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June 5, 2020

Call to Action for Our Local Law Enforcement Agencies

The Johnson County NAACP takes pride in the positive partnership we have with our local Johnson County law enforcement agencies. We must work together towards a better future for Johnson County's residents and future generations. The conversation between law enforcement and the JCNAACP must be continuous. The below action steps are not the only issues we would like to address regarding police brutality and racism; however, the discussion must begin somewhere.

We ask that each law enforcement agency commit to the following:

1. Public statement regarding the unjust death of George Floyd.

The Johnson County Park Police Department finds the actions of the police officers against George Floyd to be completely egregious in nature and a shock to the conscience of any reasonable human being. It is the duty of each officer of this agency or any agency to treat every person we contact with respect and human dignity and to realize that every life has value and meaning.

2. Public statement addressing how your agency combats police misconduct within your agency and the type of discipline received.

Officer misconduct or allegations are investigated thoroughly. Depending on the allegation, we may use an outside source, generally the Johnson County Sheriff's Office, or conduct the investigation internally. Again, depending on the type of allegation this may involve District and County Human Resource Departments. Discipline for infractions or violations range from verbal counseling up to and including termination.

3. Joint panel discussion with the community to address any concerns and questions hosted by the Johnson County NAACP.

The Johnson County Park Police Department is happy to participate in any panel discussion and has participated in a discussion on June 11th.

4. Develop and make public your Use of Force Continuum with clear rules of the escalation steps.

The Johnson County Park Police Department has not utilized a Force Continuum for a number of years. Our policy states "While there is no way to specify the exact amount of force or type of reasonable force to be applied in any situation, every member of this department is expected to use these guidelines to make such decisions in a professional, impartial and reasonable manner".

5. Ban the use of knee holds and choke holds as acceptable Use of Force Continuums.

The Johnson County Park Police Department does not authorize Choke holds or Knee holds and are not contained within our policy. These holds are not techniques we train or authorize for use by Park Police Officers under our use of force policy.

6. Implement a local citizen's review board for all complaints against law enforcement officers and all complaints are maintained in the officer's file throughout their career, even if switching agencies.

Comprehensive background investigations are conducted on park police officer applicants. If we are hiring an officer from any other law enforcement agency, we request a review of any and all personnel files from any agency the applicant is working for or has previously worked for in the past. Likewise, we will turn this information over to any agency looking to hire an officer from the Johnson County Park Police Department. As of July 01st 2018 this became law in Kansas (Senate Bill 180 / Disclosure of Files Related to Previous Law Enforcement or Government Employment). When an officer of the Johnson County Park Police Department leaves employment a "Change Of Status" form must be completed and sent to the Kansas Commission On Peace Officers Standards and Training (KS-CPOST) detailing the change in employment.

7. Implement a statewide review board against officers that use deadly force.

If an Officer of Johnson County Park Police Department was involved in a deadly force encounter the Johnson County Officer Involved Shooting Investigation Team would investigate all deadly force incidents. The Johnson County Park Police Department is not part of that team.

8. Require in-person implicit bias training for every employee to be conducted at least yearly.

The Johnson County Park Police Department requires in-person implicit bias training for every officer annually, new officers also get biased based policing while attending the Police Academy. Additionally, officers receive training in diversity and de-escalation techniques.

The Johnson County NAACP pledges to do our part and will also accept any requests from our law enforcement agencies and community to continue to the fight for social justice and equality for all. Please email us for further questions and concerns.

Moving forward together for justice and equality,

Fred Jones, Sr.

JCNAACP Branch President

Cc: JCNAACP Executive Committee and Press & Publicity Committee

The NAACP making a difference in our community