

ISLAND SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE

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POLICY BRIEF

Policing Where Everyone Is Connected

Community Policing Models for Small Pacific Island Jurisdictions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Standard community policing frameworks assume officer-community distance that is structurally impossible to maintain in small island jurisdictions where officers, community members, and subjects are embedded in the same persistent social networks.**
- **Despite conflict-of-interest challenges, small island agencies have authentic community embeddedness that large metropolitan departments spend years trying to build — a structural policing advantage that proper frameworks can leverage.**
- **Island-specific conflict management protocols, cultural competency integration, and formalized community advisory structures convert embeddedness from a liability into an asset.**

In a small Pacific Island jurisdiction, a patrol officer went to school with the people they are arresting, their mother works at the school that just called in a threat, and the person they are investigating for domestic violence is their cousin's employer. This is not an exceptional circumstance — it is the operational reality of every shift.¹

The Island Community Policing Framework

ISPI's framework integrates the community embeddedness advantage with conflict-of-interest management and cultural calibration through three adaptations: structured community relationship protocols that formalize the embeddedness advantage; a recusal architecture providing systematic conflict-of-interest management through documented disclosure and formal recusal procedures; and culturally calibrated engagement protocols for Pacific Island communication patterns, collective decision-making norms, and extended family obligation structures.

Policy Recommendations

1. Develop and mandate island-specific community policing training for Hawaii and Pacific Island territory law enforcement agencies through DOJ COPS program requirements.[FN]
2. Establish formal conflict-of-interest disclosure and recusal requirements for small island law enforcement agencies through state and territorial law enforcement standards bodies.
3. Fund Pacific Island law enforcement community policing peer networks enabling small island agencies to share effective practices collaboratively.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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The Island Security Policy Institute (ISPI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization based in Honolulu, Hawaii. ISPI produces practitioner-led research, policy analysis, training programs, and commissioned research on public safety, emergency preparedness, insider threat, and security policy for island and coastal communities worldwide. ISPI is registered as a federal contractor on SAM.gov under NAICS 541720. Warren Pulley, Founder & Executive Director.

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