



# LAW ENFORCEMENT RISK MANAGEMENT **BULLETIN**

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## LAPD Mediation Program

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) recently launched an experimental mediation program designed to resolve disputes between officers and the citizens who have accused them of racial profiling.

According to an article published at *PoliceOne.com*, the mediation program, approved unanimously by the Police Commission, aims to change the way the department looks at one type of citizen complaint made hundreds of times each year in Los Angeles—that an officer targeted someone for a traffic stop or detention based on the person’s race. These profiling complaints are most often associated with traffic or pedestrian stops, when the officer is accused of “singling out a person solely because of his or her race, ethnicity, religious attire or some other form of outward appearance,” also known as “biased policing.”

The mediation program, also used by the San Francisco Police Department, will be voluntary for both the officer and the accuser and mediated by specially trained, neutral mediators. Officers with less than two prior complaints are eligible to participate in mediations, and upon completion of the program in good faith, LAPD’s internal investigation into the allegations against the officer will be closed.

The mediation program comes as a response to LAPD Chief Charlie Beck’s call for reform on the handling of racial profiling cases. LAPD Commander Rick Webb says mediation will be used in cases with no allegations of physical assault, racial insults, or other serious misconduct. In the most serious cases, investigators will spend less time attempting to discern whether an officer acted out of racial bias, and shift focus to determining whether the person’s constitutional rights were violated.

Commissioner John Mack, who has publicly pushed for changes to the department’s protocol involving racial profiling cases, endorsed the mediation plan. “I am hopeful and optimistic,” he said. “I think there is a lot of potential here. It could really offer the opportunity to help resolve some of these issues.” The mediation program was also praised by the officers’ union, which has instructed officers to participate.

The pilot phase of the mediation program will run for three years, the LAPD said. “The goal,” said Webb, is to have officers and their accusers “stand in each other’s shoes.”

For questions on this or other law enforcement topics, contact AMRRP’s Eric Duthie or Michael Branham at (602) 996-8810.