

**Department of Justice**  
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## **Justice Department Opens Pattern or Practice Investigation into the Baltimore Police Department**

Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch announced today that the Justice Department has opened a civil pattern or practice investigation into Baltimore Police Department (BPD), pursuant to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The department's investigation of BPD will seek to determine whether there are systemic violations of the Constitution or federal law by officers of BPD. The investigation will focus on BPD's use of force, including deadly force, and its stops, searches and arrests, as well as whether there is a pattern or practice of discriminatory policing.

While the pattern or practice investigation is ongoing, the department's Office of Community Oriented Policing will continue to work with BPD and the collaborative reform process that was started in October 2014 will convert to the provision of technical assistance to the BPD allowing for changes and improvements even as the pattern or practice investigation is underway.

"Our goal is to work with the community, public officials and law enforcement alike to create a stronger, better Baltimore," said Attorney General Loretta Lynch. "The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division has conducted dozens of these pattern or practice investigations, and we have seen from our work in jurisdictions across the country that communities that have gone through this process are experiencing improved policing practices and increased trust between the police and the community. In fact, I encourage other cities to study our past recommendations and see whether they can be applied in their own communities. Ultimately, this process is meant to ensure that officers are being provided with the tools they need – including training, policy guidance and equipment – to be more effective, to partner with civilians and to strengthen public safety."

During the course of the investigation, the Justice Department will consider all relevant information, particularly the efforts that BPD has undertaken to ensure compliance with federal law, and the experiences and views of the community. The Justice Department has taken similar steps involving a variety of state and local law enforcement agencies, both large and small, in jurisdictions throughout the United States. These investigations have in many instances resulted in comprehensive, court-overseen agreements to fundamentally change the law enforcement agency's police practices.

In addition to gathering information directly from community members, pattern or practice investigations involve interviewing police officers and local officials; gathering information from other criminal justice stakeholders, such as public defenders and prosecutors; observing officer activities through ride-alongs and other means; and reviewing documents and specific incidents that are relevant to our investigation.

Pattern or practice investigations of police departments do not assess individual cases for potential criminal violations. The investigation into BPD is separate from the department's concurrent criminal civil rights investigation related to the death of Freddie Gray.

This matter is being investigated by attorneys and staff from the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. They will be assisted by experienced law enforcement experts. The department welcomes the views of anyone wishing to provide relevant information. Individuals who wish to share information related to the investigation are encouraged to contact the department at 1-844-401-3733 or via email at [Community.Baltimore@usdoj.gov](mailto:Community.Baltimore@usdoj.gov)