

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VIPD Officials Attend New York Seminar To Learn Better Policing

VIC News / **Published On June 23, 2015 10:39 AM /**

Staff **June 23, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- The VIPD's Deputy Commissioner Curtis Griffin, along with chiefs of police from the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix districts (Darren Foy and Arthur Hector Sr. respectively), are currently in attendance at the National Network For Safe Communities (NNSC) seminar, taking place at the prestigious John Jay College of Criminal Justice located in New York City.

The chiefs, who left for NY on Monday and will return to the territory on Wednesday, will learn effective strategies to reduce violence and strengthen the community, according to a VIPD press release issued late Monday.

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice is home to the NNSC, which works in troubled communities nationally and drives innovative practices in reconciliation between law enforcement and communities.

The NNSC supports jurisdictions implementing strategic interventions to reduce violence and community disorder. These strategies combine the best of law enforcement and community-driven approaches to improve public safety, minimize arrests and incarceration, enhance police legitimacy, and rebuild relationships between law enforcement and distressed communities.

The National Network's strategies operate along these guiding principles:

- First do no harm
- Strengthen communities' capacity to prevent violence
- Enhance legitimacy
- Offer help to those who want it
- Get deterrence right

First do no harm

Criminal justice is strong medicine: it can help, but applied too heavily or in the wrong way, it can hurt. It's now clear that too many incarcerations, aggressive, disrespectful policing, and other missteps can damage individuals, families, and communities and undermine relationships between neighborhoods and law enforcement. Law enforcement should do its work in ways that do not cause that harm.

Strengthen communities' capacity to prevent violence

Community norms and actions – not law enforcement – do most of the work of crime control. Community members can establish expectations for nonviolence and intervene directly with the few people at the highest risk for violent victimization or offending. Direct communication through “call-ins,” “custom notifications,” and other practical steps can focus and amplify community crime control. Using this approach strengthens neighborhoods and keeps people out of jail.

Enhance legitimacy

Most people obey the law because it's the right thing to do, not because they're afraid of being arrested. Even criminals follow the law most of the time. Communities need to see law enforcement, especially the police, as fair, respectful, and on their side. Police should conduct themselves in ways that model their caring and respect for the communities they serve. Where legitimacy goes up, crime goes down.

Offer help to those who want it

Many of the people at highest risk for violent victimization or offending do not like how they are living and want a way out. Communities should meet them where they are and do everything possible to support them.

Get deterrence right

When law enforcement needs to act, it's usually best to let offenders know that enforcement is coming, so they can stop their offending, rather than to arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate them. The creative use of existing law, combined with direct communication with high-risk people, can make deterrence work and head off both violence and actual enforcement.

Use enforcement strategically when arrest, prosecution, and incarceration are necessary. Law enforcement should use them as sparingly and tactically as possible. Profligate enforcement can have terrible collateral consequences, alienate communities, and undermine legitimacy. Law enforcement should apply the minimum that is compatible with ensuring public safety.