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Minnesota Justice Research Center Brings Community Voice Into Consent Decree to Address Race-Based Policing and Strengthen Public Safety in Minneapolis

Report helped shape the consent decree between the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and the City of Minneapolis.

[Minneapolis, MN]. The [Minnesota Justice Research Center \(MNJRC\)](#) today released their report, [Community Engagement: Shaping A Consent Decree in Minneapolis](#) that presents the perspectives of community members on what they wanted to see in the consent decree recently released between the Minnesota's Department of Human Rights (MDHR) and the City of Minneapolis (the City) and its police department (MPD).

"This is a historic opportunity to transform the Minneapolis Police Department and eliminate race-based policing. The community played, and will continue to play, a critical role as the consent decree gets implemented. We are deeply grateful for everyone who took the time to engage with us and share their truths about what improving public safety in Minneapolis means for them," shared MNJRC Executive Director, Justin Terrell.

The report highlights three main recommendations to address race-based policing and strengthen public safety through the consent decree. Many of the ideas and perspectives that community members shared are reflected in the final consent decree.

1) Community members want MPD to change its practices to shift away from a culture of violence to a culture that prioritizes humanity through clear protocols and limits; prioritizes de-escalation; and encourages the City to be more creative and expansive with public safety approaches.

2) Community members want MPD to prioritize building relationships by better understanding police and policing and being better understood by MPD officers.

3) Community members want the City and MPD to be held accountable through quality accountability systems, and a community-focused, skilled, and diverse monitoring team.

In addition to its report, the MNJRC also released a [blog](#) and short [webinar video](#) to share the report's findings.

Overview of Community Engagement

Following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, MDHR conducted an in-depth investigation into the City and MPD. They concluded that the City and MPD engage in a pattern or practice of race discrimination, a violation of Minnesota's civil rights law. These findings led MDHR to enter into negotiations on a consent decree, a court enforceable agreement, with the City.

MDHR partnered with the MNJRC to engage with community members in Minneapolis who are most directly affected by the City and MPD's race-based policing - Black and Indigenous residents - recognizing that their perspectives were critical in informing a consent decree that would lead to meaningful change.

MNJRC's community engagement used a rigorous data collection approach focused on centering the perspectives of Black and Indigenous Minneapolis residents while also opening up the opportunity for all residents to participate. This included widely publicized sessions across the city, alongside intentional engagement with specific community organizations. The report includes perspectives of hundreds of Minneapolis residents gathered at 15 community engagement sessions. Nearly half the residents were people of color and Indigenous.

At the time the report was written, MDHR and the City were deep in the process of negotiating the terms of the consent decree. Throughout negotiations, MNJRC shared recommendations from community members with MDHR so that the court enforceable agreement could contain ideas directly from community members.

Blog and Webinar

Blog, ***Addressing Race-Based Policing in Minneapolis: A Consent Decree Invites a New Beginning*** by Dr. Yohuru Williams, Distinguished University Chair and Professor of History and Founding Director of the Racial Justice Initiative at the University of St. Thomas, and Dr. Michael J. Lansing is the Department Chair and Professor of History at Augsburg University with his reflections on the process and final consent decree. Dr. Williams' blog can be accessed [here](#).

Webinar, ***Community Engagement: Shaping a Consent Decree in Minneapolis***, overviews MNJRC's approach to centering community perspectives in the research with high-level findings by MNJRC Research Director Dr. Katie Reimington Cunningham and MNJRC Research Manager Kayla Richards. The webinar can be accessed on MNJRC's YouTube channel [here](#).

About the Minnesota Justice Research Center:

The Minnesota Justice Research Center (MNJRC) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to driving meaningful change to Minnesota's criminal legal system through rigorous and community-centered research, education, and policy development. We are dedicated to using research, education, and policy development to equip communities with what they need to bring the criminal legal system into stronger alignment with commonly held values by centering voices closest to the issues.

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