

PROMOTING FAIR & IMPARTIAL POLICING: A SCIENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE



Implicit Bias Defined:

... the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. **Kirwan Institute**

Fair & Impartial Policing®: A Science-Based Perspective

Fair and Impartial Policing, LLC (FIP) is the #1 provider of implicit-bias-awareness training for law enforcement in the U.S. and Canada. We began training law enforcement professionals on implicit bias in 2008. The **Fair & Impartial Policing®: A Science-Based Perspective** training curriculum applies the modern science of bias to law enforcement; it trains officers on the effect of implicit bias and gives them the information and skills they need to reduce and manage their biases. The curricula address not just racial/ethnic bias, but biases based on other factors, such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status and so forth. The curricula also address the various ways in which biases manifest, including implicit associations, attentional bias, confirmation bias, and outgroup bias. This science-based perspective is wholly consistent with the law enforcement professions' commitment to *evidence-based practice*. Both law enforcement professionals and concerned community stakeholders can come together around this common perspective and its associated plans of action.

Our training has reached federal, state, local, and campus police agencies of all sizes. Some of the major U.S. cities that have adopted the FIP program include Boston, Dallas, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Nashville, New York, Philadelphia, San Antonio, San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle, to name a few. The FIP program has been highlighted in articles in the *Police Chief*, PERF's *Subject to Debate*, the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gazette*, *Psychology Today*, *Mother Jones*, and *National Geographic*. The program has been highlighted by the *PBS News Hour* and *CBS Sunday Morning*. Entire states are adopting the FIP perspective and FIP has been integrated into the IACP's Leadership of Police Organizations (LPO) and Women's Leadership Institute (WLI) training programs. FIP has been presented at the FBI National Academy and is a regular part of the curricula of PERF's Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP).

The Intersection of Implicit Bias and Law Enforcement

Law enforcement's approach to training on racial biases has been rooted in the traditional way of thinking about this national issue, one that rested on the notion that persons were conscious of and acted on their prejudices. The message they received was to "stop being prejudiced;" a message that was ill-suited and possibly offensive for most individuals, including most individuals in policing, who may not have these "explicit" prejudices. This traditional "thinking" overused the "racist" label, applying it to even the overwhelming number of well-meaning law enforcement professionals who, in fact, aspire to provide fair and just policing in the communities they serve.

The FIP training approach stands in stark contrast to traditional racial-profiling training programs that have been based on outdated understandings about prejudice. Scientists have determined – through voluminous research on this topic – that modern bias is less likely to be overt or "explicit" (e.g., racism). Rather, bias is more likely to be "implicit," working outside of conscious awareness and manifesting even in people who consciously hold non-prejudiced attitudes. Bias starts with our automatic tendency to categorize individuals. We categorize individuals and objects to make sense of the world, which includes categorizing people we don't know according to group membership. We then attribute to these individuals the stereotypes associated with their group. This does not require animus; it requires only *knowledge* of the stereotype. Importantly, implicit bias, like explicit bias, can produce discriminatory actions.

Research has found that implicit bias impacts all of us, with specific studies showing bias manifesting among members of various professional groups, such as doctors, other health professionals, medical students, educators, judges and prosecutors. *How might implicit bias manifest in law enforcement settings?* In practice, implicit bias might lead the line officer to automatically perceive crime in the making when she observes two young Hispanic males driving in an all-Caucasian neighborhood. It may manifest among agency command staff who decide (without crime-relevant evidence) that the forthcoming gathering of African American college students bodes trouble, whereas the forthcoming gathering of Caucasian undergraduates does not. Moving beyond racial and ethnic biases, implicit bias might lead an officer to be consistently "over vigilant" with males and low-income individuals and "under vigilant" with female subjects or people of means. Where there is a crash with two different versions of what happened, implicit bias might lead the officer to believe the Caucasian man in the white shirt and tie driving the BMW as opposed to the Hispanic teenager in jeans driving a pick-up truck.

So the bad news is that prejudice remains widespread and manifests outside of conscious awareness, even in those of us who eschew, at a conscious level, prejudices and stereotypes. The good news, however, comes from the large body of research that has identified how individuals can reduce their implicit biases or, at least, ensure that their implicit biases do not affect their behavior. Indeed, a key FIP theme is that we *all* harbor implicit biases, but we can become conscious of them and actively work to ensure those biases don't impact on *behavior*.

Fair & Impartial Policing®: The Training Curricula

The original FIP curricula greatly benefited from the expertise of a distinguished national Curriculum Design Team (CDT) comprised of experts in the area of biased policing, police executives, first-line supervisors, officers, and community stakeholders. Additionally, and importantly, social psychologists from around the nation who conduct research on human biases were members of this team. The curricula were revised in 2018 to (1) reflect updates in the science of bias, (2) add coverage of new forms of bias (e.g., confirmation bias, attention bias), and (3) enhance media and engagement components.



The FIP courses receive very strong reviews because (a) our trainers are current or retired sworn law enforcement; (b) our curriculum is successful at reducing the very understandable resistance that trainees bring into a course on “biased policing”; and (c) our curriculum conveys scientific concepts in an accessible manner; is engaging; and emphasizes real-life application of concepts and skills.

The core content of all of our courses are:

- The nature of (and scientific evidence for) implicit biases;
- How implicit biases can impact a person in his/her professional capacity;
- The consequences of biased decisions/behavior; and
- Skills to reduce and manage implicit biases.

We have incorporated the core content into various courses customized for different audiences. We have specific courses for (a) various categories of sworn personnel, (b) civilian staff, and (c) community members. We believe that a customized curriculum works best as it highlights situations and responses unique to a particular group of trainees, increasing the likelihood that individuals will connect with the science and see themselves within the scenarios presented during the training.

Below we describe our **2018 Basic** curricula for sworn personnel. We also describe several **new products**. For FIP agencies (i.e., agencies that have implemented the basic courses) we have “**Refresher TOTs**” for your FIP trainers and “**Booster Training**” for your patrol officers and supervisors. We also have new courses designed for **civilian personnel** and **community members**.

The Basic Courses for Sworn Personnel

For sworn personnel the curricula are customized for these audiences:

- ✚ Patrol Officers (the Patrol Officers’ curricula may also be used to train academy recruits with specialized exercises designed specifically for recruits)
- ✚ First-Line Supervisors
- ✚ Mid-Managers
- ✚ Command-level Personnel (or Command Personnel and Community Leaders)
- ✚ Trainers

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The curricula for both **patrol officers (to include recruits)** and **first-line supervisors** consist of four modules:

- ✚ Module 1: Introduction to Fair & Impartial Policing
- ✚ Module 2: Understanding Human Bias
- ✚ Module 3: The Impact of Biased Policing on Community Members and the Law Enforcement Organization
- ✚ Module 4 (Patrol): The Skills for Promoting Fair & Impartial Policing
- ✚ Module 4 (First-Line Supervisors): Supervising for Fair & Impartial Policing

The first three modules in the two curricula are very similar—merely customized in language and exercises for the target audiences. The fourth module of each curriculum teaches the specific skills needed for that audience.

The 8-hour training program for **patrol officers and academy recruits** helps these individuals to:

- Understand that even well-intentioned people have biases;
- Understand how implicit biases impact on what we *perceive/see* and can (unless prevented) impact on what we *do*;
- Understand that fair and impartial policing produces *just, safe, and effective policing*; and,
- Use tools that help him/her (1) recognize his/her conscious and implicit biases, and (2) reduce and manage biases.

Overwhelmingly participants have reported that the training has changed their perspectives and that the training had practical application to their day-to-day work. Participant feedback on the exercises and videos range from “great” to “awesome.” As one participant who was returning to the job after being off for several years wrote, “I had [been impacted by stereotypes/biases] as an officer but did not know it until now. I could have used you guys back in 1995!”

Other comments from trainees include:

- *“I am going to work in a very diverse environment and feel this training has helped me learn how to attempt to be unbiased towards situations I may encounter.”*
- *“I will go into each situation with this training in the back of my head.”*
- *“Absolutely (I will be able to apply the information and skills to my job). I felt that all the information was related to our jobs and how society relates to these issues as well.”*
- *“We were told we were going to ‘racial profiling’ class all day and, to be honest, that already put me off—thinking it was going to be the same stuff we always get. I was very, very surprised and happy to receive this training today.”*
- *“I learned what ‘implicit bias’ means and understand its effects on me, decisions I make and community perceptions of officers.”*
- *“Well presented. Most relevant discussions on topic of race relations I have heard in 14 years.”*

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- *“(Strengths included) addressing everyone’s biases and not making it seem like a white guilt issue.”*

The 8-hour training program for **first-line supervisors** (e.g., sergeants) starts with the three modules described above and then:

- Addresses how to identify subordinates who may be acting in a biased manner, including those well-meaning officers whose biased behavior may not be consciously produced;
- Provides guidance to supervisors on how they should respond to officers who exhibit biased policing behaviors;
- Challenges supervisors to think about how bias might manifest in their own behavior; and
- Provides guidance on how to speak internally and externally about bias, biased policing, and the agency’s efforts to promote fair and impartial policing.

Key to the supervisory training is helping supervisors identify the appropriate response to biased behavior, which can be challenging. Not only is biased behavior very difficult to prove, but, for the officers whose biased behavior is not intentional or malicious, “disciplinary” action would be inappropriate. Since, in many instances, there will only be “indications” and not “proof,” it is important to convey when and how supervisors can intervene to stop what *appears* to be inappropriate conduct while keeping in mind the ambiguous nature of the evidence as well as the sensitive nature of the issue.

First-line supervisors who have participated in the training report that they now have a new perspective for thinking about how bias (not just racial bias) might manifest in their own decision-making as well as that of their officers. The comments indicate that they emerge believing (some expressing surprise) that biased behavior can be unintentional and can manifest even in well-intentioned subordinates. Overwhelmingly, the participants report that they will be able to apply the information and skills from the training into their daily job as a supervisor. They report acquiring new tools for identifying when bias might be manifesting in their supervisees and new tools for intervening when they have concerns about subordinate behavior.

Comments include:

- *“I will better recognize bias and be able to address it with officers.”*
- *“Examples presented made me reflect on my personal behavior as well as behavior of my subordinates.”*
- *“(I learned) how to deal with biases that we all have.”*
- *“I will use this training and teach my squad.”*
- *“Helped me realize my own biases and will help me to better train those officers working under my supervision.”*
- *“One of the best classes of this type I have attended.”*
- *“(Some of the most useful info included) the fact that bias can occur and the officer doesn’t even realize it.”*

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- *“Good information that I didn’t know and great knowledge gained to take back to the people under me.”*

The 8-hour **mid-managers’** curriculum is targeted toward individuals who are above the rank of first-line supervisor and below what might be considered “command staff” in an agency (e.g., Captains). Combining elements from the command-level and first-line supervisor curricula, this program:

- Introduces trainees to the science of bias, including the science underlying mechanisms for reducing/managing biases;
- Helps mid-managers identify and intervene with subordinates who may be acting in a biased manner;
- Challenges mid-level managers to think about how bias might manifest in their own behavior;
- Provides guidance on how to speak about bias to individuals (e.g., sergeants, officers, individual community members) and groups/media; and
- Introduces the attendees to the elements of a comprehensive agency program to produce fair and impartial policing.

Mid-managers who participated in the training provided very strong evaluations of the course. Comments include:

- *“The course provided a great deal of information on bias and was presented in a manner that made it easy to understand and apply.”*
- *“An outstanding class teaching about fair and impartial policing and biased policing. Included the science behind it.”*
- *“The strength of the course content and presentation were the examples of the results of studies that supported the concepts.”*
- *“Gave me some eye-opening information. I used to be able to say I wasn’t biased; I can no longer say that. However, this course has now given me the opportunity to have an open conversation about this topic.”*
- *“Presented in lay terms that was understandable.”*

There is a 1.5-day training program for the **agency executive and his/her command-level staff**. Alternatively, this training may be held with both command-level personnel *and community leaders*. This training covers the science of bias and its implications for policing. This training also includes the elements of a “comprehensive agency program to promote fair and impartial policing” to include assessments of and reform in anti-biased-policing policy, recruitment and hiring, training, supervision and accountability, operations, leadership, measurement, and outreach to diverse communities. Agency (and community) leaders exit the training with an action plan for strengthening the agency’s efforts to promote fair and impartial law enforcement.

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This training has received very strong reviews from both police and community leaders. Some comments include:

- *"It was very interactive and made me think. The resources and facts/examples were amazing."*
- *"Provided all views of a complex problem that will bring all sides to the table for worthy, meaningful conversations."*
- *"I am leaving the class with a new perspective on my own views and beliefs. I have a new awareness of bias-based policing within my own agency. The presentation of scientific data provided me with a more convincing argument that supported the existence of unintentional, but widespread racial bias, which I was typically quick to dismiss."*
- *"I obtained new ideas from the other students as well as from the instructor."*
- *"(Instructor) aggressively addressed difficult topics with facts and experience."*

Additional comments reflecting the value of including community stakeholders include:

- *"Having law enforcement and community stakeholders in the room made for interactive and thought-provoking discussions."*
- *"Discussions enabled community and law enforcement to appreciate each other's views."*

A 2.0-day **Training-of-Trainers** (TOT) program is designed to enable instructors to implement both the patrol officers' and the first-line supervisors' training programs. This training "walks" participants through both the content and the training methodologies used throughout the Fair and Impartial Policing curricula and provides opportunities for participants to "practice" teaching the content. FIP instructors provide technical assistance, in small group workshops, on key concepts and techniques and provide critical assessments of participants' training skills during their "teach backs." Participants who complete the TOT will be certified and licensed to train the copyrighted FIP® curricula in their agencies or academies for a period of two years from date of certification.

Upon completion of the TOT (with some follow-up self-study and practice), participants are able to implement both FIP curricula within their own agencies or academies. [Agencies can request that a national FIP trainer co-train with the agency's TOT-trained trainers during early implementations. This co-training can enhance local trainer skills and facilitate quality control.] TOT participants will be able to:

- Understand the social-psychological research on implicit bias and its implications for both patrol officers' and first-line supervisors' actions;
- Discuss the impact of biased policing on community members and the law enforcement organization;
- Discuss the knowledge and skills that patrol officers and supervisors need to promote fair and impartial policing; and
- Demonstrate proficiency in using appropriate adult learning methods to support the training objectives and effectively present and debrief problem-based case scenarios.

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Comments from previous TOT participants include:

- *“Excellent training—I cannot wait to present the material.”*
- *“Critical area of training for police. Use of scientific approach is great.”*
- *“Excellent blend of lecture, facilitation, team teaching, group exercises, and teach-back.”*
- *“I enjoyed the class and look forward to instructing the classes.”*
- *“Excellent training! The teach-backs were critically important.”*
- *“I came to this class against my will. My mind was quickly changed from ‘this class is a waste of time’ to ‘why have I not had this class sooner in my 20 years of service?’ The instructors were great. I only hope I can communicate the importance of the class as well as they were able to.”*

Advanced Training for Agencies that Have Already Implemented Basic FIP Training

There is a one-day **“TOT Refresher”** course for agencies/individuals who have previously experienced an FIP TOT and want to adopt the new 2018 curricula and/or refresh their skills.

We have produced the **Booster Training** for officers and first-line supervisors who have already had the basic FIP course. Agencies might provide this course 18 months or 2 years after the initial FIP basic training. The core concepts from the basic FIP training are reviewed, but with new science, new forms of biases, and new applications presented. This training includes high-quality video scenarios that allow the participants to apply the key principles to common policing situations.

New Courses Designed for Civilian Personnel and Community Members

A new product is targeted toward **community members**. This training (designed for evening delivery)—that is available to agencies that have trained (or are training) their own personnel in FIP—allows the agency to convey to community members: (a) the science of implicit bias and how implicit biases might impact on both police officers and community members; (b) how they can recognize, reduce, and manage their own biases; and (c) what their local agency is doing to promote fair and impartial policing.

Another new product is targeted toward **civilians in the police agency**. The course includes the same core content as the patrol and supervisor curricula, but is customized to apply the concepts to the work of crime analysts, dispatchers, administrative support staff, victim advocates, front desk aides, and any other civilian role.

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Trainings: Lengths and Class Sizes

All courses are capped at 30 individuals with the exception of the community curriculum, which can be implemented with up to 50 individuals. Attendees receive high-quality trainee materials.

BASIC FIP COURSES	
Training Audience	Length
Patrol	8 hours
Supervisor	8 hours
Mid-Managers	8 hours
Command or Command-Community	1.5 days
Training-of-Trainers	2.0 days
TOT Refresher	6 hours

ADVANCED COURSES FOR FIP AGENCIES	
Training Audience	Length
Local FIP Trainer Refresher	8 hours
Patrol Officer Booster	3 hours
First-Line Supervisor Booster	3 hours

NEW COURSES	
Training Audience	Length
Community Members	4 hours
Civilian Personnel	4 hours

For more information about Fair & Impartial Policing, LLC and the associated training programs, go to www.fipolicing.com or contact Mary Hoerig at mkhoerig@fipolicing.com or 414-334-1299.