

WASHINGTON COALITION FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY
Families, Activists, and Organizations Pushing Forward
Use of Force Policy and Statewide De-Escalation Standard

Who We Are:

The WCPA centers families and communities impacted by police violence. Members include families who have lost loved ones to police use of deadly force, I-940 campaign leaders, civil rights organizations, Tribes, labor unions, the faith community, and activists committed to ending the violence present in police culture and practices.

What We Believe:

- Police hold state-sanctioned power over life and death. They can de-escalate crises rather than escalate them. They can treat those they suspect of committing crimes with dignity, and stabilize dangerous situations safely and humanely. Every person's life is sacred, and police must be held accountable for unnecessary violence.
- More than two years have passed since I-940's passage, yet unnecessary police injuries and killings of community members continue unabated. Stronger measures are required to motivate police officers and their employers to stop the violence.
- Directly impacted families and community members must have a significant place at the table in addressing police accountability so that their lived experiences inform the development of policy.

Statewide Standard for De-escalation and a Duty of Care

- **Adopts a state-wide de-escalation standard and duty of care, requiring officers to:**
 - Use de-escalation tactics to diffuse potentially violent situations in all encounters.
 - Use de-escalation tactics, such as creating distance, buying time, using cover, calling for backup and crisis intervention, or walking away where no crime is being committed.
 - Use only the minimum level of force under the circumstances, taking into account a person's characteristics, including whether they are pregnant, a youth, a vulnerable adult, in a mental health crisis, living with a disability, non-native English speaker, or are in the presence of children.
 - Use deadly force only as the last resort when necessary to protect against an imminent threat of serious physical injury or death.
 - Have less lethal alternatives available so that they can avoid using deadly force.
- **Revises the justifiable use of force standard adopted by I-940.**
 - The proposed changes clarify definitions and simplify the use of deadly force standard. It requires that deadly force must be used only as a last resort, when necessary to protect against an imminent threat of serious physical harm or death to the officer or others.

The data on how force is used, and against whom. (2015 Bureau of Justice Statistics.)

- Black Americans are more likely to be stopped by police than white or Latino residents, both in traffic stops and on the street.
- Black and Latino residents are more likely to have repeat contacts with police than white residents, especially in the contexts of traffic and street stops.
- More than 1 in 6 Black Americans who were pulled over in a traffic stop or stopped on the street had similar interactions with police multiple times during the year.
- When police initiated an interaction, they were twice as likely to threaten or use force against Black and Latino residents than white residents.
- Native Americans have the highest rate of fatal encounters with police, followed by Black Americans.

We believe these statewide standards will reduce the instances of violence between police and community members. These changes will make our communities safer.