

Body-Worn Video in Madison:

Community Engagement Sessions

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YWCA Madison
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Discussion questions

- On a day-to-day, week-to-week basis, what are your interactions and transactions with police?
- Are there any reasons you might not call police in a situation where you need help or information?
- What do you know about body-worn cameras for police?
- For citizens and communities, what are the positive and negative aspects of police body cams?

Participating Community Groups

- 100 Black Men
- BROTHER, Nehemiah
- Centro Hispano, Latino Youth Group
- Freedom Inc.
- LGBTQ Group, Coordinated with the LGBTQ Campus Center including outreach to Alianza Latina & GSAFE

Community Groups (cont.)

- Man Up, Nehemiah
- Madison-area Urban Ministry
- Operation Fresh Start
- Third St., YWCA Madison
- UNIDOS
- Union de Trabajadores Inmigrantes (UTI)
- Urban League of Greater Madison

General Perspective

- No strong feeling or detailed argument in favor of police officers wearing BWV cameras.
- Expression of potential positive and negative impact of BWV cameras
- Final conclusion that the policy would not improve the chances of residents' safety

Direct Concerns about BWV

- Officer manipulation of the camera device
- General false sense of security
- Privacy

Manipulation of the camera

“Can police alter the image? Can they turn it off and on at will? What are police bringing into situations when they arrive?”

False Sense of Security

“Body cams are not a panacea.”

Privacy

- “Privacy is going to be violated. Now that police are going to have cameras, people are going to be even more scared to fight for their rights to get their papers.”

Perspective on Police/Community Relationship

- Mistrust
- Fear
- Frustration with racial profiling and discrimination

Dominating Themes and Perspectives

- Mistrust of the enforcement system, policy, and practice
- Fear of excessive force, incarceration, and deportation
- Racial Profiling and discrimination

Mistrust

“I don’t see how [BWV] would help at all, because I feel like police officers already have way too much power, and so I feel like it would just add to their power dynamic and would add to the list of things that they can wield against you, so I just don’t see how it can help”

Fear

- “It makes the people who are being watched feel like they are bad people. It makes you feel like something bad is going to happen.”
- “I feel that police officers are paranoid of our reactions...They use extreme force when unnecessary. They don't know how to treat people.”

Racial Profiling and discrimination

- “I feel worried for my son and husband because minorities are being targeted.”
- “If you are not white then you are bad, that’s the message that is being sent by the police.”
- “In the same way they are targeting the black community they will eventually target the Latino community.”

Individual community concerns

- African American
- Latino
- Hmong
- LGBTQ
- Survivors of Domestic Violence

Support for Police and their Work

- “...we are so quick to put labels on police officers...they aren’t all like that.”
- “The majority of cops are probably good people.”
- “[Seeing police in the neighborhood] makes me feel safe.
- “It is also about their safety.”

Central Community Recommendations

- “The money that they are using for body cameras should actually go to police trainings that better inform them how to work with the community.”
- “We need more cultural competence in the police department.”
- “And train community members, what things are legal—what is not.”

Community Perspective

- Who is effected?
- What is at stake?
- Life in Madison
- Community policing vs. hotspot policing
- What should be done?

YWCA/CFFPP RECOMMENDATIONS

(based on Community feedback)

- Ban racial profiling and establish enforceable protections against it.
- Establish teams that include mental health professionals as primary responders or co-responders to crisis situations.
- End police department quotas for tickets and arrests.

Recommendations (cont.)

- Ban failure to appear fines or warrants, cap court fine revenue, and allow judges discretion to waive or initiate payment plans for fines and fees for low-income people.
- Revise police department use of force policies to: require officers use minimal force and de-escalation tactics, carry a non-lethal weapon, and intervene when another officer uses excessive force.
- Require police officers to undergo consistent racial bias training and bias testing, and use findings to determine hiring, performance evaluations and decisions about where to deploy officers.

Recommendations (cont.)

- Develop a community communication strategy. This could include a community advisory board or community ambassadors. If any action is taken or policy is changed based on the feedback in this report, how will it be disseminated to marginalized and vulnerable communities to begin to rebuild trust?