

Updates to Richmond FIPP

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To: Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>; anthony.cambridge@vermont.gov <anthony.cambridge@vermont.gov>

📎 3 attachments (1 MB)

Model FIP Policy updated 04.23.24.docx; Model FIP Policy updated 04.23.24 - Migrant Justice alternative.docx; Model FIP Policy updated 04.23.24 - Migrant Justice redline edits.docx;

You don't often get email from will@migrantjustice.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Town Manager Arneson and Chief Cambridge,

I hope this email finds you well. As you may be aware, the Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC) voted this spring to update the model Fair and Impartial Policing Policy (FIPP). Migrant Justice has been involved in this process, advocating for clear guidelines for law enforcement to prevent harmful collaboration with federal deportation officers.

All law enforcement agencies in the state received communication from VCJC attorney Kim McManus on April 24th informing them of the change to the model FIPP. The email lays out a process for agencies to update their policies to conform with the updated model policy, as per 20 V.S.A. §§ 2366(a)(2) and (b). This process should be concluded by 9/23/24. The email reads, in part:

An agency's policy must include "each component of the Criminal Justice Council's model fair and impartial policing policy." 20 V.S.A. § 2366(a)(1) However, as in the past, an agency "may include additional restrictions on agency members' communication and involvement with federal immigration authorities or communications regarding citizenship and immigration status." Id.

The Richmond Police Department has previously amended [its Fair and Impartial Policing Policy](#) to include several "additional restrictions on agency members' communication and involvement with federal immigration authorities." This was an important step to address loopholes in the former model policy and provide assurances to immigrant communities that your agency will not be involved in immigration detention and deportation. This action was taken following a City Council [resolution](#) encouraging the measure.

The 2024 VCJC model FIPP contains several positive amendments to the 2017 model policy; however, some loopholes remain. The new model policy continues to allow law enforcement officers to make decisions based on an individual's immigration status and to collaborate with federal deportation agencies in a number of ways.

Migrant Justice recommends that the Richmond Police Department updates its FIPP in a way that maintains the policy improvements that you have previously adopted. To aid in this, we are sharing three documents:

1. The new model FIPP, approved by the VCJC on 4/23/24
2. The "Migrant Justice alternative," based on the new model policy and maintaining your previously-adopted improvements
3. A redline document showing the differences between the two policy versions

Were Richmond to adopt the new model FIPP without amendments, the current departmental policy would be weakened and immigrants would lose protections that they have had for years. For this reason, we strongly encourage you to adopt the "Migrant Justice alternative" to the new model FIPP.

The Migrant Justice alternative maintains the protections for immigrant communities found in your current policy. It also complies with 20 V.S.A. § 2366(a)(1)'s allowance that departments "include additional restrictions on agency members' communication and involvement with federal immigration authorities." Finally, it is significantly shorter and more straightforward than the new model policy.

Please don't hesitate to reach out should you have any questions. Additionally, we request that you please send us a version of your updated Fair and Impartial Policing Policy when available.

Sincerely,

Will Lambek (he/him)

Migrant Justice // Justicia Migrante

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