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After question three, which questions from the flowchart are you prepared to answer?

- Is there funding?
- Which department holds the funding?
- Which orgs receive it?
- How is success measured?
- What are the impacts, and gaps?

Root Cause Analysis

Story: What did you hear from the community?

Austin, being home to both the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Texas School for the Deaf and Criss Cole rehabilitation Center and the Austin State Hospital, among other smaller facilities., has a very large population of people with disabilities. In 2019, people with disabilities were 103,634 of the Travis County population including the City of Austin . The percentage of people with disabilities living within the City of Austin is expected to grow as the population both increases and ages. People with disabilities do not necessarily have the same needs and/or life experiences as a person without disabilities. Their distinct need and culture need to be acknowledged and considered including by the Austin Police Department.

The Austin Police Department was already providing and continues to provide Americans with Disabilities Act training both to all incoming cadets and active officers. In response to prior constructive criticism from the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities and acknowledged by APD management, internal revisions such as increasing counselor screening for mental health calls were implemented. However the disability community still experiences bias from APD and the City of Austin. This bias adversely impacts people with disabilities quality of life and access to justice. People with disabilities continue having a systematically different experience with the department than people without disabilities.

Officers currently give crime victims with disabilities cards without braille and/or TDD access with no way to effectively communicate follow up after arriving on the scene. The disability community has a difficult/impossible time figuring out the status of their case without accessible cards. Because they cannot directly communicate with APD, they were treated 'differently' even if this was not the department's and/or management's deliberate/conscious intention. There are other consequences

A 2019 report issued by the University of Texas Law School Human Rights Clinic had found that out of the 15 largest United States cities, the City of Austin had the highest rate of people with ID/DD being shot by law enforcement on mental health related calls.. The Austin Police Department was faulted for limited use of appropriate de-escalation techniques when interacting with ID/DD individuals who might be unable to clearly understand and/or then comply with the arriving officer's direction. The person they are working with may not be having a 'crisis' persay' but just may not have the cognitive/functional skills needed to properly comprehend the officer's directions in order to avoid being injured and/or killed according to conventional law enforcement norms. Culture is the shared norms, values beliefs of a group of people and police culture traditionally has operated with an 'us vs them mentality'. This by default places people with disabilities in an op positional position.

An officer who is themselves fully fluent in disability culture could assist both their peers in the department and community groups who work with/for people with disabilities in both developing and providing appropriate and comprehensive disability outreach training for organizations especially servicing people with disabilities.

Because they are part of the department and the police culture, a

designated community liaison can also help peers and the department understand that bias takes many different forms. Existing programs from community organizations have not proved helpful in reducing the numbers of people with ID/DD being shot it was still occurring. Change has to come from within APD itself.

Problem: What is the problem you identify?

People with disabilities continue being treated 'differently' by the Austin Police Department in interactions even while the police department currently does provide training to cadets and officers in the ADA and other applicable civil rights laws. People with disabilities then get viewed as the 'other' by an arriving officer who does not necessarily obtain familiarity and/or comfort with people with disabilities including an understanding of disability as being a distinct culture. Limited personal experience with disability and disability culture can make an arriving officer more likely to shoot people with disabilities despite receiving initial and ongoing training in ADA and other disability laws. Laws do not necessarily mean de-escalation will be used and/or used appropriately by the arriving officer. Unlike a person without disabilities an individual with I/DD may not be able to otherwise cognitively understand the arriving officer's directions and/or clearly process what will in fact actually happen to them during the incident if they do not immediately comply despite actually wanting to be a 'goo person: and please others.

People with disabilities who are not ID/DD also experience unequal treatment since they cannot tell the officer what is happening/has happened to them or obtain timely follow up. Law enforcement needs to understand not every person encountered has the same processing skills even if somebody is physically an adult

How does the problem show up in your community? Who is most impacted by the problem?

1) people with ID/DD are being shot because they have difficulty comprehending and/or clearly complying with the arriving officer's instruction. They are not having a crisis but have different functional capabilities than a person without ID/DD.

2) People who are blind/vision impaired deaf/hearing impaired have problems accessing APD equally The arriving officer does not provide cards embossed with braille and/or does not know ASL. This makes communication with the disability community very difficult. People unable to communicate with APD cannot either receive services or properly follow up re their case. They are not being treated equally because of being a person with

Is there funding to address the problem?

Yes

Do multiple departments administer these funds?

No

Which department holds the funding?

Police

Which organization(s) or program receives the funding?

Police

How is success measured in the contract/department? How does this align with SD2023?

People with ID/DD are not disproportionately shot because of inability to follow/clearly comprehend directions from an officer arriving on the scene. The rate of people with ID/DD shot is lowered to that of other large cities and Austin Texas no longer 'sticks out'--government which works for all

People who are hearing and/or visually impaired can readily receive service from APD if they get sign language and braille access/TDD. They do not have to worry how to contact the department re status of the case--open government, government which works for all

What are the impacts of the funding?

The Austin Police Department needs to be given a designated and permanent disability community liaison who is multilingual in English American sign language and Spanish. This liaison would be modeled after the outreach liaison position already funded and being provided to other communities such as African American, Asian, Seniors, LGBTQ, Immigrant. Austin Police Department already clearly understands that effective policing requires establishing, building and maintaining trust with historically under served/marginalized communities.

A permanent and designated disability community liaison will demonstrate the acknowledged commitment to address both conscious and subconscious bias currently existing with Austin's very large disability community. Austin 's disability community has been traditionally under addressed/under served.

Considering all of the information you have or have not collected above, how do we solve for this problem?

Provide the disability community with a permanent APD community liaison.

Preference hiring for the permanent active/non-desk duty position should come from the disability community itself. But the person still has to be an active duty officer.

The community liaison will work with the Austin Police Department the City of Austin and the Office of the Police Monitor to appear at events and facilities throughout the disability community to promote and maintain better outreach to/with/throughout the disability community. This hired disability community liaison will promote improved community relations between the disability community and Austin Police Department.
