

Introduction

The Seattle Police Department's (SPD) Community Service Officer (CSO) program operated for thirty-three years until its discontinuation in 2004 due to budget cuts. Prompted by considerable community interest in the program's revival, SPD requested funding to reinstate the program during 2017-18 Biennial Budget process. Shortly thereafter, the Chinatown-International District Public Safety Task Force issued a formal recommendation for the reinstatement of the CSO program in their June 2016 report.

In the 2017-18 Biennial Budget, the Seattle City Council set aside funding for Community Service Officer (CSO) program development in 2017 and initial implementation in the second quarter of 2018. Pursuant to Council Green Sheet No. 405-1-A-1 ("Green Sheet"), in 2017 Mayor Ed Murray established an interdepartmental team (IDT), to be chaired by Chief of Police Kathleen O'Toole and comprised of representatives from various City departments, including the Mayor's Office (MO), Seattle City Council (LEG), Seattle Police Department (SPD), Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR), Seattle Human Services Department (HSD), Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) and City Budget Office (CBO).¹²

The SPD signed an Interagency Agreement with SOCR to conduct a racial equity analysis and assist with community engagement. Per the agreement, SOCR contributed staff to support the community engagement effort and implementation of a Racial Equity Toolkit; designed and led focus group sessions and stakeholder interviews; administered an online community survey; and prepared a draft report. Together, SPD and SOCR presented and solicited community input from over four hundred community members at thirty meetings.

This final report describes the collaborative community engagement process and documents the community input derived from that process.

Community Engagement Process

SPD contracted with SOCR to complete a racial equity toolkit analysis based on community engagement around a new Community Service Officer program.³ SPD wanted to leverage SOCR's toolkit analysis expertise and community contacts.

Early in the community engagement process, SOCR raised concerns that:

- (1) Community members might be asked to participate in two different engagement processes related to the CSO program.
- (2) Community groups that distrust the police would be less likely to participate and/or provide honest feedback about how the program could best serve their populations.

¹ See Appendix for a copy of the Green Sheet.

² See Appendix for the Mayoral Directive.

³ See Appendix for SPD-SOCR contract.

To address this, SOCR suggested the two departments clearly delineate which groups would be contacted by SPD and which would be contacted by SOCR. By nature of their strong community relationships, SOCR suggested they reach out to community-based organizations while SPD-led engagement focus on Demographic and Precinct Advisory Councils and other related public safety organizations that have a working relationship with SPD.

The community engagement report is roughly divided into two sections. The first section discusses SPD's community engagement process and the programmatic ideas that community raised around the new program. The second section of the paper outlines the SOCR stakeholder engagement process and includes their racial analysis of the benefits and burdens associated with a CSO program.

SPD Community Engagement Methodology

The SPD community engagement approach was designed to answer the research question, "What does the community think is important in a CSO program?" SPD chose to use a mixed methods approach, combining focus group and survey methodology.

SPD reached out to the chairs of advisory councils, either directly or through the Community Engagement Coordinator, and asked to lead a focused discussion on the design of the new Community Service Officer program with participants. Over the course of four months, SPD conducted focus group-style meetings with SPD's Precinct Advisory Councils,⁴ Demographic Advisory Councils,⁵ and other related public safety organizations.⁶

Each session began with introductions and a limited presentation on: (1) the history of the community service officer program and (2) current interest and budget allocation for bringing back the Community Service Officers.⁷ SPD facilitators presented the meeting as an opportunity for community members to brainstorm what their ideal CSO program would look like and not be limited by what it was in the past. The only clear restrictions facilitators shared were that the CSOs would be unarmed, unsworn, civilian personnel, meaning that they could not carry a weapon and would not have arresting powers.

The discussion was framed around two questions:

- (1) What would you like to see CSOs work on in your community?
- (2) What knowledge and skills would help make CSOs effective?

The questions were written out on the top of chart paper and placed at the front of the room, in clear sight of all participants. The SPD facilitators limited themselves to answering questions about the contents of the presentation to minimize risk of influencing the community. The facilitator recorded ideas raised by community members on the chart paper while a separate notetaker recorded the conversation as it occurred. This redundancy allowed SPD to capture detail and context for each idea.

⁴ North, South, Southwest, East, West

⁵ East African/Muslim, Sikh + Arab, Filipino, Native American, Southeast Asian, LGBTQ, African American

⁶ Block Watch Captain's Network, Human Service Providers Forum

⁷ See Appendix for presentation outline.

After the discussion, each community participant was given a set of six stickers. They were instructed to place a sticker next to the ideas on the chart paper that they felt were the most important in a new CSO program design. They were allowed to place as many of their stickers per idea as desired.

In community meetings where the discussion and interest was greater than the time allotted, participants were invited to share their ideas following the meeting or through email with SPD. These ideas were recorded and included afterwards in the notes, but were not considered in the dot-voting exercise.

Following the sessions, each community group received a thank you email with a copy of the detailed notes taken in the session.⁸ Community groups were asked to review the notes and make corrections if they felt an item was captured incorrectly. SPD committed to maintaining dialogue and sharing updates with the groups on the CSO program development process.

SPD Community Engagement Limitations

The following are limitations of the SPD-led community engagement process and the mitigations, when possible, taken by SPD to address them.

Selection Bias

The community members that engaged with SPD in this community engagement process are not representative of Seattle as a whole. They represent those that are active and willing to engage with law enforcement on matters of public safety.

Seattle Police Demographic Advisory Councils represent the large ethnic communities in the city, but are not representative of all of Seattle's diversity. In particular, the Latino voice and the voice of people living with disabilities are not included in the SPD CSO engagement. The Seattle Latino Police Advisory Council is not currently active and was not interested in convening to discuss this issue. SPD was not able to arrange a meeting during the community engagement process with any SPD-affiliated groups for people living with disabilities.

Engagement Consistency

Due to time restrictions and/or language barriers, there were three group meetings in which SPD was not able to execute the full methodology.

- The Southeast Asian Advisory Council meeting was held through an interpreter with Vietnamese-speaking community members. Due to the language barrier, notes were not written on the chart paper and participants did not complete a dot voting activity.
- North Precinct Advisory Council did not complete a voting activity due to time constraints.
- The Human Service Provider Forum members completed an abbreviated discussion and did not complete a voting activity due to time constraints.

⁸ The notes shared included any ideas raised by attendees after the meeting. The notes indicated where ideas were raised after the fact.

Type 1 Bias

There is a risk that SPD facilitators could be influenced by their socioeconomic identities or professional affiliations in their discussion facilitation or analysis. To mitigate this, SPD staff followed strict rules about what they were permitted to say in a facilitated discussion. SPD invited a member of the Community Police Commission to attend meetings and the community engagement analysis was overseen by an SPD-employed academic researcher.⁹

Program Goals & Outcomes

The SPD-led community engagement was focused on two questions: (1) what would you like to see CSOs work on in your community, and (2) what knowledge and skills would help make them successful. Throughout the community sessions, participants also shared their desired goals and outcomes of a successful program.

Build Stronger Community

Seattle is a city in transition. There is recognition, particularly among the Seattle natives and long-time residents, that the feeling of community and City identity is eroding. Community members cite the large influx of people moving into the City to work for Amazon and other big companies as well as the concurrent displacement of long-term residents, communities, and small businesses that helped shape that community identity. As one community member explained,

There is a feeling now that people in the neighborhoods are not invested in the community. They come here for a job, buy a house, but don't really participate.¹⁰

Community members shared a desire for CSOs to bring the community together. With their connections, they should bridge the gap between new and old City residents and build community relationships. CSOs should support opportunities for community to come together, collaborate with community leadership, and help share information throughout the City.¹¹

Enhance Trust between Seattle Communities and the Police Department

Community members voiced concern that they do not have a relationship with the police officers that patrol their neighborhood. While events like the Police Picnic allow for some informal contact, there is so much rotation of officers that people frequently do not know and or feel comfortable talking to them.

Participants called out barriers to trusting the police among population subsets including immigrant/refugee communities, struggling youth, communities of Color (particularly the African American and Native American communities), and the LGBTQ community. They cited barriers that these groups face, including current and historic trauma, fear of deportation, and lack of positive relationships with law enforcement.

⁹ A member of the Community Police Commission attended as she was able.

¹⁰ Native American Police Advisory Council. 5/17/2017. "Community Service Officer Discussion" (meeting minutes)

¹¹ North Precinct Advisory Council. LGBTQ Advisory Council.

Effective CSOs will help build trust with these and other communities in Seattle who fear and avoid contacting the police. As one community member shared,

We need to see the CSOs and understand them; they need to build trust with the communities and we need to see them as advocates.¹²

CSOs will also help build trust in the broader Seattle community by increasing responsiveness, freeing officers to react more quickly to 911 calls, and providing follow-up.

Exert a Positive Influence on Police Officers and the Department

CSOs should exert a positive influence on the Seattle Police Department. With their community-lens, well-developed cultural competency and de-escalation skills, CSOs should be role models. They should bring community knowledge to the department.¹³ The department should be open to this knowledge and use it to continue to improve policies, officers, and community relations. As one member put it,

CSOs need to be as much for SPD as for the communities they work with. CSOs will be the ones who hear the fears, stories, [and] concerns of the community.¹⁴

Advance Race and Social Justice

The CSO program should be an instrument to improve racial equity in Seattle and within the Police Department. CSOs should bring a race and social justice lens to their work, raising understanding and awareness of the racial issues in the community and within the department. Community members shared a desire for CSOs to be able to talk about race and build understanding and cooperation on racial issues facing the community. As one community member shared,

We are in a very delicate moment historically. If we could find a way to talk about these issues [race and racism] in a way that brings people back for more – we will be doing something for our own citizenship.¹⁵

Program Principles

Long-time Seattle residents shared anecdotes throughout the SPD engagement process about the positive work that CSOs had done in the old program. The anecdotes highlight three principles that strengthened the old program and should influence the design of the new one.

Flexible

The old CSO program hired people who were “innovative and nimble” and then provided them tools and flexibility to work and innovate in the space provided.

One community member shared his experience with CSOs in the University District. He recalled how a former CSO conducted outreach to the University, local businesses, the homeless community, and

¹² Native American Police Advisory Council

¹³ LGBTQ Advisory Council

¹⁴ Native American Police Advisory Council

¹⁵ East Precinct Advisory Council

service providers in the area and began a dialogue about youth homelessness, which resulted in the development of community-led strategies to address youth homelessness, including the creation of many positive programs.¹⁶ This example demonstrates the flexibility of the program design – to allow CSOs to develop relationships and build community-led solutions to a problem affecting the community.

The program redesign should consider ways to build flexibility into the design. Flexibility can be incorporated in the new program through:

- Flexible staffing – allowing CSOs to adjust their work hours to attend community meetings and participate in community events.¹⁷
- Balance workload demands – allowing CSOs the time to develop community relationships and develop solutions in partnership with community members

Adaptable

The program needs to be able to respond to community as it changes. The ideas and goals of the Native American community in Seattle are very different than those of the Vietnamese community. This program needs to support CSOs as they develop relationships and give CSOs the ability to respond to specific community ideas, concerns, and strategies.

That said, there should be some core functions and recognized authority that the CSOs have in order to make them effective and empowered to deliver services/support City-wide.¹⁸ Issues like mental health, youth needs, homeless, and substance abuse are felt across all communities.

Accessible

Community members valued the storefronts that CSOs used in the old program. The value of the storefronts was that people could just walk in and talk to someone about an issue they were facing. The centralized location meant CSOs were accessible, and their lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) meant the community did not feel intimidated in reaching out to them.

The program redesign should focus on making CSOs accessible to all people in the community. Southwest Precinct Advisory Council members expressed concern about the needs of the undocumented, stressing that CSOs should be accessible as well as trusted to the community. Other community suggestions related to CSOs being accessible include:

- *Non-911 Contact Method:* Not everyone feels comfortable contacting sworn officers and a non-911 contact method provides an alternative option to engage.¹⁹
- *Working out of a storefront:* Community members valued the storefront that the former CSO program used, because it was centrally located and people could walk in with no barrier.²⁰

¹⁶ East Precinct Advisory Council

¹⁷ North Precinct Advisory Council

¹⁸ See Program Design: Empowered and Respected by the Department and the Community

¹⁹ Human Service Providers Forum, LGBTQ Advisory Council

²⁰ Filipino Advisory Council

- *Decentralized Model:* In the absence of using a storefront, some community groups thought a decentralized staffing model would better allow communities to meet and work with their CSOs.²¹

Communities want the CSO to feel and be accessible to them, regardless of socioeconomic status, and that should be an important consideration in the program design.

Program Design

SPD usually leads with program design and follows with community engagement. Under a traditional model, SPD representatives provide program details and limitations to guide participant input. Under this broader pre-emptive approach, community members made recommendations about all facets of the CSO program design, not limited to the discussion questions.

Community members' program design feedback also focused on their desire to see the program not get cut in the future. Their design recommendations address weaknesses in the old program and strengthen the visible impact of the new program.

Define the Problem

SPD received questions from community groups about what the problem was that led to the decision to bring back the CSOs.²² One individual expressed concern that the decision to bring back the CSOs was a result of a feeling of nostalgia, rather than a rational cost-benefit analysis.²³ Without leading with a defined problem and scope, the concern was that the program would run up costs and lack direction.

Policing and the community has changed a lot in thirty years. Community members expressed a strong interest in metrics to explain the decision to bring back the program and ongoing data collection to support its continued operation.²⁴

Define the Scope and the Community Served

The CSO program needs to have a defined scope. Without it, as one West Seattle Block Watch Captains' Network member cautioned, "they could spend 100% of their time on homelessness and never do anything else." This idea is not intended to contradict the principles of adaptability and flexibility. Rather, the program should define the areas of work for CSOs and then give them room to be flexible and adaptable in their approach.

Community suggestions include making CSOs:

- Referral-based²⁵
- Geography-based²⁶

²¹ Southeast Asian Advisory Council, Filipino Advisory Council, North Precinct Advisory Council

²² SPD-OCR session

²³ East Precinct Advisory Council

²⁴ LGBTQ Advisory Council

²⁵ West Seattle Block Watch Captains Network

²⁶ South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

- Need-based²⁷

The existing program funding will not support CSOs doing all the work that needs to be done and it will be hard to make a case for its continuation without clearly defining the program scope.

Leverage Community Strengths

Community members and resources should be engaged in the CSO program development and implementation. Throughout the engagement process, individual community members have come up to facilitators offering their knowledge, their community space, and their ongoing participation to support this program. Including community members in the CSO program and hiring process will strengthen program design and greatly enhance program legitimacy in the community.

Understand the New Environment

Community members cautioned against developing a new CSO program without first fully understanding the new environment.²⁸ Seattle has changed a lot since the end of the old program – there are more resources and players to consider, particularly with big issues like homelessness and mental illness. As one WPAC member said,

You cannot work independently. You have to be like a spider – you have to be talking to the navigation team, service providers, etc. -- ... lean on another.

Even within SPD, there are many players to consider: the officers, crime prevention coordinators, community police team, LEAD. CSOs need to understand the environment to best leverage department resources and community strengths.

Identify Program Advocate and Dependable Funding Source

Community members raised concerns that the current program funding would not support hiring enough CSOs to meet the demand and that the current funding structure may be vulnerable to cuts in the future. People who had been around during the old program shared stories in many meetings about the benefits of the program and expressed frustration that that it was cut.

The program should have a high-ranking person in the Seattle Police Department or elsewhere in the City of Seattle government who can advocate for its continued existence.²⁹ Having an ally who can support community and champion the program from a position of power will help keep it from being cut in lean years to come. Community members also urged the department and City Council to look at how to protect this program from future budget cuts. Community members want funding for this program to be expanded and made permanent so the program can operate effectively for the foreseeable future.

²⁷ North Precinct Advisory Council

²⁸ Human Service Providers Forum, West Precinct Advisory Council

²⁹ Native American Police Advisory Council

Collect Program Metrics and Community Stories

The new CSO program needs to include and prioritize the collection of data to be able to justify the impact it is having in the community.³⁰ Community members recognized that policing has changed and everything is data-driven now. CSO output may be harder to quantify, but there is as much value in the intangible relationships, trust, and community capacity building as there is in the more tangible work. Community members suggested collecting metrics and data that are easily quantifiable and investing in structures like community forums to compile stories and qualitative data.

In addition to collecting data, community members also thought the CSO program should include proactive methods of communicating stories of good CSO work and good police work to the community.³¹ Seeing good work the CSOs are doing on social media or in the news, they felt, would be good positive reinforcement of the value of the program and provide further opportunities for people to learn about the program.

Recognizable Uniform

Related to CSOs being trusted, their uniform should be easily recognizable, but not be able to be confused for that of a traditional law enforcement or security officer.³² Law enforcement and security uniforms can be perceived as threatening and can be associated with historical or personal trauma.

For CSOs to be approachable and effective, their uniform needs to not be tainted by association with fear, yet easily recognized as legitimate and distinct.

Empowered and Respected by the Department and the Community

Two community groups recommended that CSOs be empowered with some authority, as simple as the ability to write reports, to better command the respect and cooperation of the police officers and community members they work with.³³ Community members raised the concern that otherwise, CSOs risk not being respected by sworn staff which would delegitimize the program and their community work.

In addition to having authority, community members brought up the need for the organizational structure to reflect the importance of CSOs to the department. The CSO program should be placed within the organizational structure in such a way that they are not marginalized. The structure should provide opportunities for CSOs to bring the knowledge and ideas of community back to sworn officers and the department in general.³⁴ One group suggested CSOs report to sworn officers, others suggested they partner on certain patrols with them, and others still emphasized financial and logistical support from the department to the CSOs.³⁵

³⁰ LGBTQ Advisory Council, West Precinct Advisory Council

³¹ Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, Southeast Asian Advisory Council

³² Filipino Advisory Council, South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

³³ Native American Police Advisory Council, African American Community Advisory Council

³⁴ East Precinct Advisory Council, LGBTQ Advisory Council

³⁵ West Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, Filipino Advisory Council

Safety Consideration

In all SPD-led community engagement meetings, the presenters prefaced the discussion with the fact that CSOs will be unarmed. Despite this, East PAC community members wanted “unarmed” to be explicitly listed on the brainstorming sheet and voted in support of it (despite it being guaranteed), saying it was critically important. The LGBTQ Advisory Council brought CSO safety from a different lens, suggesting self-defense training to help keep CSOs and those they serve safe. Among the Southeast Asian Advisory Council, members raised concerns about the safety of the CSOs too and voiced support of personal protective equipment.

This program redesign has been led with the express belief that the CSOs would and should be unarmed. This is included to present the varying ideas presented by different community groups and suggest that the program design include consideration for the safety of all participants.

Who are the Community Service Officers?

From the Community

CSOs should be people who live and actively participate in the community served. There is a level of knowledge, experience, and dedication that living and working in the community served gives CSOs. Training is no substitute for a CSO having strong community roots. Being from the community will help CSOs make connections among and work with community members who would not otherwise trust or engage with the police. As one member put it,

We live in a diverse community. There is a large Ethiopian community here. A CSO [working] in this community may not be Filipino, but they also can't be white.³⁶

Community groups expressed interest in CSOs being hired from demographic groups currently underrepresented in SPD, including elders,³⁷ immigrants,³⁸ individuals with past involvement in the criminal justice system.³⁹

One community member shared a story of a girl in the community who had applied to be a police officer. She passed in the top percentile on all the technical exams, but was penalized in the background check for her work history (had worked for her mother, then had taken time off following the birth of her child).⁴⁰ Community members shared concerns that the current SPD background check process is hurting people of color and want the CSOs not to be similarly negatively impacted by non-culturally competent hiring practices.

SPD should rethink traditional recruiting and hiring to make it more accessible and inviting to the types of people who would be the best CSOs. Community members want recruitment to reach people who are well suited for CSO work, but might not be familiar or comfortable with the traditional hiring process.

³⁶ Filipino Advisory Council

³⁷ Southeast Asian Police Advisory Council, Joint East African & Muslim, Sikh and Arab Advisory Councils

³⁸ Filipino Advisory Council

³⁹ Joint East African & Muslim, Sikh and Arab Advisory Councils

⁴⁰ Filipino Advisory Council

While hiring perfectly representative people who live in the community served with the right skills may not be possible, community members want this to be the goal of the recruitment and hiring strategy. When a potential candidate is not a perfect match, they should absolutely demonstrate strong cultural competency and community involvement to be considered competitive.⁴¹

The program design needs to include supports to retain the employees and gather and share the knowledge that they acquire in cases of transition or turnover.⁴²

Active in the Community

CSOs must have a preexisting relationship with the community served through demonstrated community involvement. Multiple groups shared the idea that a successful CSO should really “know the people.”⁴³ While the deep knowledge of community will grow over time in this position, community members shared that a good CSO comes to the job with a foundation of knowledge from living and working in the community.

A successful candidate should demonstrate a history of engagement. The CSO program design should include community input in the hiring process to ensure applicants are truly active in the community.

Effective Communicators

The most important skill a CSO must have is the ability to communicate effectively and respectfully with all types of people.

Linguistically Proficiency

CSOs must be linguistically proficient in the languages of the community served. Linguistically proficient CSOs will be able to work more effectively in communities with large non-English-speaking populations and can be called upon by sworn officers in situations where language fluency would support a more positive outcome.

- Community members suggest program incentives or incentive pay to support hiring of CSOs with language ability.⁴⁴
- When a CSO does not speak the language of the person they are working with, they should have access to the Language Line and translated materials to facilitate smooth communication.⁴⁵

Effective communication is a key skill that CSOs need to be successful. Language ability is crucial to communicating with and building relationships with people with limited English proficiency, but there is a lot more to effective communication.

⁴¹ See “Cultural Competency and Race & Social Justice” section.

⁴² Filipino Advisory Council, LGBTQ Advisory Council

⁴³ Filipino Advisory Council, Native American Police Advisory Council, Southeast Asian Police Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

⁴⁴ Filipino Advisory Council

⁴⁵ South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

Listening Skills

CSOs need to be good listeners as well as good speakers – as one member told us, you were given two ears and one mouth for a reason; it is important to listen twice as much as you talk.⁴⁶ The importance of listening was echoed in several meetings, as community shared the desire to feel respected and heard, before officers came in to “straighten them out.”⁴⁷ Community members also shared the importance of patience in listening, recognizing different language and health barriers that might slow communication.⁴⁸

Cultural Communication

A CSO should be able to talk to all kinds of people, from a person on the street to the Mayor, effectively. They should be aware of different communication styles and be mindful so as not to talk down or treat people of different backgrounds with disrespect. It is also important that CSOs be aware of cultural nuance in communication. In the Native American community, for instance, there is a level of respect given to elders in the community and that is reflected in how that community interacts with seniors.⁴⁹ Understanding and honoring this cultural practice and others like it in communication will go a long way towards building trust and deep relationships with community.

Community Communication

CSOs should also understand how different communities communicate with each other. Community members brought up different methods that neighborhoods and groups use to share information, including:

- Neighborhood blogs
- Next Door
- Local hangouts
- Community centers
- Churches⁵⁰

CSOs should be knowledgeable about how communities or sub-communities communicate and use those channels effectively.

Personality

CSOs need to be able to build and maintain trust in the community.⁵¹ To that end, community members shared a variety of personality traits and interpersonal skills that would help make a CSO effective.

A CSO should be:

⁴⁶ Native American Police Advisory Council, paraphrased.

⁴⁷ African American Community Advisory Council

⁴⁸ South Seattle Crime Prevention Council, African American Community Advisory Council, Native American Police Advisory Council

⁴⁹ Native American Police Advisory Council

⁵⁰ African American Community Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, North Precinct Advisory Council

⁵¹ Native American Police Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

- Non-judgmental⁵²
- Empathetic⁵⁴
- Patient⁵⁶
- Sensitive⁵⁸
- Able to see a situation/problem from different perspectives⁶⁰
- Proactive⁵³
- Trusted⁵⁵
- Innovative⁵⁷
- Passionate⁵⁹
- “People Person”⁶¹

CSOs should be problem-solvers⁶² and self-start when they recognize an issue.⁶³ Community members want CSOs to be passionate about community work, rather than see it as a step to becoming a police officer or something else.⁶⁴ Individuals with backgrounds in training and education⁶⁵ or customer service⁶⁶ may be well-suited.

Core Competencies and Training

The responses that community members gave to the question “What knowledge and skills would make CSOs successful” have been aggregated into themes or concepts.⁶⁷ The following concepts fall under skills and training and have been ordered by frequency (from high to low) of meetings in which they were raised. These are competencies that are not unique to specific work, but rather represent a broad baseline of skills that all CSOs should have. Training suggestions that community members made specific to work-areas are included in “What would you like CSOs to work on?”

Community members encouraged the department to avail itself of community resources and department training curricula that have been developed, tested, and proven successful by other programs, rather than waste time creating new content.⁶⁸

⁵² African American Community Advisory Council

⁵³ West Precinct Advisory Council, South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

⁵⁴ South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

⁵⁵ Native American Police Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

⁵⁶ African American Community Advisory Council, South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

⁵⁷ West Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council

⁵⁸ Native American Police Advisory Council

⁵⁹ Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

⁶⁰ African American Community Advisory Council, South Seattle Crime Prevention Council, Southeast Asian Advisory Council

⁶¹ Native American Police Advisory Council, Filipino Advisory Council, African American Community Advisory Council, South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

⁶² Community Police Commission

⁶³ African American Community Advisory Council, Native American Police Advisory Council, Southeast Asian Advisory Council, Community Police Commission, West Precinct Advisory Council

⁶⁴ African American Community Advisory Council

⁶⁵ West Seattle Block Watch Captain’s Network

⁶⁶ East Precinct Advisory Council, Community Police Commission

⁶⁷ See Appendix for meeting notes and dot-voting activity results.

⁶⁸ East Precinct Advisory Council, Native American Police Advisory Council

Cultural Competency and Race & Social Justice

Raised in 9 of 14 meetings; raised by all demographic advisory councils.

Community members stressed the importance of cultural competency and race & social justice training for CSOs. Cultural competency and race & social justice training was brought up independently by all six SPD demographic councils. Across demographic and precinct advisory councils, it was raised in nine of the fourteen meetings as being important.

As one community member put it, “it’s more than just cultural competence.”⁶⁹ Community members stressed that this knowledge had to go beyond what the average police officer obtains and really focuses on the nuance of cultural identity. Under cultural competency, community members included issues like:

- Ability to recognize communication style differences across cultures, races, ages, and backgrounds
- Understanding of community-specific issues, like tribal sovereignty for the Native American community.⁷⁰

They also shared that while a CSO will not necessarily know every nuance to every culture, they should have deep foundation of understanding, be willing to learn, and be humble and recognize that they may not understand and will make mistakes.

Community members also raised specific knowledge related to race & social justice. They wanted CSO training to include material on:

- Implicit bias and prejudice⁷¹
- Institutional racism⁷²
- History of policing against different groups⁷³
- Secondary and historical trauma⁷⁴

For CSOs to be successful, cultural competency and race & social justice need to be ongoing learnings and be built into the CSO program model.

Implementation:

- *Service Learning Model:* Wherein CSOs complete a pre-determined number of volunteer hours with a different community-based organization every month or quarter to expand their knowledge of that community.

⁶⁹ Joint East African & Muslim, Sikh and Arab Advisory Council Meeting

⁷⁰ Native American Police Advisory Council

⁷¹ East Precinct Advisory Council

⁷² Joint East African & Muslim, Sikh and Arab Advisory Council Meeting

⁷³ Native American Police Advisory Council

⁷⁴ Joint East African & Muslim, Sikh and Arab Advisory Council Meeting, Native American Police Advisory Council Meeting

- *Community-Based Organization-led Training*: Wherein CSO training is done by community organizations themselves, like the People’s Institute, to learn from the community experts.⁷⁵

Mental Health and Crisis Intervention

Raised in 7 of 14 meetings.

Community members called out the importance of training in mental health and crisis intervention for CSOs. Individuals shared concerns about the political climate and its impacts on healthcare policy, particularly as it relates to coverage of those with mental illness.⁷⁶

CSOs should have knowledge of mental illness and crisis intervention so they can interact with these people safely. They should also have access to resources and support to assist people in crisis. While one community member encouraged hiring mental health clinicians as CSOs, others felt that training and access to resources would also be effective.⁷⁷ CSOs should understand what resources are available to help the mentally ill and have relationships with and leverage support from organizations who serve them.

De-escalation and Conflict Resolution

Raised in 6 of 14 community meetings; ranked as the most important knowledge/skill by the African American Community Advisory Council.

Related to crisis intervention, community members want the CSO to be a “voice of reason” in conflict situations; someone who can calm people in a crisis.⁷⁸ Some thought that in cases like non-threatening mental health calls, CSOs may be better suited than armed officers in achieving a positive outcome.⁷⁹

The ability to de-escalate is a skill that incoming candidates might already have, but it should be a strong focus in training as well.⁸⁰ There are a lot of factors that escalate tensions in a conflict, and having more people in positions to de-escalate will be beneficial all around. Community members cautioned that providing de-escalation and conflict mediation training to CSOs could not be used to justify cutting back on de-escalation training that sworn officers receive, but should enable CSOs to be a complementary resource to the department.⁸¹

Education and Professional Background

The work that CSOs do should dictate the education and professional background sought in the hiring process. The strongest interest expressed in the engagement process was that CSOs be from and active in the community served. The program design needs to balance professional background requirements

⁷⁵ Native American Police Advisory Council

⁷⁶ North Precinct Advisory Council

⁷⁷ North Precinct Advisory Council

⁷⁸ African American Community Advisory Council

⁷⁹ East Precinct Advisory Council

⁸⁰ East Precinct Advisory Council

⁸¹ East Precinct Advisory Council

with community focus, or risk creating barriers to hiring the community-focused, community-trusted people that would really strengthen the program.

Six groups shared specific interest in a CSO having social work experience. Other possible degree backgrounds community members shared include: EMTs, people with psychology degrees, and mental health clinicians.

What should CSOs work on in your community?

Community members shared a variety of ideas about what they wanted to see CSOs address. SPD facilitators did not share ideas raised across groups in the meetings. The ideas were independently generated by the community members who attended and participated in these sessions.

The specific ideas have been aggregated into work areas presented below.⁸² The work areas are described and examples are presented from specific meetings. Not all groups were able to participate in the dot-voting exercise, so the areas of work listed below are ordered in terms of number of meetings in which they were raised (high to low). For a ranking of priorities based on the dot-voting exercise, completed by only 11 of the 14 groups, please refer to the table below for the aggregated point value for each work area.

What would you like to see CSOs work on in your community?	Points	Frequency
Community Engagement and Education	156	12
Community Resource and Social Service Partner	91	10
Youth Services	107	9
Patrol Support	25	9
Services to the Homeless	53	7
Mental Health Services	71	6
Build Community Trust	27	5
Deescalation and Conflict Mediation	26	5
Elderly Services	36	4
Race and Social Justice	20	4
Substance Abuse + Chemical Dependency	24	3
Victim/Family Support	21	2

Community Engagement and Education

Community engagement and education was raised in the most meetings (12 of 14) and received the most support in the voting activity.

Definition of community engagement

For the purposes of this paper, community engagement will be defined using the CDC's working definition:

⁸² See Appendix for all dot-voting activity results.

“...the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people... It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices.”⁸³

Successful community engagement includes:

- Relationships and partnerships between the community and the department
- Bidirectional communication flow
- Working together to address issues affecting the wellbeing of the community

Build relationships and partnerships in the Community

Community members want the CSOs to “know the community by name.”⁸⁴ To do so, CSOs need to understand community/law-enforcement relations⁸⁵ and build relationships⁸⁶ with people in the community, including, but not limited to, those who would otherwise distrust the police.

Community groups highlighted the importance of being visible in the community as a first step to building relationships between them and the department.⁸⁷ A shared concern about police officers currently is that there is so much turnover, that community members do not develop a deep relationship with the ones serving their neighborhood. CSOs should be a familiar face and engage in sustained relationship building and partnership with a specific community so that people can form those relationships.

CSOs should also consider targeted outreach to transient and harder-to-reach populations, including those experiencing homelessness, to build relationships with them.⁸⁸ They should attend community events and frequent community hangouts to meet and interact with all parts of the community.⁸⁹

Bidirectional Communication and Information Sharing

CSOs should share information with the community and bring information from the community back to the department. Having ongoing dialogue and information sharing will strengthen the community, enhance the department’s legitimacy, and strengthen public safety.

Educating the Community

A more informed community is a stronger, healthier community. Community members shared ideas about how CSOs could perform preventative education in the community on:

⁸³ CDC, 1997, p. 9.

⁸⁴ East Precinct Advisory Council.

⁸⁵ Filipino Advisory Council

⁸⁶ Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

⁸⁷ Filipino Advisory Council, Southwest Asian Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council

⁸⁸ Human Service Providers Forum

⁸⁹ Filipino Advisory Council

- SPD’s work in the community⁹⁰
- How to call the police, how to report issues, and what to expect⁹¹
 - Focus on, but not limited to, immigrant/refugee communities
- Preventative education on crime prevention, local ordinances, etc.

Community members also expressed interest in CSOs doing targeted information sharing with people following a police encounter.⁹²

Educating the Department

CSOs should bring community knowledge and feedback back to the Police Department.⁹³ Community members want CSOs to share their cultural competency, knowledge of community, and feedback from the community with the department through formal and informal channels. CSOs should be considered liaisons between communities and SPD, and advocate on behalf of those communities with the department.⁹⁴ The community wants this information to help shape department policy and improve the services that officers provide. Community members want the information CSOs share with the department to have legitimacy and to do this, knowledge transfer should be codified in the department’s organizational structure and policies. SPD leadership needs to recognize its value and ensure that the knowledge shared is disseminated appropriately through the department.

Work together on community issues

CSOs should work with community members to address common issues – attending community meetings and working with community members on issues that affect them.⁹⁵ CSOs should encourage community participation and work collaboratively with members on issues that affect community well-being and public safety.^{96/97}

Community Resource and Social Services Partner

Raised in 10 of 14 meetings.

Community members shared interest in CSOs taking on a more generalist community resource and social service partner role. SPD gets many calls through 911 that should be directed to social services, rather than law enforcement. Because social services are so diffuse, 911 is used as a catch-all for a variety of issues.

⁹⁰ LGBTQ Advisory Council

⁹¹ South Seattle Crime Prevention Council, Filipino Advisory Council, LGBTQ Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council

⁹² Southeast Asian Advisory Council, West Seattle Block Watch Captains Network

⁹³ Native American Advisory Council, LGBTQ Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

⁹⁴ Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, Native American Advisory Council

⁹⁵ LGBTQ Advisory Council, Community Police Commission

⁹⁶ Filipino Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, South Seattle Crime Prevention Council, Community Police Commission, African American Community Advisory Council

⁹⁷ Native American Advisory Council, North Precinct Advisory Council

Community Resource

Using their knowledge of community-based organizations and social services, CSOs should link people with the right resources or organizations to meet their needs. CSOs could respond to all types of community needs, a veritable “walking, talking Find-It-Fix It app,” as one community member put it.⁹⁸ Furthermore, CSOs should not be limited to knowing about resources, but also provide service referrals where needed.⁹⁹

Social Service Partner

To take on this role, CSOs need to partner with CBOs and social service providers, communicating and coordinating with different players. They might establish a forum to bring social providers together¹⁰⁰ or develop bilateral partnerships with service providers and CBOs. Regardless of the method, CSOs would establish relationships and dialogue channels between SPD, CBOs, and social service providers to better assist community in accessing the resources and services they need.

Community members want CSOs to have a directory of service providers and thorough knowledge of systems and resources to support people.

Youth Services

Community members in 9 of 14 meetings shared concerns about struggling Seattle youth. Community-identified challenges facing these youths include:

- Distrust of the police (cultural/personal)
- Trauma related to police contact
- Lure of gangs
- Conflict with family

When they act out, their families, particularly among immigrant communities, may not know of or be able to easily access the resources to help them.

Across the different meetings, four approaches were suggested for CSOs working with struggling youth:¹⁰¹

Root-Cause Approach

CSOs could work identifying needs and root causes for struggling youth and could respond accordingly.¹⁰² Assessing the underlying issue(s) facing the youth would inform the CSO response.

⁹⁸ Filipino Advisory Council

⁹⁹ EAMSAC, West Seattle Block Watch Captains Network

¹⁰⁰ Southeast Asian Advisory Council

¹⁰¹ The approaches identified are not ranked. They are included to explore the diversity of ideas suggested in community meetings.

¹⁰² Native American Police Advisory Council

School Focus – “Officer Friendly” Approach

The CSOs would work in partnership with schools to provide mentorship and build trust and positive relationships with struggling or vulnerable youth.¹⁰³

Implementation:

- *Preemptive Outreach*: CSOs mentor and build positive relationships with elementary school-aged children before fear of the police sets in.¹⁰⁴
- *Referral-Based Service*: CSOs mentor teens and provide service referrals to their families as needed under the direction of school guidance counselors.¹⁰⁵
- *Education*: CSOs provide information to schools and youth who might otherwise be at-risk for gang recruitment and involvement.
- *Service-Learning*: Interested high school students work with CSOs as volunteers or interns, extending the work of the program, while also providing work experience and leadership opportunities for youth.

Community Focus – “Detective Cookie Approach”

Community members recognize and deeply appreciate the work that Detective Cookie has performed for youth in the South Seattle community through her Urban Youth Chess Club. Detective Cookie’s Urban Youth Chess Club provides space and support for youth of all backgrounds to come together and play chess.¹⁰⁶ The program helps kids develop analytic skills, self-confidence, and good sportsmanship. As one community member put it,

“I’m not saying clone [Det.] Cookie, but do what she does for at-risk youth.”

CSOs could float to the different community centers, playing games and building relationships with the youth who hang out there.¹⁰⁷

Police Partner Approach

The fourth approach involves working closely with sworn police officers to identify work areas where: (1) a CSO accompanying sworn may help or (2) a CSO may be preferable in responding to a situation with youth.

There may be cases where, in working with an officer, CSOs could help reduce trauma and provide support. In assisting sworn, CSOs share their expertise in de-escalation and cultural competency in the moment and could provide follow-up resources or service referrals to the youth as needed. Working

¹⁰³ African American Community Advisory Council

¹⁰⁴ NAPAC

¹⁰⁵ West Seattle Block Watch Captains Network

¹⁰⁶ <http://q13fox.com/2016/05/10/detective-cookies-chess-tournament-inspires-students-and-gives-lessons-in-life/>

¹⁰⁷ South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

with sworn in certain calls would also provide information-sharing and learning opportunities for officers and CSOs.

In other cases, CSOs may be preferable to sworn in responding to youth-related calls. Examples raised by community members include:

- Responding to issues in a school that do not require law enforcement¹⁰⁸
- Providing transportation and support for DSHS pick-ups & youth homeless to shelter¹⁰⁹
- Responding to non-emergency calls from shelters¹¹⁰

These youth-specific situations are ones, community members pointed out, where having an unarmed, non-uniformed responder with a CSO's skillset would be less traumatic and lead to a more positive outcome involved than a sworn officer.

Patrol Support

Raised in 9 of 14 community meetings.¹¹¹ Please note that Patrol Support is one area where priority ranking, as assessed by number of meetings in which it was raised and number of points given (dot-voting activity), differs significantly. When considering this from the cumulative points given, patrol support ranks ninth out of twelve work areas.

CSOs could be used to provide low-level, non-emergency patrol support to sworn officers. Community members shared the idea that CSOs could free up officers to handle more serious issues and improve 911 response times.

Community members shared a wide range of ideas for possible patrol support. Most ideas related to responding to low-level, non-emergency issues, including: responding to complaints about noisy parties, car prowls, and graffiti removal, and monitoring signs of gang activity.

Community members shared ideas about using CSOs for preventative duties, like handing out information to university students moving in about Seattle's noise ordinance.

Services to the Homeless

Raised in 7 of 14 community meetings.¹¹²

Community members shared their concerns that not enough is being done to help Seattle's homeless population and that CSOs could work with service providers and law enforcement to help. People

¹⁰⁸ African American Community Advisory Council

¹⁰⁹ Community Police Commission

¹¹⁰ Community Police Commission

¹¹¹ FAC, African American Community Advisory Council, LGBTQAC, Community Police Commission, West Precinct Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, SEAAC, North Precinct Advisory Council

¹¹² LGBTQ, Community Police Commission, West PAC, Southwest PAC, West Seattle Block Watch Captains Network, Human Service Providers Network, North PAC

experiencing homelessness frequently have deeper needs related to mental illness, dependency, and unemployment.¹¹³ CSOs, with their training and knowledge of resources available, could be used to support outreach to Seattle’s homeless.

CSOs could:

- Support the work of the Navigation Teams¹¹⁴
- Mediate between property owners and people experiencing homelessness, to connect the homeless with services and support rather than forcing them to relocate¹¹⁵
- Conduct outreach to people experiencing homelessness that are isolated from other services¹¹⁶

Community members in two groups specifically called out the needs of homeless youth and wanted CSOs to focus their outreach and support to them.¹¹⁷ Another community member suggested CSOs take a more high-level approach, looking at systemic issues that lead to homelessness and working to “chip away at those underlying issues”¹¹⁸ rather than a more direct service role.

Several community members expressed concerns about CSOs working on homelessness, specifically: (1) highlighting that the City needs to be investing more funding in existing structures like Navigation Teams¹¹⁹ and (2) that if CSOs focus on homelessness without framework or a clear scope, that they may never work on anything else.¹²⁰

Mental Health Services

Raised in 6 of 14 community meetings.¹²¹

Community members want CSOs to respond and deescalate non-violent mental health calls. Between their well-developed abilities to deescalate and mediate conflict and their position as unarmed personnel, community members felt there were opportunities for them to assist those in or at risk of mental health crisis.

One community member shared a story of a friend who was experiencing suicidal thoughts. When 911 was called, an armed officer responded, increasing, rather than decreasing, tensions and stress on the friend in crisis.¹²²

¹¹³ West Precinct Advisory Council

¹¹⁴ Community Police Commission

¹¹⁵ North Precinct Advisory Council

¹¹⁶ Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

¹¹⁷ Human Service Providers Forum, West Precinct Advisory Council

¹¹⁸ West Precinct Advisory Council

¹¹⁹ Community Police Commission

¹²⁰ West Seattle Block Watch Captains Network

¹²¹ African American Community Advisory Council, Community Police Commission, West Precinct Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, North Precinct Advisory Council

¹²² African American Community Advisory Council

CSOs could respond, either solo or in tandem with sworn officers, to calls related to mental health issues. Using their ability to deescalate, they could support positive outcomes, connecting the people involved with services and providing follow-up as needed.¹²³ While most community feedback suggested CSOs be a part of the response to mental health calls, one community member suggested CSOs assist in diversion for mentally ill involved in the criminal justice system.¹²⁴

To be effective in this role, CSOs need to have knowledge of crisis intervention, mental illness, and de-escalation techniques. CSOs would need to have working knowledge of the referral process and resources available to the mentally ill and their families.

Build Community Trust

Raised in 5 of 14 community meetings.¹²⁵

Building community trust is a theme that has emerged throughout the CSO community engagement process. While most of the suggestions focused on CSOs being trustworthy and the goal that the program could increase trust between the department and community, five groups called out specific trust-building work that they thought CSOs should perform.

The African American Community Advisory Council recognized distrust as a primary barrier between their community and the Seattle Police Department. They suggested that CSO work on addressing and rebuilding trust with their community through targeted outreach and engagement.

Members of the Community Police Commission and Southeast Asian Advisory Council called out the work that needed to be done to address underreporting in marginalized communities, focusing on trust from a public safety and victim wellbeing perspective.

De-escalation and Conflict Mediation

Raised in 5 of 14 community meetings.¹²⁶

Throughout the community engagement, de-escalation and conflict mediation were repeatedly raised as important core competencies that CSOs should demonstrate and bring to all areas of their work.

In five community meetings, participants shared interest in CSOs doing work specific to de-escalation and conflict mediation in the areas of:

- Property disputes¹²⁷
- Neighbor disputes¹²⁸

¹²³ African American Community Advisory Council, West Precinct Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, North Precinct Advisory Council

¹²⁴ Community Police Commission

¹²⁵ African American Community Advisory Council, Community Police Commission, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, SEAAC

¹²⁶ African American Community Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, West Seattle Block Watch Captains Network, North Precinct Advisory Council

¹²⁷ African American Community Advisory Council, North Precinct Advisory Council

¹²⁸ Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, West Seattle Block Watch Captains Network

- Non-threatening mental health call¹²⁹

In working specifically in conflict mediation, CSOs could deescalate and resolve disputes safely and positively. Being uniformed yet unarmed, CSOs would convey authority but not be inherently threatening. Better de-escalation, community members pointed out, would result in more positive outcomes for participants, free up officers, and reduce property damage.

Elderly Services

4 of 14 meetings raised services to the elderly as an area they want CSOs to address.¹³⁰ These community groups raised concerns around:

- Risk of abuse and exploitation
- Isolation
- Mental health
- Lack of resources

Community members suggested that CSOs do welfare checks and be able to assist in cases where elders are not being well-treated, but before an actual crime has occurred.^{131 132}

CSOs need training in elder-specific issue areas including mental health, exploitation, and signs of abuse. They should know what to look for and what resources are available. CSOs should coordinate with existing SPD programs and resources that work with the elderly, leveraging crisis intervention training and the knowledge and skills of the Crisis Response Team.¹³³

Cultural competency and communication skills will be particularly important in work supporting elders. The Native American, Southeast Asian, and East African Police Advisory Councils shared the importance of showing respect to elders in their community. In working with elders in the immigrant communities, communication skills will be very important so CSOs can be effective despite existing language barriers.

Race and Social Justice

Raised in 4 of 14 community meetings.¹³⁴

Community members shared concerns around race and social justice issues and their hope that CSOs could move the needle forward in the department and community in advancing these issues.¹³⁵ Four

¹²⁹ East Precinct Advisory Council. See section on Mental Health Services.

¹³⁰ Native American Police Advisory Council; East African/Muslim, Sikh, and Arab Advisory Council; African American Community Advisory Council; Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

¹³¹ African American Community Advisory Council

¹³² Southwest Precinct Advisory Council

¹³³ Joint East African/Muslim, Sikh and Arab Advisory Council

¹³⁴ West Precinct Advisory Council, Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council, North Precinct Advisory Council

¹³⁵ See Program Goals & Outcomes: Advance Race and Social Justice

groups also made suggestions about specific work, related to advancing race and social justice, that CSOs could take on in Seattle.

CSOs could take a service approach, conducting community trainings on implicit bias and prejudice and working to address low-level hate violence and harassment.¹³⁶ Alternatively, they could take a more systemic focus and work to identify and chip away at structural issues they identified that were holding people and communities unfairly back.¹³⁷ Regardless of approach, CSOs need to have training in race and social justice issues and use that knowledge to directly and/or indirectly support and work in the community.

Substance Abuse & Chemical Dependency-related Services

Raised in 3 of 14 community meetings.¹³⁸

Community members shared concerns around substance abuse and chemical dependency in the community. One North Precinct Advisory Council member shared how, in his neighborhood, he has been seeing a lot of people struggling with addiction, who need a place to seek help. If CSOs had access to a detox van, he expounded, they could provide support and a safe place for them to sober up.¹³⁹ Another community member took a different approach, favoring CSOs being a part of the referral process to help chemically dependent and mentally ill get into diversion programs once they had broken the law.

There is a strong relationship between people who are experiencing homeless and those people suffering from mental illness and chemical dependency. CSOs need to understand addiction and be trained and knowledgeable of the concurrent needs and challenges associated with mental illness and chemical dependency.¹⁴⁰ They need to be able to work in tandem with existing treatment programs and service providers working in this field.

Victim & Family Support

Participants at two community meetings recommended that CSOs provide victim and family support services. They shared suggestions that CSOs work with victims of human trafficking,¹⁴¹ provide support to domestic violence victims,¹⁴² and follow-up for death calls.¹⁴³

CSOs would have bandwidth to go the extra mile and provide needed comfort and support after these traumatic situations. They could help ease the trauma and assist victims and families by connecting them to resources.

¹³⁶ Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, East Precinct Advisory Council

¹³⁷ West Precinct Advisory Council

¹³⁸ Community Police Commission, West Precinct Advisory Council, North Precinct Advisory Council

¹³⁹ North Precinct Advisory Council

¹⁴⁰ See Core Competencies and Training: Mental Health and Crisis Intervention and Core Competencies and Training: De-escalation and Conflict Resolution.

¹⁴¹ Community Police Commission Meeting

¹⁴² Southwest Precinct Advisory Council, South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

¹⁴³ South Seattle Crime Prevention Council

RSJI Toolkit

SOCR was contracted to conduct a racial toolkit analysis of potential benefits and burdens of the new CSO program.

SOCR Community Engagement Methodology

The SOCR Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) team relied on multiple methods to record views of community members and share information with them about the CSO program development. Prior to stakeholder engagement, the RET team approved SOCR's recommended outcome statement: *Support community-led strategies that lead to a reduction in criminal justice system involvement for communities of color.*

In-Person Community Engagement Sessions

SOCR identified and reached out to community-based organizations in Seattle with focus on historically disenfranchised populations. Facilitators requested ninety minutes of time with each community group, offering to provide food to honor their time and participation, though not all groups were able to commit to the full ninety-minute session.

Each session began with a round of introductions. A representative from the Seattle Police Department then made a specialized welcome, sharing his or her intention to listen deeply and report back the feedback they heard. The SPD representative acknowledged the history of racist and unjust policing and the connection to present day feelings of anger, grief, and mistrust. Chart paper was posted around the room and labeled with each of the engagement questions:

- (1) What are your community strengths that would make the CSO program successful?
- (2) What are the most pressing concerns in your community that you'd like the CSO program to be a part of?
- (3) What is important to consider in the design of the CSO program in order to minimize harm and maximize benefit to your community?
- (4) What do you see as success for the CSO program?

While the SOCR facilitator guided the engagement participants through the questions, an SOCR staff member or RET Team member noted ideas and concepts raised in the discussion on paper in sight of the entire room. While the notetakers were instructed to capture as much as possible, the notes do not reflect the exact words of the speakers, but rather the ideas they shared. When the facilitator noticed a theme in the discussion, s/he verbally acknowledged it and asked for participants to identify it as an issue of "high," "medium," or "low/no" importance.

After the third engagement question, SOCR facilitators shared a data sheet specific to the demographic group represented by the community organization.¹⁴⁴ The data sheet provided specific information about local public safety concerns and racial disparities in Seattle. The racial disparities focused on how race is a predictor of people's perceptions towards and experiences with law enforcement. Participants were then asked "After reviewing the data on your community, do you have additional feedback to

¹⁴⁴ See Appendix for a sample Data Sheet distributed at in-person sessions

inform the development of the CSO program?” and invited to share any further thoughts. To close out the session, the facilitator asked all participants to share a concise statement answering the question, “What do you see as success for the CSO program?” The facilitator then thanked the group for their time and input and outlined future communication and feedback channels. The facilitator asked participants to complete a demographic information form for use in the Racial Equity Toolkit analysis.¹⁴⁵

Following the session, each community group received a thank you email with a copy of the notes taken at the session and an invitation to make any corrections if an item was captured inaccurately. They were invited to participate further by visiting the SOCR CSO website and/or completing the online engagement survey.

Online Survey

SOCR conducted an online CSO engagement survey to reach individuals not captured by the in-person sessions.¹⁴⁶ The CSO Interdepartmental Team approved an online survey that reflected the questions asked in the in-person sessions. The questions were amended slightly to better frame the context of the CSO program and for ease of translation into other languages. SOCR contracted with a language consultant (NWI Global) to translate the survey in six languages and translate non-English responses. With direction for the Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, the survey was translated into: Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, Somali, and Spanish.

SOCR hosted the survey on the SurveyMonkey platform and utilized the networks of the CSO IDT, community-based organizations, and other affiliates to distribute the survey. The survey was live from August 8th through September 26th. The team received 200 responses from individuals who either live, work, or attend school in the City of Seattle.

Stakeholder Interviews

SOCR conducted interviews with eight stakeholders. The stakeholders included Seattle community organizers, a former Community Service Officer, a member of the Seattle NAACP, a Community Police Commission Commissioner, and an expert on indigenous culture and community-centered integrative program design.

Racial Equity Toolkit

Using the data collected during the stakeholder engagement (Step 2), SOCR developed a Summary of Benefits and Burdens that identifies opportunity areas and ways to minimize potential harm (Steps 3 and 4).

Racial Equity Benefits (RET Step 3)	Maximize Opportunity (RET Step 4)
Recruiting and hiring residents from Seattle neighborhoods most impacted by criminal justice inequities into the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruiting efforts should be prioritized in communities where there are connections between race and disparately higher rates of police contact,

¹⁴⁵ Demographic Questions - Appendix

¹⁴⁶ See Appendix for survey results

<p>Service Officer (CSO) program will increase racial equity by improving the cultural competency, partnership, and accountability capacity of the Seattle Police Department.</p>	<p>primarily in Seattle’s communities of color¹⁴⁷. These neighborhoods are mostly located in South Seattle, including Beacon Hill, New Holly, Chinatown-International District, and Rainier Beach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical employment requirements that may exclude these applicants should be relaxed, including the presence of a criminal history and lack of educational credentials. • Qualifying experience should include someone with preexisting relationships and respect within the communities served by the CSO program.
<p>Developing a humanistic, anti-racist, and trauma-informed framework for the CSO program is paramount to increasing racial equity. This includes trainings, professional development, and ongoing education to ensure CSOs understand the nuances of the historical and contemporary traumas experienced in communities of color.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO training should include elements of Undoing Institutional Racism, de-escalation, conflict mediation, cross-cultural understanding, social psychology, mental illness awareness and compassionate response, and restorative justice. • Training should be done in collaboration with community groups and other organizations that currently conduct these workshops, including The People’s Institute Northwest, The Black Prisoner’s Caucus, and Seattle’s Race & Social Justice Initiative. • The CSO program should learn from the successes of Detective Denise “Cookie” Bouldin’s work to engage youth and conduct anti-violence and community restoration programming.
<p>The Seattle Police Department should seek to partner with a community organization in the execution of the CSO program, such as a community-based organization, a community-led board of directors, or a community-oriented City of Seattle department. Doing so would increase racial equity through increased accountability to communities most impacted by criminal justice inequities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs should seek to form partnerships with established community-based organizations that work in Seattle’s disenfranchised communities such as El Centro de la Raza, The Village of Hope, and the C/ID Public Safety Task Force. It should be considered to have CSOs maintain office hours in these spaces and maintain a regular presence. • Potential City department partnerships could include the Department of Neighborhoods, the Office for Civil Rights, or the Human Services Department.

¹⁴⁷ Seattle Police Monitor: Tenth Systemic Assessment – “Stops, Search, and Seizure”, June 2017. pg. 9.

Racial Equity Burden (Step 3)	Minimize harm through strategies, policies, partnerships, other (Step 4)
<p>If the program isn't set up for internal legitimacy with sworn SPD officers and leadership, then this program could decrease racial equity by reducing the effectiveness of CSOs and further distance the relationship between SPD and communities most impacted by criminal justice inequities. To avoid this, program design must be intentional from the beginning to integrate and foster strong relations between sworn officers and CSOs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs and sworn officers should undergo joint trainings, attend community meetings together, and have similar reporting structures. • CSOs should join sworn officers on beat patrol as often as possible. • CSOs and sworn officers should regularly convene community engagement meetings to build partnerships with local community-based organizations, businesses, and residential associations. • CSOs and sworn officers should work to engage youth of color in their work through mentorship and targeted engagement.
<p>CSOs should have protected mechanisms in place to report up community concerns and witnessed injustices to SPD leadership. Without this in place, communities most impacted by criminal justice inequities will feel that CSOs reinforce the status quo, which will lead to a continued decrease in racial equity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs should be required to regularly report to SPD leadership on their analyses of community concerns, desires, and needs. • CSOs should have protected access to the Office of Police Accountability and Office of Inspector General for Public Safety to ensure documented cases of concern are investigated properly.
<p>Centralizing and standardizing the operations of the CSO program could decrease racial equity by disengaging CSOs from the contextual rhythms and nuances of the neighborhoods they serve. Efforts should be made to ensure CSOs can spend most of their time directly in community with their schedules flexible enough to meet people where they are at.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 20% of a CSO's time should be spent building relations throughout the communities they serve. For initial onboarding of a new hire, this percentage should be at least 35%. This can take the form of attending key community gatherings, visiting local businesses and organizations, and establishing a presence at spaces with high pedestrian traffic. • Learning from the original program, CSOs should be available as often as possible, ideally 24-hours a day, 6 days a week¹⁴⁸. Scheduling for CSO shifts should allow for this flexibility and to be on hand for any cases wherein their humanistic approach could be valued and necessary.

¹⁴⁸ James, Mary F. "Community Service Officers." *The Urban Function in American Society*, 18 Mar. 1980.

Appendices

1. Green Sheet
2. Mayoral Directive
3. SPD-SOCR Contract for Racial Equity Toolkit
4. SPD Presentation Outline
5. SPD-Led Engagement Meeting Notes
 - a. North Precinct Advisory Council Meeting
 - b. South Seattle Crime Prevention Council Meeting
 - c. East Precinct Advisory Council Meeting
 - d. West Precinct Advisory Council Meeting
 - e. Southwest Precinct Advisory Council Meeting
 - f. Native American Police Advisory Council Meeting
 - g. LGBTQ Police Advisory Council Meeting
 - h. Joint East African/Muslim, Sikh and Arab Advisory Council Meeting
 - i. Filipino Advisory Council Meeting
 - j. African American Community Advisory Council Meeting
 - k. Southeast Asian Police Advisory Council Meeting
 - l. West Seattle Block Watch Captains' Network Meeting
 - m. Human Service Providers Forum Meeting
 - n. Community Police Commission Meeting
6. SPD Engagement Voting by Meeting with Analysis (Excel File)
7. SOCR-Led Engagement Meeting Notes
 - a. Greater Seattle Business Association
 - b. Seattle LGBTQ Commission
 - c. Lunch & Dialogue (City of Seattle Staff)
 - d. West Precinct – Central Library Meeting
 - e. North Precinct – UW School of Social Work Meeting
 - f. Seattle Indian Health Board Meeting
 - g. Friends of Little Saigon Meeting
 - h. El Centro de la Raza Meeting
 - i. Project NEON Meeting
 - j. Black Prisoners' Caucus Meeting at Clallam Bay Corrections Center
 - k. University District Library Meeting (Youth & Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness)
 - l. City of Seattle Re-Entry Workgroup
8. SOCR Sample Data Sheet Distributed at In-Person Sessions
9. SOCR Online Survey Results (Excel File)
10. SOCR Stakeholder Interview Notes