

The Legitimacy Model

A Systems-Based Framework for Public Trust in Policing

Framework

Pillar	Meaning
Responsiveness	Help arrives when needed
Competence	Problems are handled effectively
Predictability	Enforcement appears rational and consistent
Visibility	The public can understand agency priorities and outcomes
Authority	Communication is timely, reliable, and informative

Key Institutional Concepts

- **The Legitimacy Gap™**: The growing disconnect between what communities believe policing should provide and what law enforcement systems are structurally capable of delivering.
- **The Responsiveness Principle™**: The public evaluates legitimacy primarily through perceived emergency responsiveness.
- **The Fragmented Safety Problem™**: Modern public safety systems divide responsibility across disconnected institutions while relying on police as the default response mechanism.
- **The Arbitrary Enforcement Problem™**: Enforcement activity that lacks visible public rationale or measurable outcomes is perceived as selective, biased, or self-directed.
- **The Visibility Trap™**: Increasing exposure to institutional failure without increasing understanding of institutional effectiveness.
- **The Narrative Vacuum™**: Institutions that cannot measure or explain effectiveness lose control of their public narrative.