

**Covering Peace Cops**

- Be strategic with public records requests and remember that every agency that has a record must provide their copy. When looking at police misconduct, for example, district attorneys' offices are often the quickest and cheapest way to large bodies of records.
- Don't be afraid to fight for access to records: Public records are a public right, and agencies must justify each and every redaction, denial or delay. Follow up at every deadline and make sure to know the specifics of your state's laws.
- Look for small agencies (and smaller agencies within small agencies) that received little public scrutiny. Sometimes the worst misconduct patterns are happening in the smallest law enforcement agencies.
- When reporting on agencies or environments where access is incredibly limited, don't be afraid to use public records to really focus in on just a small portion of the misconduct.
- Subjects of your reporting may be willing to speak with you even if they are not made to look very good in your reporting. Reach out to all subjects early and often, and be strategic in thinking through areas where they can offer an important perspective.