



City of Rochester

Rochester Police Department
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<https://www.cityofrochester.gov/police/>

David M. Smith
Chief of Police



January 12, 2024

Dear Interim Executive Director Sherry Walker-Cowart:

On October 19, 2023, I responded to the initial Right to Know Proposal, outlining some concerns. Since then, my appointed staff has engaged with the Syracuse Police Department and has arranged a meeting with the Buffalo Police Department to assess their procedures and gauge the impact the Right to Know has had on their agencies.

My ongoing concerns primarily revolve around productivity. There's apprehension that officers might shy away from interactions with citizens if they must inform each one about their rights and the complaint process. Making reporting mandatory for all level 1 stops would lead to a substantial increase in paperwork, which equates to less time spent responding to 911 calls during an officer's shift. While I recognize the importance of data collection and your intention to model California's RIPA, I suggest considering an evaluation of our current reports to identify changes we could make to capture the requested data. I am not opposed to data collection, but routine interactions (level 1) with the police should not necessitate a report, as this might discourage officers from engaging with the community.

While acknowledging the professionalism and potential benefits of providing business cards to Rochester citizens, I propose a more selective approach. Business cards should be offered upon citizen request rather than being mandatory for every interaction. It is not necessary to provide the name of a supervisor on every business card. Cost considerations are also pertinent, with 500 business cards ranging from \$25 to \$29 per person, resulting in a potential expense of \$17,550 for 650 individuals. I recommend seeking supplemental funding for this initiative.

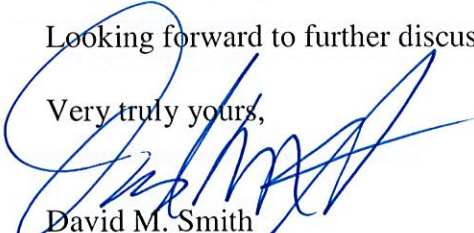
Mandated disaggregated data requests align with our ongoing efforts with Measures for Justice and our Office of Business Intelligence. Our open data portal is continually under evaluation as we improve our data-sharing practices.

Any substantial changes in our processes would prompt mandated training to ensure that members of the Rochester Police Department fully comprehend any changes to our policies and procedures.

Following feedback from the Buffalo Police Department, I would propose a meeting to discuss the feedback we receive and the Right to Know proposal.

Looking forward to further discussions.

Very truly yours,


David M. Smith
Chief of Police

