



**BJA**  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice

The Law Enforcement  
**KNOWLEDGE LAB**



# LAUNCH EVENT EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The National Law Enforcement Knowledge Lab

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# LAUNCH EVENT EXECUTIVE BRIEF

## The National Law Enforcement Knowledge Lab

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) announced the creation of the National Law Enforcement Knowledge Lab at a launch event held in Los Angeles, California, at the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Headquarters. Approximately 100 people were in attendance representing DOJ leadership, law enforcement officers and leaders, civil rights advocates, prosecutors, researchers, national law enforcement association representatives, and other relevant stakeholders. This two-day event featured discussions among leaders and listening sessions with invited participants to learn how they felt the Knowledge Lab could be a vital tool for the field.

Building the Knowledge Lab requires input from stakeholders and vision from internal and external experts, practitioners, the community, and academia. This launch announced the concept and investment and serves as a visioning session for this critical initiative for law enforcement to build trust and improve public safety.

Associate Attorney General (ASG) Vanita Gupta opened the event with the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance Karlton Moore, LAPD Chief Michel Moore, and Commissioner Eileen Decker of the Board of Los Angeles Police Commissioners. During her opening remarks, ASG Gupta identified five objectives for the Knowledge Lab:



### KEY OBJECTIVES

- 01 Identify core competencies of constitutional policing**
- 02 Assist law enforcement in voluntarily assessing their practices, policies, training, and outcomes**
- 03 Identify gaps in resources, training, and services that the department should consider addressing**
- 04 Provide on-demand consultation, advice, research, and assistance to agencies that are looking to change**
- 05 And allow for external collaboration with leaders regarding constitutional policing and crime prevention – including civil rights advocacy organizations, policing experts, community-based organizations, and national and international academic research institutions.**



The agenda was crafted to provide opportunities for participants to hear from some of the leading professionals in fair and impartial policing and invited participants to share their vision for the Knowledge Lab through a variety of facilitated breakout sessions. Feedback from the participants on the Launch Event was overwhelmingly positive, noting that the event empowered remarkable and productive conversations. These conversations will continue to be referenced as the point at which the Department of Justice established this innovative resource for law enforcement and the communities they serve.

## AGENDA

# NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT KNOWLEDGE LAB LAUNCH

Los Angeles, California — April 27–28, 2022

## DAY 1: APRIL 27, 9:00 A.M. – 5:15 P.M.

TIME	SESSION
9:00 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.	Announcement of the National Law Enforcement Knowledge Lab
10:15 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.	Fireside Chats: Where Are We, Where Could We Be, and Where Is Policing Going?
12:15 P.M. – 12:45 P.M.	Break and Lunch/Transition to CompStat Room
12:45 P.M. – 1:45 P.M.	Collaborating for Reform
2:00 P.M. – 2:15 P.M.	Vision for the Knowledge Lab
2:15 P.M. – 3:15 P.M.	Stakeholder Needs—What Do You Need From the Knowledge Lab?
3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Town Hall
5:00 P.M. – 5:15 P.M.	Closing Remarks

**DAY 2: APRIL 28, 9:00 A.M. – 4:45 P.M.**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SESSION</b>
9:00 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.	Chief's Conversation
10:00 A.M. – 10:15 A.M.	Goals for Day 2
10:30 A.M. – 12:00 NOON	Small-Group Deep Dives: Officer Recruitment, Selection, and Retention Officer Training, Education, and Enrichment Reducing Gun Violence and Crime—Challenges from the Field Rethinking the Law Enforcement Workforce Technology and Digital Trust
12:45 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.	It's About the People—Growing and Supporting a Diverse, Modern, Fair, and Just Police Department
2:15 P.M. – 3:45 P.M.	Small-Group Deep Dives: Accountability and Oversight Community Engagement Law Enforcement Tactics and Addressing Racial and Gender Disparity Leadership and Organizational Structure Use of Force
4:00 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Lightning Debrief Session
4:30 P.M. – 4:45 P.M.	Closing Remarks



## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

### FIRESIDE CHATS

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of the fireside chats was to gather perspectives from leaders across different areas of law enforcement on how departments can become learning organizations before they are required to do so via federal or state litigation, private litigation, and public controversy. Three panels were held, with panelists representing diverse stakeholders.

The first panel featured representatives from DOJ leadership and retired and current major city police chiefs. The facilitator asked the first panel about the challenges the policing profession faces and where policing is headed. The panelists emphasized the importance of officer recruitment and wellness. Concerns were raised over the underappreciation of law enforcement in the community today and how that could impact the ability to do their jobs and maintain a healthy mental state. The tremendous need for agencies to access information to learn from, especially information that the Department of Justice has produced, was also discussed. The panelists felt that the Knowledge Lab could be the delivery mechanism for this information to the field. They also discussed how the Knowledge Lab should be a place for law enforcement agencies to learn from other departments—what they have done well and not well—to prevent future incidents, build sound constitutional approaches to crime reduction strategies, and enhance community engagement. The panelists also highlighted the Knowledge Lab’s role in translating research into recommended practices.

In the second panel, featuring participants from law enforcement associations and a police chief, the panelists discussed the responsibility that legislators and other civic leaders have to react to an event such as the George Floyd killing. These events often result in situations where leaders feel pressure to make change which may not always be for the better. They added that we need to look at case studies to see what is working and what isn’t so legislators can be more informed when deciding which legislation to propose. It was also emphasized that officers need to be taught the goal rather than just a minimum standard around topics like use of force. The panelists pointed out that legislation often doesn’t reflect the community’s expectations.

The third and final panel was comprised of participants representing labor unions, researchers, and a deputy chief. In this panel, the participants discussed the need for law enforcement to take more of a proactive approach to their crime strategies and how the profession should evolve continually. Panelists also suggested that the Knowledge Lab could be a central resource for training recommendations for the field. The panelists felt that the Knowledge Lab could be used as a guide for departments to enhance 21<sup>st</sup> century policing by providing the field with resources to address departments’ need to strengthen their practices. They also raised the need to help departments hold themselves and their officers accountable. It was stated that the Knowledge Lab could help to develop front-end accountability measures for agencies to follow so that officers know what is expected of them and communities know what they should expect of their agency.



## COLLABORATING FOR REFORM

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**SUMMARY:** In this panel, the discussants, representing leadership from DOJ components and a prominent community advocate, discussed the importance of transparency in policing. In their remarks they described the newly re-launched [COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative](#). The attendees learned that Collaborative Reform will offer expert services to agencies at their request around building trust between law enforcement and the community, improving operational efficiencies and effectiveness, enhancing officer safety and wellness, and developing evidence-based practices. They stressed the importance of learning from past practice and research to determine how to move the field forward. They expressed a need for responses beyond the police that incorporate additional services. The panelists highlighted that communities had experienced immense trauma in the aftermath of COVID-19 and the George Floyd killing, and the police needed to work with their communities to heal. They also acknowledged the trauma law enforcement has faced due to anti-policing climate in some communities. The panelists were optimistic that the changes at the top levels of law enforcement are moving in the right direction and can be the driving force that changes the profession.

## VISION FOR THE KNOWLEDGE LAB

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**SUMMARY:** In this panel, BJA leadership and the Knowledge Lab partners from 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Solutions discussed the current vision of the Knowledge Lab and what questions still need to be answered. They stated that the Knowledge Lab would be a “front door” that law enforcement can use daily, including multimedia and multidimensional products and tools that can provide practical solutions for law enforcement. In creating the Knowledge Lab, the advice and expertise from the attendees at the launch are critical in determining what resources exist and what gaps there are for the Knowledge Lab to fill.

## STAKEHOLDER NEEDS — WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM THE KNOWLEDGE LAB?

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**SUMMARY:** Following the discussion about the vision for the Knowledge Lab, several key stakeholders discussed what they think is needed from the Knowledge Lab. The panelists represented the potential audience or consumers of the Knowledge Lab and included stakeholders from law enforcement leadership, community advocates, and labor unions. The panelists led the discussion by stating that the Knowledge Lab should represent and mirror what the community wants from law enforcement. They also talked about how the Knowledge Lab should be a resource for departments to evaluate their departments to improve and provide practical solutions that can be implemented that are not necessarily technical. The need for the community voices to be included when creating the Knowledge Lab was also emphasized. Community members are invested in their department’s improvement and will want access to information about what other departments are doing to address concerns in their communities so they can become more informed on the issues. The stakeholders concluded the panel by discussing the need for the Knowledge Lab to be a central location for officers, especially the rank and file, to look to standards of change around policies, practices, and research. They stated that it could be beneficial for these officers to be able to compare best practices across the world and to learn about how they were implemented and executed.



## TOWN HALL

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of the Town Hall session was to hear the diverse perspectives of additional attendees regarding the challenges the Knowledge Lab may face and what are its most pressing priorities. A researcher started the discussion by laying out some challenges that may come with the development of the Knowledge Lab. The highlighted challenged challenges included, building awareness about the Knowledge Lab, how to reach the Labs large target audience, how much evidence-based research we have about what policies, practices and programs are working and what aren't, bringing together the various entities of the DOJ, and meeting expectations about how and when the Knowledge Lab will begin to deliver resources. Another researcher raised the idea that the Knowledge Lab could be a place to identify and store high-quality research while simultaneously creating a hierarchy of current best practices.

Identifying and developing clear standards were another point of discussion amongst Town Hall participants. Defining minimum standards for training was raised, and the challenges associated with how this could be accomplished were discussed. It would be challenging to determine what should be included and what is not, especially because each department in the country is unique and have their own institutional standards. A Police Chief of a major city raised the point that officers should not be trained to a minimum standard that would help them to avoid legal action but should be trained on the gold standard according to the department and community's expectations. Others echoed this concern and stated that they want officers to work at the highest possible standard.

Best practices were mentioned as something that would be helpful to the field. Many attendees stated that it would be great to see what other departments are doing and how they did it. However, they also raised concerns about how to define a best practice. There is no evidence-based research to support most of the practices in the field, so we tend to recommend what we think will work.



### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- The goal should not be to teach what the lowest standard is but how to be the best officer they can be and to go beyond just knowing the laws.
- The Knowledge Lab needs to gain buy-in from officers at the sergeant level. They are the ones who control the culture of a department, so their engagement is critical.



### KEY CHALLENGES

- How will the Knowledge Lab bring people to the resources? Teaching people that they need the information is critical.
- Setting standards and recommending best practices will be difficult and should be carefully considered.



## CHIEF'S CONVERSATION

**SUMMARY:** The facilitator initiated this panel discussion by asking two retired Chiefs what they wished they knew or could have taken advantage of when they were leading their departments and how policing has changed over time. The first panelist began by talking about the lessons he learned as a sergeant during the Los Angeles riots in 1992. He stated that he witnessed his command staff frozen with inactivity and worry and vowed to address this issue if he was ever in a position to do so. The Chief said that a chief's tenure could be very brief, and some decisions may need to be made that may risk their position, but keeping the job can never be the most important thing. He also talked about the importance of having a strong Public Information Officer and people with great legal minds that can give advice and offer alternative perspectives. He thought this was important because once you become Chief, people will not question or challenge what you say, so a Chief needs to hold back on what they think so that others can speak freely before a Chief gives their input.

The second chief provided a theory that all people are born "as a 10" with many potential assets to succeed in life. However, various factors can take away from these characteristics, such as a lack of education or job opportunities, until you are only left with one, which is self-respect. He stated that many crimes occur when people feel their self-respect is challenged; therefore, officers should learn never to take that self-respect away. He also discussed the challenges of working with elected political officials within the department's jurisdiction. He stated that learning to listen to understand what that person is saying is more important than listening with the intent to respond, especially when speaking with people with different perspectives.

## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #1: OFFICER RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND RETENTION

**SUMMARY:** In this small group deep dive, the participants discussed the national crisis of officer recruitment, selection and retention. The group discussed the need to focus on hiring the right people while re-evaluating hiring standards and making necessary changes, such as re-evaluating applicants' reports of prior drug use. The participants also considered incentives that could increase the number of applicants to a department (childcare, housing, sabbatical options) and expressed the need for departments to collect data on why officers leave a department early.

### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The Knowledge Lab could guide departments around education standards and degree requirements for officers. The Lab should include relevant research that supports the guidance.



Provide a roadmap for departments to see what other agencies are doing and highlight those agencies having success in their recruitment and retention efforts.





## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #2: OFFICER TRAINING, EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT

**SUMMARY:** In this small group deep dive, the participants discussed the needs and challenges of officer training, education, and enrichment. The group discussed how training and education are often lumped together when they are not the same and must be addressed separately. Training is meant to inform the automatic responses, while education informs the intentional and critical thought process. The group also discussed the gaps in training for officers as they are asked to take on more and more responsibilities. The group expressed the need for more training for officers moving into supervisory roles and evaluations of all training to know what types work.

### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



Guide training standards in terms of the substance and/or subject of the training and the quality of how it is delivered to officers. Many national-level standards are the minimum standard, which can be a risk if standards are too low that the profession does not move forward.



The Knowledge Lab could develop toolkits and checklists to enable departments to evaluate their training and determine what other training is best for their department



The Knowledge Lab should be clear about the evidence supporting the promising practices identified and facilitate peer-to-peer learning opportunities with departments with good training practices.

## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #3: REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE AND CRIME — CHALLENGES FROM THE FIELD

**SUMMARY:** In this small group deep dive, the participants discussed the issue of gun violence and how the field is working to reduce it. The group discussed the need to provide the community with tools to understand their role in their safety and how law enforcement should incorporate data that the community has to inform strategy. The participants also discussed the need to evaluate trends to determine where and when these crimes occur. The participants also highlighted the need to ensure that the collected data is not racist and explain the purpose and use of the collected data.



### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The Knowledge Lab could develop a toolkit for departments with a particular issue. The toolkit would link to relevant DOJ programs, articles, research, and what other departments are doing to address that specific issue.



The Knowledge Lab could help educate communities about the issue and provide them with guidance so they can be well informed when meeting with their city officials and department leaders to address the issue.

## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #4: RETHINKING THE LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKFORCE

**SUMMARY:** In this small group deep dive, the participants discussed the law enforcement workforce and how it can and should change for the better. The group discussed the need for the field to have comparison models on what works, the financial implications, and how to reduce the carceral population. Case studies and research should be done to support these models, and peer-to-peer engagements can occur with departments that want to learn how to implement the model.

### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The Knowledge Lab should bring together multiple audiences (city officials, communities, officers, unions, etc.). All users should understand how the Knowledge Lab website will change over time and remain updated with new ideas from the field.



The Knowledge Lab should focus on the scalability of all practices they promote and explore ways to bring departments to the Knowledge Lab that may not know they need to change.

## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #5: TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TRUST

**SUMMARY:** The participants discussed technology and digital trust in this small group deep dive. They



began by discussing the pillars of legitimacy and trust: lawfulness, procedural justice, distributive justice, and effectiveness. These pillars are needed to maintain a healthy relationship with the community. The group discussed how technology could be used to become more transparent with the community through dashboards. However, they also discussed the need to be transparent with the community about the department's technologies and how they use the data from that technology. The group acknowledged that community members might not understand what the technology is capable of; therefore, it is essential to take the time to communicate this with the community before implementing new technology. The final point that the group discussed was the need for policies to be in place before deploying the latest technology. Often departments do not consider all of the factors that will come along with implementing new technology, and having a policy in place can help to think some of these through ahead of time.

### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The law has been unable to keep up with the new technologies being developed. The Knowledge Lab could provide guidelines to departments wanting to implement new technologies to help bridge the gap.



The Knowledge Lab could develop template policies for various types of new technology that a department may adopt. This could include common questions a department should ask themselves before deciding whether to implement the tech and guidelines for things such as data retention.



The Knowledge Lab could link research to practitioners on what the research has shown about the effectiveness of certain technologies.

## IT'S ABOUT THE PEOPLE — GROWING AND SUPPORTING A DIVERSE, MODERN, FAIR, AND JUST POLICE DEPARTMENT

**SUMMARY:** In this panel, the discussion began by discussing how officers are typically taught to conform when we should encourage officers to express their unique qualities because it is often reflective of the community they serve. It was stated that when officers are treated like a number, they do not feel valued and will therefore be less motivated to want to grow and improve within the agency. The panel also discussed the importance of establishing officer safety and wellness efforts before an incident occurs. Officers are exposed to traumatic events daily and need the appropriate measures to ensure they are mentally and physically protected.



The panelists then turned the discussion to talk about women in law enforcement and the [30x30 Initiative](#). It was stated that female officers tend to use less force and are seen by the community as less violent. However, women are still vastly underrepresented in law enforcement. The 30x30 Initiative strives to increase the number of female recruits to 30% by 2030. The challenges women face in the workplace, such as adequately fitting uniforms and ballistic vests, nursing mothers needing accommodations, and childcare for mothers returning to work, were also discussed as areas that policing needs to improve upon to attract and retain more women in the profession. The challenges women face in the workplace, such as adequately fitting uniforms and ballistic vests, nursing mothers needing accommodations, and childcare for mothers returning to work, were also discussed as areas that policing needs to improve upon to attract and retain more women in the profession.

The panel concluded by discussing the need for agencies to invest in their officers. They stated that law enforcement often does not have the proper training to prepare officers to take on a leadership role in the department. This type of training could be especially important for mid-level managers in a large city who may have tens of thousands of people living in the community within the district they oversee. The panelist concluded their session with the notion that we need to create more training for these individuals and create a means for evaluating the effectiveness of those training programs.

## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #6: ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

**SUMMARY:** In this small group deep dive, the participants discussed the challenges of accountability and oversight within an agency. The group discussed the need for adequate supervision within departments that is both effective and instructive. They stated that these supervisors must be willing to affect discipline and step in before an issue occurs. The group also expressed the importance of including the community when creating policies around accountability because they can often bring new and insightful ideas to the table.

### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The Knowledge Lab provides an opportunity to develop a toolkit with resources, including scorecards for departments to evaluate how their department compares to similar agencies and establish a community of practice for departments to go to for advice on how to improve accountability within their department.



There is a need for training for law enforcement leaders on how to properly discipline officers within their agencies with a guide on how to conduct an administrative investigation effectively.



## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #7: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**SUMMARY:** The participants discussed community engagement in this small group deep dive. The group unanimously expressed the importance of community engagement and stated that those efforts could not only be in response to a tragic incident. The participants felt that communication was a large part of the process, and agencies can't be afraid to share what they are doing with the community. They need to explain the terminology they are using so that the department and community can ensure a mutual understanding. The group also emphasized that community engagement is a process in which the agency needs to recognize what the community needs, apologize for any past wrongdoings, follow through with what the agency says they are going to do to respond, and be responsible and accountable for its actions.

### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The Knowledge Lab should provide resources for the field related to community engagement. These resources could include a one-pager on building trust with the community, guidelines for departments to measure their community engagement efforts, policies for running an effective community meeting, and a visual definition of community engagement.



It will be necessary for the Knowledge Lab to get its message out to the community so they can play a part in holding their departments accountable to the recommendations of the Knowledge Lab.

## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #8: LAW ENFORCEMENT TACTICS AND ADDRESSING RACIAL AND GENDER DISPARITY

**SUMMARY:** In this small group deep dive, the participants discussed law enforcement tactics to address racial and gender disparities. The group discussed ways that agencies can use data to identify biases within their department. These data ideas included comparing demographics of calls for services versus police-initiated stops and using body camera footage to look at how interactions are occurring by officers with persons of colors or other minorities. The body-worn camera footage should include all interactions and not just interactions where there was an incident. The group also emphasized the need to observe how officers interact internally with officers of color and women because that can indicate how they engage with those minority community members.



### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The Knowledge Lab could provide resources for the field for operational supervisors to make good decisions and how to help officers get better at identifying and eliminating their biases.



The Knowledge Lab needs to be accessible to the public to hold their departments accountable for best practices. It should go beyond racial and gender disparity to include the LGBTQ+ community.

## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #9: LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

**SUMMARY:** In this small group deep dive, the participants discussed law enforcement agencies' leadership and organizational structure. The group raised that leaders in law enforcement often express how lonely it can be at the top and their need for input from trusted advisors. The group also described the lack of leadership training as an individual is promoted, especially for sheriffs, because they can often make large jumps without executive experience since they are elected officials. The participants also discussed the need to incentivize departments to become learning organizations and explain why it is crucial to have a learning culture and the risks of not having that culture.

### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The Knowledge Lab could create a national inventory of leadership courses, academies, and opportunities for law enforcement. The list should include the training topic, any evaluations, and results, and what gaps exist in training.



## SMALL-GROUP DEEP DIVES #10: USE OF FORCE

**SUMMARY:** In this small group deep dive, the participants discussed the topic of use of force. The group discussed use of force policies and the need to determine what makes up a good policy to deal with these issues. There was also discussion around the need for training to align with a department's policies to be effective. The group acknowledged the challenges when use of force laws and legislation change. These changes can cause departments to adjust their policies and revise training, which can confuse officers. The group highlighted that the community should have a voice in use of force discussions because they may have different expectations that the department needs to consider. If a department does not share these policies with the community, the community may assume the department has something to hide.

### WHAT CAN THE KNOWLEDGE LAB DO?



The Knowledge Lab could centralize resources related to use of force to make it easier for departments to find. These resources could include after-action reviews and translations of what research says about use of force and how the findings can be used to improve policies.



There is a need for the Knowledge Lab to develop a guide for things a department should consider when deciding how to investigate a use of force incident. This guide should include a checklist of things to consider, steps to follow, and principles that should be included in a use of force policy.

## NEXT STEPS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE LAB →

In the coming months, the project team and the Department of Justice will work together to establish a plan for developing resources based on the discussions that were held during the event. The Knowledge Lab team plans to hold additional listening sessions with stakeholders to gain more insight into how the Knowledge Lab can be integrated into the work that is already being done in the field. The Knowledge Lab team will be thoughtful in their first deliverables for the field to ensure that it can be something that will be beneficial to law enforcement across the country.