"Social justice should be the underlying goal of all humanity."
-Alan V. Lowenstein, Institute Founder

Request for Proposals
for New Jersey Policing Report Card Project

Project Objective

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice ("the Institute") and Salvation and Social Justice are seeking a researcher or research institution to partner with for the development of the New Jersey Policing Report Card Project ("The Report Card"). The Report Card will assemble, grade and publish data and information on key policing policy issues in six cities throughout New Jersey.

Organizations' Backgrounds

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

Established in 1999 by Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein, the Institute's cutting-edge racial and social justice advocacy seeks to empower people of color by building reparative systems that create wealth, transform justice and harness democratic power—from the ground up—in New Jersey.

The Institute advocates for systemic reform that is at once transformative, achievable in the state and replicable in communities across the nation.

Salvation and Social Justice

Salvation and Social Justice seeks to liberate public policy theologically by building Black faith-rooted communication strategies, advocacy and public education campaigns, to lift up poor, underserved communities and traditionally oppressed communities with a particular focus on racial justice through abolition, restoration, transformation and coalition.

Police Reform in New Jersey: A Growing Need for Accountability

The undeniable truth — that Black lives matter — is being tested everywhere in our country, particularly in the context of law enforcement killings of numerous Black people in states across the country, including right here in New Jersey.

Fifty-four years ago, John Smith, a Black cab driver in Newark, New Jersey was brutally beaten by police for driving around officers' double-parked cars. The resulting uprising, known as the Newark Rebellion, lasted for five days, leaving 26 people dead and over 700 people injured.

Today, as our nation again faces a racial reckoning sparked by police violence against Black people, New Jersey's criminal justice system continues to have some of the worst racial disparities in the United States. A Black child is 21 times more likely to be in prison in New Jersey than a white child – the highest youth incarceration disparity in the country—even though Black and white kids commit most offenses at similar rates. Black adults are 12 times more likely to be incarcerated than white adults. These racial disparities begin early in New Jersey's criminal justice system, where a Black person is more than three times more likely to have police force used against them.

The time for deep structural change is now.

A first, foundational step toward transforming policing is increasing transparency, and in New Jersey, the demand for greater law enforcement transparency is stronger than ever.

In 2018, New Jersey Advanced Media released *The Force Report*, which was the culmination of a 16-month investigation into use of force records in police departments across the state. *The Force Report* not only revealed stark racial disparities within New Jersey's use of force practices, but also our state's lack of data transparency. Without an infrastructure for gathering and analyzing data on our state's law enforcement practices, important trends and needs for reform went unproven or undetected. This year, the NJ Attorney General responded with its own Use of Force Dashboard.

Yet, despite a steadily increasing demand for transparency and data-driven police reforms, there is still no meaningful way for the public to view a data-driven analysis of most local policing practices. Without this information, it is difficult to discern important trends both within a department and across the state.

Project Description

The Report Card will gather, analyze and grade policing data and other information to bolster transparency around local policing practices and to highlight how one police department compares to others throughout the state.

While we would like to collaborate and receive feedback from our research partner at each stage of the project, we are particularly interested in receiving assistance at Step 2: Collecting and Analyzing Policing Data and Information.

Step 1: Identifying Police Departments to Score. The Institute and Salvation and Social Justice will work together to identify six municipalities across the state that will be scored in The Report Card. In selecting which police departments will be scored, the Institute and Salvation and Social Justice will consider a variety of factors, including the size of the department and a history of police abuse.

Step 2: Collecting and Analyzing Policing Data and Information. The Institute will work closely with our research partner to collect, analyze and evaluate data and materials from the selected departments.

The Institute plans to lead the Policy Analysis and Community Survey, and hopes our research partner will lead the Data Analysis, Spending & Budget Analysis, and Racial Disparities and Demographics Analysis.

Policy Analysis

- Community Policing Policies and Trainings
- First Amendment Right to Record Police Policies and Trainings
- Department practices for responding to mental health crises
- Department participation in the federal 1033 program
- Transparency policies and practices

Data & Outcome Analysis

- Rate of use of force, including law enforcement chokeholds
- Rate of stops, searches and arrests
- Community contacts, including youth engagements
- Stops, searches, summonses and arrests related to individuals recording police
- Rate of calls for service related to behavioral health crises
- Rate of use of force against individuals experiencing behavioral health crises
- Rate of adverse credibility findings against officers who testified in court

Racial Disparities & Demographics Analysis

- A racial disparity analysis of all of the above policing practices (whenever possible)
- The demographics of the municipality
- The demographics of the police force

Spending & Budget Analysis

- Department spending related to the maintenance of equipment obtained through the federal 1033 program
- Ratio of law enforcement/social services budget

Community Survey

The Institute will also develop a community survey to better understand how each community feels about policing and public safety. The Institute will work in partnership with Salvation and Social Justice to distribute the survey.

Step 3: Developing the Scoring Rubric and Grading Police Departments. The Institute will develop, with feedback from our research partner, a scoring rubric to grade police departments based on the data and information collected and analyzed by our research partner.

Step 4: Publishing The Report Card. The Institute will work with our research partner to design and publish The Report Card. The Report Card will be published as an interactive website that will animate the results of our data, research and analysis.

Step 5: Promoting the Results of The Report Card. The Institute and Salvation and Social Justice will share The Report Card with our networks and work with local advocates, as well as police departments, to ensure that The Report Card is useful to local advocacy and police reform efforts.

Project Timeline

Step 1: September-December 2021

Step 2: January-September 2022

Step 3: January-September 2022

Step 4: October-December 2022

Step 5: January 2023 and beyond

Selection Criteria

- Experience collecting and analyzing public administrative data
- Familiarity law enforcement agencies and policing data preferred, but not required
- Experience with open records requests preferred, but not required
- Feasibility of completion of study in proposed time frame
- Experience with collaborative research with community partners

Proposal Requirements

- CV/Resume of researcher(s)
- Proposed data collection and analysis plan and methods, including timeline
- Proposed budget

Timeline

- RFP Release Date: April 26, 2021
- Proposal Deadline: May 28, 2021
- Proposal Selected: June 7, 2020
- Data Collection and Analysis: January-September 2022

Please submit RFP and any questions to: blewis@njisj.org