

Duluth Racial Bias Audit – February 2023 Progress Update

Summary

Since the contract was fully executed in September 2022, CJI has been participating in monthly meetings with the Racial Bias Audit Team. These meetings involve CJI providing progress updates towards the 11 audit objectives, the RBAT providing input on the approach for the audit objectives, and both groups working collaboratively to ensure the audit is as comprehensive as possible.

In February 2023, CJI conducted a site visit to meet with members of the Department and the community to inform our assessments for each audit objective. These opportunities to hear from those within and outside of the Department are essential to the completion of a thorough and objective audit. CJI was welcomed by department and community members alike, with numerous conversations providing necessary insight into the operations and public perception of DPD. Further details of all interviews, focus groups, and meetings conducted can be found within the respective audit objective sections below. The team also made progress on document reviews related to the audit objective topics as well as best practices research on civilian review boards and interactions with BIPOC communities. The CJI project team lead, Katie Zafft, continues to participate in regular observation of DPD's Patrol Division through twice monthly ridealongs with different shifts, patrol crews, and officers. An overview of work to date on each of the audit objectives is below.

Audit Objective #1: Recruitment, Hiring, and Personnel Practices

CJI is finalizing a review of policies and other materials related to hiring. CJI conducted interviews with DPD staff who work on recruiting, hiring, and retention to better understand whether their practices and policies align with best practices in promoting a diverse workforce.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol that incorporates best practices in recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining a diverse workforce.
- Compiled more than 250 relevant policies, training materials, and hiring materials relevant to recruitment, hiring, and personnel practices.
- Developed an interview protocol for staff involved with recruiting, hiring, and personnel processes in preparation for the February site visit.

Audit Objective #2: Bias and Interracial Relations Trainings

CJI interviewed relevant training staff to assess DPD's implementation of bias and interracial relations trainings. CJI also conducted focus groups with Patrol and Investigations Division officers and supervisors to discuss their perception of these trainings and application of skills learned.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol for measuring how trainings focused on bias have been received by DPD staff and whether there has been a measurable impact on officer behavior.
- Drafted and distributed an anonymous web-based survey of DPD staff.
- Drafted an interview protocol for a meeting with relevant training staff.
- Drafted a focus group protocol for DPD officers relevant to audit objectives 2, 3, and 4.
- Conducted an anonymous web-based survey of DPD staff to assess attitudes towards the Racial Bias Audit, opinions about the prevalence of white supremacy or racism within the Department (by individuals or departmental culture), and how the department addresses issues about race and ethnicity through policy and practice.

Audit Objective #3: BIPOC Community Relations

CJI continues to assess DPD's programming and engagement with BIPOC community organizations, their hiring of BIPOC individuals to engage with the community, and whether DPD is following best practices for interactions with BIPOC communities. CJI conducted a focus group with Community Engagement Officers as well as focus groups with Patrol and Investigations Division officers and supervisors to discuss department members' interactions with BIPOC community members and any possible impact of racial tensions within their work. In addition, we held preliminary meet-and-greets with leaders and members of BIPOC organizations in Duluth. These initial conversations help inform pathways for information collection about BIPOC community members' interactions with and perception of DPD. It is anticipated that information will be collected in a variety of ways through group meetings, one-on-one discussions, and surveys to ensure we have as wide a reach as possible.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol that outlines the framework by which CJI will assess DPD's engagement with BIPOC communities and the two groups' attitudes toward each other.
- Compiled and reviewed more than 30 policies, directives, and resources relevant to community engagement, diversity, equity, and inclusion staffing.
- Drafted an interview protocol for and conducted a meeting with DPD's Public Information Officer.
- Drafted a focus group protocol for Community Engagement Officers.
- Drafted a focus group protocol for DPD officers relevant to audit objectives 2, 3, and 4.
- Drafted a focus group protocol for Duluth BIPOC community members.
- Compiled a list of best practices for law enforcement engagement with BIPOC communities.

Audit Objective #4: Suspicious and Criminal Activity

CJI conducted focus groups with DPD officers and supervisors within the Patrol and Investigations Divisions to discuss how officers approach calls regarding suspicious or criminal activity. CJI interviewed personnel from the St. Louis County Dispatch Center to learn more about how staff intake and dispatch calls related to suspicious persons including the information they typically provide to officers. We have received data on responses to community generated calls and officer-initiated stops and will conduct an assessment to understand if there are demographic or outcome differences.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol that outlines the framework by which CJI will assess how DPD evaluates reports of suspicious or criminal activity for possibly racially motivated exaggerations and/or fabrications.

- Compiled and reviewed information relating to how officers evaluate reports of suspicious or criminal activity and detecting racially biased motivations for such reports.
- Drafted an interview protocol for a meeting with relevant dispatch staff.
- Drafted a focus group protocol for DPD officers relevant to audit objectives 2, 3, and 4.

Audit Objective #5: Gathering and Interpreting DPD Data

CJI has continued participating in ridealongs with patrol, which help inform how DPD's data collection systems work in practice. While on site, CJI observed a COMPSTAT meeting and conducted an interview with command staff related to the internal use of data.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol that outlines the framework by which CJI will assess how DPD gathers and interprets data.
- Completed a review of publicly available data dashboards, DPD policies, directives, presentations, and reports regarding racial/ethnic breakdown of stops and other police-public interactions (e.g., use of force).
- Drafted an interview protocol and conducted preliminary interviews with data analytics staff.
- Drafted an interview protocol for a meeting with command staff.

Audit Objective #6: Vehicle and Pedestrian Stops

The methodology CJI will use to evaluate whether DPD vehicle and pedestrian stops align with the expectations of the audit guidelines was introduced during the January Racial Bias Audit Team monthly meeting and will be discussed further in the February meeting.

Audit Objective #7: Civil Disturbance

CJI conducted an interview with command staff relevant to civil disturbances during the February site visit.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol to evaluate DPD's practices with respect to civil disturbances based on national standards of best practice.
- Compiled more than 20 policies, directives, and trainings relevant to civil disturbance.
- Drafted an interview protocol for a meeting with command staff.
- Completed a review of DPD policies, directives, and trainings relevant to the Department's response to civil disturbances.

Audit Objective #8: Immigrant and Refugee Populations

CJI continues to assess DPD's policies and protocols on interactions with immigrant and refugee populations and the Department's adherence to best practices. We are also building connections with leaders and members of organizations that serve immigrant and refugee populations in Duluth, which will lead to future interviews regarding the relationship between DPD and immigrant and refugee communities.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol to evaluate DPD's practices in interactions with immigrant and refugee populations.

- Compiled and reviewed relevant policies and directives from DPD and a select group of law enforcement agencies that interact with immigrant communities.
- Drafted an interview protocol for a meeting with community leaders that work with or serve immigrant and refugee populations in Duluth.

Audit Objective #9: Duluth Civilian Review Board

CJI continues to assess the accomplishments of the DCRB over the last five years. CJI is also completing a comparative analysis of the DCRB and a sample of civilian review boards in other jurisdictions. We are drafting a community survey to assess, among other things, the visibility, accessibility, and usefulness of the DCRB to the Duluth community. CJI plans to conduct focus groups with current and past DCRB members in a future site visit or virtually if needed. During the February site visit, CJI conducted interviews with DPD staff engaged with the DCRB.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol that outlines the framework by which CJI will assess the role of the DCRB and determine recommendations for increased effectiveness.
- Compiled and reviewed more than 20 public communications, reports, and resources relevant to the DCRB's activities over the past nine years.
- Drafted an interview protocol for a meeting with DPD staff engaged with the DCRB.
- Drafted a focus group protocol for current and past DCRB members.
- Compiled a list of best practices for civilian review boards with powers comparable to the DCRB.

Audit Objective #10: DPD Camera Data Review

CJI has gained access to videos associated with the sampled stops and began reviewing videos in February.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol that details the level of review that body-worn camera information can provide and the actions and behaviors that may represent biased behavior.
- Completed the sampling methodology and received approval from RBAT.
- Defined the sample of stops and provided to DPD to ensure video retention and compilation of supplementary data for each encounter.
- Received a data file with associated documentation.

Audit Objective #11: Use of Force

CJI is continuing to review DPD policies, directives, and data regarding use of force incidents. DPD has agreed to include CJI as observers for any use of force review board meetings that occur during the audit period. To date, none have been conducted.

Completed Milestones:

- Developed an assessment protocol that details the benchmarked standards for documenting, investigating, and adjudicating officer use of force as well as public transparency of the process.
- Compiled more than 400 DPD policies, directives, documents, and data regarding use of force incidents.
- Reviewed and assessed DPD's publicly available use of force information.
- Conducted a preliminary interview with the Use of Force Coordinator to understand the documentation and review process associated with uses of force in the Department.