminal research in police behavior, policy, and procedure and works to transfer to local agencies the best new information about practices for dealing effectively with a range of important police operational and administrative concerns. Motivating all the National Policing Institute's efforts is the goal of efficient, humane policing that operates within the framework of democratic principles and the highest ideals of the nation.

To learn more, visit the National Policing Institute at [www.policinginstitute.org](http://www.policinginstitute.org).

# About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than \$20 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 130,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- More than 800,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations and the COPS Training Portal.
- Almost 500 agencies have received customized advice and peer-led technical assistance through the COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, <https://cops.usdoj.gov>.



Jails are communities in and of themselves, whose members are the individuals incarcerated and the correctional staff employed there; they are also part of the broader communities in which they are located, where the correctional staff live and to which the incarcerated population will eventually return. Community-oriented policing is as important in jails as it is in towns, cities, and counties; this compendium of community policing and procedural justice practices and programs, developed by the National Policing Institute and the National Sheriffs' Association, features research and promising practices as well as eight successful programs operated by seven sheriffs' departments that will be illuminating for other agencies nationwide.



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To obtain details on COPS Office  
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COPS Office Response  
Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online  
at [cops.usdoj.gov](https://cops.usdoj.gov).



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call 800-424-7827.  
Visit the National Sheriffs'  
Association online at [sheriffs.org](https://sheriffs.org).