

VIII – DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL

This chapter presents study issues and recommendations relating to the development of human capital. In a police department, as in any public sector organization, the quality of service provided to citizens directly relates to the quality of the people in the department (i.e., its human capital). Despite the importance of the development of human capital to the police department's success, the department currently fails to set high standards for staff and focuses insufficient attention and resources on staff development. If efforts to improve the department are to be successful, increased attention must be focused on ensuring that consistently high quality personnel are employed throughout the department. In short, the department must recapture an expectation of excellence for all department employees.

This chapter is divided into six sections which address hiring practices, academy training, field training officer (FTO) training, in-service training, performance management, and leadership and succession planning.

A – HIRING PRACTICES

This section presents observations about the current situation relating to department hiring practices and presents recommendations for improvement.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Dallas Police Department Does Not Strive For Excellence In Hiring.

The police department does not strive to hire the best and brightest recruits. Instead, a philosophy of "entitlement" pervades the hiring process. The prevailing perspective is that as long as a candidate meets the minimum qualifications for a position the department is obliged to offer the candidate a position. The high percentage of candidates who are passed through each step of the hiring process supports the finding that these steps are not used to identify the best candidates for employment but are only used to screen out candidates who do not meet minimal expectations.

Hiring Process Step	Percent of Candidates Who Successfully Complete Step In The Hiring Process (2001-2002)	Percent of Candidates Who Successfully Complete Step In The Hiring Process (2002-2003)
Preliminary Interview	87.0%	89.2%
Physical Fitness Examination	73.2%	74.9%
Pre-test Polygraph Booklet	87.4%	90.1%
Polygraph Examination	82.0%	78.3%
Psychological Evaluation	88.1%	84.8%
Applicant Review Board	89.1%	88.9%
Medical Screening	96.8%	93.3%
Background Investigation	82.8%	42.8%(a)

(a) Standards for background investigations were increased in 2003.

Only at the stage in which background investigations are conducted are a substantial percentage of candidates eliminated from the potential hiring pool. In 2003, background investigation standards were increased and as a result the number of candidates who were screened out at this stage of the hiring process increased by 40 percent. This change, however, resulted not from a decision to increase hiring standards but from external pressure resulting from negative publicity about shortfalls in the background investigation process.

The department's lack of focus on excellence in hiring is also evidenced in the lack of an evaluation of a candidate's reading and writing skills. Reading and writing are critical skills both in the training and academy program and more importantly, in the performance of daily police duties. Although an evaluation of reading and writing skills had been part of the academy program this component was eliminated. At present, no assessment of these critical job skills occurs beyond the minimal requirements of the civil service test.

The Department Does Not Provide An Adequate Opportunity For Potential Officers To Get A Full Understanding Of Their Duties As A Police Officer

The department invests considerable resources in recruiting, hiring and training officers only for some of them to resign early in their tenure as police officers when they find out that the work does not suit them. Given the nature of police work it is not surprising that some employment candidates select other careers, however, it is unnecessary for the candidates to complete their training – at a cost of over \$60,000 to the department¹ – before finding this out. At present, however, employment candidates have no opportunity to get a full understanding of the work associated with being a line patrol officer until after they have been hired and trained.

Despite Good Effort Recruitment Success Has Been Hampered By A Number Of Factors

The Recruitment Unit has been doing a credible job of bringing officer candidates into the department. Over the past three years the unit has hired an average of 173 recruits per year. The unit could do an even better job of recruiting high quality police officers if its hands were not tied by a number of factors including the lack of a recruitment plan, the lack of an adequate recruitment budget, the lack of a feedback system on the quality of recruits, and the lack of a system for hiring experienced officers.

Lack of a recruitment plan. The department does not currently develop an annual recruitment plan. (Historically annual recruitment plans were developed but were not used to guide recruiting efforts). The lack of a recruitment plan impacts the Recruitment Unit's ability to set priorities based on department needs, develop action plans to address these priorities and evaluate the success of its recruitment initiatives. The impact of the lack of a recruitment plan is evidenced in the department's efforts to hire more officers who speak Spanish. Despite the increase in the city's Hispanic population (current census figures indicate 35.6 percent of the city's population is Hispanic) the department has not developed specific initiatives to increase the recruitment of Spanish speaking officers. In 2001, the department secured an outside consultant to assist in developing a recruitment plan. This plan, however, was never fully implemented. Of more concern is the belief of Personnel and Development Division staff that a recruitment plan is not needed.

Lack of an adequate recruitment budget. The current budget allocated for recruitment is woefully inadequate. Over the past two years the city has reduced the unit's budget by 61 percent to its current level of \$110,000. These cuts have resulted in a reduction in advertising and proactive recruitment initiatives with community colleges, colleges and universities.

Lack of a feedback system. The lack of a system to evaluate the quality of candidates prevents the Recruitment Unit from receiving needed feedback on the quality of the recruits they bring into the department. Since the vast majority of recruits successfully complete the probationary period, from a

¹ This cost includes the compensation (including benefits) of recruits for the eight-months they are in the academy plus the cost of all training provided (including the cost of overtime to pay the replacements for patrol trainers who are temporarily assigned to the academy to train recruits).

recruitment perspective this feedback would suggest the quality of persons hired is good. However interviews and survey results indicate department employees feel the quality of new officers has decreased substantially over the past five years. This is evidenced by the results of the employee survey. 68.4 percent of survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that “persons who are hired by the police department are competent.”

Lack of a system for hiring quality experienced officers. Despite the challenge the department faces in recruiting high quality employment candidates, current policies create a disincentive for successful, experienced officers from within and outside Texas to join the police department. Public sector agencies, such as school districts, have learned that in tough recruiting times, hiring professionals who are trained and experienced at higher steps in the salary scale based on their years of experience can be extremely cost effective. Current policies, however, create a disincentive for experienced officers from other departments to join the department. At present, for example, experienced officers hired by the department are paid at the first step of the pay scale and receive no credit for years of experience in other departments. In addition, despite their experience, officers hired from other agencies must participate in the entire field training program and, until recently, were required to complete the entire academy program as well. Only recently were accommodations made so that officers from inside Texas could attend an abbreviated academy training program. Officers with experience in other states, however, must still complete the entire academy training program. No system exists that allows experienced officers to test out of components of the academy program. Moreover, new hires who were previously employed as Dallas police officers and who have left the department for more than two years are also required to complete the academy program before returning to the field rather than participating in an abbreviated update program based on their current certification status that would familiarize them with any department policy or procedural changes that have occurred in their absence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department Should Increase Expectation For New Hires

The department has made good progress over the past year in raising the standards related to passing the background investigation and polygraph components of the hiring process; however, such steps appear to have been initiated as a result of external pressure rather than as part of an overarching effort to set higher standards in hiring. Rather than focusing exclusively on background investigations the department should revamp the entire hiring process so that candidates who do not have the potential to be excellent officers are screened out early in the process. The “entitlement mentality” that currently characterizes the hiring process should be replaced with the expectation that the department seeks to hire only employees who have the potential to be excellent police officers. As one of the first steps in this overall effort to increase hiring standards, the department should include as part of the selection process an evaluation of a candidate’s reading and writing skills. It is worth noting that if the department does a better job of screening candidates who do not have the potential to be excellent police officers early in the hiring process the number of background investigations, and likewise the number of background investigators, will decrease over time.

Employment Candidates Should Be Provided With The Opportunity To Self Select Out Of The Hiring Process

The hiring process should also be structured to provide candidates with the opportunity to self-select out of the process. For example, employment candidates should be encouraged to participate in ride-alongs with officers at the same time background investigations are being conducted. This need not be a mandatory requirement, especially for out of town candidates, however, candidates who

have gotten to the stage of the hiring process where their backgrounds are being investigated should be afforded every opportunity to talk with officers and observe them at work to determine whether they are well suited for police work.

The Department Should Implement A Formal Recruitment Planning Process

The department should implement a multi-faceted approach to recruitment planning that includes the development of short-term and long-term recruitment plans, focuses particular attention on hiring Spanish speaking recruits, and includes a process for evaluating the success of recruiting efforts.

Develop short-term and long term recruitment plans. The department should develop both short-term and long-term plans for increasing the number of recruits that meet department standards for excellence. In the short term, specific objectives should be developed based on the department's immediate staffing needs and priorities. Specific action plans should be developed to address these objectives which include measurable activities and timelines. In addition, a data system that tracks the costs and results of each recruitment activity should be developed and used to provide the information needed to evaluate recruitment activities. Using baseline data developed during the implementation of the initial recruitment plan, a three-year recruitment plan should be developed. This plan should incorporate both long-term strategies for strengthening recruiting and plans for addressing immediate recruiting needs. (As with the initial recruiting plan this longer-term plan should include action plans and approaches to evaluating recruiting success.) The plan should then be updated annually to reflect the latest information on department staffing needs as well as the results of the evaluation of the success of the recruiting strategies incorporated into the plan.

Focus particular attention on hiring recruits who are fluent in Spanish. The plan should focus particular attention on hiring Hispanic recruits and other employment candidates who are fluent in Spanish. Though the department has established the goal of increasing the number of Hispanic recruits and has dedicated a sergeant position to concentrate on recruiting candidates who are Hispanic, the department needs to expand that goal to focus particular attention on recruits who speak Spanish. The department's recruitment plan should include both short-term and long-term initiatives (e.g. establishing Explorer programs to get students interesting in policing at the time they are beginning to consider career choices; hiring person(s) with potential as public safety officers and providing them with opportunities to transition into sworn officer position, focusing recruitment efforts not only on colleges with criminal justice programs but also on colleges with Spanish foreign language programs). The department should also consider offering existing officers a bounty for recommending officers with hard to find yet desired characteristics. The bounty could be paid upon the successful completion of the FTO program by the recruit.

Evaluate success of recruiting efforts. As discussed, specific criteria should be incorporated into the department's recruiting plans that can be used to evaluate the success of recruiting efforts. These criteria should include such measures as the cost per successful recruit (recruits who complete both the academy and field training), cost per recruit for each recruiting activity and cost per incremental addition in potential recruits (using 2003-2004 data as a baseline).

The development of a system for evaluating the quality of recruits should also be a critical component of this effort. Each new recruit's performance at the academy, in field training and during probation should be tracked to not only evaluate the success of recruiting efforts but also to evaluate the success of the academy and field training programs. Establishing this tracking system would also ensure that information about a recruit's strength and weaknesses is communicated before an officer begins field training. The overall evaluation system could also be used to identify the need, if any, for follow-up training at the academy based on assessments made during the field training program.

Funding For Recruiting Efforts Should Be Increased

Additional resources are needed to strengthen the department's recruitment efforts. As a starting point, the recruitment budget should be returned its previous level of \$310,000. Based on the recruitment plan developed, and an assessment of its likelihood of success, the department should consider increasing the funding for recruitment efforts further. Given the need to increase patrol staffing and the projected retirements from the department adequate resources are essential to the hiring of high quality recruits. Without a viable plan for making effective use of these resources, however, there is no guarantee that increased expenditures will yield desired results. To increase the likelihood that increased expenditures will result in improved recruiting performance, a process for justifying additional expenditures based on recruiting success should be established. That process should include an evaluation of the cost per successful recruit, the cost of each recruitment activity versus the number of applicants/recruits per activity and the cost per incremental addition in potential recruits from the 2003-2004 baseline year.

The Department Should Eliminate Existing Barriers To Recruiting And Hiring Veteran Officers From Other Law Enforcement Agencies

Rather than creating disincentives to recruiting experienced police officers from other law enforcement agencies, the department should build on its recent efforts to reduce barriers for veteran police officers from other Texas law enforcement agencies to join the department. In particular, a number of steps should be taken. First, the department should develop a process for evaluating a veteran recruit's work experience and should provide credit for that experience by offering a salary at the appropriate experience step in the pay scale. In addition, a system should be developed to allow experienced officers to test out of selected components of academy training. The department should also work with the TCLEOSE (Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education) to determine what state reciprocal certification agreements exist and what the requirements for out-of-state veteran officers to take the state certification test are.

B- ACADEMY TRAINING

All new recruits currently attend 32 weeks of training before beginning field training in one of the department's patrol divisions. The academy curriculum provides training in the areas of criminal law, report writing, principals of investigations, defensive tactics, police vehicle operations and firearm training. This section presents observations relating to the academy training officers currently receive and presents recommendations for improvement.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Department Has Lowered The Standards For Completing The Academy

Standards for completing the academy have changed significantly over the years as a result, it seems, of the evolution of a mindset (previously discussed) that all employment candidates who meet minimal employment standards are entitled to a job in the Dallas Police Department. Rather than using the academy as a vehicle for screening out employees who do not have the potential to be outstanding police officers, the department works to "salvage" recruits who are struggling and to remediate instruction. From 1989 to 1996 a standard known as "three strikes" was in place. Under that standard, if a recruit failed three exams then the recruit's employment was terminated. Since that time, expectations for performance at the academy have been systematically lowered. In late 1995, for example, a program called recycling was begun. In this program, recruits who failed a class were

“recycled” into the next academy class, where they would repeat all classes taken. This program was continued until this past year when it was discontinued due to concerns about the cost of the program, (while the recruit was waiting to participate in the next class he or she would be paid a full salary to sit in a conference room at the academy and study) and because it was felt the program had not been successful in salvaging recruits. More recently the department has established a grade-averaging program where recruit grades on all examinations are averaged and as long as a recruit maintains an average of 70 he or she can continue in the academy. However any examination that is failed must be retaken and if the recruit does not pass the retake, the recruit is terminated. As the following table shows, this standard has proved much less rigorous than the three strikes policy

Training Academy Policy	Dates Implemented	Percent of Recruits Who Failed Academy
Three Strikes	11/2/89- 5/13/96	4.7%
Recycle To Next Class	12/11/95- 4/25/03	2.9%
70 Percent Average Standard	12/9/02	<1%

Standards for new recruits are also low at the department’s firing range. As with the overall academy program, firearms related training focuses on salvaging recruits who are struggling and providing continual intensive remediation rather than on weeding out recruits who simply cannot meet department standards. With the current focus on remediation, new recruits are given up to ten chances to pass the initial components of their firearms training before they are technically failed. Moreover, recruits are no longer required to complete a “proficiency check” when they return to the firing range for a second round of firearms training (as part of the overall academy program.)² Previously, new recruits were required to safely and successfully shoot 25 rounds before they were allowed to begin the advanced component of their firearms training. This program was discontinued, however, because the number of recruits who were failing the proficiency check was so high. The lowering of standards at the firing range is particularly troubling given available data suggesting that the officers who performed poorly and required remedial training to pass firearms training while at the academy are the same officers who now repeatedly fail recertification qualifications and need intensive remedial training each year.

The steps the department has taken to water down its requirements for academy training has resulted, not surprisingly, in a very high graduation rate from the academy. Over the past three years, an average of 84 percent of recruits successfully graduate from the academy program. This rate is particularly high when one considers that the 16 percent who did not graduate include individuals who resigned, either early in the program or after they completed state certification requirements. It is also highly given that, during interviews, training academy staff consistently raised concerns about the quality of new recruits. The academy staff share an attitude of “we train who we get” regardless of whether they the recruits have the skills to be effective police officers.

The Linkages Between The Training Academy and Field Training Are, At Best, Weak

The academy and field training programs currently operate independently despite the fact that both programs have the same objective – ensuring new employees are effectively trained. At present, when a recruit graduates from the academy and is assigned to a division for field training, no information is provided related to the recruit’s performance at the academy. Specifically, the field

² Completion of a “proficiency check” is not required for state certification but is viewed as critical to ensuring recruits have retained the firearm skills learned during their initial training.

training officer (FTO) assigned to a recruit is not made aware of the recruit's specific strengths and weaknesses nor of any discipline or other issues that occurred at the academy. FTOs are also not informed about any changes in the academy training provided recruits. Additionally the academy solicits no specific feedback from FTOs around the preparedness of new recruits for their entry into the field training program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department Should Increase Performance Expectations For New Recruits During Training

The academy's current focus on "salvaging recruits" and intensive remediation should be discontinued. Instead, the training program should be used to weed out recruits who do not demonstrate the skills and abilities essential to serving as exemplary police officers. To this end the current practice of averaging grades should be discontinued and the three strikes policy previously in place should be reestablished. Under this policy a recruit who fails three tests should be recommended for termination. Also a recruit should be required to retake any test that is failed and if the recruit does not pass the retake, then termination should be requested.

In addition, standards for firearms training should be increased. Instead of providing up to ten chances to meet a firearm's standard, recruits should be given one opportunity to receive remedial training after failing to meet the standard. If after one remedial training opportunity the recruit does not pass, the recruit should be terminated. Additionally, firearms proficiency checks for new recruits should be reinstated and a recruit should not be allowed to begin advanced firearms training unless the proficiency check is passed. Likewise, if a recruit is unable to pass any component of the firearms training program, he or she should have one opportunity for remediation and, if unable to pass the component on retest, his or her employment with the department should be terminated.

The Department Should Develop A Program To Facilitate The Transition Of Recruits From The Police Academy To Field Training

A formal program to facilitate the transition of recruits from the academy to the field training program should be established. As a key element of this program, field training officers should be introduced into the academy program prior to the recruit's graduation. As part of this process, recruits and the field training officers who will be assigned to them should jointly participate in the recruits' orientation to the field training program and should discuss performance expectations. During these sessions field training officers should also meet with academy trainers and recruits to review the recruit's strengths and weaknesses and to discuss additional training needs.

As part of this program, field training officers should also have the opportunity to refer a recruit back to the academy for additional training if additional training needs are identified through the field training process. Additionally, the training academy should regularly survey field training officers about the preparedness of recruits for field training upon their completion of the academy program.

C - FIELD TRAINING

Upon graduation from the police academy, recruits are assigned to a patrol division for 24 weeks of field training. During field training each recruit is assigned a field training officer (FTO), a senior corporal from the division, who is responsible for providing on-the-job training to the officer. (Three FTOS will be assigned to a recruit over the 24 week training cycle.) The department has developed a comprehensive field training manual that clearly articulates the expectations of field training officers

and recruits during field training. The manual also specifies, in detail, the thorough evaluation process which is to be completed by the FTO to ensure the recruit is developing the skills necessary to function effectively as a police officer.

This section presents observations and recommendations relating to the field training program.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Department's Process For Selecting Field Training Officers Is Flawed

Field training officers play a critical role in ensuring the future excellence of the department. A field training officer's one-to-one work with new officers is designed to provide hands-on instruction in the competencies and skills needed to function as a patrol officer. However, at present, the quality of field training is compromised by the lack of commitment to field training demonstrated by many field training officers.

The selection process for field training officers is perhaps the biggest flaw in the field training program. In interviews it was consistently articulated that a large percentage of FTOs only serve in the position because they are required to do so to obtain the rank of senior corporal. (Senior corporals are required to serve as field training officers if they are needed in that role.) Many of these senior corporals have no desire to provide training to new officers and complete the required duties grudgingly at best. It is reported that in many cases FTOs will simply pass a recruit on specific competencies rather than take the time to document the skill deficiency and develop a corrective action plan.

The Department Does Not Provide Ongoing Training and Support To Field Training Officers

New FTOs receive an orientation to the field training program and specific training on the areas covered in the field training manual. However there is no system in place to provide ongoing training and support to FTOs. When the academy modifies its training to reflect a change in policing best practice, the FTOs are not provided this training. Thus when a recruit begins field training, some FTOs communicate that what was taught at the academy is irrelevant. Some recruits are told to forget what they have learned and instead to follow the practices of veteran officers (who may or may not be disgruntled).

The FTO program also has not established systems to ensure consistency in the training provided by individual field training officers. Although each division has a sergeant assigned responsibility for coordinating field training these sergeants focus the preponderance of their time on paperwork and administrative issues. They do not directly supervise the field training officers assigned to their division and therefore have little ability to ensure consistency in the training FTOs provide. Similarly, the lieutenant who oversees the field training program on a department-wide basis has no organizational link with the field training sergeants assigned to each division. This lieutenant does not have the authority to mandate consistency across the divisions but rather acts in an advisory capacity.

The Department Sets Low Standards For Recruits In Field Training

The "entitlement" mindset that pervades other aspects of the department's hiring and training programs also afflicts the field training program. As with academy training, the focus of the program is to salvage recruits and provide intensive remediation. Fewer than 10 percent of the recruits who enter the program leave before completing the program. Moreover, 87 percent of those who leave the

program resign to accept employment with another department or to pursue employment in another field. Less than one percent of recruits are terminated by the department during field training for poor performance.

Rather than terminating new officers during field training, the department utilizes a system of repeated remediation when performance issues arise. When performance issues are identified a plan for remediation is developed by the FTO with the division's FTO sergeant. If the officer continues to demonstrate difficulty in that area, "intensive" remediation then occurs and often a different FTO is assigned to provide this "intensive" remediation. Rather than using the training and probationary period as a way to "weed out" officers who do not meet performance standards, basic performance issues such as tardiness, sick time abuse, uniform violations are tolerated. Despite the fact that recruits in the field training program are probationary officers who serve in an "at will" capacity, performance issues for these recruits tend to be dealt with in the same manner as they are dealt with for veteran officers who have civil service protections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department Should Redesign Its Process For Selecting Field Training Officers

Responsibility for serving as field training officers should no longer be assigned exclusively to senior corporals.³ Instead, officers should be selected for the program based, in part, on their desire to serve as training officers and based, in part, on an assessment of whether they have the skills to function effectively in a training position. The opportunity to serve as a field training officer should be viewed as an honor and privilege rather than a burden. The role of FTO should also be viewed as a training ground for future department trainers and leaders.

The Department Should Strengthen The Training Program For Field Training Officers

The department should develop an ongoing training and certification program for field training officers. As part of this program, which should be much more extensive than the orientation program in which FTOs currently participate, FTOs should receive training not only in all components of the field training manual but also should be refreshed on department policies and procedures, any changes in techniques or practices that are part of the academy program, effective teaching and supervision practices and the field training evaluation process. FTOs should also be provided extensive training in documentation of recruit performance. In addition, ongoing training and support should be provided on issues relating to supervision and on-the-job training. In particular, FTOs should receive regular training on any new techniques or practices that recruits are being taught at the academy to ensure continuity in the training recruits receive.

The Department Should Move Responsibility For The Field Training Program To The Personnel And Development Division

As discussed in Chapter XVIII, the department should realign reporting responsibility for the field training program from the Patrol Division to the Personnel and Development Division. Moving this program to Personnel and Development will provide one division with primary responsibility for the recruitment and training of new officers rather than dispersing responsibility across divisions. This

³ Chapter XI presents a recommendation to discontinue the senior corporal position.

realignment is critical to ensuring continuity between the academy and field training and will also assist the department in facilitating continuity in field training across the divisions to which recruits are assigned for field training.

The Department Should Increase Performance Expectations For Recruits Participating In The Field Training Program

The department should reevaluate the performance expectations and standards for recruits while they are in field training. While additional training and support should be provided when an officer is unable to meet standards, recruits who require repeated remedial instruction across a number of areas should be terminated.

D- IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The in-service training department includes two work units – one unit is located at the training academy and one unit is located at the department's firing range. The unit located at the training academy is responsible for ensuring all state and department mandated training and elective training classes are offered to veteran sworn employees. The unit located at the range is responsible for providing training as part of the new recruit academy, managing the recertification qualification program for all sworn employees and providing training for specialty units (such as SWAT). Currently all officers receive 40 hours of training every two years, the minimum required to maintain TCLEOSE certification. Historically this training was provided in eight to 16 hour blocks across a two-year cycle. However many officers were not completing the mandated training hours in a timely fashion and officers were scrambling to receive training just prior to their certification expiring. At times officers had to be removed from duty until mandated training was completed to qualify for recertification.

Over the past year the training department has redesigned the in-service training schedule to provide all mandated training hours within one week. Whereas the previous training program provided 24 hours of a standardized training curriculum and 16 hours of electives, the new training program provides a 40 hour standardized curriculum with increased time spent on the firing range. The training department works with each division to ensure that, based on certification expiration dates, all officers are relieved of their regular assignment to attend the academy. Thus far the curriculum and scheduling changes have been received positively across the department. Divisions are finding it easier to schedule staff for training and the training staff report they have been able to provide additional hours of staff training, as they are spending less time entering data for individual training sessions, tracking each officer's training hours, and chasing down officers who do not completed their required training hours. In addition to the mandated training, an extensive program of elective in-service training classes is also provided.

The remainder of this section presents observations and recommendations relating to the in-service training program.

CURRENT SITUATION

Current In-Service Training Does Not Meet The Department's Needs

Despite some positive features, the current in-service training program is not structured to strengthen the overall performance of the police department and to build needed capacity. Current offerings are focused on meeting state mandates rather than on building the skills and proficiencies needed to address department specific needs. Indeed, the department's current training program includes no systematic assessment of training needs in the context of department priorities, skill gaps and

performance shortfalls. As a consequence, training in some areas is insufficient to meet department needs. For example, while the department should be commended for providing training related to racial profiling, more intensive training is needed to acquaint officers with issues related to effective policing in a diverse community. In addition, an increased emphasis on ensuring all officers develop, over time, the capacity to communicate in Spanish is needed. Other areas of needed emphasis include the need to ensure all officers have the necessary language and typing skills to write professional offense reports. Moreover, the current mandated 40 hours of training every two years does not provide the department with enough training time to meet its needs. When the department was redesigning the 40-hour training program, many recommended modules had to be eliminated due to lack of time. The department has also developed many elective courses that they are unable to offer on a regular basis because of the divisions' inability to release officers to participate.

Because the department does not systematically assess its training needs, the agenda for training tends to be reactionary. Outside the mandated 40 hours of training, additional training modules are typically created as a reaction to an incident about which the department received adverse publicity. Typically after a high profile incident occurs, training staff is called upon to quickly develop a training module that officers in all divisions are required to complete. Once the department can document all officers have completed the module little proactive planning takes place while staff await the next crisis.

When officers do receive in-service training, there is lack of emphasis on ensuring that the training provided is reinforced by supervisors. Supervisors report they are often unaware of the content of the training sessions staff attend. Beyond ensuring staff attend mandated training, supervisors assume no responsibility for following up on the training officers receive or evaluating the effectiveness of the training in affecting staff performance. Likewise, no system is in place to allow supervisors to provide feedback to the training unit on the effectiveness of training provided.

Interviews with staff and the results of the employee survey support the finding that the department needs to increase the in-service training opportunities provided to all staff. 47.7 percent of survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that "police department employees receive the ongoing training they need to effectively perform their job duties" while 37.1 percent agree or strongly agree.

The Department Does Not Set High Standards For Officers' Shooting Qualifications

Qualification standards at the range are quite low. During the semi-annual shooting recertification process officers can shoot until they qualify. On average, of 3,000 officers participating in recertification qualification 250 officers fail on the first try. Of those 250, 200 will pass on the second try. The 50 remaining officers will receive remedial training and 35 to 40 will then pass. The remaining 10 to 15 officers require intensive remedial training and the range is required to "keep shooting them until they pass". Data indicates the vast majority of those officers have failed recertification qualifications repeatedly and performed poorly in firearms training while enrolled at the academy. While accounting for less than one percent of the total force, the low standards that are set for these officers communicates a message more broadly that poor performance is acceptable. More importantly, officers with poor shooting skills present a significant public safety risk to the community, their co-workers and themselves.

Insufficient Attention Is Devoted To Management And Supervisory Training

Although a basic orientation is provided to newly promoted field training officers and to new sergeants, in general the department focuses insufficient attention to management and supervisory training. In particular little, if any, training is provided on issues related to effective supervision

practices, documentation of staff performance and strategies for evaluation and development of staff. Instead, the training that is provided tends to focus on updates to department policies and procedures. During interviews managers and supervisors articulated their frustration with the lack of support they received when they were first promoted. New managers and leaders view themselves as being thrust into leadership roles with little sense of how to supervise and lead. This frustration is reflected in the results of the employee survey. 53 percent of the survey respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that “newly promoted managers and supervisors receive the training they need to perform effectively in their new roles.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department Should Take A Systematic Approach To Training That Focuses On Identifying And Addressing Department Specific Needs

To increase performance standards and ensure staff have the skills necessary to effectively perform their duties, the department should regularly perform a systematic assessment of training needs in the context of department priorities, skill gaps and performance shortfalls. Based on this assessment a training program should be developed that addresses the priorities and needs identified. In the short term, increased training should be provided relating to policing in a diverse community, Spanish language skills, typing skills and the English language skills needed to draft professional offense reports. To provide the training necessary to address these priorities and needs, it will be necessary for the department to double the minimum number of hours of training mandated for staff. Instead of participating in 40 hours of training every two years officers should be expected to participate in 40 hours of training a year.

In addition to increasing the number of hours of formal training officers receive, supervisors should be expected to reinforce that training on an ongoing basis when officers return to their divisions. To achieve this goal, ongoing training of supervisors should be provided that is linked to the training officers receive. This supervisory training should also be structured to reinforce effective supervisory practices relating to performance management, discipline, mentoring and coaching. In addition, a systematic feedback loop should be established which provides feedback to the training unit regarding any follow-up training required by officers based on their performance in the field after receiving in-service training.

The Department Should Increase Standards For Shooting Recertification

To ensure highly skilled and qualified officers are serving the citizens of Dallas, it is essential that the department increase standards for shooting recertification. The department should discontinue the policy of “shoot until you qualify”. If, after remedial instruction, an officer does not meet standards then the officer should be terminated. The department should also establish a professional development standard that requires all officers who require any remediation during recertification qualifications to participate in extra shooting and one on one instruction at the range on a monthly basis until the next qualification period. The officer should be required to continue this monthly training until such time as they complete recertification on the first shooting try.

Additionally supervisors should include data from recertification qualifications on the officer’s performance review. It is essential that performance on qualifications and any remediation, one on one instruction or additional support required to pass be included in the performance review and be addressed in the employee’s performance improvement plan.

E- PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The current performance management system provides a solid foundation for the appraisal and development of employees. The system is designed to provide regular feedback to employees regarding their performance and to develop performance improvement plans for employees whose performance does not meet minimum standards. Despite these positive features, the department's approach to implementation focuses on compliance with meeting dates and steps in the process rather than on using the system as a tool to support meaningful evaluation and staff development.

The remainder of this section presents observations and recommendations relating to the performance management system.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Department Ensures Performance Evaluations Are Completed On A Timely Basis

The department has worked with the city to implement the existing performance evaluation system. Systems have been developed to ensure these evaluations are completed on a timely basis. During interviews staff indicated these systems are effective in tracking evaluations and ensuring they are completed. This finding is also supported by the results of the employee survey. 68.9 percent of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "my performance evaluation is completed on a timely basis."

There Are Numerous Problems With The Current Performance Evaluation System

While the department should be commended for its efforts to ensure that performance evaluations are completed in a timely manner, the current performance evaluation system, nonetheless, has a number of shortcomings.

Insufficient attention focused on supporting professional development. When implementing the performance evaluation system, staff attention is focused on ensuring steps in the process are completed rather than on using the process to provide meaningful staff feedback and to support professional development. The current process only requires that performance improvement plans be developed for employees who score below a minimum total score. Otherwise the professional development needs of staff are only articulated sporadically, typically when an individual employee or supervisor actively requests that professional development needs be articulated. Staff interviewed simply do not view the performance evaluation system as a tool for supporting professional development and assisting them in improving their performance. Most staff, in fact, view professional development as solely the responsibility of the training academy.

Staff also indicates that managers and supervisors generally provide little support in improving performance. This finding is also supported by the employee survey results. 64.5 percent of the survey respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that "police department managers and supervisors view helping employees improve their job performance to be one of their primary responsibilities."

Lack of department and division goals. The performance evaluation process requires that goals for employees be established based on department and division goals. Given the lack of a department strategic plan and well-articulated goals and objectives this important component of the process is left to the judgment of each division. This results in inconsistency in implementation of the process across

divisions and allows supervisors to make subjective decisions about what goals should be reflected in the plan. Not surprisingly, this component of the evaluation process is often left incomplete due to a lack of understanding of the department's goals and priorities.

Performance rating options not utilized. Perceptions are that completing performance evaluations takes too much time. Thus, supervisors are reluctant to rate employees as exceeding or failing to meet standards because doing so requires including a justification for the rating. Minimal documentation, on the other hand, is required when rating an employee as “meets standards.” Most supervisors interviewed report they tend to rate employees as meeting standards regardless of the employee's actual performance because they view the performance evaluation process as meaningless and complete the process solely to comply with the city requirement. In fact, despite a strong consensus that there are many officers whose performance is below standards only a handful of officers are rated as “not meeting standards”.

Department Employees View The Performance Evaluation System As Having Few, If Any, Benefits

It is not surprising that department employees generally do not view the performance evaluation system as being beneficial because features of the process that could be beneficial are typically not used. For example, the early warning systems provided for in the performance evaluation system are typically not used to identify “problem employees” and address issues before they become big problems. Additionally, because there are few consequences associated with the process the system is easily ignored. Sworn employees get step increases regardless of their appraisal ratings (however evaluations do affect civilian pay). Also, performance evaluation ratings do not affect the ability of officers to be promoted.

In addition, because few employees are rating as “exceeds standards” or “does not meet standards” department managers receive little meaningful data from the process. Thus, the results cannot be used to identify overall trends and needs relating to training, supervision and professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Professional Development Plans Should Be Developed For All Employees

Rather than developing “performance improvement plans” only for employees who are rated as not meeting standards, professional development plans should be completed for all employees as part of the evaluation process. Doing so will communicate the values that the performance of all employees – even those who exceed standards – can improve and that ongoing professional development is important for all employees. In addition to articulating strategies to help employees improve their performance, these performance improvement plans should also be designed to prepare employees for future roles in the department. The process should be structured to help the department understand the career objectives of employees and to articulate career paths that will allow them to achieve these objectives. The process can also be used to identify staff who are interested in future leadership positions. Needs identified in these professional development plans can also be used by department leaders to design in-service training and leadership development programs.

As The Department Develops A Strategic Plan And Divisions Develop Operational Plans, Clear Linkages To The Performance Evaluation Process Should Be Articulated

The current performance evaluation process heavily weights the employee's progress on objectives which relate to department and divisional goals. As the department develops a strategic plan and divisions develop related operational plans, it is critical that the system be redesigned to clearly articulate the linkages between these plans and the performance evaluation process. Employees should have no doubt about the role of their unit and their own role in helping to achieve mission critical objectives.

Department Leaders Should Be Required To Ensure The Consequences In The Performance Evaluation Process Are Implemented For Employees Rated As Not Meeting Standards And Exceeding Standards

Any performance evaluation process will be viewed as being meaningless by employees and supervisors if there are few, if any, consequences associated with not meeting standards or exceeding standards. The current process articulates the steps that should be implemented if an employee does not meet standards. Department leaders need to ensure these steps are followed. Department leaders should also ensure that, at a minimum, disciplinary actions, mandated remedial training, weapons qualifications results, documented poor or excellent performance, and commendations received are reflected in employee evaluations. Department policy should also be modified to ensure that performance evaluations are reviewed and considered in the promotion and transfer process. The department should also develop positive consequences for employees who are rated as "generally exceeds standards" or "far exceeds standards". These ratings should receive commendation and be a standard to which all employees strive.

G- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

In addition to focusing on enhancing the quality of line employees and supervisors, attention must also be focused on developing future leaders. The department is facing a significant leadership vacuum over the next five years. Currently 480 sworn employees are eligible for retirement and 449 additional sworn employees will be eligible for retirement in the next five years. Over 500 of these sworn employees currently hold the rank of sergeant, lieutenant, captain, deputy chief or assistant chief.

This section presents observations and recommendations relating to the department's leadership development and succession planning needs.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Department Has No Plan For Leadership Development

The department has no plan for the development of current or future leaders. At best, leadership development occurs haphazardly. Any leadership development that does occur is generally initiated by commanders who have identified potential leaders in their own units. In addition, individual officers attend outside leadership development programs but generally do so at their own initiative and expense. Other officers pursue college credit and/or degrees in law enforcement, management and administration but do so as an investment in their own human capital and not as part of a department sponsored program. Furthermore, while no formal mentoring program has been established, some supervisors have identified staff with leadership potential and have provided individual support and development opportunities for them.

The lack of leadership development within the department is reflected in employee perceptions of their leaders. In interviews, department employees indicated a lack of confidence in the skills and abilities of their leaders. These interview findings are supported by the employee survey where 54.5 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that “police department managers and supervisors have the competence and experience to provide constructive feedback on performance of the employees reporting to them.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department Should Develop A Comprehensive Leadership Development Program

Rather than periodically sending individual officers to outside leadership or supervisory training, a comprehensive leadership development program should be developed that focuses on both strengthening the leadership skills of current department leaders and on developing future department leaders. Components of successful leadership development programs include not only classroom instruction but also project-based learning and internships.

In addition, the department should identify positions that will provide exposure that future leaders need and should encourage officers who would like to be leaders to compete for these positions. Ideally, officers should rotate through these positions to gain broad experience within the department.

The department also benefits when leaders are exposed to ideas from other departments and institutions. Therefore, in addition to designing a department leadership development program, the department should work with local colleges to identify and develop courses that would benefit department employees. Through the professional development plan process, employees who have been identified as future leaders or who identify the desire to move to a leadership position can be encouraged to take these courses.