

## XXII – BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH

In addition to gathering quantitative benchmark information from other police departments as part of this engagement,<sup>1</sup> the consultants also gathered information on best practices employed in other law enforcement agencies. This process proceeded in two steps. First, the consultants sent letters to 58 police departments serving communities with populations of more than 250,000 and asked them to nominate law enforcement agencies – other than themselves – that they considered exemplary at various aspects of police management. In addition, members of the consulting team were polled to identify the police agencies that they consider exemplary in various aspects of police management. A list of exemplary organizations was compiled based on the nominations from the law enforcement agencies that responded to the survey<sup>2</sup> and members of the consulting team. (A list of the law enforcement agencies that were nominated for each category of police management is presented in Exhibit XXII-1.) The consultants then contacted these law enforcement agencies and interviewed them about their practices.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter presents the findings from these interviews. Results are organized into the following categories: budgeting and resource allocation; career criminal program; use of civilians; communications; community outreach; community policing; controls in critical areas; crime analysis; crime reduction; employee recruitment; field training; in-service training; complaint resolution; investigations; narcotics; patrol response; promotion; special weapons and tactics (SWAT); strategic planning; technology; traffic; and youth. Each section begins with a statement describing the best practice area. Police departments that provided specific input about their practices are listed at the end of each section. (Where only general information was provided by the best practice agency no department is listed.)

### BUDGETING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

*Police departments that have developed effective systems to allocate budget resources in a way that optimizes the level and quality of service the department provides.*

The budget development process typically begins with the budget unit sending a memo/request form to each bureau and/or division commander requesting an itemized list of their budget needs – personnel, equipment, and operational expenses – for the upcoming year. The memo may or may not include the previous year's allocated dollar amounts and expenditures. It is the responsibility of the bureau/division commanders to

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<sup>1</sup> The results of the quantitative benchmark comparisons are presented in Chapter XXI.

<sup>2</sup> Sixteen law enforcement agencies responded to the survey: San Jose Police Department; Honolulu Police Department; Denver Police Department; Fort Worth Police Department; San Francisco Police Department; Lexington-Fayette Urban County Police Department; Cincinnati Police Department; Fresno Police Department; Houston Police Department; Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department; Portland Police Department; Kansas City Police Department; New Orleans Police Department; Los Angeles Police Department; Memphis Police Department; and the Columbus Police Department.

<sup>3</sup> Although many of the police agencies contacted were willing to share information about their practices, it was not uncommon for agency representatives to decline to be interviewed due to lack of time.

review the department's overall strategic plan to help ensure that budget requests are aligned with specific goals and objectives; budget requests should only be made for items included in the plan. For instance, if the strategic plan includes a new initiative that needs to be funded, bureau staff makes a best "guesstimate" as to the needed dollar amount for that line item based on the level of service and personnel they think will be required; for other operating expenses staff may look at the previous year's expenditures. The process works best when the budget is driven by the strategic plan and not the other way around. Because bureau heads, as a rule, do not have accounting and budgeting expertise but understand the complex operational aspects of a police department, their input into the budget process is invaluable from this perspective. From time to time predetermined directives are established such as hiring freezes or percentage increases or decreases across the board. Other things taken into account are cost of living and merit raises, changes in benefit packages, and the need for a one-time capital improvement outlay such as new data processing equipment.

After all bureau/division requests are received the budget office compiles and summarizes the information and sends it through the internal chain of command for review and revision before it is forwarded to the chief for his/her review and final internal approval. (The chief confers and negotiates with the bureau heads, as appropriate, throughout the internal review process. This may include a one- or two-day retreat or a series of meetings.) Budget staff compiles and summarizes the chief's final version which is then presented to the external chain of command (e.g. mayor, city manager, city council, governor). Again, negotiations take place throughout the external review process, and, from time to time, the police department's budget unit is requested to prepare additional data and make revisions. The department's final budget is adopted by the external chain of command and becomes public record. The process begins anywhere from three to six months before the fiscal year begins.

Once the budget has been finalized modifications are possible through the same chains of command. These modifications are allowable on a very limited basis – a crime spree or a weather-related emergency that requires a lot of officer overtime, for instance.

In one department, requests such as computers and vehicles are sent directly to those respective divisions, and then forwarded to the Budget office as a lump sum amount, that is, one line item request for all (department-wide) computer equipment rather than a request from each bureau or division. In addition, in more centralized departments, there is one pool of money and, more importantly, a limited number of people who have the authority to make requests to expend funds. All requests for discretionary expenditures are approved by either the chief or designee(s) before they are sent to the budget office. The budget's unit's role is to make sure the money is available for the specific request, to monitor the integrity of the system and data quality, and to submit monthly reports to the chief or supply other information as requested.

In a centralized system such as the one outlined above, budget accountability is not necessarily linked to performance; no individual is responsible for her/his own budget and therefore cannot overspend it.

**Department providing input:** Kansas City, Missouri

## **CAREER CRIMINAL PROGRAMS**

*Departments that have developed effective programs that focus on “career criminals.”*

The definition of a career criminal varies from state to state but in all cases includes guidelines pertaining to the number, frequency, and/or seriousness of felony arrests and convictions. In California, as designated by the state, a career criminal is an individual who is under investigation for the commission of one or more specified felonies (e.g., forcible rape or sodomy, kidnapping, murder or manslaughter, grand theft auto) and has committed three or more separate felonies not arising from the same transaction or who has been convicted during the preceding ten years for the commission or attempted commission of a felony; in Louisiana, as designated by the District Attorney and based on state statute, five felony arrests and/or two felony convictions; in Florida, as decided by the court, a habitual violent felony offender, a violent career criminal, or a three-time violent felony offender or prison release re-offender and who is serving time or has been released from sanction under that designation on or after January 1, 2003.

Tactics used to target career criminals include ensuring that cases presented for prosecution have been thoroughly investigated and are as strong as possible; requiring career criminals to register their residential addresses with local law enforcement officials who, at their discretion, may inform the public about the presence of a career criminal within their community; conducting door-to-door residence checks to verify the validity of the address and issuing a warrant if the address is not verified; working with district attorney’s and prosecutors offices to help ensure that sentences are stringent and strictly enforced.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, the police department has worked with the community to establish two grassroots committees to help focus awareness on career criminals: the Citizens’ Parole Advisory Committee and the Citizens’ Parole Accountability Committee, both of which provide information to the public about ways to help prevent career criminals from receiving early parole.

Several departments have disbanded their dedicated career criminal or repeat offender units, not because of the lack of success but primarily because of the expense in terms of dollars and manpower. These programs were started with grant dollars and after the grant expired the departments integrated their career criminal programs into other existing activities, such as making better use of crime analysis data to target felons, trying to decrease the backlog of warrants, or piggybacking on county or state programs.

**Departments providing input:** Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina; District of Columbia; Florida Department of Law Enforcement; Jefferson Parish, Louisiana; Oakland, California

## **USE OF CIVILIANS**

*Departments that do an excellent job of using civilians to support police department operations.*

Civilians play a wide variety of roles in police departments and the criterion used to determine which function should be performed by sworn as opposed to civilian personnel vary.

Most departments agree that mixing sworn and civilian personnel in the same unit is not an ideal situation. For instance, dispatch operations seem to work best where all of the operators are civilians and where the supervisors are also civilians; an operator has the opportunity to be promoted to a supervisory position, sworn officers are not relegated to “desk duty,” and operators are not resentful of officers making more money while performing the same duties. Of course it is acceptable for a department to temporarily assign an officer to dispatch who has been relieved of his or her patrol duties for discipline or medical reasons.

**Departments providing input:** Findings are based on general conversations with representatives from a number of departments.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

*Departments that provide effective communications and dispatch services to support overall department operations.*

Police departments with successful communications and dispatch operations have several things in common: computer systems have been upgraded within the past three years, supervisors who ensure staff competency and high morale; and personnel who work well with the staff with whom they frequently interact (e.g. patrol officers or other dispatch agencies).

**Upgraded hardware and software systems.** Upgraded hardware and software systems facilitate efficient communications operations in a variety of ways, for example, maps can be re-configured if patrol borders are changed, data fields can easily be reformatted, added or deleted, call tracking and monitoring is more user friendly, and the systems tend to be more compatible with field equipment or equipment used by other departments or city agencies. New systems are reported to break down less frequently, are easier to maintain, and system functionality is improved. One department uses its new communications system to monitor FCC rulings that impact public safety. Another department used grant funds to purchase a computerized telephone system that automatically dials city and county households (who have volunteered) to report gas leaks, missing children or adults suffering from Alzheimer, and public meeting cancellations.

**Competency and morale.** To help ensure high skill levels and an adequate knowledge of patrol operations, dispatchers participate in an initial orientation and training session when dispatchers are hired. A probationary period of six months to a year also affords the opportunity to continue to work on problem areas and take additional courses if necessary. One department has implemented a four-phase approach that includes an average 80 to 120 hours of training including sessions on department policy and procedures, knowledge of department operations, high intensity call taking activities, and a one year probationary period. After probation, operators are encouraged to take refresher courses and may be periodically tested as well. Leawood, Kansas, is part of a consortium of public agencies and dispatchers who can take any course which they feel will help improve their job performance. The focus on training not only helps dispatchers maintain their skills, but also helps ensure that they provide a high level of quality service to the public and department co-workers, improves morale, helps operators feel that what they do is a valuable, integral part of the overall department operations and

reduces turnover. To help improve morale and combat stress (reasons frequently cited for dispatcher turnover) supervisors in Leawood, Kansas, re-assess staff schedules every six months and if appropriate have the flexibility to change schedules to accommodate staff requests.

**Cooperation.** In Knox County, Tennessee all 911 dispatch agencies (city police, city fire, ambulance, and county operations) are co-located under one roof. Although each agency operates separately, they use the same software program and phone system and interact frequently. This gives them the chance to better understand each other's operations and to give the public a more "complete product". The various agencies also work cooperatively by funding the overall maintenance, salaries and benefits of the dispatch operators. (The call processors' salaries, benefits, and equipment are paid for with a surcharge on residential homes and businesses.)

Overland Park, Kansas, has instituted a ride-along program with patrol officers. The program serves to strengthen the relationship between patrol and dispatch staff, helps each group become more appreciative of their respective roles, and provides the dispatchers with a better understanding of the city's geography and demography.

**Departments providing input:** Charlotte, North Carolina; Los Angeles County, California; Knox County, Tennessee; Leawood, Kansas; Overland Park, Kansas

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

*Police departments that do an excellent job of reaching out to the community and using community information to tailor services to address community needs.*

As with crime prevention and community policing activities, a primary component of successful outreach programs is a well-educated public. Citizens appreciate the opportunity to be part of the process, hence the popularity of TV's America's Most Wanted and telephone hotlines. An important part of outreach programs is to provide citizens with the information, training, support, and forums that may help them to apprehend criminals, to not become prey to criminals, or to voice their opinions on solutions to crime problems. Many departments have established citizen academies (with upwards of 500 graduates) that include weekly lectures and workshops, safety tips, ride-alongs with patrol officers, training in observation techniques and police procedures, and personal safety demonstrations. Police websites include community alerts, quarterly newsletters, volunteer opportunities, sections for public comments, and links to state or federal informational sites. In addition, some departments have outreach staff located at City Hall or at satellite substations to facilitate community interaction and accessibility.

Another aspect of community outreach programs is to encourage participation in law enforcement programs such as Safe Streets, Neighborhood Watch, and National Night Out. One department has a target of establishing or maintaining at least 100 active neighborhood watches as a goal for 2004. Richmond, Virginia recently received a Clergy for a Safe Neighborhood grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to work collaboratively with faith-based entities to develop strategies for responding to crisis situations. Other approaches are to encourage citizens to become community service officers and neighborhood liaisons, to attend community meetings, and to work collaboratively with department staff to identify and implement solutions.

A third aspect of a successful outreach program is using input and feedback to help tailor police services to address specific community needs. Feedback from community organizations such as home owners' and parent/teacher associations, surveys, and hotlines provide departments with ways to ascertain top of mind community concerns. Initiatives that have been established as a result of citizen input is a homeless liaison program, using police volunteers to make telephone checks on retired and self-care citizens, and helping citizens establish a victims advocacy group.

Although departments try to accommodate community requests for outreach services, clearly all requests cannot be addressed. Part of the departments' strategic planning process is to work with the city council to determine which outreach programs will be focused on crime analysis data, types and level of complaints from the previous year, input from citizens who have identified prevalent problems, and the practicality of implementing one program over another. In several departments the budget contains one line item for outreach activities and the chief, with input from the city council if necessary, will decide which activities will be funded. In other cases, the chief will temporarily reallocate personnel, ask staff to identify grant or forfeiture dollars, or assign community service liaisons.

Outreach programs are evaluated less on quantitative success and more on the qualitative factors. To ascertain citizen satisfaction some departments issue annual questionnaires about crime reduction, service levels, and personal safety perceptions; others conduct after the fact surveys by randomly calling citizens who have received police services in the past year.

**Departments providing input:** Colorado Springs, Colorado; Fresno, California; Richmond, Virginia; Santa Monica, California

## **COMMUNITY POLICING**

*Police departments that have developed approaches to community policing that are both efficient and effective.*

Community policing, problem oriented policing (POP), or neighborhood centered policing, is in practice across the country to a greater or lesser extent, typically according to the conviction of the chief. Most agree that in order to succeed, community policing needs three things: to be an integrated part of traditional police work and not a standalone meet and greet exercise; to build trust and mutual respect between patrol officers and the residents in their assigned beats, and to nurture two-way communications, collaborations, and partnerships.

One department has established a community policing academy, a combination community policing and outreach strategy. Classes typically take place once a week and include how a murder is investigated, how to respond to a crisis situation, working cooperatively with the police and patrol ride-alongs.

Several departments are members of the National/Regional Community Policing Institute, a national network funded by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). The institute provides training to sworn personnel, civilians and volunteers and includes courses in problem solving, addressing hate crimes, and mediation techniques.

Independence Missouri, is involved in the DOJ sponsored ‘Weed and Seed’ program, a collaborative effort between the police and the community that emphasizes community policing activities and resources in the northwest part of the city.

**Departments providing input:** Richmond, Virginia; San Diego, California; Santa Monica, California; Independence, Missouri

## **CONTROLS IN CRITICAL AREAS**

*Departments that have established effective mechanisms to provide needed controls in critical areas (e.g., handling of drugs, money, and evidence).*

This section discusses property recovery, processing and storage, checking out property and property destruction.

**Recovery.** All departments have established rigid procedures for picking up evidence after it has been collected in the field. Typically, the recovery officer takes the evidence to the local station, fills out the appropriate form, seals it, and places it in lockers or drop boxes, usually located in the station’s property holding area. The evidence remains in the lockers until the officer takes it to the central storage facility for processing or until central facility staff picks it up (in either case, usually within 24 to 48 hours). Two departments operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week; another department requires a sergeant to be on call around the clock to process money over \$2,000 and certain types of drugs.

**Processing and storage.** When the item reaches the central storage facility, intake staff is responsible for processing, check-in and storage. Drugs and money over a certain dollar amount are processed by two staff members. Processing includes checking the recovery officer’s paperwork against the items, counting money, assigning a storage number, and placing the item in the appropriate storage area, for example, money, drugs, lottery tickets, and precious jewels in safes or vaults, and biohazard materials in refrigerators or at laboratories. Several departments process items via bar coding; others use a manual system. Two departments tried a bar coding system but found it unstable (still needed to print hard copies of everything) or inefficient (it was programmed to assign numbers at only one of two storage facilities). Neither department has ruled out using bar coding in the future.

The Miami Police Department uses a three-tier system of checks and balances: the recovery officer prepares a property receipt, then enters the information into a computerized bar-coding tracking system (PET) at the local station. Central facility staff checks PET for new entries and sends couriers to the various stations for pick ups. The courier signs the property receipt and logbook and delivers the items to the central facility. Central staff verifies the property, signs the property receipt, enters the information in to a logbook and updates the information in PET. Items are stored in various boxes located in a secured central room until the box is full, at which time it is placed in a permanent location. .

To avoid situations where evidence is lost or destroyed inadvertently, departments strictly limit property room access: visitors are not allowed past certain areas of the facility, documentation is precise, and manual and computerized tracking systems are maintained in case logbooks are damaged or computer files are corrupted.

**Checking out property.** Property can be checked out by the recovery officer (usually temporarily) or by an investigator with a subpoena. Typically the intake process is continued – entries are made in logbooks, receipts are signed, computer systems are updated, etc. Most evidence is removed only as part of a court proceeding. The court clerk signs a statement verifying that the evidence is being retained by the court. After the case is closed, evidence is either kept by the courts in their own storage facilities or returned to the police department's storage facility.

**Property destruction.** Typically, the investigating officer will determine whether and when property/evidence can be destroyed. In most cases storage facility staff will contact the investigators and make a request to destroy items at which time the investigator will give the go ahead or reject the request. The investigator signs an authorization form and central staff updates the logbooks and computer files and likewise signs off. Some items can only be destroyed with a court order (e.g., weapons, narcotics). Drugs are incinerated and weapons are auctioned (although most departments seem to be getting away from this), melted down in a foundry (more and more being recognized as an environmental hazard) or cut down. Unclaimed money is used to fund department activities. While some items are “never” destroyed (murder case evidence, for example) a common concern was raised about the need for standards to be set around the destruction of biodegradable materials such as blood and DNA. These standards need to balance prisoner rights to appeals and re-testing against the fact that at some point these materials lose their usability and become health hazards as well.

**Departments providing input:** Kansas City, Kansas; Prince William, Virginia; Houston, Texas; Overland Park, Kansas; Miami, Florida

## **CRIME ANALYSIS**

*Departments that do an outstanding job of using information on crime and crime trends to support crime reduction efforts.*

While relying on experience and ‘gut feelings’ is useful, having access to rigorous and reliable data and statistics, and turning that data into knowledge, is key to reducing and solving crimes. Toward this end, several departments have adopted a crime analysis problem-solving technique called SARA – scan (the numbers), analyze (the data), respond (to the problem), and assess (the results).

Successful crime analysis units, first and foremost, need support from department management, including the chief and his/her chain of command. Because certain police department personnel have historically been suspicious of numbers it is the responsibility of the top brass to demonstrate how crime analysis can be used to enhance police work, to develop strategies and tactics that respond to information related to crime patterns and trends, and to make sure that even the most routine police work is enhanced when it is linked to data and statistics analysis. One department put a stop to a string of delivery truck robberies by using crime analysis data to predict where and when the robbers would strike next. This fact was communicated throughout the department, and is believed to be partly responsible for the increase in requests for

specialized crime analysis reports. Another department achieved a 25 percent reduction in crime by means of a GIS-generated map and a crime pattern report and then informing businesses and residences in that area about these patterns.

Another quality of successful crime analysis units is well trained analysts. Whether analysts are new hires or have worked through the department in other units, such as records or communications and have a working knowledge of department operations, structured training is needed. Training runs the gamut from on-the-job to attendance at annual conferences to participation in the International Association of Crime Analysts' (IACA) certification program, that identifies 21 needed skill sets, including computer skills, math, problem solving, and how to evaluate qualitative information. IACA, with over 300 law enforcement members, has also identified techniques for using technology to map crimes, identify trends, and proactively predict where criminals might strike next. Analysts also need to understand the department's operations. Investigators may not see the significance of patterns and trends as they tend to focus on one case at a time and data analysis is more instructive when viewed from the practical aspect as well as a quantitative one. The better trained an analyst is, the more helpful he or she can be in not only analyzing data but in helping officers understand what the data means and in developing proactive strategies.

Working with information technology staff, departments are also focusing on how to make data accessible and available. In Columbus, Ohio, crime statistics are continually updated and posted to the department's website. Supervisors print daily/weekly reports, monitor hotspots, and employ tactics that address recurring problems, such as temporarily modifying patrol routines at certain times of the day or moving officers from desk jobs to put more manpower in a specific area.

As departments make better use of crime analysis data, analysts are trying to balance their time between the routine monthly reports they are required to submit and the special requests they are receiving more and more frequently.

**Departments providing input:** Columbus, Ohio; Overland Park, Kansas; Shawnee, Kansas

## **CRIME REDUCTION**

*Departments that have developed efficient and effective crime reduction strategies.*

Based on the premise that criminals need the desire, ability, and opportunity to commit a crime, crime reduction and prevention is best achieved by developing solution oriented strategies that eliminate the opportunities, as little can be done about ability and desire.

Although departments operate from a reactive mode, being proactive is one such strategy. By using crime analysis data, crime mapping, and good, old-fashioned police work, departments can anticipate where criminals are likely to strike and employ tactics to eliminate their opportunities. Using crime alerts to notify businesses about a series of robberies and asking them to be vigilant or add extra security, performing security checks of businesses and residences and providing tips on how to make property more secure and teaching citizens how to recognize and handle suspicious activity are other crime reduction tactics. Some departments have designated crime reduction

coordinators who write newsletters, teach business owners how to recognize identify theft and credit card misuse and work collaboratively with internal staff to implement strategies that address specific issues or problems in various neighborhoods,

Phoenix, Arizona, has established a program aimed at reducing crime in multi-housing residences that includes conducting an eight hour seminar, having meetings with a department liaison, requiring minimum security certification and providing a logo that can be used to advertise the building's security status. This program has helped reduce crime in these residences and made residents feel safer. Phoenix also offers neighborhood watches and Home Owners Associations the opportunity to apply for grants (\$1,000 to \$10,000) to fund new or existing crime reduction programs.

Prince George's County, Maryland, recently received a Project Safe Neighborhood grant from the U.S. Department of Justice that will be used in collaboration with the state's attorney and sheriff's offices, county police, the University of Maryland, the faith-based community and business owners to create a job re-entry program for men and women returning from prison. The County will track the number of jobs created and the length of time the former prisoners remain employed. Prince George's County has also worked closely with criminal justice entities to recently pass a bill that increases the penalties for auto-thefts conducted by youths. Instead of sentencing youths to a few days, sentencing now includes serving time on consecutive weekends and paying restitution.

New York's strategy has been to categorize the city's criminal activity (e.g., curbing youth violence in schools, getting guns off the street, rooting out corruption), then applying the department's four guiding principles to reduce crime in each category. These principles are similar to the crime analysis techniques referenced above – accurate and timely intelligence, effective tactics, rapid deployment of personnel and resources and relentless follow-up and assessment. New York's success in recent years, a 10 to 25 percent reduction in crime and high citizen satisfaction ratings, has been well publicized.

**Departments providing input:** Charlotte, North Carolina; New York, New York; Phoenix, Arizona; Prince George's County, Maryland; Richmond, Virginia; Santa Monica, California

## **EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT**

*Police departments that do an excellent job of recruiting employment candidates that have the potential to be outstanding department employees. In particular, police departments that have developed effective practices relating to recruiting minority candidates.*

Over the past several years departments have placed increased emphasis on their recruitment processes, with a special emphasis on practices relating to youth and minority candidates.

General recruiting strategies include holding local job and alumni fairs, posting vacancies on websites, participating in statewide career expos, and placing advertisements in newspapers. Some departments send recruiters to out-of-state fairs

in an effort to widen the applicant pool as much as possible. New York City, for instance, holds job fairs that attract police departments from the entire northeast corridor and that draw 20,000 potential applicants.

**Youth.** Most departments participate in Explorers, a national program for youths who may be interested in a career in law enforcement. Explorers offers training in law enforcement as well as leadership and self-confidence. Hundreds of youths have passed through the program. Other youth-oriented programs include internships (students currently studying law enforcement or criminal justice who need real life experience) and cadets (similar to an internship with the added benefit of automatic entry into the department's police academy upon graduation). Other recruiting strategies include public service announcements (PSAs) on 'hip-hop' radio stations and recruiting at military bases and criminal justice colleges.

**Minorities.** Several departments have established a recruitment council or task force aimed at recruiting a specific demographic segment (e.g., African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians or women). These councils typically include community leaders and are responsible for easing the mistrust between the police and the community, promoting those aspects of the department which may appeal to the targeted group (e.g., a clearly-defined promotion track for women), and trying to convince their constituents that they fix real or perceived problems by working within the department.

One of the advantages of specifically targeting the Hispanic population is the need for more and more departments to have a pool of potential and new applicants who speak Spanish. One department offers financial assistance for new hires who take bilingual courses. Another pays AT&T \$500,000 a year for Spanish translation services for its dispatch operations.

**Marketing.** Competition has made it necessary for departments to develop marketing plans that emphasize the benefits of a large (full range of opportunities and exposure to different perspectives) versus a small (opportunity to get to know everyone and not get lost in the shuffle) department; a suburban (less hectic and more money) versus an urban (more excitement and the opportunity to rotate to different units) department. Other selling points include benefit packages, tuition reimbursement, and mentoring programs.

**Criterion.** While some criterion/attributes are more quantitative in nature – steady employment history, no DUIs within the past seven years, no marijuana use within the past two years – others are more qualitative but just as important – maturity, discipline and respect. One department looks at tattoos as a way of determining possible gang affiliations (while a tattoo won't disqualify a applicant the department insists that they be covered). Another department forbids the use of tobacco products on or off duty.

**Assessment.** Most departments find that the recruiting process itself is also a screening process that helps weed out 10 to 25 percent of potential hires. Failure rate is highest as a result of the psychological test (that includes mnemonics), polygraph test,

and the physical challenge. Las Vegas has established a run-with-a-cop a program that commences several weeks before the actual exam that gives applicants time to build needed stamina.

**Departments providing input:** Hartford, Connecticut; Las Vegas, Nevada; Phoenix, Arizona; Tempe, Arizona

## **FIELD TRAINING**

*Police departments that have established excellent field training programs for new officers.*

Field training is considered an extension of academy training and follows the minimum requirements mandated by the respective states. Field training includes exams, practical application, assignments and constant evaluation.

Honolulu's program is a three-phase, 14 week approach: six weeks of field training officer (FTO) observation, four weeks of increasing responsibility and working on areas identified for improvement, and four weeks as a patrol officer. A different FTO is assigned to each phase. FTOs are given no information about the recruits they are assigned to observe to avoid predetermined biases, nor do they share information with each other as the recruit moves through the three phases. FTOs compare notes only after the recruit has completed the training program. If the FTOs determine that the recruit has successfully passed the training program, the recruit enters a probationary period as an officer. If the recruit does not pass the program, remedial training may be recommended that focuses on those areas where the recruits performance was unsatisfactory (typically defensive driving, report writing, and application of safety techniques). Termination may occur after the probationary period or after the additional training period. The field training sergeant compiles a final report presented to the department's chain of command and the chief makes the final hiring or termination decision. FTOs are highly recommended by their supervisors, go through a series of interviews, average 15 years of experience, and complete a field training officer development course. FTOs are evaluated by their supervisors using a 20 criteria matrix.

Montgomery County, Maryland's, training program lasts 27 weeks and is based on a set of 14 critical areas.

**Departments providing input:** Honolulu, Hawaii; Montgomery County, Maryland;

## **IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

*Police departments that have developed effective approaches to identifying training needs and developing in-service training programs that address those needs.*

As with field training, in-service training minimums are set by the states and typically include recertification in firearms and other protective instruments and instruction on the use of force. Personnel may then choose elective courses based on a needs assessment survey sent to the individual employees. Additional training may also be required as a result of an issue identified as part of an employee's performance evaluation or because the department has decided that training is needed on a specific issue such as sexual assault or fitness and nutrition. One department requires a

minimum of additional training at one, three and five year intervals over and above the state's required minimum. Formal training is also supplemented by rotating personnel through the department, for instance detectives will spend a year back in patrol.

**Departments providing input:** Clovis, California; Montgomery County, Maryland

## **COMPLAINT RESOLUTION**

*Departments that have developed effective approaches in the management of citizen complaints.*

This discussion covers issues related to the receipt and categorization of complaints, complaint investigation, and the process for completing investigations.

**Receipt and categorization of complaints.** Citizen complaints against police personnel seem to have been on the rise over the past decade and, consequently, departments are making attempts to ensure that the internal processes for investigating these complaints are evenhanded and consistent. Complaints are accepted in person, by phone, mail, or email. The complainant is notified when the complaint has been received and of the department's intent to investigate it and seek resolution. The chief of police is notified as well and may involve him or herself at any point in the process. Most departments categorize complaints in three ways: most serious (e.g. criminal), moderately serious (e.g. misconduct) and less serious. Cases are initially reviewed by the internal affairs unit and are then submitted for further investigation according to the type of charge or the established protocol. In Honolulu, investigations are handled by one of three departments: the Police Commissioners office (on-duty complaints, within 60 days of the incident, claims of misconduct), internal affairs (criminal charges, off-duty complaints, on-duty complaints after 60-days, complaints against civilians), and the personnel department (sexual harassment, debt payments/alimony, and personal and family related issues). In Charlotte, North Carolina, complaints are conducted according to the chain of command – the less serious charges are investigated by the employee's section commander and if founded usually result in a written reprimand; more serious allegations may be sent to the bureau commander for investigation.

**Complaint investigation.** Departments use an investigative process that includes interviews with the complainant, the officer/civilian, and witnesses, examination/analysis of evidence, polygraphs, prior history, etc. After the investigation has been completed (the average seems to be 60 days to six months), the investigating unit makes recommendations for disposition/reconciliation of the charges (sustained, unfounded, exonerated, insufficient evidence, or policy failure) and disciplinary action (ranging from an oral admonition, to a one day suspension with pay, to termination). Employees under investigation may continue to work either at their same job or in another position or may be put on administrative leave.

**Completed investigations.** Completed investigations are forwarded back to the internal affairs unit and to the chief of police for final review. If all parties agree to the findings and charges, the disciplinary action is enforced. If there is disagreement among any of the parties (or, as in the case of Montgomery County, Maryland a charge is sustained), a panel is convened to review the case. This panel can either uphold the original finding or recommend a different disciplinary action. There is no matrix for determining disciplinary actions; each investigation is decided on a case-by-case basis

and the chief, ultimately, makes the final determination. An employee has the right to appeal under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement and may file a grievance or request an administrative hearing under oath. Complainants are then notified that their investigation has been completed and of the outcome.

**Departments providing input:** Charlotte, North Carolina; Honolulu, Hawaii; Montgomery County, Maryland

## **INVESTIGATIONS**

*Departments that have implemented investigative strategies that lead to outstanding clearance and/or arrest rates in any specific or general crime category.*

Investigative units tend to take a “holistic” approach to solving crimes by remaining closely tied to various local entities (the mayor’s office, city prosecutor, and multiregional task forces). Successful units also make sure investigators have the expertise needed to investigate crimes effectively. Investigators tend to be specialists (drug enforcement, family violence, property crimes), not generalists. Although Phoenix staffs its midnight shift with two general investigators, their job is basically to plug the dike until the case can be assigned the next day to the appropriate specialized area. Along with expertise, reliable information and intelligence are also key factors. Consequently investigators work closely with their department’s crime analysts, forensics labs, and tactical units.

Investigators try to maintain manageable workloads by focusing on solid cases (those with viable leads such as eyewitnesses and license plate numbers as opposed to cold cases or cases with a relatively low chance of being solved), and on cases more serious in nature. One department is considering developing a weighted criterion list to determine which cases will be investigated. For those cases that don’t make the cut, victims will receive a letter stating that their case will not be investigated.

Departments measure success by the number of serious cases that lead to an arrest and the number of cases suspended. Comparisons between the current and previous years’ performance are also made.

**Departments providing input:** Beverly Hills, California; Phoenix, Arizona

## **NARCOTICS**

*Departments that have developed innovative and effective approaches to reducing the use of narcotics in an area or jurisdiction.*

Departments focus on two primary strategies to deal with the use of narcotics: education and collaboration. Because citizens are typically the first to be aware of drug activity in their neighborhoods, departments put a lot of effort into educating the public about narcotics, including conducting workshops and lectures, distributing information materials, setting up anonymous tipster hotlines, and establishing D.A.R.E. programs in schools.

Honolulu’s clandestine lab response team investigates suspected drug activities and follows up on leads of chemical precursors being used to manufacture illegal drugs within three days of receiving a report. The response team consists of a full-time

detective and officer and 15 other trained staff who are called upon when additional support is needed. The response team is also cross deputized and works with federal agents to implement airport interdiction strategies.

Possible central/decentralization conflicts are avoided by informing watch commanders when narcotics staff is going to be operating within their beats, participating in daily briefings, and continually checking with regional law enforcement offices to make sure no other operations are in process, such as federal busts or stings.

**Departments providing input:** Honolulu, Hawaii; Independence, Missouri; San Jose, California

## **PATROL RESPONSE**

*Departments that do an excellent job of scheduling and deploying resources to address citizen needs.*

Departments have developed and implemented various strategies to reduce patrol response times. Some police department rely on artifice to make response times appear lower than they actually are (e.g., eliminating traffic injuries from response time statistics and only including response to felonies). Other departments work to reduce response times by addressing operational issues. Examples of operational strategies employed by various police department include reconfiguring beat boundaries (in one department response time for priority 1 crimes now averages three to five minutes instead of eight minutes), making better use of available resources by responding to calls for service 'telephonically,' deploying non-sworn officers (e.g., community service officers) to take traffic reports, and re-assigning desk officers to beat patrols. Another tactic is to take officers out of cars and put them on bikes, horses, or motorcycles where street patterns or vehicular traffic impede timely response.

Because performance evaluations are based on response time, departments use a variety of strategies to help balance the need for a fast response to calls-for-service with other patrol related activities. For example, in one department, officers are "encouraged" to perform non-patrol activities on their breaks and during lunch; in another, reserve officers (volunteers who work with regular officers, have some powers to arrest, and receive basic course and continuous field training) relieve officers by filling out paperwork, answer telephones, take traffic reports, and perform other types of administrative police work.

**Departments providing input:** Beverly Hills, California; Clovis, California

## **PROMOTION**

*Departments that do an excellent job of identifying and promoting staff to managerial and supervisory positions.*

To save time one department recently worked with city hall to change its promotion process; rather than test applicants whenever a position became open, the department now maintains a pool of applicants who have already been tested. The test is the same for corporeal and sergeant, but, depending on the actual position the applicant is interested in, they can determine what additional training or skills need to be acquired.

Applicants are encouraged to take the training while they're part of the pool and not after they've been promoted into the position.

In one department a promotions board has been assembled consisting of uniformed officers, supervisors, and graduates of the citizen's academy. Applicants are questioned about community policing techniques, their knowledge of department operations, and personal qualities.

When applicants are passed over for promotion they receive feedback mainly about what they need to focus on to have a better chance of being promoted the second or third time around.

**Departments providing input:** Clovis, California; Richmond, Virginia

### **SPECIAL WEAPONS AND TACTICS (SWAT)**

*Departments that have developed innovative and effective approaches to preparing for and addressing incidents requiring a SWAT response.*

The selection process to become a SWAT officer usually includes administrative review, oral interview, a physical test, and an assessment of report writing, decision making, and courtroom testimony skills.

An experienced team that works together in a variety of different situations is the most effective approach to addressing SWAT-related incidents; the resulting coordination, communication, and seamless approach is critical. Departments may employ full time dedicated officers or use SWAT-trained officers who are on call from other units (in one department SWAT personnel is budgeted and assigned to the patrol division with an additional \$30,000 for equipment and training). Whatever the staffing model, however, departments make every attempt to pull together the same group of officers when a SWAT response is required. The number of officers assigned to respond depends on the type of incident, for instance 16 officers may be sent to a barricade situation while six officers may be deployed to serve a felony warrant.

The second strategy is to ensure that officers are well trained and knowledgeable about SWAT techniques. In Lenexa, Kansas, officers are required to take 16 hours of monthly training plus supplemental external training as needed.

**Departments providing information:** Lenexa, Kansas; Los Angeles County, California; Olathe, Kansas

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

*Departments that do an excellent job of developing strategic plans and using these plans to improve performance.*

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg County North Carolina, the city council prioritizes the areas on which it wants the police department to focus. The police department's executive staff decides how to best meet these objectives on a division wide, not department wide, basis and how to tie the current year's budget to the identified priorities. The divisional plans are then rolled up into an overall department-wide plan. Divisional goals are

aligned with the strategic plan and individual goals are aligned with the divisional goals. It is important that everyone sees the big picture and understands how and where they fit into the department's overall operating strategy. An important element of developing a strategic plan is that it needs to be reasonable and practical, and takes into account the department's weaknesses and inadequacies.

The Fresno Police Department's strategic plan is linked as much as possible to the city and county strategic plans and includes analyses of the region's projected population growth and density, and development plans. The plan is used to identify personnel, equipment, and capital facilities requirements. The department also analyzes several years' worth of Uniform Crime Reports as a way to use historical crime rate data to project future calls for service. Fresno's most recent strategic plan explores the possibility of combining fire and police capital improvement projects such as dispatch and training facilities.

A typical strategic plan may cover one year to five years to as many as twenty years.

**Departments providing input:** Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina; Fresno, California

## **TECHNOLOGY**

*Police departments that do an outstanding job of using technology as a tool for achieving department goals and objectives.*

Several departments are in the process of upgrading their technology systems with the intent either of reducing paperwork or enabling officers to perform their jobs more efficiently. One department is testing a wireless system that will allow officers to pull down mug shots and bulletins via modems. This department is also in the final stages of completely automating the field reporting process including making all forms electronically available in patrol cars.

Several departments have posted forms and reports on their websites, providing the ability to file and manage reports on-line. These reports range from citizen complaints to missing persons to stolen property. In some cases citizens can make updates or determine the status of their cases over an automated telephone line.

As part of the Neighborhood Watch program, one department has installed video cameras that monitor street activity and more and more departments are using telephoto cameras to record traffic infractions. Technology is also being used to improve records management systems, enhance document imaging, and facilitate internal communications.

To help fund their technology projects, departments rely on federal grants, serve as beta test sites at reduced costs, or piggyback onto other city or county projects.

**Departments providing input:** Honolulu, Hawaii; Richmond, Virginia; Toledo, Ohio

## TRAFFIC

*Departments that do an outstanding job of addressing traffic related issues, reducing the number of injury accidents, and investigating traffic related crimes.*

Departments have one primary traffic-related objective: to reduce accidents and fatalities, most of the causes of which are attributable to alcohol and drugs, speed, and improper vehicle maintenance.

Strategies to address these issues include prohibiting trucks from driving on certain city streets or at certain times of the day, saturating high incident areas, performing sobriety and roadside safety checks, using motorcycles with radar and lasers, using non-consensual chemical testing for DUI arrests, making periodic assessments of traffic flow patterns and the timing of traffic lights, and using incident reports to decide what tactics to deploy. Chicago, for example, recently closed a stretch of streets to truck traffic because of statistical report data.

Nonsworn community service and reserve officers provide supplemental support by responding to traffic accidents and taking reports. These officers wear different color uniforms from the color worn by sworn officers and drive vehicles with different color (yellow) lights. In one department all officers are trained to investigate routine collisions and the collision analysis squad only investigates serious collisions or other unusual incidents.

Departments are also focusing on improper vehicle maintenance especially for trucks and taxicabs. One department is currently coordinating efforts with the city to fingerprint cab drivers, require them take a geography test, and become more vigilant to issuing citations and impounding vehicles. Kent, Washington has passed an ordinance prohibiting drag racing in industrial areas. Anyone who races or watches a race is subject to arrest and one year in jail. The California Highway Patrol has recently implemented a cost recovery program if an accident is related to drug or alcohol negligence and results in an emergency response. In response to a section of the California vehicle code, San Diego has instituted project STOP - drivers with suspended or revoked licenses or who have been stopped twice for driving without a license can have their car towed and held for 30-days, whether or not they are the registered owner. The city also can apply the forfeiture code if the driver has a prior misdemeanor and put the vehicle up for auction. The program, which includes eight full-time staff, pays for itself.

Traffic personnel coordinate their efforts by participating in daily and monthly briefings with other department staff to share results and upcoming activities, and seek input from watch commanders in developing collaborative tactics.

Grant dollars from the National Traffic and Highway Safety Association help departments institute many of their programs.

Performance objectives include reduction in the number of accidents in a given geographic area (from year to year or month to month) and number of DUI tickets written. Ticket writing is viewed as part of an overall strategy to enforce traffic laws not an exercise designed to meet quotas.

**Departments providing input:** Chicago, Illinois; Clovis, California; California Highway Patrol; Kent, Washington; San Diego, California

## **YOUTH**

*Departments that do an outstanding job of addressing youth related crime issues.*

Departments have recognized the need for programs targeting youths and have implemented a variety of methods to focus attention on this segment of the population, including joining forces with social service and community organizations to coordinate localized activities, collaborating with surrounding cities and counties to develop intervention and suppression strategies, participating in national programs such as ChildAbuse to take advantage of existing expertise, and using community feedback to identify problem areas that need additional focus and resources.

All departments maintain a presence throughout their school districts. School officers/coordinators speak to students about drug abuse and gang activities, coordinate programs such as D.A.R.E and PALS, and encourage citizens to get involved by designating their residences as McGruff Safe houses. Las Vegas recently introduced CRAVE (Cops Racing Against Violence through Education), a youth-focused initiative paid for through sponsorships and donations. As the result of community feedback and analysis of gang-related crime analysis trends, Chicago implemented a gang loitering dispersal ordinance. 41,000 dispersals were handed out in 2003 and the number of gang-related shootings in various areas of the city has been reduced.

Most departments participate in Explorers, a national program for youth sixteen to twenty years of age who are interested in law enforcement as a possible career. Program training includes police operations, leadership, and self-confidence. The program offers the opportunity to participate in real life, nonhazardous situations and to working on crime reduction campaigns, community relations, and evidence searches. Participants must maintain a 'C' average in school.

Modesto, California, has implemented two youth programs: Wake Up, (an eight-session intervention/prevention program that includes a prison field trip) and a diversion program for first time offenders that provides counseling and lays out the consequences of re-offending. Clovis, California has implemented an intervention work detail program that is an alternative to sending youth to juvenile hall. Another program deploys community service officers to work with "good kids" (coordinating fundraisers and taking them on field trips) who may get lost in the shuffle because attention is typically focused on badly behaved youth.

**Departments providing input:** Santa Monica, California; San Diego, California; Las Vegas, Nevada; Clovis, California; Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina; Modesto, California