

*Training the Guardians of Democracy*

**BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST IN  
WASHINGTON STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**WHAT WE'VE ALREADY DONE**

The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, where all city and county peace officers receive their state mandated training, began changing the culture of policing two years ago. We moved away from the military, boot-camp model for basic training to a strategy that develops critical thinking leaders. While retaining a strong tactical skills program to keep officers safe, we've restructured the curriculum and integrated behavioral science into all programs to ensure that officers have better skills and tools to de-escalate conflict and reduce the use of force. We have emphasized the honor and nobility of the profession, instilling deeper respect for constitutional rights and emphasizing the importance of protecting both life *and* liberty. Recruits are inspired to see their role as guardians, protecting the people they serve, rather than warriors coming into communities to conquer.

This transformation in our training culture has been well-received by recruits and the results are very promising. Thanks to a financial investment from the legislature, we are currently engaged with a team from Seattle University to conduct a long-term, scientifically based research and evaluation process to demonstrate the efficacy of this approach.

**WHAT IS NEEDED NEXT**

Our recruits leave the academy after a 5-month immersion in the "guardian" culture and return to their home agency culture which may, or may not, support the guardian philosophy. Many law enforcement leaders in the state have expressed strong interest in adopting the guardian culture in their own agencies but need training programs, guidance and support to effectively institutionalize the necessary changes. We have developed a plan for implementing a series of research-based programs to instruct, guide, and support those leaders in transforming their agency culture.

**THE RESOURCES NEEDED FOR SUCCESS**

An additional investment from the legislature is needed to fund a Program Manager and an Administrative Support person to develop and oversee a statewide cadre of trainers (employed and paid for by local agencies) to deliver a series of proven programs that will help transform agencies toward a culture that will improve public trust.

Cost for personnel and support to administer this program (per year) .....**\$350,000**

## THE LEED MODEL - The Building Blocks of Justice-Based Policing

The current state of law enforcement can probably be best described with this statement: *"People don't care so much about crime stats; they care about how they are treated"*.

Professor Tom Tyler of Yale University has done extensive work in this area under the rubric of Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy. He has found that the perception of fairness and justice by those we serve is significantly impacted by the way we address - or fail to address - basic human needs during interactions on the street.

Tyler's work explains why, after three decades of dramatically falling crime rates, improved training, and widely used community policing strategies, the public perception of police has not improved.

Justice-Based Policing is a *strategy to improve the quality and outcome of interactions* between police and citizens while improving officer safety. The LEED model is a tool to guide officers when employing this strategy. Over time and across multiple interactions the use of Justice-Based Policing serves to strengthen community trust and confidence in the police and increase the lawful behavior and future cooperation of citizens.

Justice-Based Policing is not a new idea. It's not a program and it's not complicated. It's the way good cops have always done it.

Rather than adding another layer of training and mandates on top of our current practices, this strategy can be easily and logically *integrated* into all of our interactions by employing four basic principles represented under the **LEED** model:

### **Listen and Explain with Equity and Dignity**

- **Listen** - Allow people to give their side of the story; give them a voice, and let them vent. *Listening is the most powerful way to demonstrate respect.*
- **Explain** - Explain what you're doing, what they can do, and what's going to happen.
- **Equity** - Tell them why you are taking action. The reason must be fair and free of bias, and show that their side of the story was considered.
- **Dignity** - Act with dignity and leave them with their dignity.

By addressing these four basic human needs officers elevate the quality of the interaction and people are more likely to see the police as helping rather than controlling...as guardians rather than warriors. The result is improved officer safety and increased community trust.

-Director Sue Rahr and staff - Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (2013)