

## **LGIT Partners with University of Maryland Professor to Provide Implicit Bias Training to Law Enforcement Officers**

In May 2015, the President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing released its final report. The report identified “six pillars of modern policing.” The fifth pillar, “*Training & Education*,” focuses in part on the importance of law enforcement agencies working collaboratively with colleges and universities to develop and implement more effective training for current and future law enforcement officers.

The report identified “implicit bias” as one of several key areas where additional training was necessary. Implicit bias relates to any type of difference between people, including disability, gender, age, body size, or race/ethnicity. Many of the conflicts that exist between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve may be decreased if individual officers have a better understanding of implicit bias and the role it plays in their interactions with the public.

Following the release of the report, a local law enforcement agency here in Maryland committed itself to developing an implicit bias training to provide new recruits and veteran officers with the tools necessary to work with the diverse communities it serves. The agency worked with Kris Marsh, PhD, an Associate Professor at the College of

Behavioral and Social Sciences, at the University of Maryland (UMD), and others at UMD, to develop the program. By the end of November 2018, approximately 1800 law enforcement officers and civilian personnel will have completed the 10-hour in-service training.

Based upon the success of this program, LGIT has entered into a partnership with Dr. Marsh to offer the Implicit Bias Training Program to LGIT’s member law enforcement agencies.

The one day program created by Dr. Marsh is multi-faceted. It includes three main approaches: 1) Lectures and interactive exercises to establish understandings of prejudice and discrimination; 2) Computerized Implicit Association Tests (IATs) to help officers uncover their potential biases; and 3) Virtual reality simulations to assess behavior in real-life scenarios.

The classes are designed to teach officers:

- The definition of implicit bias and its related concepts, and how to identify implicit bias in everyday life.
- How implicit biases are measured, formed,

and affect judgement and behavior.

- Strategies to reduce unlawful bias and discrimination.
- The differences between community and police perspectives related to bias, discrimination, and use of force.

These lessons will be learned through a variety of potential topics and methods including:

- Comparing and contrasting implicit and explicit bias.
- Discussing the social science behind implicit bias.
- Discussing how does implicit bias training lead to effective policing.
- Understanding diverse populations and implicit bias.
- Learning tools to reduce and manage bias.
- Understanding how implicit bias can impact procedural justice.
- Understanding how to discuss bias with peers and the community.
- Understanding how bias can impact officers/community interactions.
- Understanding community police relations from the citizen point of view.
- Training on how to use the reality simulations and related equipment.

The virtual reality simulations place police officers in scenarios designed to challenge the biases they may hold about race, class, gender, ability, and immigration status. They are optimized so that officers can acknowledge and think more critically about their own biases. The simulations allow the participants to take a step back and examine

how they behave or react to different people based on social identities. The hope is that once the officers complete the training, they are armed with new knowledge, have a renewed awareness of the community they serve, and acquire ways to check their biases before interacting with members of the community.

The goal of LGIT's partnership with Dr. Marsh is to help police officers recognize biases that may affect their performance. Officers that complete the program should be able to understand how biases can and do have a negative impact on communities, **especially minority and marginalized communities**. This understanding should give police officers the capacity to show more empathy to the communities they police. Over time, this training should help improve police – community relationships across the state for the better.

As always, our members are encouraged to apply for a training grant from LGIT to help pay for this and other trainings designed to reduce the risk of loss related to coverages insured by LGIT. Grant applications can be found on our website at:

<http://www.lgit.org/FormCenter/Online-Forms-3/Training-Grant-FY19-99>

**This training is approved for 10 in-service credit hours by the Maryland Police Training Commission.**

**Training to LGIT members will be at a discounted rate of \$50.00 per person, with a minimum of 50 participants per class.**

If you would like further information regarding the program, when it is offered, or how to register, please contact Everett Sesker, Law Enforcement Loss Control Consultant, at [EverettS@lgit.org](mailto:EverettS@lgit.org).