



RACIAL BIAS AUDIT OF THE CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Charleston Police Department (CPD) is increasingly becoming an active community partner in conversations and efforts to address the city's past and present challenges surrounding race. Efforts to strengthen police-community relationships have been at the forefront of the city's priorities. In January 2019, Charleston selected CNA to conduct a racial bias audit of the CPD.

WHAT WE DID

- Assess, monitor, and assist the CPD, in concert with the community, in uncovering any aspects of implicit bias or systemic and individual racial bias.
- Assess the effect of enforcement operations on historically marginalized and discriminated-against populations, particularly those in the African-American community.
- Provide recommendations for reforms that improve community-oriented policing practices, transparency, professionalism, accountability, community inclusion, fairness, effectiveness, and public trust, taking into account national best practices and community expectations.
- Engage the community to understand their experiences and their expectations of interactions with CPD.

HOW WE DID IT

The audit team based its approach to the racial bias audit on a number of guiding principles: (1) providing evidence-based assistance with an emphasis on research, including both academic research and documented lessons learned and best practices from the field; (2) using a multimethod assessment design, including interviews, community meetings, document review and data analysis; and (3) conducting a comprehensive review and applying best practices in police settings.

WHAT WE LOOKED AT

1. Traffic stops and field contacts
2. Use of force, deadly and non-deadly
3. The complaint process, internal and external
4. Community-oriented policing practices
5. Recruitment, hiring, promotions, and personnel practices

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CNA compiled 48 findings and developed recommendations for each. Below are examples of a few:

Finding	Recommendation
Analyses of CPD’s traffic stop data indicate racial disparities in stop rates and search decisions during traffic stops where a warning was issued.	CPD should develop an action plan to address the possibility of implicit bias in the department, including concrete activities such as training for officers.
Community members feel that the complaint process is illegitimate and are uncertain that their complaints will be addressed.	CPD should establish a formal process for following up with community members who file a complaint or grievance.
CPD’s community engagement activities and efforts to sustain and build relationships with community stakeholders lack a strategic and top down approach.	CPD should leverage the Illumination Project strategies and plan to develop the CPD community engagement strategic plan.
	CPD should work with its community stakeholders to establish engagement mechanisms such as neighborhood community councils.
	CPD should communicate the importance of community support in effectively implementing changes to the community.
Although the demographics of the department are similar to the demographics of the city of Charleston, underlying concerns remain related to the lack of diversity and inclusivity across CPD’s specialized units and teams.	CPD should closely re-examine the demographics of each specialized unit and team to ensure that these teams and units are diverse and inclusive.

To read the entire report, visit [CNA](#).

ABOUT CNA CORPORATION

CNA is a nonprofit research and analysis organization dedicated to the safety and security of the nation. It operates the Institute for Public Research — which serves civilian government agencies — and the Center for Naval Analyses, the Department of the Navy’s federally funded research and development center (FFRDC). CNA is dedicated to developing actionable solutions to complex problems of national importance. With nearly 700 scientists,

analysts and professional staff, CNA takes a real-world approach to gathering data, working side-by-side with operators and decision-makers around the world. CNA’s research portfolio includes global security and great power competition, homeland security, emergency management, criminal justice, public health, data management, systems analysis, naval operations and fleet and operational readiness.

For more information please contact:

Denise Rodriguez, Project Director Rodriguezd@cna.org

571-309-3997