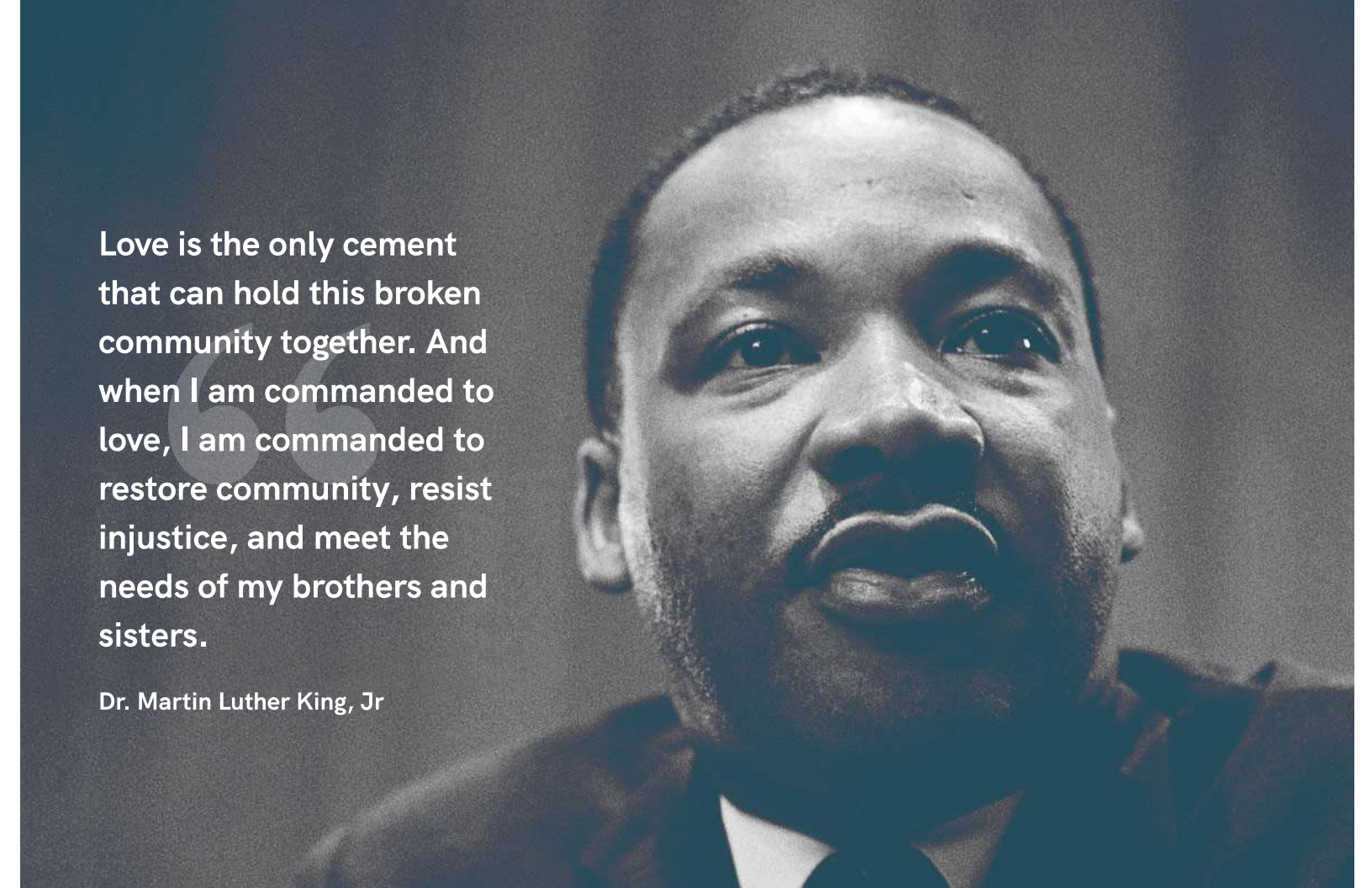




CITY OF SEATTLE EVALUATION REPORT




empowerinitiative.org

A close-up portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. looking upwards and slightly to the right. The image is in a dark, monochromatic style with a blue tint. A large, faint, stylized number '66' is visible in the background.

Love is the only cement
that can hold this broken
community together. And
when I am commanded to
love, I am commanded to
restore community, resist
injustice, and meet the
needs of my brothers and
sisters.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

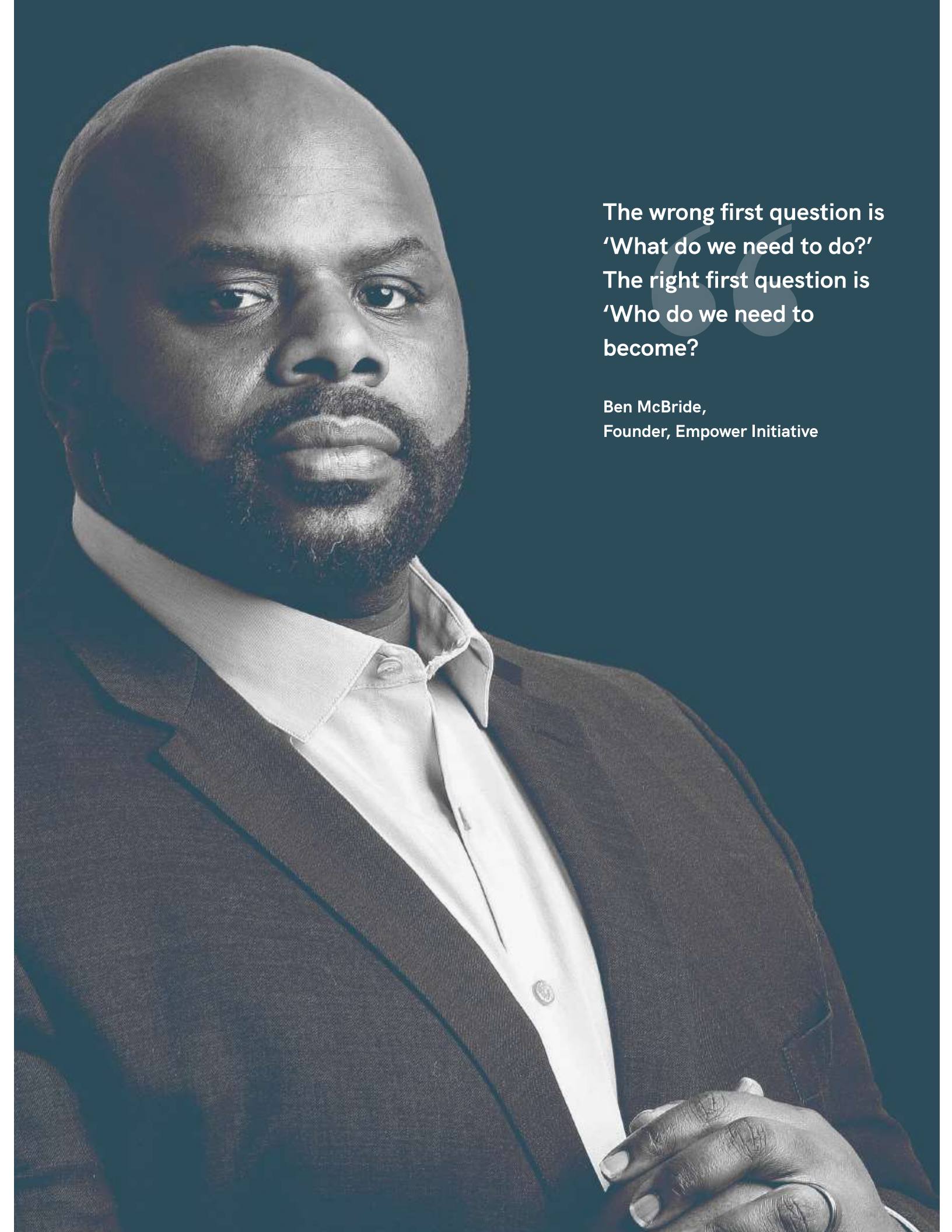
A portrait of Bell Hooks smiling. The image is tinted with a light blue/cyan color. A large, faint, stylized quotation mark is visible in the background.

Bridges are made to
walk on.

Bell Hooks

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A portrait of Ben McBride, a Black man with a beard, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a solid dark blue.

The wrong first question is
'What do we need to do?'
The right first question is
'Who do we need to
become?'

Ben McBride,
Founder, Empower Initiative

ABOUT EMPOWER INITIATIVE

Fostering Belonging

Led by founder Rev. Ben McBride, [Empower Initiative \(EI\)](#) is a leadership development organization.

Founded in 2014 and based in Oakland, California, EI supports creating a society where everyone belongs through cultural and structural strategies in partnership with the private, public, cultural, and social change sectors.

Why we do this:

It can be exhausting, frustrating work when deeply rooted blind spots — within our organizations and in the wider world — prevent our progress.

You're under fire internally and externally for not creating belonging, and it's hurting not only morale but also productivity, retention, and your bottom line.

We get it, and you are not alone: Staying the course as you work to create diversity, equity, and inclusion becomes harder and harder when no matter what you do, your culture is stuck in a place of exclusion and "othering."

These blind spots are why Empower Initiative exists.

When nothing else has worked, we're at your side to help you and your city, company and communities uncover your blind spots and move forward with renewed confidence.

How we do this:

We offer [5 ways](#) to empower our clients, rooted in 20 years of experience as practitioners!

We empower.



CITY OF SEATTLE: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS REVIEW

Purpose

President Obama's [21st Century Policing Task Force Report](#) (2015) details key insights that empower forward progress in trust building and belonging between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Informed by these best practices and our work with [Stanford University's Principled Policing Training](#), we curated the Community Conversations Initiative to facilitate education, dialogue, and input in service to Seattle's Chief of Police search.

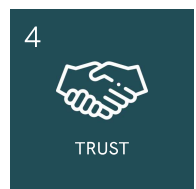
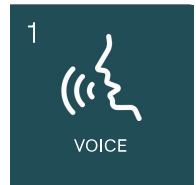
Procedural Justice

Of the many best practices found in the 2015 report are the four pillars of procedural justice. Procedural justice speaks to the idea of fair processes, and how people's perception of fairness is strongly impacted by the quality of their experiences and not only the end result of these experiences. Procedural justice theory has been applied to various settings, including supervisor-employee relations within organizations, educational settings, and the criminal justice system. In the criminal justice context, most procedural justice research has focused on citizen-police interactions.



"Procedural justice posits that people are likely to comply with the law, cooperate with authorities, and engage with them when they are treated fairly, which the public tends to interpret through how they are treated as opposed to focusing on the outcomes of authorities' decisions. Research suggests that the way police treat citizens impacts how people think of themselves, especially how they think of themselves as citizens. Positive changes in procedural justice may encourage more democratic participation in government."

Dr. Tracey Meares
Walton Hale Hamilton Professor
Founding Director of the Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School



These gatherings leaned into the practice of Voice.

Outcome

We gathered community voice and recommendations for the City of Seattle to be used in the hiring process and first, 100 Days Plan of the new Chief of Police.

Process

Each event ran for 90 minutes, provided the same facilitator and agenda; including framing, education, and prompts for input. Through targeted strategies, we created in-person and virtual meetings, designed with equity, to ensure accessibility for Seattle residents. Included in the design was a focus on place (geographical location), language (included 9 interpreters), and technology (online events for those unable to travel).



COMMUNITY CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

DATA PERCENTAGE MAJORITY



RACE/ETHNICITY

Black/African: 47%
White/European: 25%
AAPI: 11%
Latino/Hispanic: 5%
Preferred not to answer: 5%
Middle Eastern: 2%

47% BLACK



AGE

Adults: 33%
Middle-aged adults: 25%
Young Adults: 22%
Youth: 11%
Senior Adults: 9%

33% ADULTS



GENDER

Cisgender Male: 60%
Cisgender Female: 40%

60% MALE



LARGEST NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATION

Central District
Downtown
Rainier Beach
West Seattle



CONVERSATION 1: FAITH COMMUNITY

Rooted in the Central District, Mount Calvary Church of God in Christ hosted the conversation from the perspective of the faith and religious community.

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"The city is hurting and crying out. We've been trapped indoors and at home with a pandemic for enormous amounts of time and people are tired. There has been a lot of mental instability, and we need the new police chief to understand and have greater insight regarding mental health issues that plague the community. The police chief needs to show love and know that everyone is not carrying around an AR15 and people just need understanding and love."

- Black wheelchair bound woman appearing to be mid 60's

Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 1: FAITH COMMUNITY

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"We need PC to understand the mistrust because of the history: There is a lot of mistrust due to history has to be addressed." - General Comment

"The community has solutions and we need resources. Respect us and honor what we need and that we have answers. The community doesn't need fixing from folks who aren't part of the community—they show up with disrespect." - Black woman appearing to be in her 40s

The biggest failure from policing in our community has been?

"Kids in the community are still trying to figure out why Charlena Lyles is not alive."

"Everyone deserves dignity and there are substance abuse issues and cops need to be aware."

"We need a radical imagination where we don't use guns to police and keep order. Dream of a more beautiful world!"

"A big failure has been the police creating fear in the community. We have to stop it."

"The biggest failure is that this behavior has still been allowed to go on. White folks can do what they want to do and the police just drive on by but they assault Black folks. We have to change the system. The police let white folks rob stores to buy their heroin but don't say anything." - Black formerly incarcerated man in his 40s

"Police departments need to be more transparent and accountable!" - Black woman appearing to be in her 50s



Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 1: FAITH COMMUNITY

The biggest failure from policing in our community has been?

"The police aren't seeing us as human. I can give examples where folks were treated as non-human. (pointing to a woman in the church) Her door was broken down and an assault rifle was in her face. Someone ended up passing away! They came to her building "16 deep" like it was war. The police don't need that amount of gun force. Issues can be resolved without an assault rifle. It used to be that cops would fight you and wrestle with you in the yard, not shoot and kill you. Officers must be trained. We deserve to be here and live and thrive. Our parents lived here and we have a right to be here. I don't care what's in the car when folks are stopped."

- Black woman appearing to be in her mid 30s

"I watched six or seven cops flying up the street to arrest someone drinking at the bus stop. Over Policing! They stopped me recently and asked, " What are you doing? Who are you?" It's discouraging to be treated poorly when you pay taxes and you're just trying to figure out what is going on. It's ridiculous how downtown Seattle is being over policed. The police officers "bumped my legs with their bikes" and once they found out I was a pastor, I was treated with more respect."

- Black older man appearing to be in his 60s

My greatest hope for the next police chief is?

"Police their cops and engage in maintaining the quality of self-care and officer-care. Police their inner circle and integrity will permeate out to everyone else."

"New chief has capacity and skill. There are two parts of the job, outward and inward: They need the rank and file to follow, and need to be able to communicate to the general public. Hoping the PC has capacity and experience of community engagement. They must have a proven record."

- Black man appearing to be in his 50s

"Intelligent enough to realize that the police department can't do the work alone."





CONVERSATION 2: BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Hosted virtually, the conversation with the business community was strongly attended by small business owners and corporate leaders proximate to downtown Seattle.

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"Small business owners want to be part of the business solution but they need help. Majority of businesses are small, but they want to participate and engage but don't know how." - white woman appearing to be in her 50s

"Workers don't want to go back into the office because of safety concerns!"

"The perception from investors is that the same thing will trickle down from SF to Seattle. Attracting investors is important for crime to be handled." - Arab man appearing to be in his 50s

Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 2: BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"Important for police to walk hand and hand with the business owners. It's important that the arms of government be in tight communication with the police and government. Folks don't often know who to call. They need the police chief to be clear about who to call and when to call."

- white woman appearing to be in her 60s

"Public-private partnerships are what work!"

"The unique thing I want the police chief to know is that those who openly use and deal drugs downtown are open and willing to change their behaviors in a way that makes the community more enjoyable. How can the police understand that rather than over policing."

- white man appearing to be in his 50s

"I see over two thousand customers a month! We're dealing with open drug use, folks exposing themselves, people stealing, breaking windows. The biggest problem is that if we call the police, there's no point because they are under staffed so nothing happens. I acknowledge racial inequalities exist, but I want to live somewhere where everyone is safe."

- white man appearing to be in his 40s

"We want a police chief that brings about action. If mental help is needed, we need pragmatic action."

"When thinking about the business community, we need a police chief to understand that means more than downtown businesses; include the industrial spaces as well!"

- white man appearing to be in his 50s

The biggest failure from policing in our community has been?

"When there's a call there's a lack so folks have stopped believing in the system. Systems must be working. If they are there, have them working."

- white woman appearing to be in her 50s



Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 2: BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The biggest failure from policing in our community has been?

"Biggest failure has been the lack of trust from both sides. How do we bring both parts: accountability and compassion? How do we bring trust back? How do we rebuild it?"

"Younger folks do not want to join a police force with absolutely no accountability, where police have killed those in mental health crises and beat protesters without consequence." - white man appearing to be in his 60s

"We want a police chief that brings about action. If mental help is needed, we need pragmatic action."

"When thinking about the business community, we need a police chief to understand that means more than downtown businesses; include the industrial spaces as well!" - white man appearing to be in his 50s

My greatest hope for the next police chief is?

*"They can address retention and the reputation of the department."
- white woman appearing to be in her 50s*

"My greatest hope for the next police chief is that they might finally have the tools and support to do the job that they are tasked with." - white man appearing to be in his 50s

"They will be a visionary who is able to attract the best. I am hoping the business community will support the monetary needs of police recruitment. I want someone who is able to deal with the union."

"They take time to get to know people in the neighborhood. Reaches out to parks and rec, etc. Someone who can get a sense of what everyone needs." - white man appearing to be in his 40s



Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 2: BUSINESS COMMUNITY

My greatest hope for the next police chief is?

"Someone who actually sets standards for the department." - Asian woman appearing to be in her 20s

"That they work diligently to establish trust with the business community, the city council, mayor's office and all stakeholders in the city. I also hope that the next chief stays in the position long enough to see change happen."

"I have a business in and our community is experiencing all the crime, open drug use and random vandalism found in other areas of the city. We see people in need of mental health services on our streets. We've also experienced recent incidents of Asian hate. I would like to see more community policing partnering with quasi public entities or organizations/leaders who know our community. More attention to working more closely with the communities they serve. There are many in our community who are frustrated and have often given up on turning to the Police for help." - Asian woman appearing to be in her 60s

My greatest hope, for my neighbors, from the next police chief is?

*"I don't want anyone to be afraid when they see a police car."
- white woman appearing to be in her 60s*

"We want folks to find what they need when they find themselves in different situations."





CONVERSATION 3: GENERAL COMMUNITY

North Seattle College hosted regional community members along with students from the college.

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"We are under a consent decree and not done a good job complying with that decree. The community is diverse and concerned. They've done a good job of picking concerns." - Black woman appearing to be in her 40s

"The city has needs. There are perceptions of red lining and the north end has a lot of diversity. Poor folks are struggling and I want a police chief to have an understanding of what the landscape is. The north end is also a marginalized community." - white woman appearing to be in her 60s

Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 3: GENERAL COMMUNITY

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"Community has a tendency to have a lot of meetings, so don't move too fast." - white man appearing to be in his 60s

"Treat folks with the utmost respect."

"The Black community does not need saving. We need a partner who respects all of us, individually and collectively. I would like HER to know that SHE should be adaptable and think differently. What do new ideas look like to HER? Get community input and share what it looks like." - Black woman appearing to be in her 60s

"The police chief needs to know what needs to be worked on and prioritize effectively!" - Black man appearing to be in his 20s

The biggest failure from policing in our community has been?

"There is a lack of respect for the Black community. 'Shoot now and ask questions later!' We don't need that thinking in this day and time. Take that into consideration; new training must be put in place. We need a change in the police mindset. They're not always wrong, but there is a lack of respect and police come from an idea that they must correct something. The police chief must work on relationships. The Black community needs relationship building. All communities need a good relationship but especially the Black community."
- Black woman appearing to be in her 60s

"The change from a guardian mentality to a warrior mentality; we need it the other way around. Be guardians not warriors!"



Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 3: GENERAL COMMUNITY

The biggest failure from policing in our community has been?

"The police force looks too white and Aryan; diversify the police force!" - white woman appearing to be in her 60s

"We ask our police officers to do too much. Homeless outreach, mental health, etc."

My greatest hope for the next police chief is?

"They can be a change agent to shift the community; I hope the next police chief is put in a position to be successful." - Black man appearing to be in his 20s

"I want the police department to reflect who they serve." - Black woman appearing to be in her 60s

My greatest hope, for my neighbors, from the next police chief is?

"I want the business communities to get what they need to feel safe." - Black man appearing to be in his 40s

"I want the youth to have a relationship with the police." - Black man appearing to be in his 20s

"I want the neighbors who need police services to have decreased response time!"





CONVERSATION 4: YOUTH COMMUNITY

Designed to engage young people in Seattle, this conversation was scheduled for a Saturday afternoon at the community center.

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"Create a good relationship between the community and police. Create a friendly face, play basketball, create a friendship. I want police to show up in public service not just to enforce the law." - Black boy appearing to be in his teens

"We want them present in the public meetings. We want them to show up and participate in meetings where accountability is centered. Be present and listen to our comments." - Black woman appearing to be in her 60s

Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 4: YOUTH COMMUNITY

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"The funding going into certain precincts doesn't match the behavior and it's a problem. Precincts that have systemic problems shouldn't be refunded." - Black woman appearing to be in her 30s

The biggest failure from policing in our community has been?

■ *"Engage with Black folks better. The interaction with black folks has been terrible."*

"It's been a failure that they haven't understood that community members are their equals."
- Black man appearing to be in his 60s

"The PD isn't bringing in different perspectives of training. A lack of diversifying who's being recruited, and not getting the voice of the community into the Police academy." - Asian man appearing to be in his 40s

"The biggest failure is the investment in precincts that are responsible for deaths. A lack of investment in precincts when they have harmed the community. The amount of money that's going into the precincts that aren't matching the activities that come from it."
- Black woman appearing to be in her 30s

My greatest hope for the next police chief is?

■ *"Fulfill the community's needs!"*

"That they have cultural competency and prioritize cultural competencies in this department!" - Asian woman appearing to be in her 20s

My greatest hope, for my neighbors, from the next police chief is?

"Meet with the community on a regular basis!" - Black boy appearing to be in his late teens

■ *"Police working with the community will change a lot."*





CONVERSATION 5: IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

As our final conversation, we hosted it virtually to ensure accessibility for non-english speaking community members.

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"Understand the dynamics in the community. Parents are working multiple jobs and the resources are not always the best but wants the police chief to come up with solutions about the advancement of folks and no criminalization." - Black woman appearing to be in her 50s

■ *"Immigrants are at a disadvantage and the language barrier might be an issue."*

Community Conversations Review

CONVERSATION 5: IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

The unique thing I need the new police chief to know about our community is?

"Not all refugees are created equal. We are professionals, artists, and musicians. The intergenerational trauma that has happened across the Kamaya culture has affected our community and we need more support. The next police chief needs to know the historical story and have targeted strategies for our community." - Asian woman appearing to be in her 20s

The biggest failure from policing in our community has been?

"The reaction police departments have had when folks who have been impacted by police brutality. Violent reactions from police are upsetting. No additional targets should come towards the community." - Asian woman appearing to be in her 20s

"A failure is the defensiveness from the cops."

My greatest hope for the next police chief is?

"Reach out to other communities and be visible. The trust can be rebuilt. Go out and learn about other folks' communities." - Asian woman appearing to be in her 60s

"Greatest hope is that they have grace for themselves. It's going to be hard, but to understand that they aren't alone."

"Provide transparency on how money is spent."
- Asian woman appearing to be in her 20s.

"Promote community engagement, be preventative not reactive, and build relationships with the community." - Black man appearing to be in his 30s



SUMMARY FINDINGS

After five community convenings that involved approximately 200 people, what emerged was a clear call for a Police Chief hire who has their leadership anchored in the principles of procedural justice:

1. Providing the general community with a voice in their interactions
2. Demonstrating respect for Black, indigenous, and people of color within the community in their interactions
3. Fairness concerning policing practices, ensuring that marginalized communities get the same opportunities as their white counterparts
4. Trust and transparency where police departments exist as a public service rather than an occupying force

Based on community input, we make the following ten recommendations for the police chief hiring process:

- A candidate must demonstrate experience in building trust with Black, indigenous, and people of color communities.
- A candidate must demonstrate experience in the skill of bridge-building and be committed to an ambassadorial role in communities where trust is low.
- A candidate must demonstrate experience in creative strategies that produce public safety without increasing the criminalization of Black, indigenous, and people of color.
- A candidate must be action-oriented, pragmatic, and solution-based to ensure safety and security for disparate communities.
- A candidate must demonstrate knowledge of the historical and generational effects of policing on Black, indigenous, and immigrant communities from countries with an authoritarian history.
- A candidate must demonstrate experience with implementing progressive policing practices as determined by the 21st Century Policing Task Force Report and the Department of Justice COPS Office.

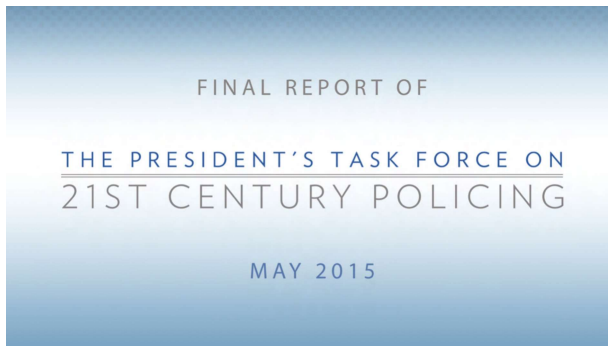
SUMMARY FINDINGS

- A candidate must provide a strategy for diversifying the police force, including hiring personnel that reflects the community.
- A candidate must not be adversarial to the first amendment rights of citizens to protest and must demonstrate experience in crowd control tactics that do not violate the constitutional rights of citizens.
- A candidate must demonstrate a background in holding police officers accountable for misconduct and express a willingness to work alongside the office for police accountability.
- A candidate must provide a strategy for training the police force that includes the involvement of community members.

Conclusion

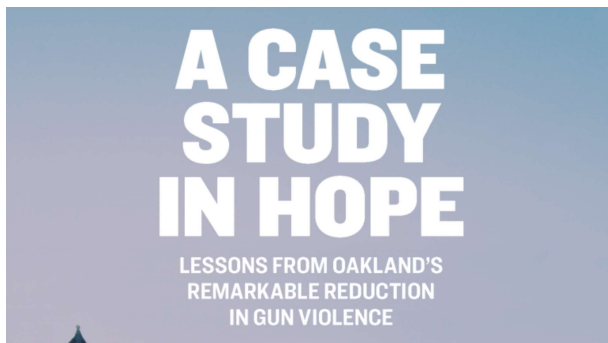
The Seattle community will be served best by their input, serving as guiding principles for the hiring process of the next police chief. The Police Chief should provide deeper investment and engagement with Black, immigrant, refugee, and business community stakeholders to ensure successful leadership of the police department. We recommend the review of this report and community engagement sessions follow the hire of the next Police Chief. Within the first 100 days of leadership, the new hire should revisit the communities participating in the listening sessions to operationalize their desires. Their follow-up will increase the likelihood of positive next steps to concretize voice, respect, neutrality, and trust, leading to a productive relationship between the police department and Seattle's communities.

RESOURCES APPENDIX



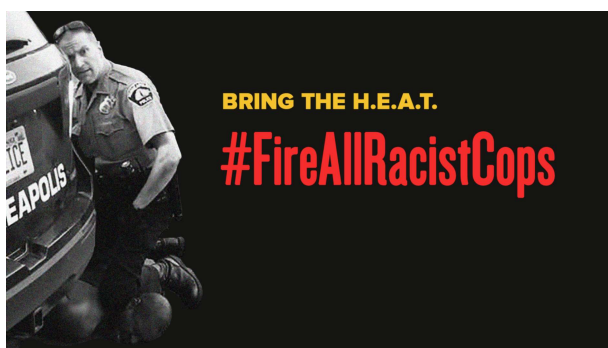
THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING

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A CASE STUDY IN HOPE: LESSONS FROM OAKLAND'S REMARKABLE REDUCTION IN GUN VIOLENCE

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LIVEFREE #BRINGTHEHEAT FRAMEWORK

[Read the framework](#)

THANK YOU

