



## **The Department of Justice Needs Your Help, Ideas and Input**

The United States Department of Justice ("Department of Justice") wants to hear your thoughts, ideas, and input as to what should be included in the terms of a comprehensive reform of the Cleveland Division of Police ("CDP")

Nearly two years ago, the Department of Justice began an investigation into the CDP's use of force. This investigation was called for by many people and organizations, including community groups, religious leaders, and the Mayor of Cleveland. The investigation was civil, not criminal. It focused on determining whether the CDP engages in a pattern or practice of using excessive force and, if so, identifying the underlying causes that contribute to the use of excessive force, with the goal of enacting reforms to address those problems.

During the investigation, the Department of Justice, in consultation with experts in police practices, reviewed thousands of documents, talked to hundreds of people about their experiences with police, spoke with dozens of police officers and the Command staff of the CDP, and rode along with officers to get a fuller understanding of their job. It reviewed records regarding nearly 600 incidents between 2010 and 2013 in which officers used force.

On December 4, 2014, the Department of Justice publicly announced that it had reasonable cause to believe that CDP did, in fact, engage in a pattern or practice of using excessive force. This pattern or practice of unreasonable use of force included:

- the use of deadly force, such as firing a weapon in a dangerous manner or head strikes with a firearm;
- the use of less-lethal force involving Tasers, chemical spray, and punches;
- the use of force against people who are in mentally ill or in crisis; and
- the commission of tactical errors that endanger both officers and the community.

The Department of Justice identified systemic deficiencies that contributed to officers' use of excessive force, including that the CDP fails to:

- adequately review and investigate officers' uses of force, fully and objectively investigate all allegations of police misconduct, and identify and respond to patterns of at-risk behavior;
- implement effective community policing strategies at all levels of the CDP;
- provide its officers with the support, training, supervision, and equipment needed to allow them to do their jobs safely and effectively; and
- adopt and enforce appropriate policies.

Mayor Frank Jackson has agreed to enter into a Consent Decree to reform the CDP. The Consent Decree will be overseen by an independent monitor and enforced by the federal court. The Consent Decree will spell out what reforms the City must undertake to address the problems identified in the investigation. The substance of its terms must be negotiated by the City of Cleveland and the Justice Department. Your input into what should be in the Consent Decree is important. That is why Justice Department officials want to hear from you. Your thoughts and ideas can be shared with DOJ officials at **(216) 622-3651** or **(202) 307-6479** or by email at **community.cleveland@usdoj.gov**.