

# Massachusetts Public Sounds Off on Nation's First, Upcoming Statewide Regulations for Police Interaction with Youth

*Strategies for Youth hosted the forums as Mass. prepares to lead the nation by unveiling the first statewide regulations on police interactions with youth.*

CAMBRIDGE, MA, UNITED STATES, February 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As Massachusetts prepares to lead the nation by unveiling the first statewide regulations on police interactions with youth, dozens of parents, advocates, and former law enforcement officers came together virtually this week to sound off on how those standards should take shape.



We know that interactions with police are the front door to youth entry in the legal system. Our mission is to work with gatekeepers – the police – to use developmentally appropriate practices.”

*Shelley R. Jackson, Strategies for Youth*

National nonprofit [Strategies for Youth \(SFY\)](#), based in Cambridge, Mass., hosted the forums and collected public comments for submission to the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission, which is charged by state law with developing the country's first model law enforcement policies for interactions with youth.

“We know that interactions with police are the front door to youth entry in the legal system,” said SFY law enforcement policies attorney Shelley R. Jackson. “Our mission is to work with gatekeepers – the police – to equip officers and agencies with the ability to use developmentally appropriate practices to reduce arrests, escalation of incidents, and use of force.”

While Americans assume, according to a poll commissioned by SFY in 2023, that law enforcement officers have training and policies for interacting with youth, most Massachusetts agencies have neither, leading to many negative outcomes that could have been avoided. With its mission to improve interactions between law enforcement and youth, SFY offers various training programs for young people and law enforcement agencies in 26 states.

In 2023 in Massachusetts, Black youth were 4.9 times more likely to be arrested, and Latino youth were 2.9 times more likely to be arrested than white youth. That same year, Black youth

were 3 times and Latino youth 2 times more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system than white youth. Youth of color were significantly more likely to be arrested and brought to police stations than white youth charged with the same offenses, increasing youth of color's exposure to trauma.

Lisa Thureau, executive director of SFY, explained the need for standards in how police address this unique population – young people – at the statewide level.

“Depending on the department, we’re not always sure how officers are trained. As a result, we see justice by geography,” Thureau said. “We will see very different outcomes in very different law enforcement agencies in the state – in part due to finances and in part due to lack of regulations and policies.”



Strategies for Youth (SFY) is a national policy and training organization dedicated to improving interactions between law enforcement and youth.

SFY partnered with Citizens for Juvenile Justice, Parent/Professional Advocacy League, and Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee to provide these public listening session opportunities Tuesday and Thursday.

The Massachusetts POST Commission is due to release an initial draft of these regulations in the near future, which will then undergo a public feedback and revisions process. In this week's public sessions, Thureau encouraged the public to provide further comment directly to the Massachusetts POST via email at [POSTC-comments@mass.gov](mailto:POSTC-comments@mass.gov) or by visiting their website at [mapostcommission.gov/about-post](http://mapostcommission.gov/about-post).

About Strategies for Youth (SFY):

Strategies for Youth (SFY) is a national policy and training organization dedicated to improving interactions between law enforcement and youth. By providing developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and racially equitable training since 2010, SFY aims to reduce juvenile arrests and enhance public safety, ensuring better outcomes for young people, police, and their communities. SFY's [12 Model Law Enforcement Policies for Youth Interaction](#) provide a foundational blueprint relied upon by experts and advocates nationwide. More information

about the Cambridge, Mass.-based organization can be found online at: [strategiesforyouth.org](https://strategiesforyouth.org)

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