

**This was in the Editorial section of the News-Journal, while it should be on the front page. But because it wasn't I feel our elected officials has the responsibility to make sure their constituents are aware of this survey being as critical as it is. Please share**

**<http://www.yourvoiceonline.com>**

## **Delaware public should participate in policing survey: Editorial**

The News Journal Editorial Board Published **Aug. 30, 2017**



*The News Journal)*

**<http://courts.delaware.gov/supreme/access.aspx>**

***This survey will close October 15, 2017***

If Delaware is going to make its criminal justice system fairer and more equitable, it will need an honest self-assessment.

That's why residents should participate in [a new survey](#) that hopes to measure community attitudes toward police.

The survey comes from the Access to Justice Commission and several law enforcement groups. It is designed to gauge whether Delawareans — in general and among specific racial and ethnic groups — have positive or negative relationships with police and probation and parole officers.

You can take the survey at [courts.delaware.gov/supreme/access](https://courts.delaware.gov/supreme/access)

Police deserve credit for participating in the effort. It can be hard to seek public input on your own performance, knowing that some people will inevitably be critical. It would have been easy for the Fraternal Order of Police and the Police Chief's Council to remain on the sidelines.

Now that they are engaged, it's time for our local communities to follow suit.

The survey is easy to understand and only takes a few minutes. But we would encourage those who take it to reflect on their experiences with police and let their answers paint an honest picture.

Law enforcement has always been a touchy subject, given how high the stakes are. But it has become an emotional live wire in the wake of a string of high-profile shootings of unarmed black men across the country in the last few years.

Many people of color, particularly African Americans, are justifiably outraged and afraid because of those incidents. And there's no avoiding the fact that black residents are far more likely to have run-ins with police and end up in jail.

Police, meanwhile, rightfully feel that their entire profession, which is noble and necessary, is being demonized because of a few bad cops and a handful of terrible mistakes.

The issue demands an honest but measured discussion, and this survey seems like a good start. Both officers and the people with whom they interact are participating, so hopefully many perspectives will be represented.

A survey in and of itself won't fix much. It is a tool that will only be useful if state leaders act on the findings.

Still, Delaware could use all the tools it can get it when it comes to criminal justice reform. And the more people who participate, the more useful this tool will be.

*The News Journal's editorial opinions are decided by its editorial board, which is separate from the news staff.*