



# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012  
(213) 974-1101  
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

SACHI A. HAMAI  
Chief Executive Officer

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October 30, 2019

To: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair  
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Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Sachi A. Hamai  
Chief Executive Officer

## **SHERIFF RECRUITMENT, HIRING, AND RETENTION STRATEGIES: FINAL REPORT (ITEM NO. 59-A, AGENDA OF APRIL 10, 2018)**

On April 10, 2018, the Board directed the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to work with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff) to hire outside consultants to assist in developing long-term recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies to reduce the high number of vacant Deputy Sheriff positions.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) was engaged to evaluate and make process improvement recommendations. Their scope of work encompassed a comprehensive review of the Sheriff's processes for recruitment, hiring, background investigations, Academy, and retention, see Attachment I (Note: The Sheriff's hiring criteria and standards were not part of IACP's purview).

The IACP's final report has 110 recommendations that range from streamlining specific processes to department organizational strategies. The following summarizes IACP's key recommendations:

1. Develop a Hiring Strategic Plan that identifies hiring, training, and retention priorities and objectives, implementation and communication strategies to align operations with the strategic plan, and key performance indicators.
2. Establish a Human Resource Data Analytics Program that includes a team dedicated to the development, compilation, and analysis of data for the purpose of developing and continually improving policies, procedures, operations, and programs. The team would also be responsible for monitoring and reporting to executives the progress of the Hiring Strategic Plan's key performance indicators.

3. Investment in information technology is needed to capture relevant data and integrate the various human resource functions and units to streamline processes, facilitate unit and department-level analysis, and produce validated reports.
4. Enhance the application screening process by: a) adding screening tools that evaluates critical thinking, maturity, motivation, and readiness for a career in law enforcement; b) ranking and prioritizing applications to the background investigations phase which is the most resource and time intensive step; and c) including Academy, Custody, and Patrol leadership in the final case review since they are the stakeholders immediately affected by the outcomes of the hiring process.
5. Modernize the Academy through instructors, curriculum, and a culture that model and reinforces 21<sup>st</sup> century policing practices and the procedural justice philosophy of treating people with dignity and respect, impartiality, fairness, and transparency. The Academy should also develop an evidence based physical training program that is focused on both, building trainee's physical development to meet law enforcement requirements, and injury prevention, reduction, and physical rehabilitation; whereby, the services of a professional strength coach and athletic trainer are highly recommended.
6. Prioritize professional development by providing personnel staff and Academy instructors with regular training to develop and then maintain their knowledge and skills to be current with industry standards and best practices.
7. Facility improvements are needed that provide applicants with space that is conducive for the written exam and physical abilities test. IACP recommends consideration of a dedicated testing facility and/or additional locations throughout the County where recruitment is a challenge.

In addition, facility improvements are needed at the Academy to accommodate the number of trainees and classes at the main Academy locations (Biscailuz and College of the Canyons), Pitchess Weapons Training Facility, and the Emergency Vehicles Operations Center (EVOC). IACP identified two critical priorities: a) development of an EVOC on department owned and controlled property since current EVOC operational availability is subject to the Los Angeles County Fairplex's paid events calendar which results in significant scheduling bottlenecks; and b) physical training space (track and gym) that is readily accessible to trainees and is properly maintained in good physical condition (free of hazards, e.g. gopher holes, ruts, etc.).

8. IACP observed there is significant reliance on deputies to perform administrative functions. IACP recommends the civilianization of administrative operations and redeploying sworn personnel to their law enforcement duties. CEO anticipates this may positively impact workload and overtime.
9. Reevaluate the Dual Track Career Path Program (Dual Track) and consider establishing separate Deputy and Correctional Officer classifications to reflect the distinct duties and

responsibilities in patrol and custody. The knowledge and skills necessary to perform these duties are different as is the training, both for entry-level and for ongoing professional development. Separating the classifications would allow the Sheriff to recruit, hire, and train for the respective characteristics and skillsets needed for patrol and custody.

10. A recommendation that overlaps both the Dual Track and Academy is to have new deputies assigned to field patrol training upon graduation. IACP noted the Academy is focused on training patrol deputies; however, new deputies spend several years in custody assignments prior to having the opportunity to transfer to patrol. This delay may result in a difficult transition since custody and patrol are very distinct assignments, and the patrol knowledge and skills acquired during the Academy will have likely deteriorated during those years without any daily practical application.

The Sheriff's response to IACP's 110 recommendations will be forthcoming. The Sheriff has been requested to prioritize implementation of the recommendations beginning with those providing cost-saving efficiencies. Any remaining recommendations should be prioritized as part of the annual budget process. IACP did note the Sheriff has already incorporated some of their early recommendations, including, but not limited to: expanding test preparation resources, computerizing the written exam, combining the written and physical tests on the same appointment, increasing the number of providers for medical and psychological testing, etc.

If you have any questions, please contact Rene Phillips at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or at [rphillips@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rphillips@ceo.lacounty.gov), or David Turla at [REDACTED] or at [dturla@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:dturla@ceo.lacounty.gov).

SAH:FAD:MM:SW  
RCP:DD:cc

#### Attachment

- c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
- County Counsel
- Sheriff
- Auditor-Controller
- Human Resources
- Civilian Oversight Commission
- Office of Inspector General

# **Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Process Improvement Report**

Prepared for the County of Los Angeles

October 2019

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Process Improvement Report

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## Acknowledgments

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- Sergeant Brian Riley

Last, but certainly not least, our thanks go to the women and men of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department who participated in interviews, focus groups, completed the workforce survey, and took the time to provide information, ideas and suggestions to us.

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## Executive Summary

Human resources are, without question, the most important resource of any police agency. All police organizations face the challenge of staffing their agencies with personnel that are reflective of their community and of a proper mindset to successfully handle the challenges of policing in the 21st century. This process has become more critical in recent years as violence, homeland security needs, and negative perception of law enforcement have increased in many communities. Police agencies today have fewer recruiting resources because of strong competition among police organizations and other organizations, such as the military or private security firms, for the pool of qualified applicants. Additionally, the supply of quality applicants has been reduced in recent years because a higher proportion of candidates have had criminal (albeit minor) infractions or substance abuse issues. Moreover, younger generations are less likely to have a taste for the regimented life of police officers and deputy sheriffs than older generations had.

In these times of an extremely highly competitive environment to identify, attract, recruit, and hire highly qualified Deputy Sheriff Trainees, numerous resources, personnel and financial, are necessarily invested in the endeavor. Efforts are made to improve the process for identifying highly qualified applicants, attract them to the department, successfully process them through the comprehensive hiring process as quickly as possible, and get them into the training cycle. As successful applicants progress through each stage of the hiring process, more and more of an investment has been expended. While every component of the recruitment, hiring, training, and retention process is important, the reality is that the further along in the process a potential candidate progresses, the more of an investment has been made on their behalf.

Recognizing this challenge, in October 2018, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and its collaborative partner the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) to conduct a two-part systematic process improvement analysis for of the specific areas of the department. The first part focused on recruitment, hiring, and retention practices and the second part on the training academy.

Process improvement analyses focus on identifying, analyzing and improving upon existing business processes within an organization and identify areas of inefficiencies. Specific to this study, the process improvement analysis included examining the recruitment and selection process for the entry-level deputy sheriff position and providing recommendations and suggestions for revising existing hiring practices, and recommendations for developing new

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

strategies and implementing profession best practices. The analysis for the first part of this study involved the quality and number of recruits, the speed of the hiring process, assessing the nature and effectiveness of the hiring process, identifying strategies to minimize dropout rates for candidates, and identifying strategies for retention of personnel. The analysis for the second part included an assessment of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Training Academy, with an emphasis on improving the potential of recruits to successfully complete the academy, the identification of and implementation of best practices in law enforcement academy operations, and an assessment of the overall culture and climate of the academy.

Studies of this nature are predisposed toward the identification of areas requiring improvement, and accordingly, they have a propensity to present what needs work, without fully acknowledging and highlighting positive aspects of an organization. Because of the numerous recommendations contained within this study, those consuming this report might mistakenly conclude that the sheriff's department hiring practices and its academy are in a poor condition. We wish to state the opposite quite clearly.

This report outlines the process and methodology used by IACP to conduct the analysis of the culture and practices related to recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. This analysis attempts to fairly represent the conditions, expectations, and desired outcomes studied, and those which prompted and drove this inquiry. Where external data was used for comparison purposes, references have been provided.

It is important to understand and recognize that the details concerning implementation may require modification or revision in order to meet departmental needs. Any proposed implementation suggestions are one possible method for accomplishing the stated goal and, understandably, the department may need or choose to take a different approach for a variety of reasons.

The results of the systematic evaluation have been organized into four (4) focus areas, each with a report detailing the findings and recommendations specific to the focus area:

1. **Hiring Process Report:** This section contains an analysis of and recommendations for improvements to the hiring process
2. **Background Investigations Unit Report:** This section contains an analysis of and recommendations for the organization and function of the recruitment and background units

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3. **Training Academy Report:** This section contains an analysis of and recommendations for the Training Academy and field training function
4. **Recruitment and Retention Programs Report:** This section reviews best practices and contains the recruitment and retention program proposal

## Hiring Process Report

### Background

Well-designed hiring processes follow the professional guidelines and procedures developed over the last century in response to several acts and laws, including the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the Wage and Salary Stabilization Law of 1942. Professional organizations that represent employee assessment practitioners developed standards to encourage the use of consistent and fair practices. These standards form the foundation of professional practice related to the hiring process and include:

- *The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*<sup>1</sup>
- *The Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures*<sup>2</sup>
- *The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures*<sup>3</sup>

While these documents do not agree in all aspects of professional practice, they all provide guidance about testing and hiring procedures that are reliable, valid, and based on scientific research yet flexible enough to be applicable in a multitude of situations. Core tenet across the three documents is that all human resource/human capital tools must (a) be based on an understanding of critical job requirements, (b) be developed and administered in a consistent and fair manner across examinees, and (c) minimize sources of bias that are unrelated to job performance. While there is a general relationship between these documents and federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies, employers must also consider additional standards. In the case of LASD, these include the California POST guidelines and regulations for peace officer selection, California employment law, and Los Angeles County regulations and policies. This

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<sup>1</sup> American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014)

<sup>2</sup> Society for Industrial/Organizational Psychology, 2018

<sup>3</sup> Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Civil Service Commission, Department of Labor, and Department of Justice, 1978

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collection of documents, along with relevant professional literature and data regarding the practices of other jurisdictions, forms the overall basis for our recommendations.

## **Current State of the LASD Hiring Process**

LASD's hiring process for Deputy Sheriff Trainees (DSTs) includes nine distinct steps. For the purposes of this report, we assume that the hiring process begins once a candidate completes the recruitment process and submits an application via Los Angeles County's NeoGov site and ends when the candidate successfully completes the medical and psychological screening, completes the pre-Academy consultation, and is offered a spot in an upcoming Academy class.

The current DST hiring process complies with California POST requirements, including the use of (a) reading and writing ability assessments, (b) oral interviews, (c) background investigations, (d) medical evaluations, and (e) psychological evaluations. Although not required by POST, LASD's DST hiring process also includes physical abilities assessments and polygraph examinations. LASD must have an annual recruiting pool of 16,000 candidates who complete the application process to meet the hiring goal of 720 DSTs (i.e., 8 classes of 90 DSTs) annually. The passing rates are very high for the written test (78%), the physical abilities test (96%), and the structured interview (92%) and very low for the law enforcement job family review (42%) and the background investigation (26%). As LASD attempts to hire more than 720 DSTs annually to close the number of vacant Deputy Sheriff positions, it will be increasingly important that the hiring process can efficiently identify and process those candidates who are most likely to meet LASD hiring standards, complete Academy training, and succeed in Deputy Sheriff positions.

## **Key Findings**

### **1. The hiring process is time-consuming**

Like other law enforcement organizations, the LASD hiring process can take a great deal of time. While it is important for LASD to thoroughly vet candidates for suitability for a peace officer position, LASD's hiring process takes more time than most other jurisdictions. Because there are numerous jurisdictions in the LA metro area, high quality candidates may apply to multiple departments simultaneously and accept an offer from the first department to hire them. As a result, LASD loses access to candidates who would be more likely to (a) successfully complete the hiring and training process and (b) perform well on the job. Further, applicants can have a difficult time identifying where they are in the hiring process, which can cause them to "self-select" out of the process in favor of other jurisdictions.

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## **2. Some steps in the hiring process are ineffective or inefficient**

The hiring process consists of nine assessments, including traditional written and physical abilities assessments and structured interviews as well as a full background investigation and polygraph examination and a medical and psychological assessment. A large proportion of candidates pass the written test (78%), the physical abilities test (96%), and the structured interview (95%), rendering them largely ineffective in identifying qualified applicants. In contrast, only a small proportion of candidates pass the background investigation (26%) which is much more expensive and time-consuming to administer. Implementing more rigorous assessments prior to the background investigation would reduce background investigator workload and increase hiring speed while maintaining LASD's hiring standards.

## **3. LASD lacks a modern talent management infrastructure**

LASD and Los Angeles County has invested in some HR systems, such as eHire, which LASD uses to track applicants through the hiring process, and the county job application site (i.e., NeoGov). In other cases, LASD lacks modern talent management software. Most noticeably, LASD personnel records are stored in individual, hard copy "jackets," which makes analyzing HR data to identify trends impossible. Such data are indispensable for tracking HR metrics related to recruitment, hiring, and retention goals. In addition, LASD's examination facilities and equipment are also lacking. LASD recently began administering the written test via computer, which will save thousands of dollars annually in labor, but facilities for safely and consistently administering the written test and physical abilities test, in particular, are lacking.

## **Top Recommendations**

### **1. Update hiring assessments**

LASD should update the assessments that occur prior to the background investigation. Specifically, the passing scores for the written test and the physical abilities test should be re-evaluated given that the vast majority of candidates pass these steps. In addition, LASD should add (a) a standardized writing test to replace the unstandardized writing assessment that occurs during the background investigation and (b) add a non-cognitive written assessment, such as a test of personality or work styles, which would enhance the validity of the hiring process. The standardized writing test would reduce the burden on background investigators and address a common complaint of supervisors that many new Deputy Sheriffs struggle with writing accurate, complete, and grammatically correct

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reports. A personality test would help eliminate candidates who are unlikely to pass the background investigation or training. LASD should also update the structured interview to assess candidate maturity and readiness for the job and to comply with best practices (e.g., train interviewers, develop anchored rating scales).

## **2. Update testing infrastructure and facilities**

LASD tests a large number of candidates annually, but the current facilities are insufficient for the testing volume. Actions such as implementing computerized administration of the written test are a good first step toward improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the hiring process. However, the sworn exams unit should have access to a standardized, secure testing facility that is conducive to full performance by candidates (e.g., adequate testing space). Moving forward, LASD should investigate whether eHire, or other systems, could be used to support additional hiring functions, such as allowing candidates to self-schedule tests and appointments and check on their application status without having to call an LASD employee. Such a system would also enable LASD to track critical HR metrics more easily.

## **3. Prioritize candidates for background investigation based on score rankings**

Currently, all applicants complete all steps in the hiring process in the order that they apply. As noted above, LASD is likely losing some number of high-quality applicants to other departments because of the length of the hiring process. By implementing the previous recommendations, LASD will have access to a larger body of information about which candidates are likely to make it through the background investigation process and the training academy and perform well on the job. LASD should be able to move these applicants through the hiring process at a faster rate, such as by prioritizing candidates with higher scores on the exams (i.e., written test, physical abilities test, writing test, structured interview, and personality test) for background investigations over candidates with lower scores, and therefore lower probabilities of success in the remainder of the hiring process, in training, and on the job.

## **Background Investigations Unit Report**

### **Background**

All background investigations for LASD Deputy Sheriff Candidates are conducted in accordance with the California Code of Regulations § 1953, Peace Officer Background Investigation, which requires that:

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*Every peace officer candidate shall be the subject of a thorough background investigation to verify good moral character and the absence of past behavior indicative of unsuitability to perform the duties of a peace officer [Government Code section 1031(d)].<sup>4</sup>*

The section further requires that the background investigation include a review of the following dimensions:

- Integrity
- Impulse Control/Attention to Safety
- Substance Abuse and Other Risk-Taking Behavior
- Stress Tolerance
- Confronting and Overcoming Problems, Obstacles, and Adversity
- Conscientiousness
- Interpersonal Skills
- Decision-Making and Judgment
- Learning Ability
- Communication Skills

The section also outlines the requirements for conducting criminal history, driving history, citizenship, personal reference, and employment checks. The LASD background investigative process complies with all requirements of this section as well as with all other applicable state and federal laws.

## **Current State**

The LASD Background Units are located in decentralized offices throughout the county in order to better serve applicants based on the geographic location of their residence. There are five separate teams (North, South, Central, East, and West) consisting of approximately 70 Background Investigators (BI). Each team is supervised by a sergeant who makes the specific case assignments in their units. Team sergeants are responsible for monitoring the progress of the investigations assigned to their personnel. There is also a Civilian BI Unit consisting of two civilian

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<sup>4</sup>[https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/I18418B48E0BD41B6A483178F31A93C1F?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/I18418B48E0BD41B6A483178F31A93C1F?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=(sc.Default))

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Background Investigators. In 2018, approximately 50-80 cases were assigned to the BI Unit each week according to the applicant's location. It was reported that the BI Units are currently averaging 35 cases assigned per investigator for Deputy Sheriff Trainees and Custody Assistants.

The LASD background process begins when an applicant's file is assigned to a background investigator. For the past year and a half, the LASD has been utilizing an electronic background tracking system called "eHire." According to information provided by staff, this system "is built on a software platform and consists of a content management file structure for storing and interacting with backgrounds investigations, a centralized forms development and routing system, and a process automation component." Access to the system is available to both LASD employees and applicants from any electronic device.

## Key Findings

### **1. The LASD would benefit significantly by investing in the strategic development of its Background Investigative personnel.**

Turnover in the Background Investigative Unit has been described as common, although the department lacks the data to determine how accurate this statement may be. It was explained that some high-performing Background Investigators (BIs) are concurrently seeking other positions in the department that are coveted, or bonus positions, which leads to lost expertise and additional vacancies when these BIs leave the unit. This condition further delays the background process for applicants.

Most other sworn investigative positions in the LASD are coveted positions which provide deputies with bonus pay. Supervisors in the Background Investigative Units have indicated that the lack of coveted position status harms both the ability to incentivize a quality investigator to transfer into the unit and the ability to retain high performing BIs.

All but two of the approximately 70 investigators assigned to the various BI Units are sworn deputies. While there are some benefits to having a sworn presence in the unit, it would also be beneficial to increase the number of non-sworn BIs. Doing so would allow the LASD to focus more sworn resources on other public safety duties, reduce the costs associated with assigning only sworn deputies to the unit, while also providing more stability and expertise in the unit. This would ultimately allow for better training and mentoring of assigned sworn personnel.

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## Top Recommendation

### 1. Consider converting some BI positions to non-sworn positions

LASD should consider creating some number of permanent non-sworn BI positions, by hiring civilian or retired investigators, as the duties of a BI do not require having sworn status to accomplish. The type of investigations conducted are primarily administrative in nature and could be completed by civilian personnel. Civilianizing some portion of the BI workforce would likely require discussions with the employees' unions but the benefits to the department in the long term would be significant.

## Training Academy Report

### Background

By the time a highly qualified candidate successfully makes it into the training academy, more attention and some reasonable precaution into this investment is warranted. It is understood that not every applicant who makes it through the vetting process and into the recruit academy will be successful. However, it is important to remember that at this point in the hiring process, the agency owes it to the community it serves to assure that there is nothing in the training program that unnecessarily weeds out these otherwise highly qualified applicants.

Related to the importance of protecting the investment after the department hires highly qualified applicants is the importance of identifying prospective applicants with the specific skills and interest in performing the various staffing functions required of the LASD. Since the job duties and responsibilities of patrol deputies and custody deputies are so different, we believe there is an opportunity for the department to reexamine the current condition in light of its overall recruitment, hiring, training, and retention goals.

### Current State

From the study team's examination of the recruitment, hiring, training, and retention processes currently employed by the LASD, we note the following conditions exist:

- Recruitment for DSTs is primarily patrol-centric, although applicants are informed about the dual track system and that an initial custody assignment is a possibility.
- DST recruit training in the Regular Basic Course is entirely patrol-focused, resulting in certification as a peace officer upon successful completion of the academy.

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

- The recruit training learning domains are designed to prepare trainees for patrol field training and eventual patrol work.
- Upon graduation from the recruit academy, rather than beginning patrol field training, all DST graduates are immediately given a custody assignment.
- Since the new DST graduates have not received training or certification to work a custody assignment, they must undergo training in jail operations in order to be qualified to perform the duties of an adult correctional officer. This involves an additional six weeks of training.
- After completing jail operations training, new DST graduates participate in an on-the-job custody field training program.
- Following custody field training, the new Deputy Sheriff in a custody assignment is qualified to perform solo duties in a custody setting.

## Key Findings

### 1. Assess job classifications and assignments

Department staff have indicated that the average timeframe that newly graduated DSTs spend working in custody is between 3-4 years. Over that time, the knowledge gained, and skills learned in recruit training become stale and outdated. As a result, those custody deputies desiring a career path in patrol must first attend a 3-week Patrol School in order to refresh their patrol-oriented training. Once this is successfully completed, they begin the Patrol Field Training (FTO) program.

For many participants in the Patrol FTO program, their field training begins several years after recruit training had prepared them for this transition. From interviews, we have learned that, for this reason, some custody deputies elect not to choose a patrol assignment as a career track due to the fear of failing the FTO training. Many others initially assigned to custody have indicated to the study team that for myriad other reasons, they will choose to remain in custody assignments for the entirety of their careers. In those instances, the cost-effectiveness of the initial investment in academy training and peace officer certification is questionable.

### 2. Attrition at the Basic Academy is significant and is higher than at other agencies studied for this review

Like many other U.S. law enforcement agencies, attrition in general at the LASD presents an ongoing challenge in terms of maintaining adequate staffing. Compounding this

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situation, the dropout rate for the Academy is significant, at 20.38 percent and is well above the numbers reflected in other agencies the IACP has studied. Despite its best efforts, the Academy has consistently averaged a 20 percent attrition rate since January 2012, and it is clearly challenged to try to keep up with the department's overall attrition levels. This negative situation will continue unless meaningful efforts are implemented to drill down on attrition causation and to mitigate any preventable reasons for Deputy Sheriff Recruits not completing the Academy.

### **3. The Academy's Physical Training (PT) program should more closely conform to evidence-based practices for injury reduction**

There is considerable evidence that an ability-based PT program can reduce the likelihood of injuries to both students and training instructors. Based on interviews with the Academy's training staff, evidence exists that the current PT program directly contributes to some injuries that result from overtraining, and in particular, from excessive running and from unintentional additional physical workload that occurs during Academy training. Leaders at the Academy would be well served to examine contemporary, evidence-based PT practices and consider how adopting similar practices might help to reduce injuries and improve student performance.

## **Top Recommendations**

### **1. Assess job classifications and assignments**

The job descriptions and duties and responsibilities of a peace officer and of a correctional officer are vastly different. The knowledge and skills necessary to perform these duties are different as is the training, both for entry-level and for ongoing professional development. If the LASD were to create a job classification for a Custody Deputy/Adult Correctional Officer that is separate from that of a Patrol Deputy, it would allow them to recruit, hire, train, and retain these employees for the positions that both they and the department are seeking to have them occupy. This would further assure that all training received, including field training, is conducted in a more efficient and logical timing sequence.

### **2. Evaluate the reasons for recruit attrition**

In many cases, Academy staff are not able to identify trends regarding specific causes of attrition due to inadequate data collection, storage, and retrieval methods used in trying to identify why recruits voluntarily leave the basic training program. Without usable data,

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no detailed analysis is conducted. Having a better understanding why attrition occurs would allow the Academy to evaluate any conditions that might unnecessarily be contributing to attrition and to implement changes to improve the ability for more Deputy Sheriff Trainees to successfully complete the training program.

### **3. Review and revise the PT program in accordance with evidence-based practices for injury reduction**

This recommendation is based on an examination of the LASD's PT program and testing standards, comparative testing standards from other studies, attrition in the recruit academy, and the number of apparent PT or running-related injuries experienced by LASD recruits. Accordingly, the following recommendations are offered:

- Engage the services of both a professional strength coach and an athletic trainer to assist the PT staff with the development and implementation of a revised, evidence-based PT program
- Ensure a gradual progression to avoid overuse injuries
- Reduce the amount of running in the PT program
- Be mindful of the potentially detrimental impact when additional PT is used as discipline/punishment
- Implement more cross-training and strength training activities in place of running
- Foster a culture of injury risk reduction in all aspects of PT

## **Recruitment and Retention Programs Report**

### **Background**

Recruitment and retention of trained and qualified employees is a critical human capital issue. With current national unemployment rates near historic lows<sup>5</sup>, many organizations struggle to attract and retain high-performing employees. As competition for qualified candidates increases, effective talent recruitment and retention strategies must be a top priority, particularly for public

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<sup>5</sup> Frazee, G. (2018, October 5). The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been since 1969. Here's why. Retrieved January 15, 2019 from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/making-sense/the-unemployment-rate-is-the-lowest-its-been-since-1969-heres-why>

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sector organizations, who may otherwise struggle to adapt to labor market trends and compete for talent.

To meet mission requirements in this environment, organizations like LASD must rely on, and pay for, mandatory and voluntary overtime. For example, in FY2017-2018 LASD had excess expenditure of more than \$142,000,000 in overtime; although that deficit was expected to be partially offset by the vacancies in 564 sworn positions.<sup>6</sup> Each time an employee separates, an organization can expect to spend between 90% and 200% of the salary associated with the position to recruit, hire, train, and develop replacement staff,<sup>7</sup> in addition to the costs associated with lost productivity and overtime while the position is vacant. Given the extensive recruitment, selection, and training demands associated with hiring a new Deputy Sheriff, this estimate may be higher for LASD.

To improve recruitment and retention, it is important to understand the factors that matter to candidates and employees and cause them to join, and stay with, an organization. The three primary factors that affect retention are personal factors, organizational factors, and external factors.

## Current State

LASD provided historical data on turnover rates. LASD's Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data from 2013-2018 show that 2,502 sworn personnel left LASD, with a range of 364 (2014) to 488 (2017) cases annually. The majority of cases were classified as separating due to retirement (52.96%), unknown (14.71%), or service-connected disability (10.75%) reasons. The 2013-2018 average annual attrition rate of 417 are near LASD's projected annual hiring rate of 554, assuming 720 recruits and a graduation rate of 77%.<sup>8</sup> Data provided by LASD on separations since 2000 follow a similar pattern, with the majority of cases (69.6%) due to retirement. As discussed in more detail below, the LASD Employee Service Center conducts an exit interview for all separating employees on which employees can designate up to 16 reasons for their separation (e.g., retirement, dislike police work). In addition, employees who indicate they are moving to

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<sup>6</sup> County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office (April 3, 2018). Sheriff's Department Budget Status Report (Item No. 2D-8, Agenda of June 26, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Allen, D.G., Bryant, P.C., & Vardaman, J.M. (2010). Retaining Talent: Replacing Misconceptions with Evidence-Based Strategies. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24, 48-64.

<sup>8</sup> County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office (February 9, 2016). Update: Sheriff's Department Hiring Strategy (Item 50-A, Agenda of April 14, 2015; Item 10, Agenda of June 22, 2015; and Item 54, Agenda of September 29, 2015).

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another law enforcement agency can select from up to 34 reasons for that decisions (e.g., cost of living in LA, immediate patrol assignment)

## Key Findings

### 1. The current approach to recruiting is effective

LASD has invested significantly in advertising and recruiting and these efforts appear to be consistent with current best practices in recruiting and outreach. The use of “personas” that represent categories of people likely to be interested in a law enforcement career is encouraging, as is the Phelps/9<sup>th</sup> Wonder approach to using paid search strategies on Google and Bing and paid social strategies on Facebook and Instagram. Metrics from NeoGov and observations from the LASD recruitment unit indicate these strategies are increasing the volume and quality of applicants. However, LASD should actively monitor the diversity of the candidate pool on an ongoing basis.

### 2. Understanding the reasons for turnover is difficult

As noted in the hiring process, LASD lacks software to track and analyze workforce trends, instead storing personnel records in individual, hard copy “jackets.” While LASD does conduct exit interviews and collects detailed data on reasons for separation, this method of data storage makes it impossible to analyze the resulting data to identify trends that may affect retention. While JOLTS (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey) data are stored in a database, the coded reasons for separation are very broad (e.g., retirement, personal) and do not capture factors that lead to separation decisions. LASD also does not currently conduct engagement surveys with current employees to proactively identify issues that may affect morale or retention. Reducing turnover is critical given that, during FY2017-2018, LASD spent more than \$142,000,000 in overtime that is attributable to hiring delays, leave absences, and vacancies.

## Top Recommendations

### 1. Develop a Strategic Human Capital Plan

A Strategic Human Capital Plan links personnel policies and practices to department priorities and provides metrics/performance indicators for evaluating progress toward department goals. Currently, LASD is attempting to reduce the number of vacant Deputy Sheriff positions. A Strategic Human Capital Plan can guide decisions about how to achieve that goal through recruiting, hiring, training, and retention programs and would provide measurable outcomes for evaluating whether the plan is working.

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## 2. Provide a realistic preview of the job and career development

While LASD does require applicants to complete several activities that provide a preview of the job (e.g., ride-alongs, jail tours), interviews with DSTs and new DSs indicate that recruits' expectations are not always met. Adding additional "previews" into the hiring process, such as via virtual ride-alongs or video interviews with current DSs in a variety of roles, and additional screening during the hiring process (e.g., alterations to the structured interview, addition of personality or work styles tests) may reduce the number of candidates who enter the hiring process, the training academy, or the job without being ready. Further, LASD should ensure that current DSs have accurate information about how to prepare for, and take advantage of, the numerous career paths available in LASD. Such information is a leading reason that high performing employees join and remain with organizations.

## 3. Recruit from within LASD

LASD currently administers largely the same hiring process to candidates for Deputy Sheriff and Custody Assistant positions (but with different cutoff scores). Custody Assistants work alongside Deputy Sheriffs who are in custody positions and perform very similar work. Custody Assistants have passed background investigations and LASD has invested large sums of funding into their selection and development. LASD should actively recruit high performing Custody Assistants to fill Deputy Sheriff positions via an expedited hiring process in which background investigations focus on only the time since starting with the department and candidates not be required to resubmit documentation already in the possession of the department. It appears that LASD has little trouble filling Custody Assistant positions, so Custody Assistants who move to Deputy Sheriff positions could easily be replaced with new Custody Assistants.

## Summary of Core Recommendations

This study provides **110** recommendations, following several major themes:

### **Strategic Planning – Develop a strategic plan for recruitment, hiring, training, and retention**

This strategy should involve a comprehensive effort that includes every division within the Training and Personnel Administration Bureaus and should foster more and better communication, encourage partnerships, reduce divisional silos, promote problem solving and accountability, and involve measurable outcomes that evaluate the success of the department's efforts related to recruitment, hiring, training, and retention. The strategic plan should:

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

- Engage a planning process to align the department's hiring and training operations
- Implement strategies to reduce Deputy Sheriff Trainee attrition
- Engage a process to strategically plan for future training facility needs
- Implement strategies to reduce training injuries, including enhancing safety protocols and formal injury analysis to create a culture of safety in the Academy
- Continuing to support career development and exploration

### **Technology – Utilize a data-driven approach.**

Data-driven strategic planning processes are designed to operationalize and align department recruitment, hiring, training, and retention goals. A data-driven approach reinforces information sharing across units, focuses attention, enhances problem solving, opens up communication channels, and tracks and measures results. Strategic targeting and prioritization are other critical roles of a data-driven approach by targeting individuals that promise the greatest results and the best chances for success which will subsequently reduce the caseloads.

To further this recommendation, the department should assign a personnel analyst to the Personnel Administration Bureau to improve data collection and management and support analysis and metrics tracking. The analyst should begin a process of assessment of all information systems for effectiveness and interoperability. This process should include stakeholders from all units involved in the hiring process. At a minimum, the participants should focus on the following objectives:

- Determine what information these systems need to collect and track
- Assure that they eliminate individual unit silos so that information which needs to be shared is included
- Create systems which can immediately provide data on attrition/retention issues
- Assure that department personnel data related to hire dates and potential retirement dates are included to assist with the projection of future personnel needs
- Ensure that personnel information is tracked and managed as effectively as crime information
- Use a data-driven approach in discussing hiring goals and accomplishments to highlight their importance and value and to maintain a sense of urgency
- Create a mechanism (e.g., electronic Daily Bulletin) to share this information across the department

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To effectively implement these strategies, LASD must invest in updating its technology capacity.

## **Process Improvement**

Throughout the study, IACP identified “processes” as a critical driver in caseload management, backlogs and bottlenecks, expectations versus reality, and eventually the quality of candidates graduating from the Academy. Process improvement recommendations include:

- Recruit, hire, train, and retain sworn department members for the specific job tasks they will be performing
- Assure that the timing and sequence of training closely aligns with staffing assignments
- Streamlining and enhancing the hiring process
- Assure that testing standards are reasonable and measure job requirements
- More closely align the disciplinary culture in recruit training with 21st century policing principles

A summary of the principal recommendations is provided in Appendix A of this report. More detailed recommendations may be found in each of the specific reports.

## **Facility Enhancement**

The LASD projects to increase the number of DST classes in the years ahead and an agency its size will continue to experience high training volume for years to come. This condition will require enhancements to some of its existing training facilities and the likely need to accrue additional training sites. Important and necessary features, such as sufficient and appropriate physical training, defensive tactics training, and scenario training areas, adequate cafeteria and break room areas, locker rooms, and rest room facilities, staff offices, security features, and adequate parking will need to be incorporated into any new facilities and for enhancements to existing facilities.

Recruit training occurs at both the Biscailuz Academy and at the North Academy located at the College of the Canyons. Both of these locations are operating at maximum facility capacity for students and staff and neither academy has an indoor breakroom or a cafeteria. At the North Academy, the closest restrooms are located several hundred yards away from the classroom building inside the college’s football stadium. The physical training area and the running track at the Biscailuz Academy is in poor condition and contains several potential safety hazards.

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Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC) training occurs at the Fairplex in Pomona, the home of the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds. Scheduling recruit EVOC training at the Fairplex is very challenging, requires much flexibility, and sometimes causes other components of training to be adjusted due to scheduling conflicts with the fairgrounds. Department command staff have indicated that the LASD has been involved in the planning process for designing and opening a department-owned driver training facility. This should remain a high priority for the department, especially as it anticipates expanding the number of recruits hired and trained in the coming years.

A summary of the principal recommendations is provided in Appendix A of this report. More detailed recommendations may be found in each of the specific reports.

## Introduction

In October 2018, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to conduct a systematic evaluation of certain aspects of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. There were two primary components of this study. The first component involved an assessment of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Training Academy (Academy), with an emphasis on improving the potential of recruits to successfully complete the academy, the identification and implementation of best practices in law enforcement academy operations, and an assessment of the overall culture and climate of the academy. The second component involved an assessment of the recruiting, hiring, and retention practices within the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department.

### Primary Areas of Focus

- Training – a review of agency practice related to training to include culture and learning atmosphere, curriculum review, resource coordination, and review of academy facility, staffing and equipment
- Recruitment, Hiring and Retention – a review of agency practices related to recruiting, hiring, and retention of personnel to included factors contributing to attrition, profession best practices related to recruitment and retention, and process improvements.

This report highlights positive aspects of the operations and outlines potential improvements to ensure department leaders, government officials, and the community and stakeholders, have clear and mutual understanding of the law enforcement mission, and how it relates to the hiring and training practices within the sheriff's department setting. The recommendations emphasize actions the department can employ to achieve objectives more effectively, maximize productivity, and meet future requirements in an informed and orderly manner.

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and its Academy are a dynamic and ever-changing organization. The IACP recognizes that numerous changes have taken place since the start of this study at the end of 2018. Conditions examined in this report may have changed in the time that has elapsed between report preparation and delivery. Understandably, it has been necessary to freeze conditions to a point-in-time to prepare the report. The most current information on the conditions of the department and the academy resides with the command staff of the sheriff's department and at the academy, including information on actions taken, which constitute consideration and implementation of the recommendations included in this report.

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## How to Use This Report

This analysis has been organized into five reports, each of which correspond to a segment of organizational and/or operational function and analysis. Although each report is distinct, there is some repetition of information, due to the overlapping nature of the LASD's and the Academy's operations and the interrelated nature of the topic areas. This report has been written for three different but very important audiences: LA County government officials, sheriff's department officials, including academy staff and other department personnel, and community members. Accordingly, the IACP has worked to provide sufficient details so that anyone reading this report can readily understand each aspect.

Within these reports, there are various tables and figures as visual aids, and as a means to validate and substantiate the observations of the team, and the associated recommendations. Supplemental data and tables may also be included within the appendices at the end of the reports. Additionally, icons have been inserted to readily identify recommendations and action items.

-  **Indicates a high priority recommendation:** Shouldn't proceed without; system wide; low hanging fruit
-  **Indicates a moderate priority recommendation:** Important, but can do without; narrower than high priority
-  **Indicates a low priority recommendation:** Can operate without; implement as time and resources allow
-  **Indicates an action step**

## **Section I: Policing Environment Report**

Policing in America continues to grow increasingly more complex as law enforcement faces growing challenges, from new technology that evolves faster than laws and policy can keep up to the opioid epidemic to responding to persons with mental illness. Yet, the everyday challenges of patrolling neighborhoods and responding to calls remain. Furthermore, it is also the environment against which law enforcement agencies, including LASD, find themselves recruiting new officers and deputies.

As noted by the Department, LASD has experienced an ongoing shortage of deputies while responding to increased demands for service. Per the Department, as of April 1, 2018, LASD had a total of 8,824 budgeted Deputy Sheriff positions with 7,693 filled. Positive economic growth in the region's private sector and competition among 45 local police departments within the county have created a highly competitive employment market, creating challenges in filling vacancies. Qualified applicants typically apply to multiple agencies and, given law enforcement's intensive, lengthy, and often cumbersome hiring process, applicants often accept the first job offer made. Additionally, LASD has seen its annual attrition numbers steadily increase from 363 in 2014 to 488 in 2017, which they have partially attributed to sworn staff hired during the 1984 Olympic Games hiring boom who are now at retirement age.

Examining the policing environment is an essential prerequisite to informed judgment regarding policing culture, practice, policy, operations, and resource requirements. The geography, service population, economic conditions, workload, and resources in the County of Los Angeles are salient factors that define and condition the policing requirements and can affect recruitment and retention efforts. These factors are examined in this section.

### **County of Los Angeles Overview**

The County of Los Angeles is located in southern California, bordering 70 miles of the Pacific Ocean coast. The county is approximately 4,083 square miles and includes a diverse geography encompassing mountain ranges, valleys, forests, islands, lakes, rivers, marshland, and desert.<sup>9</sup> It was established on February 18, 1850 and was one of California's original 27 counties. The County of Los Angeles has the largest population of any county in the United States and accounts for approximately 27 percent of California's population.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.lacounty.gov/government/geography-statistics/statistics/#1481130319359-d19956e6-ad46>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.lacounty.gov/government/about-la-county/>

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## Service Population Demographics

As of the 2010 Census, the County of Los Angeles population was 9,818,672; the 2017 U.S. Census estimate is 10,105,518. Since 2019, the County of Los Angeles has experienced a population increase of 2.92%.

The population of the County of Los Angeles is predominately white (26.1%) with Asian being the next largest segment of the population at 15.4%, and Black or African American the third largest segment at 9.0%. Those identify as Hispanic or Latino constitute 48.6% of the population, but Hispanic may be of any race and may also be included in other applicable race categories.<sup>11</sup>

These factors are important as law enforcement agencies work toward hiring, recruiting, and staffing police and sheriff departments that are representative of the communities they serve. As of the end of 2018, 39% of the department's employees were white, 9% were African American, 5% were Asian, and 45% were Hispanic.<sup>12</sup> Numerous research studies have shown that having a department that is reflective of the diversity of the community—not just racial diversity, but including gender, language, life experience, and cultural backgrounds—is linked to building trust and legitimacy with the community it serves.

## Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Overview

The mission statement, core values, and department creed for the LASD is listed on the department's website and is also contained in the Recruit Training Manual. They read as follows:

***Our Mission:***

*To enforce the law fairly and within constitutional authority;*

*To be proactive in our approach to crime prevention;*

*To enhance public trust through accountability;*

*To maintain a constitutionally sound and rehabilitative approach to incarceration;*

*To provide a safe and secure court system;*

*To maintain peace and order; and*

*To work in partnership with the communities we serve to ensure the highest possible quality of life.*

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census – Los Angeles County, California Quick Facts (retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/losangelescountycalifornia>)

<sup>12</sup> <http://lasd.org/pdfjs/publications/2018-YIR-VIEW2.pdf>

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## ***Our Creed:***

*My goals are simple, I will always be painfully honest, work as hard as I can, learn as much as I can and hopefully make a difference in people's lives.*

*- Deputy David W. March EOW April 29, 2002*

## ***Our Core Values:***

***COURAGE - COMPASSION - PROFESSIONALISM - ACCOUNTABILITY - RESPECT***

*With integrity, compassion, and courage, we serve our communities-- protecting life and property, being diligent and professional in our acts and deeds, holding ourselves and each other accountable for our actions at all times, while respecting the dignity and rights of all.*

*Earning the Public Trust Every Day!*

It is quite evident from examining the above mission, creed, and core values, that the LASD projects an organizational focus that is committed to contemporary policing and correctional standards and practices.

Given the breadth and depth of its responsibilities, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department is truly unique among other law enforcement agencies. The LASD operates 23 patrol stations and has every specialized unit a law enforcement department may have, including aviation, marine, and special operations units. LASD also operates one of the largest jail systems in the world and is responsible for securing up to 20,000 inmates at any given time in seven custody facilities. Furthermore, it provides security and enforcement to 37 Superior Courts. Additionally, it is the largest contract policing agency in the United States.

- **Cities:** LASD provides police services to 42 of the county's 88 cities, as well as the 141 unincorporated county areas.
- **Colleges:** LASD is the largest community college policing agency in the nation, providing the nine campuses of the LA Community College District with police services.
- **Transit:** LASD also provides contract services to the Metropolitan Transit Authority and to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority, making it the second largest transit enforcement agency in the world after the New York Police Department.

## **Section II: Strategic Department Recommendations**

This section consolidates the prominent recurring issues that cross operational lines among the various units involved in the hiring process and the department as a whole.

In many ways, LASD does not appear to be lacking in individual dedication and enthusiasm of its employees. Rather, there is a lack of coordination, communication, and cohesion between and among individual units responsible for recruiting, hiring, and retention. Since recruiting and hiring highly qualified applicants is a primary goal of LASD, the department needs to ensure that all functional units involved in the process are communicating well and regularly throughout the process. The overarching recommendation in this regard is for LASD to craft a department-wide strategic plan for recruitment, hiring, and retention of personnel. This strategy should involve a comprehensive effort that includes every division within the agency and should foster more and better communication, encourage partnerships, reduce divisional silos, promote problem solving and accountability, and involve measurable outcomes that evaluate the success of the department's efforts related to recruitment, hiring, and retention.

An array of opportunities exist to enhance, improve, or create new policies and procedures intended to improve the effectiveness, accountability, coordination, and the operations of the various units involved in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriffs. LASD is currently employing several exciting and innovative approaches to recruiting and hiring which clearly are best practices in many respects. The recent implementation of the eHire system and the external review of their recruitment marketing strategies are examples of promising practices in these areas. LASD deserves credit for the creative approaches being used to achieve the hiring and staffing goals. The project team noted that many of the people with whom we interacted are performing admirable work, often under adverse or challenging conditions. In response to a question asking what the LASD does best, one member of the command staff answered, "We are used to doing more with less." This sentiment was echoed by many staff who were interviewed and, despite limitations related to facilities, equipment, staffing, or organizational support, all seemed to exemplify hard work and dedication to the mission of their individual units. Many staff members noted that they were happy to see this study take place and were welcoming of an outside review which might provide additional ideas and different approaches to help them improve the department.

The corresponding recommendations are based on data analyzed and information gleaned from this study, to include contact with members of the department, and they are based on best practices, 21<sup>st</sup> Century policing recommended approaches, as well as what may best fit for LASD.

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It is further recognized that some of these recommendations are already under consideration or are planned for implementation.

## Strategic Planning

### **Recommendation 1: Develop a Strategic Human Capital Plan**

LASD should create a Strategic Human Capital Plan (SHCP), which links decisions about personnel programs directly to LASD's overall strategic plan. The SHCP plan documents the ultimate outcomes LASD wishes to attain, such as reduce vacant sworn positions, and also specific strategies for achieving these outcomes. LASD's strategies might include reducing attrition, increasing the number of qualified candidates who complete the hiring and training process, and maintaining a diverse and representative force. These strategies, in turn, will help LASD achieve strategic priorities, such as improving service quality or reducing overtime costs.

A second critical aspect of an SHCP is the identification of key performance indicator (KPI) metrics. These are measurable outcomes that show whether LASD's strategies are working; as such, metrics require identification and management of accurate and complete data sources. Sample metrics include:

- Increased number of qualified applicants making it through the hiring process
- Reduced time-to-hire
- Increased number of qualified applicants completing Academy training
- Increased number of qualified applicants completing custody and/or patrol field training
- Reduced mandatory overtime shifts
- Reduced open positions
- Reduced "bad" attrition, such as lateral transfers to other jurisdictions
- Workforce demographics that match LA County demographics
- Increased Deputy Sheriff engagement
- Reduced disciplinary issues

## Strategies for Data Driven Decision Making

### **Recommendation 2: Establish a Human Resource Data Analytics Program**

The project team heard frequently from LASD staff that data necessary to conduct further analysis about why recruits voluntarily resign from the Academy, how they sustain injuries in training, or why veteran deputy sheriffs voluntarily leave LASD for other law enforcement agencies is either not accurately collected or it is not in a usable format that would allow for further analysis.

Specific methods of accomplishing this goal would include establishing a data analytics unit within the Personnel Administration Bureau, purchasing statistical software for data analysis, and providing dedicated support from the Information and Technology unit. The data analytics unit would provide oversight of the data collection methodology and processes, analysis of personnel data, reporting of findings and corresponding recommendations to management, and monitoring of the information technology system needs to support the operation. With respect to the latter, there should begin a process of assessment of all information systems for effectiveness and interoperability and a subsequent investment in developing databases containing high quality, timely, accurate, and easily retrievable information that will allow the department to synthesize the data, develop assessments or conclusions, and make recommendations for actions or changes based on the data.

At a minimum, the data analytics unit should focus on the following objectives:

- Determine what information these systems need to collect and track
- Assure that they eliminate individual unit silos so that information which needs to be shared is included
- Create systems which can immediately provide data on attrition/retention issues
- Assure that department personnel data related to hire dates and potential retirement dates are included to assist with the projection of future personnel needs
- Ensure that personnel information is tracked and managed as effectively as crime information
- Use a data-driven approach in discussing hiring goals and accomplishments to highlight their importance and value and to maintain a sense of urgency
- Create a mechanism (e.g., electronic Daily Bulletin) to share this information across the department

### **Recommendation 3: Utilize a data-driven strategy for recruitment, hiring, and retention initiatives**

Based on the data and information collected thus far, the project team recommends the following actions as initial next steps for LASD to take regarding recruitment, hiring, and retention. Several of these steps are already in progress. By monitoring these measures, LASD will be able to understand the impact of any interventions and make adjustments as needed.

- LASD should utilize a data-driven approach in its recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts. This type of approach reinforces information sharing across units, focuses attention, enhances problem solving, opens up communication channels, and tracks and measures results.
- Strategic targeting and prioritization are other critical roles of a data-driven approach. As with recruitment, hiring, and retention, available resources must be used carefully, targeting individuals that promise the greatest results and the best chances for success. Case overloads can reduce investigators' efficiency unless they know how to identify the most fruitful leads. Intelligence enables officers to work more efficiently.<sup>13</sup>
- Planning how data will be collected is key to the intelligence process. Effective planning assesses existing data and ensures that additional data collected will fill any gaps in the information already on file. To be effective, intelligence collection must be planned and focused, and its methods must be coordinated. Finally, analysis converts information into intelligence. As one authority on the subject notes, "Without the explicit performance of this function [analysis], the intelligence unit is nothing but a file unit." Analysis is quite simply a process of deriving meaning from data.<sup>14</sup>

One of the most glaring shortcomings noted by the project team, albeit one that is, unfortunately, common among law enforcement agencies, was the lack of data readily available for useful analysis. Moving forward, LASD will benefit significantly by implementing plans to correct this limitation.

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<sup>13</sup> Intelligence-Led Policing: The New Intelligence Architecture, Bureau of Justice Assistance (2005), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bja/210681.pdf>, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 7.

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### **Recommendation 4: Consider implementing more standardized data collection, retention, and analysis procedures**

As mentioned above, data can be highly effective in informing the refinement of the selection process. Other types of administrative data are essential as well, including data on race, national origin, sex, and attrition circumstances. These data need to be collected in a reliable and standardized manner and retained for regular and systematic analysis and monitoring of the process.

### **Recommendation 5: Conduct a complete inventory of all the data collected or should be collected**

We were told numerous times by various stakeholders that there are large amounts of data collected throughout the department, though not typically in a usable form. We were also told more than once that they were not sure if that information was collected or not. Having a complete picture of what data already exists is a huge first step in implementing a data driven strategy to the personnel process. LASD should map and inventory all the decision points and identify whether the necessary data for a decision is collected and available; otherwise, begin collecting that data. It should then launch an effort to obtain, automate, aggregate, analyze, link to common goals and share regularly and widely with the department.

### **Recommendation 6: Provide Personnel with dedicated IT support**

Several of those interviewed expressed concern about the long-term administration and maintenance of personnel information technology systems and databased; specifically, the eHire software system. All interviewed viewed eHire as an innovative program that will benefit the hiring process but expressed concern that it is not maintained by the department's Technology & Support Division. The department should consider transitioning eHire to the Technology & Support Division.

### **Recommendation 7: Consider purchasing statistical software to assist in analyzing data**

The existing Test Development Unit research staff has insufficient resources to conduct the studies and analyses needed to examine ways to better use the VPAT-R and the written test. Interviews with the Test Development Unit suggest that it is difficult for the LASD to hire and retain I/O psychologists as other entities pay better.

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## **Recommendation 8: Implement talent management technology**

As noted above LASD should develop a comprehensive data management strategy, which will help support the validity and utility of the hiring process and coordination between step owners by allowing everyone to see the “big picture.” It would also be necessary to invest in the necessary technology to support data management, which could be easily accomplished with a talent management tool. For example, it may be possible to expand the use of eHire to perform this function.

## **Communication and Coordination**

### **Recommendation 9: Personnel issues, strategies, and priorities should be clearly and regularly communicated departmentwide**

Many individuals mentioned in our discussions that communication in the department, primarily that stemming from leadership, is lacking in terms of cohesion and standardization. For example, one group of deputies described communication as a game of telephone, where deputies share and spread information that they hear, oftentimes distorting the information as it is passed from person to person. Deputies also mentioned that when everything is communicated via e-mail, it becomes easy to ignore, because there is no indication of what updates are most important. Thus, it may be helpful to have a communication process where the method of communication differs according to the importance and/or urgency of the message.

Many law enforcement agencies reinforce critical information sharing through regularly scheduled processes which also ensures the consistency and accuracy of the information and identifies priorities. Personnel matters should be treated similar to crime and other community concerns, which would serve to highlight the importance of personnel matters, such as hiring and recruiting, and to apply effective approaches of data collection and management to address these issues. These meetings are intended to highlight and emphasize strong focus on the areas identified that are of most importance to the agency. From interviews with command staff, it was learned that recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts are not discussed at department command staff meetings. Further, some unit commanders indicated that the information flow throughout the department was infrequent and that discussions of mission, policy, focus, and direction is limited. Since the recruitment, hiring, and retention of highly qualified deputy sheriffs has been identified by LASD as one of its most important goals, there should be ongoing and strong department-wide focus, at all levels and involving all units. The department’s efforts at attaining its hiring goals and its

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results need to be measured, analyzed, improved where needed, and celebrated when appropriate.

## **Recommendation 10: Identify an individual to oversee and coordinate efforts across steps in the recruitment, hiring, and retention employee life cycle**

The Department should assign an individual to lead the development of a strategic plan for recruitment, hiring, and retention. As part of implementing a strategic plan for recruitment, hiring, and retention, this individual will need to assure that the value of the goals of this process as well as general department operational issues or specific personnel/hiring issues, are clearly communicated throughout the department to maintain continuity and connectiveness, much like data on crime is communicated. Specific suggestions from our experts include:

- Institute regular command staff meetings to discuss day-to-day issues but also larger organizational strategy and direction, discussion and rationale for approaches, and give and take with command members
- Institute Divisional staff meetings to ensure interactivity is maximized as necessary, understanding of individual unit missions, and maximum information sharing
- Institute unit level staff meetings monthly at least, including discussion of clarity of policy, mission, focus, and direction
- Create a Daily Bulletin - an electronic report that can be used in roll calls and throughout the Department to update members on critical issues regarding crime, hiring and personnel issues, training, and policy updates. Information should be retained for at least ten days. Editing and alterations authorized at the supervisory level

### **Custody Assistant Pathway**

Through interviews and focus groups with Custody Assistants (CA), it was determined that many CAs feel underappreciated and not respected for the work they do. Some also strongly asserted their belief that they essentially do the job of a Custody Deputy Sheriff, with less pay and without the prestige of having sworn status. The highest levels of frustration expressed by CAs, however, had to do with the difficulties experienced by those who had applied for DST positions.

Many CAs indicated that they were hired under a belief that the CA position could be a “stepping stone” for becoming a sworn deputy and, given that they would already possess a proven work record with LASD and had successfully completed all testing for their position and a background

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investigation, the application process would be much easier. In one group discussion, 10 out of 17 CAs had at some point applied to be a DST and all had been disqualified. They expressed a belief that the LASD would rather hire someone off the street, with little or no work record, instead of hiring a CA. They opined that this is either due to the fact that LASD does not want to create more vacancies in the CA position, or that the concept of the CA position being a stepping stone for advancement was essentially false advertising.

Not everyone hired as a Custody Assistant aspires to become a Deputy Sheriff. However, if the department's intent is to recruit Custody Assistants and provide those who may later desire to seek a position as a DST with the opportunity to do so, then the LASD should consider prioritizing internal applicants (e.g., Custody Assistants and/or Security Officers) who are applying for DST positions. They should aggressively use the position of CA as a future recruiting tool and as a legitimate first step to becoming a DST for those interested in pursuing that career. The department should further determine if a more abbreviated background investigation process is possible, given that these applicants are incumbent LASD employees who previously and successfully passed their background investigations.

The differences in perceived status between Deputy Sheriffs working in custody assignments and non-sworn Custody Assistants working alongside them can cause personnel challenges for the agency. Similar to the condition that has been identified regarding negative perceptions of Custody Deputy Sheriffs compared to Patrol Deputies, it can eventually lead to feelings of jealousy and negative perceptions about self-esteem and self-worth. The CAs we spoke with indicated that the hiring challenges that they encountered have, in their opinion, affected morale within their ranks.

### **Recommendation 11: Clarify if there is a Custody Assistant pathway to becoming a Deputy Sheriff**

LASD should strongly clarify and advertise the hiring expectations and standards for Custody Assistants; specifically, the potential to later become a Deputy Sheriff.

### **Review of Administrative Positions: Sworn and Civilian**

Due to attrition and the potential for future increased law enforcement responsibilities (new sports stadium, Olympics) LASD will need to continue hire new deputies. Clearly, for the sake of addressing simple attrition, increased hiring is necessary, however, with more focused analysis and some reassignment of existing personnel, other efficiencies may also be recognized. It is not uncommon to find sworn staff performing administrative work that could otherwise be done by civilian staff. It may prove extremely valuable for LASD to engage in a comprehensive personnel

management review to determine exactly where all of their sworn personnel are assigned. While there is excellence and value provided by having sworn staff throughout the agency, it is also not uncommon for some redundancies and lack of efficiencies to exist.

Specifically, for this study, we observed LASD relies heavily on sworn staff to administer the hiring process. These individuals are highly trained in law enforcement but are performing personnel work. LASD should consider, at each step in the hiring process, whether the work is best performed by sworn personnel, civilian staff, or contractors.

### **Recommendation 12: Conduct a departmentwide personnel management review of sworn staff assignments**

A comprehensive study of personnel assignments may lend more clarity as to how many sworn personnel are actually needed.

### **Recommendation 13: Civilianization of Personnel staff**

Many of these steps in the hiring process could potentially be performed more efficiently by civilian and/or contractor staff.

## **Dual Track Career Path Program**

LASD currently has a Dual Track Career Path Program (DTCPP), which allows sworn personnel to choose a career path of custody, patrol, or both. As part of this program, applicants are asked to indicate a desire to pursue a career in custody, patrol, or both on their employment application. After completing the Academy, newly hired deputies are all assigned to the Custody Division. Deputies who want to stay in Custody may do so, while those who want to pursue a career in patrol can request to transfer to a patrol station after completing their probationary period. The entry-level salary is the same for both career options, though non-patrol deputies reach their maximum level of pay at Step 6 while patrol deputies reach their maximum level of pay at Step 7.

DTCPP was implemented in 2013 to address concerns regarding the use of force and violence in LASD custody facilities that was attributed to a lack of supervision in these facilities. LASD advertises the DTCPP as enhancing continuity, stability, and accountability in both custody and patrol functions, thus fulfilling its intended goals.

In our conversations with LASD personnel, both advantages and disadvantages of this program were mentioned. Generally, individuals liked the fact that DTCPP offered options to deputies, acknowledging that some people are better suited for one track than another. Along these lines,

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an advantage of the DTCPP is that it helps the safety of officers and the larger community as people who do not want to be in patrol, or who are not well-suited for patrol, are not required to do so.

Additionally, the DTCPP allows deputies to attempt field training and patrol, without risk of losing their job due to failure. Previously, deputies who did not pass field training would not be able to retain their job by returning to custody. Participants in our interviews and focus groups were mixed on if the ability to return to custody after a patrol failure should be considered a positive or negative.

Some clearer disadvantages to the DTCPP were noted as well. For example, one deputy noted that now that deputies are not required to go into patrol, it is easy for deputies in custody to get complacent and become minimal performers because they don't have to impress others. Deputies were more motivated to perform well when they were required to go out into patrol.

Many interview and focus group participants voiced concerns regarding the fact that the pay scales for custody and patrol deputies are largely the same. They emphasized that the jobs are quite different in terms of the day-to-day activities and challenges they face, with most participants describing patrol as less predictable and more demanding. As such, participants voiced their desire for the pay scales reflect these differences. Individuals also noted that the DTCPP has had a negative effect on the morale of patrol deputies, due to these pay issues.

Another concern with the DTCPP that came up frequently regards the mandatory stint in custody when first hired, and the effect that this has on the retention of the knowledge and skills developed in the Academy. Academy training focuses on the knowledges and skills needed for effective patrol. Deputies complete this training and are then required to go into custody, where they have to learn a new set of skills and procedures. Though there is a three-week patrol school that is required between custody and patrol, many deputies noted that this is not sufficient to fully refresh the knowledge that was learned during the Academy. In 2018, 75 deputies failed to complete field training; 60% of these deputies were listed as failing because they were "not prepared." The current set up of the DTCPP is likely inadvertently causing deputies to be less prepared to enter patrol than they would have been otherwise, and, thus, fail field training at higher rates.

One potential option to replace the DTCPP that was frequently mentioned is the creation of a jailer position in the department for deputies who only want to pursue a career in custody. This position would be on a different pay scale than patrol deputies and could potentially require a different type or degree of training. However, there are additional concerns that arise with such

a prospect. For example, it would likely exacerbate the split that already is present in the department between custody and patrol positions, where custody employees may be considered “lesser.” Additionally, this jailer role does not offer the same kind of career path options that are currently available from the DTCPP. Finally, if these jailers are required to go through a different or less intensive training, they would likely not be available to help during a state of emergency.

### **Recommendation 14: Reevaluate the Dual Track Career Path Program**

As indicated previously, there are advantages and disadvantages to the DTCPP, as well as to other potential options. In general, law enforcement agencies need to look at their specific needs and priorities to determine what kind of career path system would be most effective. For LASD specifically, as mentioned in previous consultant reports, we recommend the development and implementation of a high-level strategic plan to shape the future of the department. This plan should include a future direction for career paths, determined after a careful consideration of the current state, future needs, and likely consequences of any chosen path. We recognize that various approaches to the department’s career paths have been employed in the past and, thus, recommend that any change moving forward be aligned with a broader strategic plan and kept consistent for enough time to truly detect any changes in important outcomes.

### **Recommendation 15: Assess job classifications and assignments**

The job descriptions and duties and responsibilities of a peace officer and of a correctional officer are vastly different. The knowledge and skills necessary to perform these duties are different as is the training, both for entry-level and for ongoing professional development. If the LASD were to create a job classification for a Custody Deputy/Adult Correctional Officer that is separate from that of a Patrol Deputy, it would allow them to recruit, hire, train, and retain these employees for the positions that both they and the department are seeking to have them occupy. This would further assure that all training received, including field training, is conducted in a more efficient and logical timing sequence.

## **Section III: Hiring Process Report**

This section focuses on the overall Deputy Sheriff Trainee (DST) hiring process, including all steps after a candidate completes after the recruitment process and before he or she enters the Academy. The report provides recommendations for each step individually and also provides recommendations that span the overall hiring process. The recommendations in this report are informed by (1) findings from the three site visits performed by IACP and HumRRO in December 2018 and January and March 2019 and (2) a subsequent literature review of best practices in law enforcement, military, and civilian organizations.

### **Current State Assessment**

IACP and HumRRO staff conducted three site visits between December 2018 and March 2019. During the first site visit (December 10-14, 2018), the team met with LASD staff from across the Personnel Administration Bureau to learn about the current state of LASD's recruitment, hiring, and retention programs. Specifically, the project team met with members of each unit in the Bureau including Recruitment, Hiring, Test Development, Sworn Exams, Background Investigations, Intake, and Exit Interviews. Each unit provided a detailed overview of the specific procedures they used and the data they had available. Deputy Bilbao provided a thorough overview of the hiring process. While we are aware that LASD has identified, and implemented, several changes to the hiring process since this time, we used as the baseline for this report. The team also conducted several focus groups with current Deputy Sheriffs working in custody positions at Men's Central Jail and Twin Towers.

The second site visit (January 28-31, 2019) centered on the Academy. IACP project staff conducted interviews of academy drill instructors, supervisors and commanders, recruits, and staff from other training related functions including Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC) staff, weapons training, and the field training coordinator. The team also conducted several focus groups with current recruits, recent academy graduates, and Custody Assistants.

During the third site visit (March 4-8, 2019), the team visited numerous stations to conduct interviews with Deputy Sheriffs in patrol assignments, conducted additional focus groups with specific groups, and interviewed representatives from the remaining units involved in the hiring process. Table 1 summarizes the groups with whom the team met across the site visits.

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Table 1: Summary of data collection activities during current state assessment

Group	Date		
	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	March 2019
Recruitment Unit	X		
eHire and Hiring Process	X		
Test Development and Sworn Exams Unit	X		
Intake Unit	X		
Background Investigations Unit	X		
Employee Service Center (Exit Interviews)	X		
Deputy Sheriff (Custody) focus group – MCI/TTCF	X		X
Deputy Sheriff (Custody) exit interview – MCI/TTCF	X		
Academy drill instructor, supervisor, and commander interviews		X	
New recruit focus interviews		X	
Training staff interviews		X	
Recent Academy graduate focus group		X	
Current recruit focus group		X	
Custody Assistant focus group		X	
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – Temple			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – East Los Angeles			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – Lancaster			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – Walnut			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – West Hollywood			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – Compton			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – South Los Angeles			X
Background investigator focus group			X
Deputy Sheriff (recent hire) focus group			X
Deputy Sheriff (high performer) focus group			X
Polygraph Unit			X
Recruitment Unit			X
Clinical Unit			X
Field Training Officer focus group			X
Tour - Men’s Central Jail and Twin Towers Correctional Facility			X

## Professional Standards, Legal and Regulatory Considerations, and Best Practices

Well-designed hiring processes follow the professional guidelines and procedures developed over the last century in response to several acts and laws, including the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the Wage and Salary Stabilization Law of 1942. Professional organizations that

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represent employee assessment practitioners developed standards to encourage the use of consistent and fair practices. These standards form the foundation of professional practice related to the hiring process and include:

- The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* guide the development and use of tests across both employment, educational, credentialing, and evaluation settings. The *Standards* are based on earlier documents developed independently by each of these organizations beginning in 1954 and are designed to promote the sound and ethical use of tests and to provide a basis for evaluating the quality of testing practices. The 2014 version of the *Standards* describe criteria for evaluating the development, administration, and use of tests and emphasize considerations that improve the reliability (i.e., consistency of test scores), validity (i.e., evidence that supports the interpretation of test scores for the test's intended purpose), and fairness (i.e., lack of bias in test content and scores across identifiable groups).<sup>15</sup>
- The *Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures* represent current professional consensus on the development and implementation of valid human resource/human capital tools and provides guidance for practitioners conducting job analysis, test development and validation, and for interpretation by personnel managers and others responsible for implementing the resulting human resource/human capital tools. The *Principles* are intended to be consistent with the guidance provided by the *Standards*, but with additional emphasis on the application of testing procedures to employment decisions.<sup>16</sup>
- The *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures* assist employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, and licensing and certification boards in complying with the requirements of Federal law prohibiting employment practices which discriminate on grounds of race, color, religion, sex, and nation origin. Human resource/human capital tools that are subject to litigation are evaluated against the *Uniform Guidelines*.<sup>17</sup>

While these documents do not agree in all aspects of professional practice, they all provide guidance about testing and hiring procedures that are reliable, valid, and based on scientific research yet flexible enough to be applicable in a multitude of situations. Core tenet across the

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<sup>15</sup> American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education (2014). *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (3 ed).

<sup>16</sup> Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (2018). *Principles for the validation and use of personnel selection procedures* (5th edition). Bowling Green, OH: Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

<sup>17</sup> Uniform guidelines on employee selection procedures (1978). *Federal Register*, 43, 38290-38315.

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three documents is that all human resource/human capital tools must (a) be based on an understanding of critical job requirements, (b) be developed and administered in a consistent and fair manner across examines, and (c) minimize sources of bias that are unrelated to job performance. While there is a general relationship between these documents and federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies, employers must also consider additional standards. In the case of LASD, these include the California POST guidelines and regulations for peace officer selection. California employment law, and Los Angeles County regulations and policies. This collection of documents, along with relevant professional literature and data regarding the practices of other jurisdictions, forms the overall basis for our recommendations.

### **Current State of the LASD Hiring Process**

LASD's hiring process for DSTs, depicted in Figure 1, includes nine distinct steps. For the purposes of this report, we assume that the hiring process begins once a candidate completes the recruitment process and submits an application via Los Angeles County's NeoGov site and ends when the candidate successfully completes the medical and psychological screening, completes the pre-Academy consultation, and is offered a spot in an upcoming Academy class. As noted previously, our review and recommendations consider the hiring process as described during the December 2018 site visit and does not consider any implemented or planned changes since that time.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bilbao, A. (2018). Presentation to IACP team on the selection process. December, 2018.

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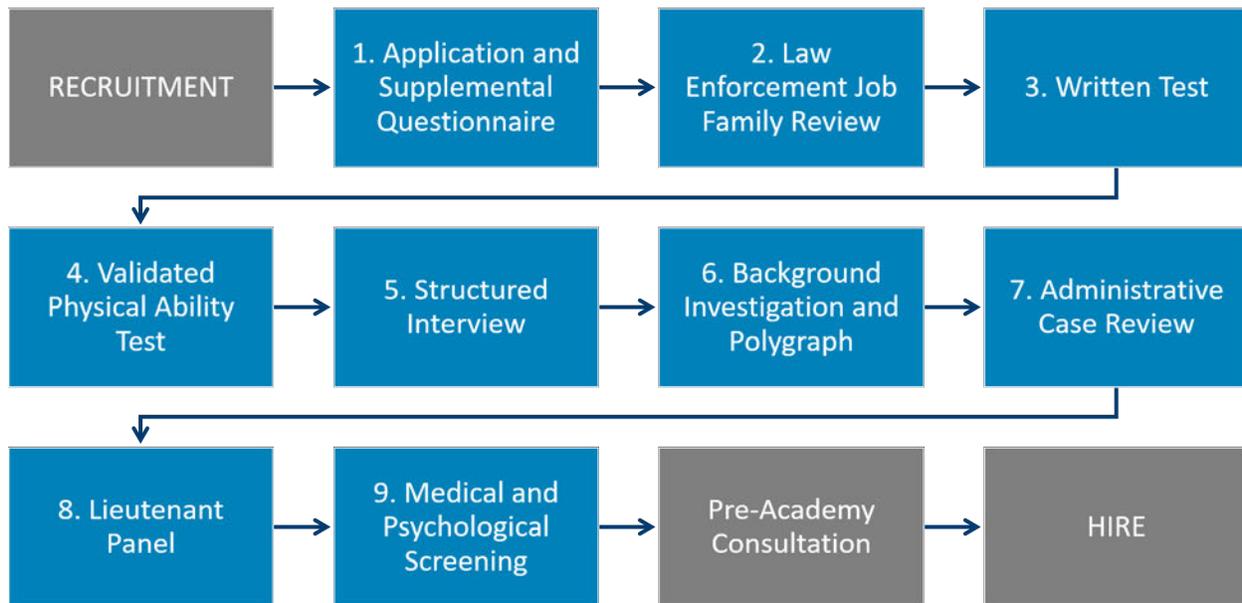


Figure 1: LASD Deputy Sheriff Trainee hiring process (December 2018)

The current DST hiring process complies with California POST requirements, including the use of (a) reading and writing ability assessments, (b) oral interviews, (c) background investigations, (d) medical evaluations, and (e) psychological evaluations. Although not required by POST, LASD's DST hiring process also includes physical abilities assessments and polygraph examinations. Per Deputy Bilbao's presentation, LASD must have an annual recruiting pool of 16,000 candidates who complete the application process to meet the hiring goal of 720 DSTs (i.e., 8 classes of 90 DSTs) annually. Table 2 summarizes the percentage of candidates passing each step in the DST hiring process. The passing rates are very high for the written test (78%), the physical abilities test (96%), and the structured interview (92%) and very low for the law enforcement job family review (42%) and the background investigation (26%). As LASD attempts to hire more than 720 DSTs annually to close the number of vacant Deputy Sheriff positions, it will be increasingly important that the hiring process can efficiently identify and process those candidates who are most likely to meet LASD hiring standards, complete Academy training, and succeed in Deputy Sheriff positions.

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Table 2: Passing rate cumulatively and by step for DST hiring process components

Hiring Step		No. Candidates	Cumulative Remaining Applicants	% Pass this Step
1	Application and Supplemental Questionnaire: <i>reviews application</i>	16,000	100.0%	84%
2	Law Enforcement Job Family Review: <i>reviews supplemental questionnaire</i>	13,504	84.4%	42%
3	Written Test: <i>assesses readiness for cognitive demands of Academy and the job</i>	5,631	35.2%	78%
4	Validated Physical Ability Test: <i>assesses readiness for physical demands of Academy and the job</i>	4,368	27.3%	96%
5	Structured Interview: <i>assesses communication skills, interest, and suitability for the job</i>	4,176	26.1%	95%
6	Background Investigation and Polygraph: <i>assesses personal history, judgment, and other skills and experiences</i>	3,984	24.9%	26%
7	Administrative Case Review/Lieutenant Panel: <i>impartial review of applicant's case file</i>	1,040	6.5%	92%
8	Medical and Psychological Screening: <i>after conditional offer of employment, assesses whether candidate is medically and psychologically fit for the Academy and the job</i>	960	6.0%	75%
9	Pre-Academy Consultation: <i>Personnel Captain interview prior to attending Academy</i>	720	4.5%	100%
Hired for Training Academy		720	4.5%	---

In total, 4.5% of LASD applicants complete the hiring process and are offered an Academy slot. Per the national survey indicate, hiring yields for other departments range from 3% to 35%, with most departments indicating yields of 20-30%.

## External Comparison of Hiring Process

To inform the recommendations, two external sources of data were considered. First, publicly available information about the hiring processes used by 15 large state and local law enforcement

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agencies and five large sheriff's departments<sup>19</sup> was collected and compared it to LASD's public description of the DST hiring process. This information provides an initial benchmark of how LASD's process compares to other large departments nationwide and also provides insight into the types of information candidates can access during the recruiting process. Tables 3-9 summarize the results of this study. Additionally, IACP and HumRRO administered a national survey to a police and sheriff's departments in major cities and major counties across the United States to help determine common practices related to recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of law enforcement officers by large departments. Detailed results of this survey are available in Appendix C.

**Table 3: Survey of 20 Large Law Enforcement Agencies:  
Information provided to candidates about timeline of hiring process**

Information Provided to Candidates About Timeline of Hiring Process				
	Overall Time to Complete	Time for Application Process	Time Between Phases	Time Needed for Test(s) or Phase(s)
LASD	Yes	6-9 months	To some extent	To some extent
Other Departments				
Yes	7	2.5 - 12 months (Median 5 months)	0	1
No	13	N/A	18	13
To Some Extent	0	N/A	2	6

Most departments do not provide information on the hiring timeline. It is also notable that LASD's stated timeline (6-9 months) is longer than all other departments that provided timelines with the exception of Miami-Dade Police (9-12 months). A similar pattern emerged in the national survey. Of the 13 departments who responded, reported length of the hiring process ranged from 6 weeks to 12 months, with a median of 5 months. Five of these departments reported processes that took six months or more.

<sup>19</sup> The following departments were included in this analysis: New York Police Department, Chicago Police Department, Philadelphia Police Department, Houston Police Department, New York State Police, Pennsylvania State Police, Washington, DC Metropolitan Police Department, Texas Department of Public Safety, Dallas Police Department, Phoenix Police Department, Miami-Dade Police Department, New Jersey State Police, Baltimore Police Department, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Nassau County Police Department, Cook County (IL) Sheriff Department, Harris County (TX) Sheriff Department, Riverside County (CA) Sheriff Department, San Bernardino County (CA) Sheriff Department, and Broward County (FL) Sheriff Department.

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**Table 4: Survey of 20 Large Law Enforcement Agencies:  
Information provided to candidates about drug test or use prohibitions**

Drug Test or Use Prohibitions		
	Required	Disqualifiers Are Made Public
LASD	Yes	No
Other Departments:		
Yes	18	8
No	0	10
Unknown	2	2

As with most other departments, LASD does require that previous drug use can result in disqualification from the hiring process. However, the other departments are almost evenly split on whether they publicly disclose the level of drug use that results in disqualification.

**Table 5: Survey of 20 Large Law Enforcement Agencies:  
Information provided to candidates about the written text**

Written Test				
	Required	Information About Test is Public	Practice Test and/or Study Guide Provided	Passing Score(s) Are Made Public
LASD	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Other Departments:				
Yes	20	15	11	7
No	0	4	9	13
To some extent	0	1	0	0

All surveyed departments use a written test as part of the hiring process. Like most, LASD provides information to candidates about the test. Fewer departments provide study guides or make the passing score public.

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**Table 6: Survey of 20 Large Law Enforcement Agencies:  
Information provided to candidates about the physical ability test**

Physical Ability Test					
	Required	Information About Test is Public	Training Guide, Program, or Class Provided	Video of Test(s) Provided	Passing Score(s) or Time(s) Are Made Public
LASD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Other Departments:					
Yes	20	20	12	13	18
No	0	0	8	7	1
To some extent	0	0	0	0	1

All surveyed departments use a physical ability test as part of the hiring process and provide information to candidates about the test. Most departments also provide training guides or classes, and videos of the test. Unlike LASD, most departments make the passing score public.

**Table 7: Survey of 20 Large Law Enforcement Agencies:  
Information provided to candidates about the structured interview**

Structured Interview		
	Required	Evaluation Criteria Are Made Public
LASD	Yes	No
Other Departments:		
Yes	10	4
No	10	6

Half of the surveyed departments report using a structured interview process. Of those, the majority do not provide information on how the structured interview is scored.

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**Table 8: Survey of 20 Large Law Enforcement Agencies:  
Information provided to candidates about the background information**

Background Investigation			
	Required	Disqualifiers Are Made Public	Polygraph Used
LASD	Yes	No	Yes
Other Departments:			
Yes	20	15	17
No	0	5	3

All surveyed departments complete a background investigation as part of the hiring process. The majority (a) make public the factors that would disqualify a candidate and (b) use a polygraph examination.

**Table 9: Survey of 20 Large Law Enforcement Agencies:  
Information provided to candidates about the medical and psychological testing**

Medical Exam				
	Required	Lists Specific Medical Tests or Metrics Used	Lists Specific Medical Disqualifiers	Vision Test
LASD	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Other Departments:				
Yes	20	2	2	13
No	0	18	18	0
Unknown	0	0	0	7
		Hearing Test		Psych Exam
	Required	Req(s) Are Made Public	Required	Assessment Used Made Public
LASD	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Other Departments:				
Yes	7	4	20	1
No	0	1	0	19
Unknown	13	13	0	0

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All surveyed departments require a medical and psychological assessment as part of the hiring process. Most report requiring a vision test; it is unclear how many require a hearing test. Most departments do not make public the specific medical or psychological disqualifiers.

## Findings and Recommendations

In the following sections, we provide a series of recommendations for improving each step in the DST hiring process as well as for the overall process itself. For each section, we first describe the current state of the step and then make recommendations.

### **Application and Supplemental Questionnaire (84% pass this stage, 84% of initial applicants move to the next step)**

The first step of the hiring process is to complete an online application via NeoGov. Conversations with new hires who had recently gone through the hiring process indicated that the online application process is easy and smooth. The change to an online system seems to have been well-received, with personnel describing it as “user-friendly,” “seamless,” and “more organized”. One participant compared LASD’s system with other agencies, calling LASD’s “quicker and simpler.” Participants seemed to particularly appreciate that they were able to save a profile online and use or complete this profile at a later date.

With the online application, applicants also complete and submit a supplemental application which asks about selection requirements, willingness to work in certain conditions (e.g., overtime), as well as some background disqualification questions that have a “black and white” answer. About 12% of applicants are eliminated at this step. However, we feel that this stage of the hiring process could be used more effectively to prioritize the pool of applicants and improve the quality of those who move forward.

#### **Recommendation 16: Consider adding questions to help prioritize applicants for further stages.**

For example, measures of personality traits that are relevant to the job and likely important for effective job performance (e.g., conscientiousness, proactivity) could be included at this stage and used to prioritize or help rank candidates at later stages.

#### **Recommendation 17: Consider including a realistic job preview (RJP) in the application and supplemental questionnaire phase of the hiring process.**

An RJP is a tool that illustrates both the positive and negative aspects of job, in order to provide potential applicants a thorough, realistic picture to help them assess if they would be

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a good fit for the job. RJPs have been shown to reduce turnover among new employees<sup>20</sup> because they encourage a better match between what an individual wants from a job and what the job in question provides. Thus, including an RJP early in the hiring process should increase the likelihood that candidates who would be poor fits for the job will self-select out of the application process, freeing up resources needed in the subsequent steps to focus on candidates who would likely be better fits.

### **Law Enforcement Job Family Review (42% pass this stage, 35% of initial applicants move to the next step)**

The primary purpose of this step is to review and accept applications prior to scheduling the next steps in the hiring process. While a large number of candidates is eliminated at this step (only 35% of applications move to the next step), the eliminations are because the candidates either fail to meet (a) an administrative requirement to continue through the hiring process (e.g., incomplete or duplicate application) or (b) a mandatory requirement, per Los Angeles County Civil Service Rule 6.04, as documented in their supplemental questionnaire responses (e.g., criminal record). In addition, a percentage of candidates do not continue in the hiring process past this step for “self-selection” reasons, such as failure to schedule, or show up for, the written test/VPAT. This step in the hiring process appears to efficiently identify candidates who are more likely to complete the hiring process.

### **Written Test (78% pass this stage, 27% of initial applicants moving to the next step)**

There are multiple sources of evidence supporting the written test, including a criterion related validity study,<sup>21</sup> a recent concurrent criterion validation study,<sup>22</sup> a job component validity study, validity generalization, and a convergent validity study.<sup>23</sup> The written test is 60 items in length and includes items that measure constructs including reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, data interpretation, and reasoning. The test correlates highly with the previously existing

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<sup>20</sup> Meglino, B.M., Ravlin, E.C., & DeNisi, A.S. (2000). A Meta-Analytic Examination of Realistic Job Preview Effectiveness. *Human Resource Management Review*, 10, 407-434

<sup>21</sup> Dingess, D. (1987). *Deputy Sheriff written test validation project*. Unpublished technical report (DST-200), Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

<sup>22</sup> Hoffman, C.C. (2019a). Criterion-Related Validation of the Law Enforcement Job Family Test: Addendum to Original Technical Report. Unpublished technical report, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

<sup>23</sup> Hoffman, C.C. & Valle, C. (2012). Job analysis of patrol & custody deputy, custody assistant, security officer, and security assistant classifications at LASD and validation of cognitive ability predictors. Unpublished technical report, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

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Deputy Sheriff Test, and the previously used Deputy Sheriff Test was shown to accurately predict (*corrected*  $r = .75$ ) academy performance.<sup>24</sup> The recent criterion-related validation study correlated the test with knowledge tests administered during the Academy.

There is currently no written test assessment of personality or work styles. Another contractor, Matthew Bostrom, conducted a study on increasing trust through character-based hiring and recommended that LASD consider developing and using measures of cultural competence, ability to inspire confidence, emotional intelligence, and servant leadership. We understand from our interviews that the LASD Test Development team is currently developing an additional written test focusing on work styles/personality.

Analyses discussed by Hoffman and Valle (2012)<sup>25</sup> and Hoffman (2019a)<sup>26</sup> show mean subgroup differences on the test (with Black and Hispanic groups scoring lower than whites), but these differences are much lower than what is typically found with tests of general mental ability.<sup>27</sup> One potential explanation for this is the LASD has apparently been effective in recruiting high quality candidates from racial minority groups: over the past 10 years, larger percentages of blacks and Hispanics have been applying, and DST position candidates in particular have a higher percentage of black and Hispanic candidates with post-secondary education than their white counterparts.<sup>28</sup> Although this is encouraging, interviews suggest that there is a lack of effective data collection on race and gender data as candidates move through the selection process and are then hired.

The job analysis results suggest that the DST position has higher ability requirements than the Custody Assistant (CA) and Security Officer (SO) jobs but many of the abilities needed are similar. To address this, LASD created one test for all three jobs and now uses a different cut score for each of the classifications. To derive the cut scores for the DST job, LASD examined the impact of potential cut scores between the lower range and average expected scores on the test and selected the cut score that minimized adverse impact. Cut scores above this range were thought to be too restrictive (i.e., result in the elimination of too few candidates early in the process) and

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<sup>24</sup> Dingess, *supra* note 21

<sup>25</sup> Hoffman, *supra* note 23

<sup>26</sup> Hoffman, *supra* note 22

<sup>27</sup> Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124(2), 262-274.

<sup>28</sup> Hoffman, C.C. (2019b). Personal communications, May, 2019

possibly result in greater adverse impact. LASD leveraged predicted scores to identify cut scores for the CA and SO jobs.<sup>29</sup> A recent study shows little to no adverse impact for protected groups (as defined by the 4/5ths rule).<sup>30</sup>

LASD revises the test every few years by scrambling the items and reordering the response options. Interviews with LASD testing staff indicate that there has been little to no change in the mean scores on the test, suggesting that the test has not been seriously compromised. Interviews also suggest that the LASD is planning to develop replacement items.

Interviews with background investigators indicated that applicants must provide two handwritten essays to the background investigator. One essay is to describe the candidate's ride-along experience, and the other essay is a 5-page autobiography. These essays are not scored or interpreted in a systematic manner.

 **Recommendation 18: Consider developing a standardized writing component of the test**

This component would not replace any current elements on written test, but rather, it would replace the handwritten essays currently requested by the background investigators. This writing component must be standardized so that every candidate writes in response to the same stimuli and is assessed on the same factors that are shown by job analysis to be relevant to the job.

 **Recommendation 19: Any new content on the written test (including the elements discussed above) should be subjected to field-testing and data analysis with a goal of streamlining the assessments**

Test items and components that measure the job-related skills and abilities most reliably and with minimal subgroup differences should be retained.

 **Recommendation 20: Consider adding an instrument measuring personality or work styles to the selection process**

Adding an instrument that reflects these non-cognitive abilities should increase the validity and cost effectiveness of the overall process without introducing increased subgroup

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<sup>29</sup> Hoffman, *supra* note 23

<sup>30</sup> Hoffman, *supra* note 22

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differences.<sup>31</sup> It is important to note, however, that faking can be a threat to the operational validity of self-report work style or personality inventories. Accordingly, we recommend using these types of self-rating tools for screening rather than ranking,<sup>32</sup> instructions that provide a common frame-of-reference to candidates, specifically asking them to focus on work- or school-related experiences,<sup>33</sup> and including warnings about the consequences of providing false information.<sup>34</sup> POST offers a “Pre-offer Personality Testing in the Selection of Entry-Level California Peace Officers Resource Guide<sup>35</sup> and a “Pre-Offer Personality Test Information Database”<sup>36</sup> that LASD could use to evaluate the addition of a personality test to the hiring process.

### **Recommendation 21: Consider adding a computer-based video or animation-based instrument to the selection process**

Tscoumis provides an overview of some possibilities for rich media assessment.<sup>37</sup> This instrument could be designed to provide both a realistic preview of the job and assess the judgment candidates in situations similar to those encountered by deputy sheriffs. This would further broaden the standardized component of the selection process, provide valuable information to candidates early in the process to assist them in self-selecting, and reduce the burden on the costlier and less standardized components of the process (e.g., the background investigation).

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<sup>31</sup> Mount, M. K., Witt, L. A., & Barrick, M. R. (2000). Incremental validity of empirically keyed biodata scales over GMA and the five factor personality constructs. *Personnel Psychology*, 53(2), 299-323.

<sup>32</sup> Hough, L.M. (1998). Personality at work: Issues and evidence. In M. Hakel (Ed.), *Beyond multiple choice: Evaluating alternatives to traditional testing for selection*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates.; Ones, D.S., Viswesvaran, C., & Reiss, A.D. (1996). Role of social desirability in personality testing for personnel selection: The red herring. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 660-679. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.81.6.660

<sup>33</sup> Bing, M.N., Whanger, J.C., Davison, H.K., & VanHook, J.B. (2004). Incremental validity of the frame-of-reference effect in personality scale scores: A replication and extension. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89, 150-157. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.89.1.150; Schmitt, M.J., Ryan, A.M., Stierwalt, S.L., & Powell, A.B. (1995). Frame-of-reference effects on personality scale scores and criterion-related validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 607-620. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.80.5.607

<sup>34</sup> Dwight, S. A., & Donovan, J. J. (2003). Do Warnings Not to Fake Reduce Faking? *Human Performance*, 16(1), 1-23. doi:10.1207/s15327043hup1601\_1

<sup>35</sup> [http://lib.post.ca.gov/Publications/resource\\_guide.pdf](http://lib.post.ca.gov/Publications/resource_guide.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> <https://media.post.ca.gov/PersonalityTestInformation>

<sup>37</sup> Tscoumis, S. (2015). Rich-media interactive simulations: Lessons learned. In Y. Rosen, S. Ferrara, & M. Mosharraf (Eds.), *Handbook of research on technology tools for real-world skill development*, Hersey, PA: IGI Global.

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## **Recommendation 22: Consider computerizing the written exam**

Computerizing the exam may reduce the number of staff needed and allow for increased time frames when the exam is available. Computerization will also enable use of videos and animation in the items. We understand that the exam has been administered recently in computerized form.

## **Recommendation 23: Consider revising the cut scores**

In multiple recommendations listed above, we recommend expanding the content of the written assessment (e.g., to include a situational judgment component, and a personality assessment). One of the benefits of this expansion is that it provides an opportunity to reduce the burden on other, costlier and less standardized portions of the assessment process (e.g., the background interview). Currently the cut score is set at a low level to ensure that a sufficient number of candidates make it through the entire assessment process to address the hiring need.<sup>38</sup> This is necessary, in part, due to the attrition that occurs during the lengthy background investigation. We posit that if the number of candidates going through the background investigation were reduced, the background investigations will be completed more quickly and the attrition during the background investigation will be lower. The ideal context for revising the cut scores would be a predictive validation study featuring the expanded battery, research developed criteria, and an analysis of the impact of a variety of cut scores on job performance of hires, as well as the selection ratios of protected groups. If data on performance are not available, LASD might want to consider the possibility of success in the entire selection process as a criterion.

## **Validated Physical Ability Test (96% pass this stage, 26% of initial applicants move to the next step)**

The Validated Physical Ability Test-S (VPAT-S) consists of four tests including push-ups, sit-ups, a 75-yard obstacle course, and a 20-meter shuttle run test. The VPAT-S is supported by strong validity evidence including a job analysis and a concurrent criterion-related validation study (Hoffman, 2018). Scores on the VPAT-S predicted successful completion of the Academy as well as performance on a physical battery administered during the Academy. The VPAT-S was implemented in late 2018 as a modification to a similar VPAT battery that included some elements that were more burdensome to administer. The VPAT-S has higher validity, requires

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<sup>38</sup> Hoffman, *supra* note 28

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less time and expense to administer, and allows for administration in a broader range of locations including indoors and remote locations.

The cut score used on the VPAT-S was established with the objective of equivalence with that developed for an earlier version of the VPAT. However, given that the only data available were from a restricted sample of incumbents, empirical evidence of equivalence is lacking.

While there are subgroup differences on the VPAT-S (i.e., candidates who are African American, or are female score lower), the cut score on the VPAT-S is so low (approximately 80 percent pass), that there is no adverse impact by race,<sup>39</sup> and the adverse impact for females is lower than other valid alternatives. The 20-meter shuttle run test (added in October 2018) has the lowest subgroup differences of all of the alternatives.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the components with the lowest subgroup differences are given greater weight in the VPAT-S composite score.

### **Recommendation 24: Consider continuing to administer the VPAT-S and the written test together in the same appointment**

Offering this as an option may assist in cutting costs and reducing the length of the selection process.

### **Recommendation 25: Consider increasing the number and intensity of the existing workout sessions offered to potential candidates**

Chicago Police Department offers boot camps to serve this purpose.<sup>41</sup> Prior to the academy, boot camps are offered to prepare potential candidates for and assist them in reaching the required academy fitness standards. San Francisco Police Department uses social media to reach out to a broader audience and invite candidates to workout sessions, potentially increasing the participation levels.<sup>42</sup> This may help to reduce any non-valid variance in the scores.

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<sup>39</sup> Hoffman, *supra* note 28

<sup>40</sup> Hoffman, C.C. (2019c, May). Validation of the validated physical ability test-revised (VPAT-R) including criterion-related validation of a new test battery (VPAT-S). Unpublished technical report, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

<sup>41</sup> IACP (2018). Major City Police Chiefs Discussion of Selection and Recruiting. At the Annual International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference, Orlando FL, October 6, 2018.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

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## **Recommendation 26: Reevaluate physical assessments following any POST changes**

Following any changes to the POST physical standards curriculum or the Work Sample Test Battery (WSTB), update the job analysis, reassess the cut-score on the VPAT-S, and consider adverse impact and job performance implications.

### **Structured Interview (95% pass this stage, 25% of initial applicants move to the next step)**

After candidates pass the written test and VPAT, the next step is a structured interview. Currently, these interviews last approximately 15-20 minutes and are conducted by retired LASD sworn personnel. Interviewers ask five questions of the applicants and write down verbatim what the interviewee says. The interviewee's response is then confirmed when the interviewer reads back what he or she wrote down.

The purpose of the interview, as stated in the POST manual, is to “determine suitability to perform the duties of a peace officer,” and, according to POST guidelines, the interviews must address six factors: Experience, Problem Solving Ability, Communication Skills, Interest/Motivation, Interpersonal Skills, and Community Involvement/Awareness.

About 95% of applicants pass the structured interview and move forward to the next step in the process. With such a high pass rate, the structured interview is not providing any utility in the hiring process, other than complying with POST requirements. There is an opportunity to revamp the structured interview so that it becomes a useful step in the hiring process, improving the quality of the applicants who move forward to the next step and who may ultimately join the department.

## **Recommendation 27: Consider using the structured interview to measure maturity and readiness for the job**

Many of the complaints heard in conversations with LASD personnel, including new Deputy supervisors and Field Training Officers, referred to new hires' lack of experience and maturity. These factors are especially well-suited to be assessed in an oral interview.<sup>43</sup> In order to ensure that the questions being asked in the interviews will appropriately target these factors, it may be helpful to use a group of subject matter experts (SMEs) to help write and assess potential interview questions. These SMEs should be experienced, high-performing employees or supervisors, familiar with the Deputy Sheriff position. SMEs should draft

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<sup>43</sup> California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST; 2003). *Interviewing peace officer candidates: Hiring interview guidelines*. California.

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questions and then assess the degree to which potential question taps into the factor it is designed to help evaluate.

### **Recommendation 28: Consider developing and using a wider pool of interview questions**

Currently, there are five questions used in the interviews, and, according to conversations with LASD personnel, these questions are widely known in advance. Advanced knowledge of the questions may allow applicants to practice, or even fabricate, answers and, thus, decrease their authenticity and usefulness.

### **Recommendation 29: Consider using multiple interviewers per interview**

Having more than one interviewer participate in the interview has been shown to help reduce the impact of biases among interviewers and improve the recall of information.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, having a range of ratings and judgments from different perspectives can increase overall accuracy.<sup>45</sup>

### **Recommendation 30: Consider training interviewers on the proper way to conduct a structured interview and requiring a refresher training at regular intervals**

Training all interviewers in a consistent manner increases the accuracy, and, thus, the utility, of the interview. Training should begin with a description of the background and purpose of the interview, followed by a discussion of the interview itself, job requirements, and how the written questions are intended to assess the job requirements.<sup>46</sup> Training should also include guidance on when and how to ask probing or follow-up questions.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Campion, M.A., Pursell, E.D., & Brown, B.K. (1988). Structured interviewing: Raising the psychometric properties of the employment interview. *Personnel Psychology*, 41, 24-42.; Stasser, G., & Titus, W. (1987). Effects of information load and percentage of shared information on the dissemination of unshared information during group discussion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 81-93.

<sup>45</sup> Dipboye, R.L. (1992). *Selection interviews: Process perspectives*. Cincinnati, OH: Southwestern.

<sup>46</sup> Campion, M.A., Palmer, D.K., & Campion, J.E. (1997). A review of structure in the selection interview. *Personnel Psychology*, 50, 655-702.

<sup>47</sup> Pulakos, E.D., & Schmitt, N. (1995). Experience-based and situational interview questions: Studies of validity. *Personnel Psychology*, 48, 289-308.

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### **Recommendation 31: Consider developing and requiring the use of anchored rating scales for the evaluation of interview responses**

The use of a rating scale, common across all applicants, is a key component of a fair and valid interview process and anchored rating scales have been shown to simplify complex judgment tasks, by providing behavioral, descriptive examples of responses for different points on the rating scales.<sup>48</sup>

### **Recommendation 32: Consider training interviewers on common rating biases and errors (e.g., halo error, leniency, similarity)**

Research has indicated that one way to minimize these errors is to make interviewers aware of them.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, conversations with LASD indicated that the high pass rate of the structured interviews is likely due to leniency of the raters. Therefore, focusing on common errors, particularly leniency, and encouraging interviewers to critically differentiate among interviewees may be particularly helpful.

### **Recommendation 33: Consider calibrating the ratings of interviewers during training to ensure a common frame of reference**

For example, during a training, interviewers could hear various sample interview responses and rate them each according to the developed ratings scales. Then, ratings would be compared and discussed, to help ensure that applicants are being assessed in similar ways across the different interviewers.

### **Recommendation 34: Consider recording interviews**

Researchers have noted that the advantage of using a structured interview over other interview types depends on the extent to which interviewers follow the structured format. Therefore, in addition to training raters (see previous recommendation) it may be helpful to record interviews as well, to hold interviewers accountable for following the prescribed format.<sup>50</sup> This may also help lessen the burden on interviewers who currently are transcribing interview responses verbatim.

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<sup>48</sup> Campion, *supra* note 46; Taylor, P.J., & Small, B. (2002). Asking applicants what they would do versus what they did do: A meta-analytic comparison of situational and past behavior employment interview questions. *Journal of Occupation and Organizational Psychology*, 75, 277-294.

<sup>49</sup> United States Office of Personnel Management (2008). *Structured interviews: A practical guide*. Washington, DC.

<sup>50</sup> Sedikides, C., Herbst, K.C., Hardin, D.P., & Dardis, G.J. (2002). Accountability as a deterrent to self-enhancement: The search for mechanisms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 592-605.

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### **Background Investigation and Polygraph (26% pass this stage, 6.5% of initial applicants move to the next step)**

The background investigation process is covered in detail in *Section III: Retention and Background Units Report*.

### **Administrative Case Review (92% pass this stage, 6.0% of initial applicants move to the next step)**

As the hiring process was originally presented to the research team, once the background investigators have completed their work, they submit an extensive report to their team sergeant for review and approval. The sergeant makes the final decision about whether a candidate is placed in the “Hire,” “Not Best Qualified,” or “No Hire” category based on this review. As of December 2018, a Lieutenant Panel was the final step of the selection process, however, as of 2019, this practice has been removed from the process in favor of the Administrative Case Review being performed by the sergeant.

#### Overview of the Lieutenant Panel’s Review Process

A viable candidate will be scheduled for a panel review conducted by three LASD lieutenants. The panel review was added as a component of the hiring process in 2015 after it was recognized that “the Department’s hiring practices were under close scrutiny” and this “layer of transparency was added to the hiring procedures to ensure impartiality and sound decision making. The summary of the candidate’s background file is redacted of names and references and is then presented to the panel for a hiring decision. The panel weighs the background file against the Department’s hiring standards and determines whether the candidate will move forward in the process. Only by the panel’s unanimous vote, does the candidate continue without further review.” The panel then provides the candidate with a rating of one of the following categories:

- **Hire.** A recommendation to send the applicant on to the next phase of the process.
- **NBQ (Not Best Qualified).** This recommendation is made when an applicant has concerning information in their background, however the issues do not necessarily rise to the level of a disqualification and/or No Hire. NBQ is also an indicator to the examining Psychologist that the Department has some concerns regarding the applicant.
- **No Hire.** The panel feels the applicant’s background exposes the Department to liability and/or does not represent an individual who meets the character, integrity, and professionalism of a Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriff.

If the panel’s rating is unanimous, the applicant will be scheduled for the medical and psychological examinations. From staff interviews it was learned that some applicants with a “not best qualified” rating may continue in the hiring process for Deputy Sheriff Trainee or may be offered employment as either a Custody Assistant or as a Security Officer.

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Through our interviews with background investigators and other LASD staff about the hiring process, a number of concerns with the case review process were uncovered. Background investigators expressed a sense of frustration that their recommendations regarding hiring decisions did not seem to hold weight any longer. Their impression was that there was a time when it was the norm for the hiring decisions to be made in accordance with background investigator recommendations, but this is no longer the case. Employees from other units occasionally expressed a similar opinion without solicitation: that the recommendations of the background investigators should be taken by those making the hiring decisions because they know what they are doing and have developed skills and intuition in making judgments about applicants. Interestingly, this issue is brought up in the Background Investigators Manual published by POST. They state explicitly that “background investigators should not make candidate ranking recommendations unless they are always followed.”<sup>51</sup>

On a related note, concern was expressed that the practice of the panel is not consistent with the department’s policies. An example that was given centered around the drug policy. While the panel receives full information regarding the applicant’s drug use, it is unclear that they have, or are applying, the formal written hiring standards regarding use. This theme of policy and practice not being aligned came up across various stages of the hiring process and other areas of the department (e.g., training).

There was some discomfort expressed about the handling of applicants deemed “Not Best Qualified.” It was unclear to what extent NBQ candidates are kept in the process through the medical and psychological clinical screens following a conditional offer, but if they do successfully complete these stages in the process and are hired, their status as NBQ is not shared with staff at the Academy. While on one hand, sharing information about NBQ status with the Academy may be ill advised, as it may bias perceptions of trainee behavior or performance,<sup>52</sup> if this information were shared to a specific end, such as to encourage directed additional training resources to meet the needs of NBQ hires, it could prove beneficial for both the trainees and the department. It should be noted that the research team has been made aware that some changes to this process were in the works, including the dissolution of the lieutenant panel and change from a blind review process to one where the applicant’s identity was known to the deciding

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<sup>51</sup> California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, *supra* note 43

<sup>52</sup> Shapiro, J.R., King, E.B., and Quinones, M.A. (2007). Expectations of obese trainees: How stigmatized trainee characteristics influence training effectiveness. *Applied Psychology*, 92(1), p. 239-249.

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party. These recent developments may have implications for the implementation of our recommendations.

### **Recommendation 35: Background investigators should not make candidate ranking recommendations unless they are always followed**

As mentioned above, this is a recommendation made in the POST background investigation manual. It was clear from our interviews that the shift from regularly accepting the recommendations of background investigators to not doing so has caused both confusion and indignation. If the panel (or individual) responsible for making the final decision will not be doing so based on the recommendations of the background investigators, then background investigators should no longer be encouraged to document their recommendations.

### **Recommendation 36: Base final hiring decision on the results of the total hiring process**

Final case review and candidate ranking (Best Qualified, Not Best Qualified, Disqualified) should be structured and based on a review of the entire candidate package, including test scores, structured interviews, and the background investigation. As the process currently stands, it seems that the final decision regarding applicant qualification is based solely on the results of the background investigation. Candidates have passed the (relatively low) hurdle for the cognitive, physical, and structured interview tests, and beyond that pass/fail bar, these tests are not considered in further decisions about the candidate. There is likely additional valuable information in these scores, and this information could be used systematically to increase the quality of ranking decisions. Regardless of whether this additional information is considered or not, the determination of these rankings should be structured in a transparent way that is applied consistently. Interviewees felt that the way decisions are currently made does not match existing department policy. At the same time, they expressed uncertainty as to whether the decision makers (especially the sergeants) were privy to the details of the applicable policies. As the part of the process in which it seems the most subjectivity can sneak in, and in which some past efforts have been directed in order to prevent this (i.e., implementing blind panel review to prevent nepotism), the department must be vigilant in assuring that these decisions are held to a documented objective standard. The earlier recommendation to standardize the background investigation process and its outputs if applied would make implementation of the current recommendation easier

 **Recommendation 37: Final case review and candidate ranking should be the responsibility of a multi-member panel comprised of stakeholders from the Academy, Custody, and Patrol divisions**

When considering the ways in which a standard hiring process is implemented in most private sector organizations, rarely, if ever, is the final hiring decision made entirely within the HR or Personnel function. Members of the operational divisions in which the new hire will be working also evaluate and express preferences regarding the hiring of an individual. In the same way, we recommend that at least one ranked (Sergeant, Lieutenant) deputy from each of the three major stake-holding divisions of the department (Academy, Custody, and Patrol) be combined to form a hiring panel to replace the current decision making process (whether that is still the lieutenant panel, or an individual). As each of these division have different priorities for what makes a good candidate, and each candidate will potentially need to be successful in all three, it is reasonable that they each have input. Additionally, as subject matter experts, these stakeholders should have input into how the candidate ranking process is structured in the recommendation above.

### **Medical and Psychological Screening (75% pass this stage, 4.5% of initial applicants move to the next step)**

As is required by law (both national and state of California), the medical and psychological portions of the hiring process cannot take place prior to a conditional offer of hire. Once LASD has completed the case review and made a conditional offer of employment (whether for a Deputy position or a reduced position), candidates are scheduled for their medical and psychological interviews. There are only a few providers that the department contracts with to do the testing. As a POST participating agency, any licensed medical provider with access to the POST standards may do the testing, however psychologists must meet POST requirements for continuing education and familiarity with relevant research literature and state and federal law in order to assess law enforcement candidates. Candidates are scheduled into existing slots and must contact the department if they need to reschedule. Sometimes the candidate will be told whether or not they passed based on the opinion of the provider, but this is not consistent, and the provider cannot make guarantees. Results from the medical and psychological testing are currently processed through the Los Angeles County Occupational Health Program (OHP) office. As this office handles such results for hiring to all county positions, there has reportedly been quite a backlog in processing and sending results. There was some indication that OHP may be removed from the process of hiring for LASD soon, with results sent directly to the Sheriff's Office, perhaps speeding up the process. Medical decisions are made pass/fail (or Recommend/Cannot

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Recommend), while psychological results are categorized as highly qualified, qualified, or not qualified. The criteria for these processes differ between Deputy Sheriff and other LASD positions (e.g., Custody Assistants). If the applicant feels the results are not accurate, they are permitted to challenge them. They must pay to go see an alternate physician or therapist who will submit the results. Ultimately, the department provider will make the determination upon receiving the second opinion.

### **Recommendation 38: Increase the number of providers permitted to perform medical and psychological testing**

The number one item on the wish list of the operations staff who deal with the scheduling for medical and psychological testing was an increase in the number of providers available. While all agreed that eHire has improved scheduling, they believed rescheduling would be less of an issue if there were more providers available. Also, this would allow for greater convenience to the applicant, so they would not need to travel so far to get to the providers. One interviewee even suggested the possibility of having the medical and psychological testing occur in the same place. Given that the POST standards for a provider to be considered qualified to perform these tasks are fairly broadly defined, it seems highly likely there are numerous other acceptable providers throughout Los Angeles County who would meet them. On a more detailed note, it may be advisable to provide directions and parking instructions, perhaps even a picture of the building for the provider who is more challenging for applicants to find.

### **Recommendation 39: Regularly review medical and psychological provider decisions**

As mentioned above, previously there had been issues with the quality of decisions made by some psychological providers. If additional providers are added, it will become necessary to monitor the quality of the decisions made to assure that similar patterns do not emerge in the future. One possible method for addressing this would be to create a panel of reviewers from existing contracted providers. Document standards for acceptable performance for each type of provider. If the applicant seeks a second opinion, as they have the right to do under POST guidelines, standards for review of second opinions should also be determined and monitored. Transparency regarding this review process and its results is key to improving the reception of the results by candidates. As mentioned above, both recent hires and more seasoned deputies felt that the psychological process was subjective, unrelated to the job, and too lengthy. By making clear that the providers are regularly and stringently monitored, some of these concerns should be waylaid.

### **Recommendation 40: Consider publicizing commonly misunderstood criteria at the time of the conditional offer**

While the psychological testing seemed to raise more concerns about the nature and validity of the tests, the medical testing was perceived to be the bigger hold up as far as taking time to complete. This may be in part due to misunderstandings or unknown criteria by the applicants, requiring them to return, or to see an additional provider. Specific items that were mentioned during a discussion with one medical provider included:

- Inform applicants of the vision requirement and need to get contacts or LASIK if their vision is greater than 20/70. Applicants must wear contacts for minimum of 30 days before their medical test.
- Advise applicants not to consume protein powders, supplements, or pre or post-workout supplements at least 30-days prior to their medical exams. The use of these products have resulted in applicants not passing due to irregular blood lab results, mainly liver function test. Applicants who fail this test are able to get their own blood lab work through their own providers, but it is costly, and not all may follow up.
- Clarify guidelines for applicants diagnosed with various types of hepatitis. Some types are not contagious, while others are treatable or even curable. There are a large number of cases in Asian population in LA area, and a positive test is not necessarily a need to fail an applicant.
- Clarify guidelines for hearing tests, specifically indicate if the “Hint” test is acceptable.<sup>53</sup>
- Use blood tests, rather than skin tests, for TB so the applicants do not have to return for their skin read.
- Administer the treadmill test during the VPAT. If it is not acceptable to use as a pass/fail test at this point due to concerns with the ADA and FHES, the pass/fail standards could be shared with applicants so that they can work toward acceptable physical ability while proceeding through other steps in the hiring process. According to one provider, 1 in 5 applicants who reach the medical testing stage do not pass the treadmill test, which has replaced the height/weight standards that were previously in place.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://hei.org/>

## Pre-Academy Consultation

The pre-Academy consultation is an interview conducted by the Captain of Personnel. Candidates cannot be disqualified at this step; we did not evaluate it as part of the hiring process.

## Hiring and Academy

The hiring process is completed when the candidate is offered an Academy date, accepts it, and is added to the class roster.

## Hiring Process Systemwide Recommendations

The previous sections describe specific recommendations for each step in the hiring process. In addition, we identified several overall recommendations for the overall DST hiring process and activities that support it.

### Transparency of “Qualifications Criteria”

As the law enforcement profession currently faces great challenges, one critical element for improvement is garnering and maintaining public trust, which includes, in part, staffing policing agencies with officers that are representative of the communities they serve. Law enforcement departments across the United States have struggled with these issues traditionally, but there is mounting evidence that departments are facing even greater difficulty in their hiring practices today.<sup>54</sup> As the 21st Century Policing Task Force Report noted:

*To build a police force capable of dealing with the complexity of the 21st century, it is imperative that agencies place value on both educational achievements and socialization skills when making hiring decisions. Hiring officers who reflect the community they serve is also important not only to external relations but also to increasing understanding within the agency. Agencies should look for character traits that support fairness, compassion, and cultural sensitivity.<sup>55</sup>*

Traditional police hiring practices tend to disqualify candidates with negative issues discovered through the hiring process. In order to hire 21st century officers, departments need to examine

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21713898-stronger-economy-partly-blame-police-departments-struggle-recruit-enough> (Posted: January 7, 2017)

<sup>55</sup> Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services; Published 2015; page 52

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their orientation and focus hiring on those candidates that model the values and vision of the community and the law enforcement agency. This new focus requires departments to establish and publish their visions and values. More importantly, these visions and values need to become the core of their daily operations, as well as their recruiting and hiring programs.

As part of the hiring process, many agencies have identified various disqualification factors, which will cause an applicant to be immediately removed from further consideration. Some of these factors are based on law (such as having a felony conviction), and others are based on department preference, such as the extent of a poor driving record or other concerning conduct. Information published on the LASD website only indicates that “Applicants cannot have any felony convictions nor be on probation; misdemeanors may be disqualifying, depending on the number, type of violation, and date of the violation.”<sup>56</sup> LASD was not willing to share any additional disqualification criteria, so it is difficult to make any comparisons or specific recommendations to consider. Past marijuana use was described by LASD staff as the number one out-screener in NeoGov applications. Most of those interviewed indicated that, if anything, narcotics use should be even stricter than it currently is. One exception was an investigator who believed that the current hiring standards should be modified (relaxed). That investigator believes that society is different today than it was 10 years ago and that LASD should look more closely at drug use (marijuana), driving, and credit standards.

IACP identified the most common reasons cited for failing the background investigation from 10 departments that participated in an IACP best practices survey for recruiting and hiring. The reasons cited were criminal issues, drug use issues, falsification of information or untruthfulness, a pattern of poor choices, or other behavior issues. It is possible that the department is using certain factors for excluding candidates from consideration, which might be in need of further examination or consideration. A favorable process looks for character traits that support fairness, compassion, and cultural sensitivity, and one that points to a spirit of service in the applicant. This may require re-evaluating prior disqualification factors, which may not be as applicable in today’s society.

Out of every 100 Deputy Sheriff Trainee candidates who apply to the LASD, only 4.5 get hired. The department projects that it will need 16,000 applicants each year to meet its goal of training 720 recruits annually. Processing this large number of applicants throughout the various stages in the hiring process is a daunting task. Almost everyone involved in the hiring process expressed the goal of finding more qualified applicants rather than just increasing the total number of

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<sup>56</sup> <https://careers.lasd.org/seu-faq/>

applicants. Accordingly, that focus should also translate into eventually finding ways to reduce the number of people going through the background investigation process who are eventually disqualified. In furtherance of this objective, LASD should consider being more transparent with candidates about their disqualifying factors.

### **Recommendation 41: Review and consider publishing hiring disqualification criteria**

The department should consider publishing their disqualification factors as this may eventually reduce the number of unqualified applicants from applying, thereby reducing LASD staff time involved in processing applications.

### **Dynamic Ranking of Candidates**

Surveys of candidates indicate that candidate satisfaction with the early stages of selection is high, while their satisfaction with the background investigation and other later stages is low due to the length of time to complete those steps.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, it is likely that many of the best candidates leave the process for other positions.

One consistent theme in our recommendations is that LASD should implement methods for prioritizing candidates who are likely to successfully complete the hiring process, pass the Academy, and perform well on the job. By doing so, LASD can improve the time-to-hire for qualified candidates and reduce the resources spent on adjudicating low probability applications.

### **Recommendation 42: Improve screening to identify high probability candidates**

Standardizing and reordering some of the existing assessments and adding additional assessments could serve to “screen in” high probability applications prior to the background investigation.

### **Recommendation 43: Establish a ranking mechanism based on prior steps**

Prioritization could be implemented by having “A, B, and C” level candidates as determined by their scores on the job-related parts of the selection process (e.g., the JFT and the VPAT-S). Those in the highest category would then be prioritized for the next step of the hiring process. Once everyone in a ranking category complete being processed to the next step, the cohort in the next priority category would then be similarly processed. The LASD should consider these prioritization procedures part of the selection process, and thus subject to the

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<sup>57</sup> Hoffman, *supra* note 28

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same standards as any other selection procedure covered by a variety of employment laws (including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act).

## Communication and Coordination

A consistent theme across site visits, interviews, and focus groups was a sense of separation; that each unit, whether that unit was a station, a division, or a step in the hiring process was unique and functioning at least to some degree apart from what others were doing.

### **Recommendation 44: Communication between step owners**

Work throughout the hiring process is done in silos, each step following, but not necessarily connected to the step before. Recruiters do not communicate with background investigators or sworn exams. Academy personnel do not receive complete information regarding the results of various stages of the hiring process. And no single system exists to track information on an individual from application through hire and training at the Academy. There also did not appear to be an individual responsible for owning and overseeing the personnel process from recruitment to hire, and beyond including training at the Academy.

### **Recommendation 45: Include Academy stakeholders throughout the process**

The IACP team was informed on at least one occasion that the Academy does not receive information regarding the outcomes of the hiring panel or background investigation process, meaning they are not told whether a recruit is rated as “Not Best Qualified,” whether there were concerns during the medical or psychological testing that should be monitored, or whether a recruit may need some extra assistance with writing or other skills assessed during the hiring process. As the decision makers for who will pass training and become sworn Deputy Sheriffs, they both need to understand and would have valuable input into the earlier stages of the hiring process. In addition, knowledge of the success or failure of individual recruits in training would be valuable data to add to hiring metrics and would allow for one form of validation of the existing hiring process (i.e., do criteria x,y,z predict performance in the Academy).

## Data Analytics and Information Technology

### **Recommendation 46: Establish quality control on testing criterion and validity**

Data on a high-quality criterion measure would greatly assist in refining the written test and the entire selection process. To assist in ensuring that the criterion measure is minimally affected by a variety potential contaminating factors, we suggest developing a criterion

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measure specifically for use in studies. This criterion measure would need to be based on the job analysis and reflect as much of the job content as possible. To ensure the quality of the data, the information should be gathered and stored in a confidential manner and not used for operational purposes (e.g., promotions or performance appraisals).<sup>58</sup>

 **Recommendation 47: Consider acquiring information systems and applicant tracking technologies that talk to one another as opposed to multiple different systems**

Ensure that these systems are supported by qualified information technology staff.

 **Recommendation 48: Provide Personnel Unit staff with necessary software**

Similarly, some step owners would benefit from specific software. For example, the background and recruiting units may wish to use applicant tracking or case management software to monitor, track, and report on their work. Similarly, the sworn testing unit must have access to specialized software (e.g., SPSS, R) that allows them to conduct statistical analyses of the reliability and validity of the tests. SPSS can be easily procured through an annual licensing agreement, while R is open source (i.e., free) but would require some staff training.

## Testing Facilities

Personnel from the Test Development Unit (TDU) are responsible for the scheduling and administration of the DST written examination and the written test administration. Other responsibilities of the unit include administering sworn promotional exams, conducting civilian hiring and promotional processes, and administering the coveted testing program. There is not a dedicated staff for the VPAT-S administration, so administration is conducted by a combination of recruiters, background investigators, and testing unit staff typically working on overtime.

The written test and the VPAT-S are administered weekly on Saturdays and Wednesdays by 10 to 12 LASD employees at the LASD's STAR Center in Whittier. It is not a dedicated testing facility, as it is also used for training and other activities. Since the testing location is shared by other LASD units, furniture in the room often needs to be set up prior to testing and broken down after testing. In addition, the personnel from the TDU are physically located in offices remote from

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<sup>58</sup> Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Civil Service Commission, Department of Labor & Justice (1978). Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures. *Federal Register*, 43, 38290-38315.; Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (2018). *Principles for the validation and use of personnel selection procedures* (5th edition). Bowling Green, OH: Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

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the STAR Center, so the staff also regularly incur significant loss of productivity, due to extra time related to their travel to and from the STAR Center and the set up and break down time at the test site.

As a measure to reduce attrition in the hiring process, the DST written examination and the VPAT-S are now scheduled to occur on the same day each week. This has been proven to have reduced applicant attrition in the testing process and this arrangement should continue. When administered alone, there are many “no-shows” for the written test and the VPAT-S, but when they are administered together, there are fewer no-shows. Apparently only the individuals who consider themselves ready for the VPAT-S make the commitment. Participants in a focus group of recent hires indicated that they really liked the convenience of being able to complete all of the paper work, the written test, and the VPAT-S all in one appointment. In interviews, LASD staff indicated that they tried to do the entire selection process in a single day event, but the cost was too high.

LASD schedules up to 300 individuals to test on a given day, but typically only about 120 show. Individuals who have completed the application within the past four months are invited to reschedule. If more than four months have passed since the application was completed, they must redo the application.

The 90-minute written test is administered in a large auditorium at the STAR Center. The testing staff for the written test conducts an apparently fair and effective testing session. The auditorium is less than ideal as a testing setting as it has poor acoustics (so that small sounds can be distracting) and candidates often sit within a foot of one another. The test is paper and pencil administered with bubble answer sheets and Remark Software scoring systems. When we visited in 2018, there was no facility for conducting computerized testing. The VPAT is usually administered outside the facility on an asphalt surface. Neither location was designed for or is well suited for these testing purposes.

LASD uses multiple technologies and databases to coordinate the selection and hiring process including NeoGov, SharePoint and eHire. These are separate systems that are not supported by LASD technology staff. The Test Development Unit maintains its own spreadsheet-based database. The Test Development Unit does not have access to e-hire.

Sometimes a van is used for testing, but this van is nearly 20 years old and may not project a positive image of the department.

### **Recommendation 49: Explore the need for a dedicated testing facility**

There will be a continuing need to provide testing for large numbers of DST applicants in the years ahead. Accordingly, the department should identify an alternate facility better suited for test administration and closer to the TDU offices. A designated testing space should provide a more positive first-impression to candidates, improve the integrity of the process, and reduce the cost of overtime charged for set-up and tear-down of the testing area.

Consideration of forming a partnership with a local college or university to provide the necessary facilities might also be a viable option. Any alternate location should also have access to a facility, similar to a gymnasium, where the VPAT can also be administered regardless of weather conditions.

A testing facility should include:

- A room with better acoustics (e.g., by including carpeting or sound deadening acoustic panels)
- At least two feet of open space between each examinee
- A WiFi or internet connection to allow for scoring and exchange of data with the eHire system

### **Recommendation 50: Consider conducting computer administration of the written test**

The cost for this may be higher, as equipment will have to be dedicated or set-up and taken down each testing session. However, the need for testing staff on-site may be reduced and may facilitate recommended changes in integrating the information systems and applicant tracking technologies.

### **Recommendation 51: Consider administering the test in additional areas of the county that might be easier to access by candidates from areas where recruiting is a challenge**

### Candidate Preparedness

LASD provides an online study guide for the JFT and has posted a high-quality video online to introduce candidates to the VPAT. While there are workout sessions to assist candidates in prepping to take the VPAT-R, candidates generally seem to want more of them.<sup>59</sup>

 **Recommendation 52: Continue providing candidates with test preparation resources**

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<sup>59</sup> Hoffman, *supra* note 28

## Section IV: Background Investigations Report

This section proposes recommendations and actions for improving LASD's Background Investigations Unit. The recommendations in this report are informed by (1) findings from two site visits in December 2018 and January 2019, and (2) a subsequent literature review of best practices in law enforcement, military, and civilian organizations.

### Current State Assessment

In addition to the various unit briefings provided to the project team during the first site visit, the team conducted several interviews of investigators and supervisors within the Background Investigations (BI) Unit. During the second site visit, the schedule for prearranged interviews was changed due to previously unexpected department meetings that precluded the Recruitment Unit personnel from being available for interviews. Additionally, two members of the LASD command staff, who had initially been assigned as IACP liaison contacts, were reassigned just prior to the site visit. Nonetheless, the members of LASD with whom the project team interacted were extremely helpful and flexible with scheduling their time. The second site visit centered on the Academy. IACP project staff conducted interviews of Academy drill instructors, supervisors and commanders, recruits, and staff from other training-related functions including Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC) staff, weapons training, and the field training coordinator. The team also conducted several focus groups with current recruits, recent academy graduates, and Custody Assistants.

### Background Investigative Process

All background investigations for LASD Deputy Sheriff Candidates are conducted in accordance with the California Code of Regulations § 1953, Peace Officer Background Investigation, which requires that:

*Every peace officer candidate shall be the subject of a thorough background investigation to verify good moral character and the absence of past behavior indicative of unsuitability to perform the duties of a peace officer [Government Code section 1031(d)].<sup>60</sup>*

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<sup>60</sup>[https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/I18418B48E0BD41B6A483178F31A93C1F?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/I18418B48E0BD41B6A483178F31A93C1F?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=(sc.Default))

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The section further requires that the background investigation include a review of the following dimensions:

- Integrity
- Impulse Control/Attention to Safety
- Substance Abuse and Other Risk-Taking Behavior
- Stress Tolerance
- Confronting and Overcoming Problems, Obstacles, and Adversity
- Conscientiousness
- Interpersonal Skills
- Decision-Making and Judgment
- Learning Ability
- Communication Skills

The section also outlines the requirements for conducting criminal history, driving history, citizenship, personal reference, and employment checks. POST has published a Background Investigation Manual that provides guidelines for investigators on methods they can apply to meet these goals. POST does not require background investigator training; however, they do offer a 32-hour training course, along with update courses for background investigators. LASD requires its background investigators to complete the POST training within one year of starting the position as well as with all other applicable state and federal laws.

The LASD Background Units are located in decentralized offices throughout the county in order to better serve applicants based on the geographic location of their residence. There are five separate teams (North, South, Central, East, and West) consisting of approximately 70 Background Investigators (BI). Each team is supervised by a sergeant who makes the specific case assignments in their units. Team sergeants are responsible for monitoring the progress of the investigations assigned to their personnel. There is also a Civilian BI Unit consisting of two civilian Background Investigators. In 2018, approximately 50-80 cases were assigned to the BI Unit each week according to the applicant's location. It was reported that the BI Units are currently averaging 35 cases assigned per investigator for Deputy Sheriff Trainees and Custody Assistants.

The LASD background process begins when an applicant's file is assigned to a background investigator. For the past year and a half, the LASD has been utilizing an electronic background tracking system called "eHire." According to information provided by staff, this system "is built

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on a software platform and consists of a content management file structure for storing and interacting with backgrounds investigations, a centralized forms development and routing system, and a process automation component.” Access to the system is available to both LASD employees and applicants from any electronic device.

The eHire system has been credited with reducing the timeline between various stages of the hiring process. As an example, applicants can now complete and forward the personal history questionnaire electronically via eHire and other required HR forms can be scanned and forwarded between applicants and personnel staff. Investigators can also forward case files to supervisors electronically for review and approval, further reducing the timeline for processing.

eHire also contains automated points of communication that keep applicants informed about progress throughout the various steps in the process. Another automation tracks the amount of time investigators keep cases open. If a case is still open 120 days after being assigned, eHire triggers a message to the investigator and to the supervisor requiring a case disposition update.

The eHire system, while still relatively new, appears to be very promising in that it can provide the LASD with a significant opportunity to improve operational efficiency in the hiring process. There are some areas in need of further development in eHire, especially related to its ability to properly collect and analyze data for operational use. The main concern raised about the eHire software system is that it was created by LASD employees who are not assigned to the department’s Technology & Support Division and the ongoing development and maintenance of eHire is solely in the hands of the employees who created it.

Upon receiving a case, a BI will review the case file and ensure that all required documents have been submitted and are complete. During the third site visit, several additional concerns with the background investigation process were discussed. Through our interviews with background investigators, it was revealed that there are a number of steps in the process where the applicant can introduce significant delays into the timeline, beginning immediately with the upload of required documentation into the eHire system. There are 35 documents required for the investigation to be complete; however, only two of these must be uploaded for it to begin, and investigators universally noted that they are regularly assigned cases in eHire that have none of the required documentation. They often have to spend time when applicants come in for their interview scanning documents that should have been available before the interview.

Based on a review of the applicant’s personal history information, the BI will form a general investigative outline and schedule the applicant for a background interview. Applicants are thoroughly interviewed regarding their personal history, their motivations for pursuing a law

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enforcement career, and the BI will discuss in more detail any personal history conduct or information of concern. If no major disqualifiers are apparent, the BI will schedule the applicant for a polygraph examination. If no major concerns are identified from the polygraph examination, the BI will begin field work, which will include conducting in-person checks of all employers and residences where the applicant worked or lived within the previous three years.

Upon completion of the background investigation, the BI submits a written summary to the unit supervisor. After review, the BI Unit sergeant forwards the case to the Operations Section for final review.

Staff have reported that the background process for a viable candidate averages approximately six months, which is a significant improvement compared to previous years. Some of those interviewed also indicated that the polygraph examinations seem to create a bottleneck in the process, but no specific data was provided to confirm this information. To date, there have not been any time studies or analysis completed on Background Investigator workload or workflow.

When prompted to discuss parts of the process they might change, several investigators mentioned that the reference checks and employer checks are usually the least fruitful parts of the investigation given the amount of time they consume. Unfortunately, due to their heavy caseloads, it is rare for investigators to have time to use these references to identify secondary references to follow up with. It was also noted that for out-of-state applicants, these checks are not part of the process.

### **Pre-Background Investigations Screening**

A major issue identified during interviews conducted by the project team involved the large number of applicants who progress through the hiring process until they are later disqualified during their background investigation. Those BIs interviewed indicated that often times they initiate investigations of candidates who could have been eliminated for automatic disqualifiers had disqualifying information been known to the department (and to the applicant) earlier in the hiring process. The department has a stated goal of increasing the number of viable, qualified candidates so that its human resource investigative resources are put to the most effective use in the hiring process. To date, attracting large numbers of applicants has been mostly successful. The department is now more focused on attracting “better” applicants so that the attrition rate is lowered and the ratio of applicant to hired deputy can be increased.

The eHire system is still in its infancy stages and has the potential to be an excellent tool. It could also be utilized to help automatically, and at an earlier stage, screen out candidates who are not viable, which would free up investigator time for more viable applicants. We recommend that

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the department create a recruiting/marketing *funnel*, where potential applicants initially complete a brief, online questionnaire designed to quickly educate the applicant (and inform LASD) as to whether or not they are a viable candidate to be hired. Such a process should help reduce the number of candidates applying who are not viable, thereby reducing further processing time spent on those applicants. This recruiting/marketing funnel would be most effective if LASD clearly articulated its hiring standards. These standards would need to be assessed in at least some of the questions. Applicants should be required to provide an email address in order to complete the questionnaire to demonstrate at least some level of serious interest and to eliminate candidates who may only be curious about the department but who do not meet basic standards. This process should help identify applicant viability at an earlier stage, thereby reducing the time spent on those who will eventually not be hired. It may also help improve the 50% “no show” rate for the Deputy Sheriff Trainee (DST) written examination by better educating prospective candidates who do not meet, at least at the point in time that the questionnaire is completed, the basic criterion for hiring.

 **Recommendation 53: Create a process to provide an earlier assessment of an applicant’s eligibility and viability as a successful deputy sheriff trainee candidate**

Establish a process to identify applicant viability at an earlier stage; thereby, reducing the time spent on those who will eventually not be hired.

 **Recommendation 54: Examine the impact of adjusting the pass threshold of earlier steps on background investigation success**

Conduct a study examining the likelihood of background investigation success if different JFT and VPAT-R cut-scores were implemented. Potentially use this information to adjust the cut scores.

As cases are assigned for investigation, the BIs themselves determine the priority of their cases. That priority should go to the most promising candidates as identified in earlier parts of the selection process. One investigator who tracks statistics said that out of 120 background investigations that he conducted, only ten were fully completed as the rest were suspended due to various disqualifiers identified during the process. Of the ten completed BIs, only two applicants were hired as the remaining applicants had other issues with physical or psychological testing. That investigator opined that at least 80% of his time is spent on applicants who are never hired. This condition further highlights the need for more effective screening at all levels of the process.

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We recommend LASD continue to develop a standardized, efficient process that focuses on getting the best candidates through the process as quickly as possible while still being sufficiently thorough with them.

### **Recommendation 55: Prioritize the most viable applicants for background investigations**

Establish a formal process to identify, prioritize, and assign applicants to background investigations based on their scores from prior steps.

Finally, there is at least an anecdotal perception on the part of CAs that there is an active block to them becoming Deputies. One way to counteract such perceptions would be to have accurate and accessible data on rates of application and rejection of CAs for Deputy. Additionally, the differences in standards for a CA vs a Deputy should be made clear and available to candidates. The process for applying to step up should be clear and easy to find. Accelerated background investigations could focus on only time since starting with the department, and additional weight could be given to performance reviews. They should not be required to resubmit documentation already in the possession of the department, and to the extent possible, steps in the process should be removed or shortened for these candidates. This would remove the burden on stakeholders throughout the hiring process. One interviewee even suggested that CAs could be actively recruited and mentored on how to successfully navigate the process. A similarly accelerated process could be applied to applicants from other POST certified programs which would have comparable hiring standards.

### **Recommendation 56: Expedite backgrounds investigation of internal applicants (Custody Assistants and Security Officers) applying for Deputy Sheriff positions**

Develop a process to expedite the evaluation of applications from current LASD staff, such as background investigations focused on only to the time since starting with the department and additional weight given to performance reviews.

### **Background Investigations Process**

While the background investigation portion of the hiring process was not the only one which raised this concern, several stakeholders expressed concerns that, while there may be a “correct” or “policy” way to do a background investigation, it is not always the case that this way is followed. Each of the team sergeants runs the team differently. We heard more than once that, while there may be a policy, practice does not always follow policy. Background investigators commented that they would bring a case to their supervisor’s attention regarding a clear

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disqualifier only to be told to work the case to completion anyway. However, there was also an opinion, expressed by more than just background investigators, that they should have more leeway to make subjective decisions regarding the qualities of the applicants.

As mentioned earlier, there is also some concern that the blind lieutenant panel (or final decision makers) do not have the actual disqualification policy accessible to them when making decisions.

Validating the types of decisions made in a background investigation process (specifically examining criminal history) can be challenging and does not follow standard validation procedures. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider and document standards to assure valid and reliable hiring decisions are made based on this information.

Current investigators could be asked as SMEs to review the current policy and confirm that it adheres to their perceived best practices. This will enhance the perception that their expertise is being taken into consideration while also enhancing the policy/practice alignment. Introduction of monitoring and quality control regarding background investigation processes and outputs is also recommended. As with any stage in a hiring process where subjectivity can enter the equation, assurance that policy is being appropriately implemented is vital. For example, prior disqualifications from one team could be reviewed by the sergeant on another team. A similar review could be done for polygraphs. We make a similar recommendation regarding the medical and psychological testing process. Additionally, by standardizing the inputs into the background investigation process, this assures that standardized outputs will be provided to the decision makers, improving the quality of the decisions made.

### **Recommendation 57: Standardize or manualize the background investigation process and stick to it**

Establish and document background investigation standards to assure valid and reliable hiring decisions are made.

BIs review an autobiography and a ride along document written by the candidate in their own handwriting. The requirement to write these documents creates a high candidate burden as well as a burden on the BI to review the documents. It may be worthwhile to determine if assessment of written communication skills can be done at an earlier point in the process using more valid methods that place less burden on Background Investigators.

While the code of regulations does specifically note that communications, including both oral and written, should be assessed within the context of the background investigation, no one

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method is required, and the POST Background Investigation Manual talks about written communications and the Personal History Questionnaire as primary sources of this information.

As with most other characteristics assessed as part of the hiring process for LASD, this emphasis on written communication seems to be one of redundant information, rather than the background investigation serving as the primary source. The cognitive ability test assesses some elements of written ability, and it sounds as though this is actually sufficient to meet the POST requirement for written communication. However, if there is a desire to further assess writing ability, there are reliable and valid assessments that could be added earlier in the hiring process to reduce the burden on the background investigators regarding reading and evaluating candidate assignments.<sup>61</sup> Depending on what other constructs are deemed important outputs of these writing assignments, LASD should look into less taxing and more reliable and valid assessments of these as well.

### **Recommendation 58: Assess the value and purpose of the current writing assignments during the background investigation**

LASD should consider revising the required writing pieces so that they are addressed in an earlier part of the selection process (through more standardized and valid means); otherwise, clarify the purpose of requiring writing assignments during the background investigation stage.

Finally, California Labor Code §980 prohibits employers from looking at applicant social media accounts by asking for passwords or requesting that the applicant log onto their accounts in the employer's presence. An internal audit of the hiring process prior to the start of the current investigation also noted the questionable legality of this practice.<sup>62</sup> While the POST Background Investigation Manual expresses some equivocation as to whether this applies to public sector employees, it seems that the safest and most legally unambiguous approach is to cease the social media reviews altogether. Based on our interviews, LASD has already scaled back what background investigators are allowed to look at during these reviews anyway. Given the lack of validity evidence, limited scope, and state legal prohibition, we strongly recommend removing this practice from the background investigation process.

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<sup>61</sup> Sparks, J.R., Song, Y., Brantley, W., and Liu, O.L. (2014). Assessing written communication in higher education: Review and recommendations for next generation assessment. *ETS Research Report Series*, 2014(2), p. 1-52.

<sup>62</sup> LASD Audit and Accountability Bureau. (2018) Hiring process of Deputy Sheriff Trainees Examination Report (No. 2018-1-AT).

## **Recommendation 59: Remove the social media review from the process**

Pursuant to the POST Background Investigation Manual, should cease the social media reviews altogether.

## **Polygraph**

The polygraph is a time consuming and labor-intensive part of the investigation process. Best practices suggest limiting the number of candidates who would partake in these parts of the hiring process.

While reports from both candidates and polygraphers were inconsistent, it sounded like rather than being targeted at the specific disqualification criteria for the department, questioning during the polygraph focused on specific answers to personal history questionnaire items. Coupled with the vagueness (or complete lack of information) around the department's hiring standards, the impression from polygraphers was that this results in numerous misunderstandings and high levels of stress in candidates, resulting in even less meaningful results and the potential failure of otherwise excellent candidates. One supervisor stated that, "We're turning people into liars due to the grey areas surrounding the department's disqualification factors." Focus groups with Custody Assistants also provided at least anecdotal information confirming the high number of polygraph failures. In one focus group discussion, 9 out of 17 Custody Assistants who had applied to be DSTs reported that they had to take the polygraph more than once.

Focusing on disqualifying criteria may provide clearer results but may be a less value-added approach than a focus on problem areas identified by background investigators. Additional suggestions around the polygraph included providing basic training on the use of the polygraph to all LASD staff involved in the hiring process, with the intention that a better understanding of how and why polygraphs can and should be used would encourage using them more appropriately. Polygraphers also recommended that background investigators collaborate with polygraph examiners to re-examine the benefit and use of the "Concern Sheet" for the polygraph examinations.

## **Recommendation 60: Clarify the purpose of the polygraph**

The department should clarify what exactly it is they are expecting from the polygraph and make sure this is clearly communicated to polygraphers, background investigators, and candidates.

During the course of this study, the timing of the polygraph testing was identified as an issue of concern, which warrants further review. It was stated that polygraph tests are being used at an

earlier stage than optimal, under the premise of screening out candidates who have not yet been more completely investigated. Polygraph examiners who were interviewed expressed that polygraphs were being scheduled as an investigative tool to preclude additional background investigation work, rather than at a later stage to be used as a final screening mechanism. This has resulted in a large quantity of polygraph testing, coupled with a reported 38% failure rate of those applicants tested, causing an exorbitant amount of time spent on applicants who will not be hired.

### **Recommendation 61: Consider placement of the polygraph later in the background investigation process**

The polygraph is a time consuming and labor-intensive process that should be performed as one of the final stages of the background investigation.

### **Background Investigations Staffing**

Interest was expressed in doing a time study and workflow analysis of the background investigation process to look for possible inefficiencies. While some metrics are kept on time spent during the process, one investigator noted that these measures do not track time spent interviewing the applicant, which is a meaningfully time consuming part of the process.

In addition, although other areas of the department (patrol and custody) are struggling due to staffing shortages, it may be necessary to temporarily divert staff to the BI Unit or consider outsourcing some of the BI functions until sufficient numbers of new DST recruits can be hired. Regularly scheduled reviews of the workload will be necessary in order to adjust staffing (up or down) until the attrition rate is ultimately balanced.

### **Recommendation 62: Monitor, quantify, and evaluate the workload for background investigators**

LASD should conduct studies to identify and implement efficiencies with the background investigation process.

Background investigator positions are not coveted positions; all other investigative unit positions are. This limits the ability to incentivize an experienced investigator to transfer into the BI unit while also making it difficult to remove an underperforming or ineffective investigator. It was reported that no detectives come to the BI Unit because detectives are already in a coveted position and would lose a financial benefit if transferring to the BI Unit. Most new BIs come right from a patrol station without any previous investigative experience. This was described as being typical of all new background investigators.

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It was shared that background investigators do not receive the requisite respect other detectives have. One commander indicated that the department does not have respect for the background investigator position and that BIs are not considered credible by the workforce. One BI supervisor indicated that he gets many new investigators with only 2-3-years of patrol experience (with no prior investigative experience) coming to backgrounds just to get out of patrol.

Turnover in the BI Unit has also been described as common, although the department lacks the data to determine how accurate this statement may be. It was explained that some high-performing BIs are concurrently seeking other bonus positions, which leads to lost expertise and additional vacancies when they leave the unit. This condition further delays the background process for applicants.

### **Recommendation 63: Convert background investigators to a coveted position**

LASD should consider establishing the BI position as a coveted position for sworn personnel in order to attract and retain quality deputies with more investigative experience.

In addition, LASD should consider creating permanent non-sworn BI positions, by hiring civilian or retired investigators, as the duties of a BI do not require having sworn status to accomplish. The type of investigations conducted are primarily administrative in nature and could be completed by civilian personnel. Civilianizing some portion of the BI workforce would likely require discussions with the employees' unions but the benefits to the department in the long term would be significant.

In a journal article citing studies related to the value of civilians in law enforcement, the authors noted the following:

*Civilians benefit agencies in a number of ways. Hiring civilians can enable agencies to deploy more of their officers into field assignments (Koper et al., 2002; Koper and Roth, 2000; Morris and Hawkins, 1977; Swartz et al, 1975). Civilians also bring a variety of needed and specialized skills to police agencies. Indeed, they can often serve in specialized roles more effectively than sworn personnel, who are hired to be generalists and are frequently rotated among assignments (Forst, 2000). Since civilians may bring more specialized skills to positions than sworn staff members, they tend to be more productive in those positions (Hennessy, 1976; Griffiths et al., 2006). Moreover, the organization*

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*does not need to invest in a lengthy academy training program for civilian hires (Guyot, 1979).<sup>63</sup>*

While there are some benefits to having a sworn presence in the unit, having some percentage of non-sworn BIs would allow LASD to focus more sworn resources on other public safety duties. Further, the costs of hiring and training civilians to perform these duties would be significantly less than the costs associated with sworn personnel. Finally, the rotation of sworn deputies through the unit leads to a lack of consistency in conducting these important administrative and investigative functions, whereas having non-sworn personnel assigned to the unit would provide more stability in expertise and allow for better training and mentoring of assigned sworn personnel.

### **Recommendation 64: Convert some background investigative positions to non-sworn**

Duties of a background investigator may be performed by civilian staff or contractors which could stabilize the unit turnover, increase expertise with longer tenured staff, and reduce the cost associated with continually training new sworn staff with less costly civilians.

Investing in the professional development of employees is beneficial both to the organization as well as to the employee. Training can enhance performance, improve job skills, and help motivate employees. Efforts have been made to enhance training for background investigators and all interviewed had attended the POST-mandated background investigator training. Supervisors who were interviewed indicated a desire to further enhance and standardize training for BI personnel. The reasons stated for a lack of ongoing training for Background Investigators included the heavy workloads in the units and a lack of funding for outside training.

During interviews with BIs, it was learned that none of the investigators had received training in interview techniques, although all expressed interest in this training. In her article describing the effect of training on employee attitudes, the author opines that the “larger the gap between the skills required to perform a task and the actual skills available for performing a task, the greater the lack of job satisfaction and the greater the increase in employee turnover within the organization. Conversely then, not having the skills to perform a job correctly can set up employees for failure and put the business at a less-than-competitive disadvantage.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Davis, R., Lombardo, M., Woods, D., Koper, C., & Hawkins, C. (2014). Civilian staff in policing: An assessment of the 2009 Byrne civilian hiring program, 11.

<sup>64</sup> Truitt, D. (2011). The effect of training and development on employee attitude as it relates to training and work proficiency, 2-3. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244011433338>

“Interviewing prospective applicants for employment with LASD and their references is a large part of the duties of background investigators. Accordingly, the department should invest in ongoing training, beginning with providing advanced interview training for all background investigators.

### **Recommendation 65: Invest in the professional development of background investigators**

Professional development provides staff with the latest skills to performing their duties, greater job satisfaction, and lower employee turnover.

### **Communication During the Background Investigations Process**

From interviews and presentations from command personnel it was stated that some background investigators need to focus more on treating applicants as customers and potential future partners, rather than as suspects. The belief was expressed that some investigators focus too heavily on trying to weed people out. From focus groups and interviews with current recruits and recent Academy graduates, the experiences described by this cohort included both highly positive feedback about their background investigators as well as some criticism that more closely aligned with the “weeding out” mentality. The same mixed experiences were also described about applicants’ experiences with their polygraph examiners.

Several comments expressed by both background personnel and Academy staff centered around their frustration that today’s applicants are not as well prepared or as willing to engage in the same due diligence in preparing for the hiring process and the training regimen as applicants did in prior years. There was some intimation of perhaps a leftover mentality of “this is what I went through, so this is why we do it.” During interviews with BI staff, some mentioned that they were opposed to allowing applicants to complete the personal history questionnaire (PHQ) online, rather than in person. One supervisor explained that the in-person process for completing the PHQ is more intimidating for the applicant and so he favors that method, believing that applicants might not be as truthful when they complete the PHQ in the comfort of their homes. Creating mobile access in eHire for completion of the PHQ and other HR forms was a positive innovation which has enabled LASD to shorten the hiring timeline.

It is important for all personnel involved in the hiring process to recognize that today’s applicants, including many who are millennials, may present unique challenges. The department can, and should, continue to maintain its high standards while adjusting to the needs of a new generation. Many other Southern California law enforcement agencies are competing with the LASD for the same, limited pool of highly qualified applicants. Some applicants will benefit from additional

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mentoring during the hiring process and those applicants might be drawn to the agencies that best provide a more customer-oriented focus.

This is an area where more analysis is warranted. In the meantime, more communication and additional training related to understanding these unique challenges along with a more customer-focused orientation for all those involved in the hiring process would be beneficial. The relationship between LASD hiring personnel and DST applicants should be a positive one. This may require a cultural shift to a friendlier and less confrontational relationship. In the long run, both the department and the future employees will benefit from having a more welcoming and hospitable approach to hiring new employees.

### **Recommendation 66: Evaluate the professional relationship between background investigators, polygraph examiners, and applicants**

LASD should develop a standardized customer focused orientation to improve communication/relationships with applicants and reduce attrition. A Customer Relationship Management Program should be considered.

Most BI employees reported having very little or no contact with recruiting or hiring personnel. Some stated that they keep getting assigned to the same applicants, over and over. If communication was improved, better and more correct information could be given to applicants. An example cited was that an applicant might ask a recruiter if marijuana use 20 years ago will be a problem. The recruiter will probably say no. The applicant will later disclose hundreds of marijuana uses to the BI and will be disqualified. It was further described that the Intake and the Background Units have much better communication because they are under the same command.

This condition underscores the need for increased synergy between recruiting and backgrounds, instead of these units representing separate silos which, at times, appear to be at odds with the overall hiring mission. Their primary collective goal is, and should be, the same – to recruit and hire the best candidates without spending excessive amounts of time on those who are not viable candidates. It is critically important to establish mechanisms to provide more formal and informal dialogue between Recruiting and Backgrounds, especially regarding hiring goals and strategies. This is another example where strategic planning and more effective communications would benefit the overall hiring and retention strategy.

## **Recommendation 67: Improve communication and coordination between background investigations unit and recruitment unit**

Establish mechanisms to provide more formal and informal dialogue between the Recruiting and Background units to ensure consistent information is provided to applicants and improve workload and case management.

### **Equipment for Background Investigations**

## **Recommendation 68: Provide background investigators with necessary equipment**

The equipment needs expressed by BI personnel included the following:

- Vehicles - Investigators share cars and often have to wait for an available vehicle to conduct an in-person check
- Laptops - Investigators spend a significant amount of time in field. They take written notes then have to re-enter the information when they return to the office
- Scanners and printers are needed in the offices

### **Additional Background Investigation Recommendations or Procedures to Consider**

The section that follows provides a listing of additional recommendations for consideration. Some of these recommendations may appear to be minor in nature, but those staff members making the recommendations to the project team felt strongly about their importance and their impact on the operations of the BI Unit. In addition to the recommendations above, listed below are other recommendations for LASD to consider:

- The West Background Investigations Unit is located at the Hall of Justice. There is currently not sufficient parking for the six investigators assigned there and it is difficult for applicants to find parking for their interviews at that location. We recommend that the LASD consider a more suitable location for this unit or find a remedy to the parking limitations.
- Background investigations are assigned according to the geographic location of the applicant's home residence. On the current BI form, the applicant's residence is located within the packet, making it more time-consuming to locate the address and assign investigations. The form could be revised to show the address of the candidate on the front page.

## Section V: Training Academy Report

The recommendations in this section are informed by (1) findings from three site visits performed by IACP and HumRRO in December 2018, January 2019, and March 2019 and (2) a subsequent literature review of best practices in law enforcement, military, and civilian organizations and (3) a review of data provided by the LASD.

### Current State Assessment

IACP project staff conducted interviews of Academy drill instructors, supervisors and commanders, recruits, and staff from other training-related functions including Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC) staff, Weapons Training Unit staff, and the field training coordinator. The team also conducted several focus groups with current recruits, recent Academy graduates, and Custody Assistants. Additionally, the team provided comprehensive questionnaires that were forwarded to both current recruits and recent graduates of the Academy that asked about their training experiences. The team members were also provided tours of the Biscailuz Training Academy, the North Academy at the College of the Canyons, the Sheriff's Training Academy and Regional Services (STARS) Center, the Emergency Vehicle Operations Center, and the Weapons Training Facility. The conditions identified and the related recommendations that encompass the training function are outlined in this report.

### Mission, Organizational Structure, and Staffing

#### Mission, Values, and Expectations

The mission statement, core values, and department creed for the LASD is listed on the department's website and is also contained in the Recruit Training Manual. They read as follows:

***Our Mission:***

*To enforce the law fairly and within constitutional authority;*

*To be proactive in our approach to crime prevention;*

*To enhance public trust through accountability;*

*To maintain a constitutionally sound and rehabilitative approach to incarceration;*

*To provide a safe and secure court system;*

*To maintain peace and order; and*

*To work in partnership with the communities we serve to ensure the highest possible quality of life.*

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### **Our Creed:**

*My goals are simple, I will always be painfully honest, work as hard as I can, learn as much as I can and hopefully make a difference in people's lives.*

*- Deputy David W. March EOW April 29, 2002*

### **Our Core Values:**

**COURAGE - COMPASSION - PROFESSIONALISM - ACCOUNTABILITY - RESPECT**

*With integrity, compassion, and courage, we serve our communities-- protecting life and property, being diligent and professional in our acts and deeds, holding ourselves and each other accountable for our actions at all times, while respecting the dignity and rights of all.*

*Earning the Public Trust Every Day!*

In addition, the Recruit Manual contains a letter of welcome from the Training Commander that conveys additional expectations about the training environment. It reads as follows:

*As Captain of the Training Bureau I extend to you my welcome to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Academy. You are now involved in the finest law enforcement training program in the nation. During Academy training you will receive many hours of quality training in all phases of law enforcement. Upon graduation you will have the basic background and foundation upon which to build your career as a law enforcement professional.*

*It is the goal of this Academy to prepare you to serve our communities in the most professional way possible. Nothing short of our maximum effort and your maximum effort will achieve this goal. Our standards are high, therefore, the training ahead of you will be demanding. Together we will be successful, provided you are willing to meet our standards in the areas of academics, ethics, leadership, general performance and physical training.*

*If you accept the expertise we will provide you, honestly give all you have, and truly care about your future in law enforcement, you will achieve that which only a few people have attained. Upon completion of this Academy you will join the ranks of the most professional law enforcement officers in the world.*

*Welcome aboard and good luck to each of you.*

It is quite evident from examining the above mission, creed, and core values, that the LASD projects an organizational focus that is committed to contemporary policing and correctional

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standards and practices. Additionally, the welcome letter from the Training Bureau Captain to new recruits sets a positive tone and emphasizes the tremendous pride the department has in the high standards and high quality of its recruit training program.

Those Academy staff members who were interviewed explained that the training and hiring functions are not strictly empirically and/or statistically driven. Instead, the mission of the Academy is driven by spirit, pride, and teamwork, and these concepts are conveyed to both staff and students alike. In short, the majority of those interviewed expressed a true passion for their work and related that these concepts, spirit, pride, and teamwork, are part of the culture and are expected.

### **Leadership Style**

The IACP found that the Academy has a clearly delineated chain of command. Of the staff members interviewed who expressed an opinion, almost all indicated a good relationship with their immediate supervisor and that they felt supported, that they had open communication with their supervisor, and that their supervisor was competent and treated them fairly and appropriately. Those interviewed also described a pattern of leadership internally that is varied and contingency/situationally-based. Supervisors and command staff seem to approach leadership matters in a manner that fits the issue at hand, in consideration of the capabilities and experience level of those who must carry out the work. Most supervisors and staff members related that the senior leadership are very interested and engaged in their subordinates' work. The only major concern about the Academy's supervisory/leadership team was that, due to long-term injuries, two of the five recruit class supervisors (sergeants) were unable to perform their duties and had been away from the Academy for considerable periods of time.

The IACP project team had an opportunity to observe Academy leaders and instructors in various settings and in interviews with them. Based on the interviews, the review of various Academy documents and reports, and the observations of the team, it was found that the leadership is, at all levels of the Academy, competent and engaged, and concerned with making decisions that benefit the Academy and the department. From the IACP's vantage point, Academy leaders are working collaboratively to address the various issues that arise in the training process of Deputy Sheriff Trainees. As noted above, these leaders are working hard to do the right things and have had remarkable success in spite of the many challenges facing the training staff, especially regarding the size and number of recruit classes, significant facility limitations, and woefully inadequate administrative and technological support and infrastructure.

## **Management and Supervision**

Based on staff interviews and observations of the IACP team, the leadership at the LASD Academy embraces a decentralized form of management and supervision, allowing supervisors and individual staff members to do their job, without interference and undue micromanaging. In discussions with supervisors, they explained that the Academy command staff outlines their expectations for them through written communication and through group and individual meetings.

In describing the level of autonomy they have, supervisors explained in the interviews that they have a high level of latitude to make decisions. They feel empowered to act, but also know that they are responsible for making sure that commanders know what is happening within their units. Supervisors also explained that even though they have the authority to make decisions on their own, they also know that they have support available, should they need to seek assistance or guidance.

The process was described as one that is a top-down strategy, wherein the command staff identifies performance expectations, and these are pushed down through the section supervisors to the staff members. This process is designed to ensure that everyone is aware of what the expectations are for them in their respective roles.

## **Communication**

During interviews with staff, the project team inquired about various aspects of organizational communication at the Academy. Academy staff indicated that depending on the issue, communication may occur in the form of face to face, email, staff meetings, or even written memoranda for more formal or important communication. Not unlike conditions at many other agencies that the IACP has studied, staff at the LASD Academy described a desire for improved communication at all levels.

It was obvious during the interviews that good channels of communication have been established at the Academy, but that quality communication sometimes falters because of the high volume of training, busy schedules, and the fact that some of the training occurs at off-site locations. Unit staff meetings were described as rare occurrences, although informal meetings often take place to discuss specific issues.

## **Organizational Structure and Staffing**

The Training Bureau provides certified training for recruits, deputies, police officers, reserve deputies/officers, custody assistants, and security officers. In addition, it facilitates training of

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law enforcement technicians and other civilian staff and maintains the education and training records for department members. The bureau provides training on perishable skills in the areas of Use of Weapons, Emergency Driving (EVOC), and Use of Force; it also provides Advanced Officer Training Classes, Patrol School, and Sergeant's Supervisor School.

The LASD Recruit Training Unit (RTU) is a sub-unit within the department's Training Bureau. The Commander of the Training Bureau is a Sheriff's Captain. A Sheriff's Lieutenant is the commander of the Recruit Training Unit. The Recruit Training Unit is responsible for presenting the Basic California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Academy training to Deputy Sheriff Trainees and training for Custody Assistants. RTU staff have indicated that due to the recent increases in the size of Deputy Sheriff Recruit classes, the responsibility for training Custody Assistants is currently the responsibility of the Custody Training Unit.

The authorized staffing for the Recruit Training Unit includes:

- (1) Lieutenant
- (5) Sergeants
- (27) Deputy Sheriffs
- (2) Operations Assistants
- (1) Clerk

All RTU Staff are certified through the POST as Academy Instructors, and many are also certified as Force Training instructors, Physical Training instructors, Scenario Testing Managers and/or Test Administrators. RTU Staff regularly assist the Advanced Officer Training and Field Operations Training Units in scenario-based training. Assigned Staff conduct "Pre-Academy Physical Training" in the evenings, twice a week, at both the north and south training facilities. And, RTU staff regularly provide assistance with ceremonial duties as members of the Honor Guard/Color Guard Detail. Two of the five Sergeants are currently out on long-term injury status as is the assigned clerk.

The Weapons Training Unit consists of staff assigned to the Biscailuz Center Range (currently closed), the Pitchess Detention Center Range, and the Tactics and Survival unit. The current staffing at the Pitchess Detention Center Range where recruit training occurs, includes:

- (2) Sergeants
- (17) Deputy Firearms Instructors (full-time)
- (5) Reserve Deputy Instructors, utilized for recruit training

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- (2) Law Enforcement Technicians, a non-sworn classification who assist with administrative duties, training records, supplies, and facility maintenance.

The Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC) staff is responsible for all vehicle training and testing for department members. The current authorized staffing for the EVOC Unit includes

- (1) Sergeant
- (11) Deputy Sheriffs
- (1) Law Enforcement Technician
- (1) Operations Assistant.

### **Process for Recruitment, Selection and Retention of Instructors**

The selection and assignment of Academy instructors can have lasting influences on a law enforcement agency. In the case of instructors who teach and interact with recruits, these men and women are not only trainers, but also coaches, counselors, and role models. The project team recommends only the very best and most highly qualified candidates be selected to be Academy instructors. The LASD seeks to achieve this goal by utilizing a formal selection process that measures the aptitude and qualifications of applicants. Doing so also promotes fair and transparent practices in the recruitment and selection of new instructors. Not only does the Academy benefit from selecting instructors who successfully demonstrate the specific traits and qualifications necessary to succeed as an instructor, but instructors will likely have a stronger sense of having earned their position at the Academy.

There is a well-defined formal selection process for filling Academy instructor vacancies. This process is overseen by the department's Coveted Testing Unit. For these positions, announcements are advertised department-wide. Interested candidates can submit an application listing their qualifications. Those who meet the minimum qualifications for the position must participate in a structured interview and a competency demonstration exercise. Applicants must also pass a multiple choice written situational judgement test. A physical test is also required for positions that require a fitness component. Qualified applicants undergo an internal background review and are then placed on an eligibility list. When a vacancy occurs, candidates are selected based on their rank order score in the selection process.

Retaining a consistent, motivated, qualified, and productive workforce is imperative to meeting organizational goals. Therefore, retention strategies are important for the Academy leadership to implement. All Academy instructors receive a 5.5 percent pay incentive throughout the duration of their assignment. While the extra pay is likely very much appreciated, there is much

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more that leaders can do to inspire their employees and to make them feel valued and appreciated to be part of the Academy team. One such action would be to acknowledge and reward individual and team contributions in the workforce. This does not necessarily require doing so through the formal, departmental awards programs. Initiatives such as providing informal unit awards, organizing staff luncheons and cookouts, or just giving out the occasional “thank you” in person from the command staff can go far to promote harmony and good feelings in the workplace. In their book, *The Leadership Challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations*, the authors expressed the following about how effective leaders go out of their way to express appreciation for exemplary performance:

Exemplary leaders recognize and reward what individuals do to contribute to the vision and values of the organization. These leaders express their appreciation far beyond the limits of the organization’s formal systems. They enjoy being spontaneous and creative in saying thank you. Personalizing recognition requires knowing what’s appropriate individually and culturally.<sup>65</sup>

We believe that selecting and retaining the best trainers to be part of the Academy staff is paramount to the success of the training programs. Retaining a quality workforce is equally important, and we encourage the Academy leadership to continue to be creative in identifying strategies to make the staff feel valued and appreciated.

### **Mentoring and Coaching**

The successful transition from a field assignment into a specialized unit often requires specific training geared to the performance standards of the specialty unit. Academy instructors must not only be familiar with the subject areas and the curriculum they teach, but must also learn to organize lessons, manage time allotment and classroom activities, and most importantly, effectively engage their students. These skills often take time to develop and are critically important aspects of helping students to learn. This is especially true of assignments at the Academy. This transition can be further enhanced through effective and meaningful mentoring and coaching, as studies have shown that job proficiency is enhanced when employees receive effective coaching.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2012). *The Leadership Challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations* (5th ed.). San Francisco, California: The Leadership Challenge.

<sup>66</sup> Truitt, D. *The Effect of Training and Development on Employee Attitude as it Relates to Training and Work Proficiency*. 2010.

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Mentoring is an intentional, long-term career developmental relationship among a senior instructor and a less-experienced instructor in their workplace. The purpose of mentoring is lifelong learning, professional advancement, engagement, and succession planning.<sup>67</sup> Instructors who begin their tenure at the Academy significantly benefit from mentoring because it is associated with employee engagement and increased employee satisfaction.

Through interviews with Academy supervisors and instructors, we learned that new instructors at the Academy are paired with a veteran instructor to assist them as they learn and develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities that are unique to the training assignment. When asked what might have better prepared these new instructors for their teaching role at the Academy, most indicated that more practice with public speaking, learning more effective strategies for teaching to a large group of students, and understanding different learning styles would have been beneficial. The project team views the formal process of mentoring new instructors at the Academy as a best practice and applaud the LASD for providing their new instructors with this opportunity to learn from those who have a broader level of experience.

### **Professional Development of Instructors**

Studies of top performers strongly suggest that people require a supportive environment in order to excel.<sup>68</sup> Staff interviewed by the project team indicated that, due to the high volume of training and heavy workload, Academy instructors are rarely sent to training opportunities to promote career and skill development beyond what is required for certification. The project team notes that when high-potential, highly motivated employees are presented with the chance to learn, lead, and/or advance, they will take advantage of those opportunities. Therefore, it is critical for agencies to cultivate and guide these quality employees.

It was apparent to the project team that the Academy command staff is sincerely interested in the professional development of the training staff but, according to those interviewed, the staffing demands and budgetary limitations are such that they have been unable to extend many opportunities to their instructors for other than required professional development. As a means to provide more instructional skills development and to achieve more consistency among instructors, this is an area where the project team encourages the department to support the Academy more with staffing and funding resources.

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<sup>67</sup> Jakubik, L. D., Weese, M. M., Eliades, A. B., & Huth, J. J. (2017). Mentoring in the Career Continuum of a Nurse: Clarifying Purpose and Timing. *Pediatric Nursing*, 43(3), 149-152.

<sup>68</sup> Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2012). *The Leadership Challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations* (5th ed.). San Francisco, California: The Leadership Challenge.

## Staffing and Workload Examination

The project team recognizes that personnel allocation is an imperfect process. In certain areas within police agencies, such as patrol and investigative functions, workload analysis and staffing recommendations, while still imperfect, are easier to estimate based on the various data available to evaluate. In the case of Academy operations, it is much more difficult to determine ideal staffing levels, as the workload often fluctuates dependent upon the specific training that is occurring at any given time and by variances of the size of the classes that are in session.

For this study, the IACP examined the current staffing levels within the LASD RTU and conducted interviews of Academy staff regarding their individual and unit workload demands and staffing needs. Accordingly, the analysis of various workload and operational factors rely mostly on data specific to the LASD Academy. Within the RTU, each recruit class (usually 100 recruits – 90 LASD DSTs and 10 recruits from outside agencies) has a training sergeant and 7-8 training instructors assigned.

Student to instructor ratios vary depending on the training topics being conducted. For some classroom presentations, there is only one instructor assigned for the entire class of 100 students. For high risk training, such as weapons and EVOG training, the LASD has a lower student to instructor ratio. Firearms training is always conducted with a ratio of one instructor for every five students while EVOG training utilizes a ratio of one instructor for every one student in some of the “behind the wheel” training exercises. The Field Operations Training Unit, which provides defensive tactics training to recruits, also strives to maintain a low (5 to 1) student to instructor ratio in order to enhance learning, although with class sizes as large as they are at the LASD and with only nine instructors assigned to the unit, this is often not possible. It is important to strive for as low a student to instructor ratio as possible, especially for physical skills training (e.g., searching, handcuffing, defensive tactics) where monitoring proper tactics, providing quality feedback, and creating opportunities for repetition of the skills being taught are critically important in order to enhance learning.

The project team did not examine staffing levels at other law enforcement training academies to look at benchmarks and metrics for comparison because these comparisons can have significant limitations. As an example, there are myriad variances in the types of operational sub-units assigned to the other training academies as well as to the number of, and the size of, recruit classes in session at any one time or in any one location.

The IACP looked to a three-year study of 591 law enforcement training academies that was conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to determine

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benchmarks for the average size of recruit classes at academies across the U.S. That study determined that, on average, between 2011 and 2013, academies held a median of six training classes, or two classes per year. For municipal police academies, the median smallest class size was 16 recruits, and the median largest class size was 28 recruits. Overall, there was a large range of class sizes.<sup>69</sup>

It is obvious that the size of the recruit classes at the Academy (up to 100 recruits in each class) and eight scheduled classes annually far exceeds the average class size for most other training academies, and this creates many challenges for both staff and students. Many instructors indicated that it is difficult for them to request time off for additional training or even for vacation time as their training responsibilities have increased significantly. The Academy command staff estimated that they need a 25 percent increase in basic training instructors to maintain the current pace of training and to allow employees appropriate time off.

To identify staffing needs, the IACP primarily looked at recent and projected increases in the size of recruit classes as well as feedback provided by the Academy leadership and training staff. The project team found that the majority of those interviewed identified their individual recruit training team's current staffing levels, with the exception of administrative support, to be adequate but less than ideal. Interviewees also indicated that if the department were to increase the number of recruit classes scheduled each year, consistent with the current plan, additional instructors, supervisors, and administrative support would be necessary to effectively perform their duties. Several pertinent examples are provided:

- Recruit class sizes have increased to near classroom capacity since 2017. For the 15 recruit classes conducted from January 2017 to March 2019, the average number of recruits starting these sessions was 91 students.
- Due to the increase in the size of the recent recruit classes, trainees are afforded fewer repetitions during training related to scenario and physical skills training (searching, handcuffing, etc.).
- From interviews with the EVOC staff, the project team learned that during the County Fair in September 2018, the EVOC staff worked two consecutive 20-hour days on every Monday and Tuesday for four weeks while the fair was closed, in order to complete the POST-required EVOC training for two recruit classes. Not only is that

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<sup>69</sup> Reaves, Brian A., B.A. (2016). Ph.D., BJS Statistician. State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

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indicative of the scheduling challenges faced by the EVOC staff at the fairgrounds, but it also has potential safety implications that need to be recognized.

- The Weapons Training unit and EVOC unit are currently understaffed. POST has mandates for recruit training for both specialty areas, and this training takes up approximately 85% of the time available in the schedules at these facilities. POST also has mandates refresher training for veteran deputies, and the Academy has been challenged to try to provide this required in-service training.

Based on the feedback from the Academy staff and the projected continued large size of recruit classes and the increase in the number of classes, the project team identified that additional staffing will be necessary to support both the current workload and these anticipated workload projections. The Academy has a need to supplement the basic recruit training with additional instructors, supervisors, and administrative personnel. Additionally, both the EVOC and the Weapons Training units will need increased staffing during peak periods of training in order to meet the increased training demands that will result from the projected hiring goals of the department. The project team recommends that LASD continue to monitor the changing workload demands in each of the sub-group areas and assure that staffing is adjusted in those areas as conditions change.

### Summary

The Academy would not be successful without the dedicated and motivated team of instructors and civilian staff behind it. The IACP determined through staff interviews that the training team is highly motivated to perform at its best. Their goal is to train and develop recruits to perform confidently and successfully during their careers as Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriffs. The following recommendations will assist the Academy and its staff in achieving its aims.

#### **Recommendation 69: Engage a process to strategically align the department's training operations**

Managing change and providing clarity of mission requires formal planning. A process to strategically align the department's training processes with clear goals and objectives will facilitate achievement of desired training outcomes. The strategic plan should contain broad goals that address achieving excellence in all areas of educational and training programs. Specific objectives in this plan should address the following: the training and developing new personnel for the specific job tasks they will be performing; the development of highly-trained and highly-skilled staff; the efficient and effective operation of the Academy, strategies for reducing training injuries and total attrition; and, developing strategies for

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maintaining strong internal and external communications. The plan should also emphasize the Academy's mission and core values and how these align with expectations for staff performance. The Academy staff should be included in a process to provide input into the development of the strategic plan. This will aid in promoting buy-in and ownership toward achieving the Academy's strategic goals.

### **Recommendation 70: Add or supplement the basic training staff to meet increased Academy volume**

In recent years, the size of the recruit classes at the Academy has increased, and the current hiring goals for the LASD, project adding additional classes in the years ahead. Numerous Academy staff, supervisors, and the command staff indicated that the current staffing levels for recruit training are not sufficient. Two of the five Recruit Team supervisors (sergeants) and one administrative person has been on long-term injury leave, thereby further challenging the workload of the training staff. The IACP recommends that the LASD assure that adequate numbers of instructors, supervisors, and administrative support personnel are added as the volume of recruit training is increased. For this, the department will need to continue to monitor, quantify, and evaluate the workload of the Recruit Training staff as the number of recruit training classes increases as planned.

### **Recommendation 71: Conduct short- and long-term analysis of staffing and workload demands for the Weapons Training Unit**

The staff in the Weapons Training Unit provides twelve 8-hour days (96 hours) of range training to each recruit class, plus an additional five-hour lecture on weapons safety. The Weapons Training Unit staff is responsible for providing an additional eight hours of handgun and shotgun training to the entire department every two years. In 2018, they provided 14,000 8-hour training slots. They also provide patrol rifle training to department personnel but, due to heavy workload demand to complete recruit training, were forced to cancel several patrol rifle classes. The LASD should monitor, quantify, and evaluate the workload in the Weapons Training Unit.

### **Recommendation 72: Enhance internal communication within the Academy**

To assure that effective communication is ongoing, consider conducting regularly scheduled staff meetings to include occasional all-hands staff meetings. Meeting locations should occasionally be rotated, so that staff stationed outside of the main Academy will feel more connected to the team. Other, less formal opportunities for Academy leaders and staff to interact, should also be considered.

## **Recommendation 73: Develop proactive measures for the professional development and retention of training staff**

In order to develop competent and credible trainers, academies must invest significantly in the professional development of their training staff. This is accomplished through scheduling attendance at specialized training courses in their specific areas of instruction and by bringing outside trainers to the Academy to conduct advanced instructor development courses. Once trained, it is important to encourage and support the ongoing professional development of staff.

It is equally important to retain these highly trained instructors. In addition to the professional development of instructors, the LASD should explore additional strategies to retain their best instructors. Some recommended strategies would include the following: assuring a culture of professionalism, integrity, mutual respect, and open communication; providing clear expectations to all instructors; finding opportunities to make staff feel valued; and assuring that highly productive staff members are not overburdened.

## **Deputy Sheriff Trainee Attrition Root Causes**

The cost associated with training of new Deputy Sheriffs is a huge initial investment for departments. Prior to arriving for the start of the Academy, agencies have already invested significant time, money, and resources to hire and evaluate successful applicants. Successful completion of the recruit Academy is a condition of employment and is considered a continuation of the selection and hiring process.

While a desired outcome during academy training is to create an environment where every recruit has the opportunity to be successful, it is most often the case that not every recruit who enters the sheriff's academy will graduate. This condition is to be expected, as the demands of the law enforcement profession require that recruits demonstrate competencies in myriad academic, physical, and decision-making skills. Considering the investment of time and resources associated with hiring and training new deputies, agencies should and must strive to identify root causes of attrition, and where, appropriate, seek remedies to minimize these conditions.

The LASD has worked hard to try to meet the staffing demands of the department, but like many agencies, it faces significant hiring challenges, given the current state of law enforcement. Attrition exacerbates this condition. Regardless of how or why trainees leave the Academy, elevated levels of attrition force the agency to place greater emphasis on recruiting and hiring

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more deputies. Because of this, it is important to identify when and why recruits leave, and to initiate steps to minimize the risk of unwanted or unnecessary separations.

### **Attrition at the LASD Academy**

In studies of other law enforcement agencies, the IACP has found that in many cases, agencies are able to find and hire candidates that seem qualified, but for one reason or another, those candidates do not successfully complete the Academy. Hiring law enforcement officers is costly, and organizations cannot afford to use a process that does not produce trainees whom the agency can ultimately deploy. If an agency has a strong process for recruiting and hiring, but it ultimately fails to develop those candidates into useful resources for the organization, associated costs, both hard and soft, can multiply.

Determining what is a high attrition rate is difficult, as there can be many factors that affect why recruits do not complete the Academy. However, by examining attrition data from the Academy and associate data from other sources the LASD can assess the level of attrition in comparison to different agencies.

For this study, the IACP evaluated data from the LASD recruit training classes from January 30, 2017 (start of Class 421) to March 29, 2019 (completion of Class 435). During this time period, recruit training occurred at two locations: the Biscailuz (BC) Training Academy in East Los Angeles and at the North Academy, a satellite facility which is located on the campus of the College of the Canyons (COC) in Valencia. Three overlapping recruit classes of up to 100 students per class are conducted twice each year at the BC facility (11 classes during the study period), while a single class of up to 90 students is conducted twice each year at the COC (four classes during the study period). The LASD also provides recruit training to several outside police agencies at both training sites.

The tables below provide a summary of the average attrition rate for these 15 training classes (Class 421 to Class 435) along with the average attrition rate at each training location. Additional tables reflecting each specific classes' attrition rate can be found in Appendix D.

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## Attrition Rates for Classes 421 – 435 (2017-2019)

Table 10: Total Attrition (BC Academy Only)

Category	Started		Graduated		Attrition	
<b><u>LASD Recruits</u></b>						
Male	719	80.5%	587	132	18.36%	
Female	174	19.5%	121	53	30.46%	
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>20.72%</b>	
<b><u>Participating Agency Recruits</u></b>						
Male	105	82.0%	89	16	15.24%	
Female	23	18.0%	17	6	26.09%	
<b>Total Other Agencies</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17.19%</b>	
<b>Total BC Academy</b>	<b>1,021</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>20.27%</b>	

Source: LASD provided data

Table 11: Total Attrition (COC Academy Only)

Category	Started		Graduated		Attrition	
<b><u>LASD Recruits</u></b>						
Male	259	81.2%	213	46	17.8%	
Female	60	18.8%	44	16	26.7%	
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	
<b><u>Participating Agency Recruits</u></b>						
Male	16	76.2%	14	2	12.5%	
Female	5	23.8%	4	1	20.0%	
<b>Total Other Agencies</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	
<b>Total COC Academy</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	

Source: LASD provided data

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Table 12: Total Attrition (BC and COC Combined)

Category	Started		Graduated	Attrition	
<b><u>LASD Recruits</u></b>					
Male	978	80.7%	800	178	18.2%
Female	234	19.3%	165	69	29.5%
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
<b><u>Participating Agency Recruits</u></b>					
Male	121	81.2%	103	18	14.9%
Female	28	18.8%	21	7	25.0%
<b>Total Other Agencies</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
<b>Total All Academies</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,089</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>20.0%</b>

Source: LASD provided data

As can be determined from attrition data in the tables above, since January 2017, the LASD hired 1,212 Deputy Sheriff Trainees for academy training and 247 new hires either did not pass the Academy, voluntarily quit, or were involuntarily separated. Like many other U.S. law enforcement agencies, attrition in general at the LASD presents an ongoing challenge in terms of maintaining adequate staffing.

The average attrition rate over these 15 academy classes is significant, at 20.4 percent as shown in Table 12 above. The LASD also provided general attrition data for previous recruit training classes that occurred between January 18, 2012 and May 5, 2017 (Classes 387 – 420). The average attrition for all of these classes during this five-year span was 20 percent. Further, attrition by gender indicates that LASD female recruits fail to successfully complete the Academy at a much higher percentage (29.5 percent) than their male counterparts (18.2 percent). Attrition for all outside agency trainees is lower for both male and female recruits than it is for LASD recruits and is also reflected in the tables above. A table containing the specific attrition rate for each of these previous classes can be found in Appendix D.

The LASD also provided data related to the race and ethnicity of LASD trainees who attended recruit training during the same time period. The tables below reflect Academy attrition by both combined gender and ethnicity and by ethnicity alone. These totals do not include trainees from the outside agencies.

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## Attrition by Ethnicity 421 – 435 (2017-2019)

Table 13: LASD Male Recruits – Attrition by Ethnicity

Category	Started		Graduated	Attrition	
Hispanic	594	60.7%	492	102	17.2%
White	234	23.9%	194	40	17.1%
African American	53	5.4%	39	14	26.4%
American Indian	17	1.7%	14	3	17.7%
Asian	55	5.6%	40	15	27.3%
Filipino	25	2.6%	20	5	20.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>18.3%</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Table 14: LASD Female Recruits – Attrition by Ethnicity

Category	Started		Graduated	Attrition	
Hispanic	170	72.7%	113	57	33.5%
White	38	16.2%	28	10	26.3%
African American	10	4.3%	8	2	20.0%
American Indian	6	2.6%	6	0	0
Asian	10	4.3%	6	4	40.0%
Filipino	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>31.3%</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Table 15: LASD All Recruits – Attrition by Ethnicity

Category	Started		Graduated	Attrition	
Hispanic	764	63.0%	605	159	20.8%
White	272	22.4%	222	50	18.4%
African American	63	5.2%	47	16	25.4%
American Indian	23	1.9%	20	3	13.0%
Asian	65	5.4%	46	19	29.2%
Filipino	25	2.1%	20	5	20.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>20.8%</b>

Source: LASD provided data

From the tables above, it can be determined that the highest attrition for male recruits involved Asian trainees (27 percent), followed by African-Americans (26 percent), and Filipinos (20 percent). White males had the lowest attrition (17 percent), followed by Hispanics (17 percent) and American Indian male recruits (18 percent). Asian recruits also had the highest attrition for females with 40 percent, followed by Hispanics (34 percent), and Whites (26 percent). African-American females had the lowest attrition at 20 percent.

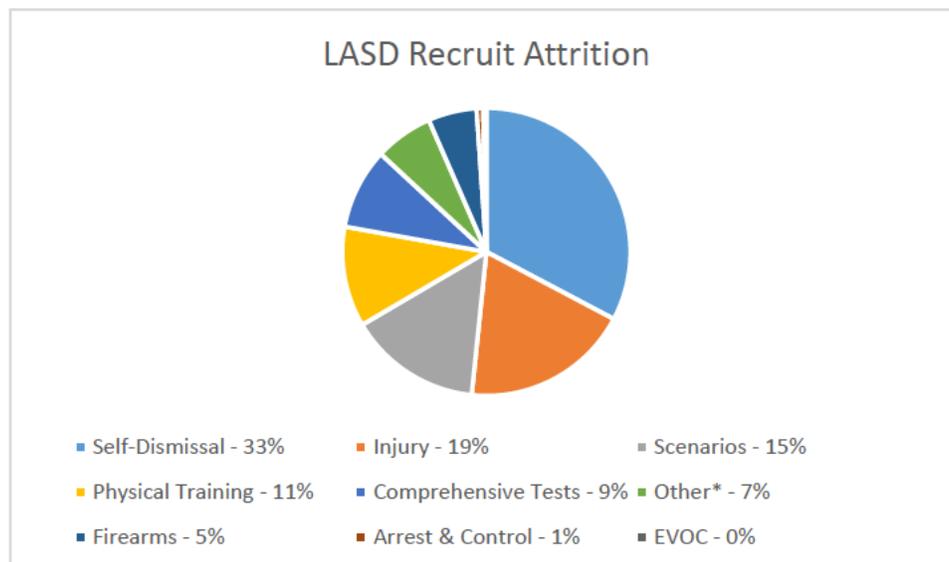
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When combining male and female attrition by ethnicity, Asian recruits have the highest attrition (29 percent), followed by African-Americans (25 percent), Hispanics (21 percent), and Filipinos (20 percent). American Indians had the lowest attrition (13percent) followed by White trainees (18 percent).

Finally, the project team reviewed attrition data in relation to the size of recruit classes (the number of students who started an academy class) for both the periods 2012 to 2017 (Class 387-420) and 2017 to 2019 (Class 421-435). Class sizes were broken down into enrollment groups as follows: 60-69 students, 70-79 students, 80-89 students, 90-99 students, and 100 or more students. As can be seen in the tables in Appendix D, for the most recent time period (2017-2019), the average attrition for smaller classes generally reflected a lower rate than the average attrition for larger classes did. For the earlier time period (2012-2017), the opposite was true. The project team is hesitant, however, to offer any conclusions about the relationship between attrition and class size since there was significant variance in attrition rates for individual classes within each enrollment group.

### Reasons for Attrition at the LASD Recruit Academy

Further details of the specific reasons for Academy attrition in each of the previous 15 recruit training classes at the LASD are shown in the chart and table below.<sup>70</sup>



\* Violation of Rule and Regulations or violation of conduct.

<sup>70</sup> Source: LASD Training Academy

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A review of the Academy training attrition data revealed that the highest causes of attrition were self-dismissal (voluntary resignations) at 33 percent, followed by injuries (19 percent), scenario failures (15 percent), and physical training failures (11 percent). Comprehensive test failures, firearms, arrest and control, EVOC, and rule violations each accounted for less than 10 percent of attrition and appear to be well within or, in most cases, well below averages when compared to other academies the IACP has studied.

Attrition factors related to injuries and physical training failures will be discussed in more detail in other sections of this report. The tables below provide a further analysis of self-dismissal reasons.

**Table 16: Reasons for Recruit Attrition (Class 421-435)**

Reason	Number	Percent
Self-Dismissal (Voluntary Resignation)	90	33%
Injury	52	19%
Scenarios	41	15%
Physical Training	31	11%
Comprehensive Tests	25	9%
Other (violation of Rule and Regulations or violation of conduct)	18	7%
Firearms	15	5%
Arrest and Control	2	1%
Emergency Vehicle Operations (EVOC)	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>275*</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: LASD provided data

\*272 total entries (3 recruits were counted under 2 different attrition categories). Eight recruits failed out of a second Academy class.

Additional information was provided about reasons offered by the 90 recruits who voluntarily resigned from the Academy during the above timeframe. The data provided by the Academy indicated that the most common reasons cited for self-dismissals included the job “not (being) for me” (28 percent), resigning in lieu of dismissal (24 percent), and for other personal reasons (23 percent). Family reasons, not returning (no show) to the Academy, and military obligations each accounted for smaller percentages of self-dismissals.

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Table 17: Self-Dismissal Categories (Class 421-435)

Self-Dismissal Categories	Number	Percent
Not for me	25	28%
In lieu of dismissal	22	24%
Personal	21	23%
Other	11	12%
Family	6	7%
No show	4	4%
Military	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>99%*</b>

Source: LASD provided data

\*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

## National Attrition Data for Law Enforcement Academies

As was stated previously, determining what is a high attrition rate is difficult, as there can be myriad factors that affect why recruits do not complete the basic academy. However, data from the Academy can be compared with data from other sources to assess the level of attrition at the LASD in comparison to different agencies.

First, the IACP turned to a national study of 591 participating state and local law enforcement training academies that was conducted by BJS. In that study, BJS determined that 45,000 recruits entered a basic law enforcement-training program across the country each year between 2011 and 2013. About half (48 percent) of recruits were trained by academies using a training model that was more stress than non-stress oriented in its approach. About a fifth (18 percent) of recruits were trained by academies that maintained more of a non-stress environment. A third (34 percent) of recruits were trained in academies that balanced the two approaches. In academies that used an all or mostly non-stress training environment, 91 percent of recruits who started a basic training program completed it, compared to 85 percent in other academies that are stress oriented. This equates to an attrition rate of 15 percent for majority of the training academies throughout the country and a nine percent attrition at the academies with low-stress training environments.<sup>71</sup>

The IACP is also able to compare attrition rates from six recent IACP studies. These rates include all academy separations combined, including physical training and firearms failures, academic failures, voluntary resignations, and dismissals. A review of the academy training attrition data

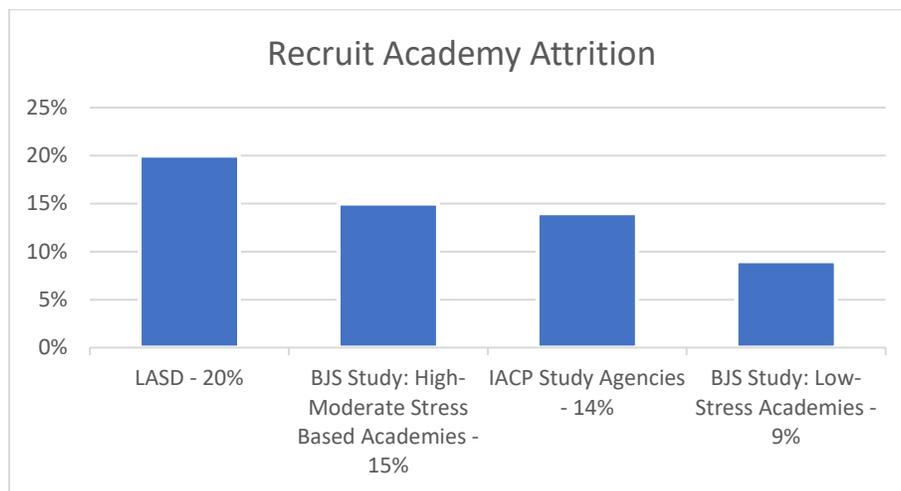
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<sup>71</sup> Reaves, Brian A., B.A. (2016). Ph.D., BJS Statistician. State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Page 11).

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from these studies revealed the sample agencies hired 3,861 trainees and 501 of those recruits dropped out of the Academy. This represents a 13.98 percent failure rate. The most commonly cited reasons for dropping from the Academy were academics and physical fitness. Several other reasons could be categorized under hand-eye coordination related activities including emergency vehicle operations course (EVOC), firearms, and defensive tactics. Other reasons cited included stress and personal reasons.<sup>72</sup>

In reviewing the attrition data from the BJS study and the data from the six recent IACP studies, the LASD attrition rates as cause for concern. The attrition rate for the LASD's recruit program is higher (at 20.38 percent) than all the other academies studied. This is a significant difference and clearly a major shortfall in the LASD's goal to meet its staffing objectives and retain a high-quality workforce.



The Academy attrition rate, combined with the department's normal attrition rate, adds to the critical staffing shortfalls the LASD is facing. The analysis of this variance indicates the likely causes of attrition are due to one or more of the following factors: the quality of the candidates hired; the quality of the vetting in the hiring process; and/or conditions in the training environment. Indicating these items as causation factors is not a criticism of the LASD. Hiring and retaining quality applicants is one of the most daunting challenges that law enforcement agencies face today. Rather, identifying these issues is important in assisting the LASD to focus more on the following areas:

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<sup>72</sup> Source: Recruiting for Diversity in the 21st Century: Lessons Learned from 10 Cities. A Study by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, February 2017. Page 37.

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- The quality of Deputy Sheriff hires
- Addressing the administrative burdens of the recruiting and hiring processes
- Maximizing the number of high-quality recruits
- Ensuring an effective and collaborative hiring process
- Evaluating causation and minimizing dropout rates during academy training

The data provided were insufficient to determine the specific reasons why the self-dismissal (voluntary resignation) rate is so high (33 percent) at the LASD. The IACP is aware from previous studies that recruits voluntarily leave academy training for a variety of reasons. The three most common reasons cited were academics, unpreparedness for the job overall (motivation), and poor physical condition. Other factors mentioned include injury, family and personal matters, and the demands of the job being too stressful. It is likely that some of the same reasons cited by the previous study agencies also apply to the LASD; however, further study is necessary in order to determine if any unwarranted or unnecessary training-related or personnel practices are causing these actions.

### **“Black Monday” Attrition**

During interviews and focus groups with both Academy staff and recruits, “Black Monday” was mentioned as an event where self-dismissals were described as a regular occurrence. The Deputy Sheriff Recruit training program is currently 20 weeks long. The first few days primarily consist of personnel-related, administrative, and specialty training courses provided by non-Academy personnel. The next phase begins with “Black Monday” and the first full week of exposure of the recruits to the Academy’s staff Drill Instructors (DIs). From interviews with both recruits and Academy staff, as well as from internal surveys of current recruits and recent Academy graduates, this initial orientation to the Academy atmosphere has been described as highly stressful and even chaotic. Academy staff and recruits alike have indicated that approximately five percent of the recruit class leaves the Academy on “Black Monday” or later during that first chaotic week. Some of the descriptions of staff/recruit interactions during that orientation week include screaming at recruits for made-up infractions, requiring recruits to run up a steep concrete hill (the green mile) in business attire and dress shoes, and lifting their briefcases over their heads while dressed in business attire for long periods of time as punishment for minor or made-up infractions.

Most of those interviewed, including supervisory Academy staff, have justified the existence of a highly stressful initial orientation to the Academy, despite the continual attrition that coincides

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with this time period. The rationale and justification for such harsh treatment is that after graduation, the deputy's first day in the jail is going to be stressful, so the recruit should get exposed to a high stress environment at the Academy. Staff have further explained that the high stress environment is good for discipline as it helps "break the recruits down," it develops strong "command presence" personalities, and it teaches recruits to perform under pressure. Also, almost surprisingly, many recruits who were interviewed also expressed justification for the high stress disciplinary climate that exists at the Academy.

The Academy staff and supervisors assert that the DIs are capable of "modulating" the stress environment, "transitioning from DI mode to teaching mode, and back to DI mode" depending on the demeanor of the class or as other circumstances warrant such changes. Both staff and recruits stated that the high stress environment is not conducive to a general atmosphere of safety in dialogue where recruits would feel comfortable approaching most of the staff. Several of those interviewed indicated that some mentoring does occur during recruit training, especially in the later weeks of the Academy, but that very little mentoring of recruits by staff occurs early in the training program. Many staff have justified the resignations that occur around "Black Monday" as necessary, since those recruits who resign are believed to be ill-prepared for the rigors of the Academy.

The department invests considerable staff time and money to recruit and hire every trainee who is selected to attend the Academy. While it is difficult to accurately determine how many self-dismissals may be related to the highly stressful disciplinary orientation known as "Black Monday," it is important for the LASD to try to understand why trainees voluntarily leave recruit training. Further discussions about the efficacy of high-stress academy training will be addressed elsewhere in this report in the section on *Cultural Approach for Academy Learning*, but a core question to consider regarding attrition is at what point does screaming and imposition of punishment for minor or non-existent infractions lose its intended value (to help prepare recruits to deal with stressful situations), and instead, become detrimental to the welfare and well-being of the recruits and a cause of unnecessary attrition.

A further examination of the average number of training days completed prior to a self-dismissal revealed that, on average, 80 percent of all self-dismissals occurred within the first three weeks (15 days) of recruit training. The reasons cited were "not for me" (10.5 days), "in lieu of dismissal" (15 days), "personal" (15.5 days), and "no show" (5 days). There was also one self-dismissal for military service reasons (10 days). Further study will be necessary to determine the extent to which the "Black Monday" environment may be contributing to unnecessary or unwarranted resignations.

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**Table 18: Average Number of Days Completed for Each Self-dismissal Category**

Self-Dismissal Categories	Percentage	Average Number of Training Days Completed
Not for me	28%	10.5
In lieu of dismissal	24%	15.28
Personal	23%	15.5
Other	12%	40.9
Family	7%	26.33
No show	4%	5.3
Military	1%	10

Source: LASD provided data

## Scenario Failures

A final category of attrition that was reviewed involved scenario failures. There was not sufficient data to determine whether the attrition rate for scenario failures (15 percent) is high, low, or about average compared to other California training academies but since scenario failures were the third highest cause for recruit attrition, some additional analysis was conducted.

During the period of this review of Academy attrition, there were 41 scenario failures which accounted for 15 percent of all Academy failures. The highest individual scenario failure was in Learning Domain (LD) 23, Crimes in Progress – Ambush, which had nine failures. The Suspicious Person scenario (also in LD 23) accounted for six failures, as did Felonious Assault (LD 30) and Use of Force (LD 20). There were seven scenario failures that did not list a title or learning domain. Male recruits accounted for 83 percent of scenario failures while females accounted for 17 percent.

**Table 19: Academy Scenario Failures**

Learning Domain	Scenario Title	Number of Failures	Percentage
23	Crimes in Progress – Ambush	9	22%
23	Suspicious Person	6	15%
30	Felonious Assault	6	15%
20	Use of Force	6	15%
37	People with Disabilities	3	7%
21	Pedestrian Approach	2	5%
23	Critical Incident	1	2%
1	Ethics	1	2%
None listed	N/A	7	17%
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>	

Source: LASD provided data

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## Summary

Like many other U.S. law enforcement agencies, attrition in general at the LASD presents an ongoing challenge in terms of maintaining adequate staffing. Compounding this situation, the dropout rate for the Academy is significant, at 20.38 percent and is well above the numbers reflected in other agencies the IACP has studied. Despite its best efforts, the Academy has consistently averaged a 20 percent attrition rate since January 2012, and it is clearly challenged to try to keep up with the department's overall attrition levels. This negative situation will continue unless meaningful efforts are implemented to drill down on attrition causation and to mitigate any preventable reasons for Deputy Sheriff Recruits not completing the Academy.

Considering the time and resources associated with successful completion of the Academy, law enforcement agencies should continuously monitor the progress of recruits within the program to identify common trends and problems. These issues can be identified using a variety of approaches such as:

- Interviews with Academy instructors
- Reviewing common areas of failure
- Analyzing causes of training injuries and injury trends
- Exit interviews of every recruit who drops from the Academy
- Focus groups with recruits immediately prior to completing the training, to identify strengths of the program and areas in which they had problems
- Focus groups with deputies, six months to one year after successfully completing the Academy, to determine areas where they experienced problems in their training.

Together, this information can help to better identify gaps or shortcomings in the selection process, how to better prepare recruits for the Academy, areas where new recruits may need guidance, mentoring, or tutoring, and standards that need to be evaluated in the training environment.

This section has outlined the process and methodology used to conduct analysis of the root causes of attrition in the basic recruit training program at the Academy and how attrition at the LASD compares to other training academies in this study. Based on this analysis, the IACP makes several recommendations, and these follow several major themes:

- Attrition at the Academy is significant and is higher than at other agencies studied for this review;

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- Developing a structured process for understanding the root causes for Academy attrition is necessary in order to identify and mitigate preventable causes of attrition; and
- Buy-in and support from Academy staff at every level in implementing strategies and best practices to reduce common causes of attrition will be essential in improving these conditions.

Accordingly, the LASD should engage processes to track and monitor these conditions and offer the recommendations that follow.

### **Recommendation 74: Evaluate the reasons for recruit attrition**

In many cases, Academy staff are not able to identify trends regarding specific causes of attrition due to inadequate data collection, storage, and retrieval methods used in trying to identify why recruits voluntarily leave the basic training program. Without usable data, no detailed analysis is conducted. Having a better understanding why attrition occurs would allow the Academy to evaluate any conditions that might unnecessarily be contributing to attrition and to implement changes to improve the ability for more Deputy Sheriff Trainees to successfully complete the training program. All such data should be electronically collected and correlated to facilitate effective analysis.

### **Recommendation 75: Improve the process for conducting exit interviews**

An exit interview is conducted whenever a recruit resigns or is separated from the Academy. The Training Captain or Lieutenant personally sits in on most of these interviews. During the interview, a LASD Training Academy Recruit Exit Questionnaire is completed by a staff member in the presence of the recruit. This memo is then forwarded to the LASD Personnel Bureau. No analysis on the specific reasons for voluntary separations from the Academy is conducted by either Academy or personnel staff.

Having a senior staff member or command officer conduct the exit interview can be beneficial as it potentially provides Academy leaders with timely and unfiltered information regarding conditions that are causing recruits to leave the training program. Having the staff member complete the exit interview form in the presence of the recruit may also, at times, suppress some of the true reasons for voluntary resignations as some recruits may not be comfortable sharing information that might be considered negative about the training program or about training staff. The entire department would benefit significantly from having a consistent and well-defined exit interview process that includes timely analysis and information-sharing with affected units within the department.

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The Academy would be well served to ensure that a formal and structured exit interview process is established and is conducted in a manner that best assures candid feedback will be provided by recruits who either voluntarily resign from the Academy or those who fail out. Along with improved data collection, this analysis is especially important to try to better understand if there are any discernable attrition trends that relate to gender, age, or race or ethnicity. The specific reasons for resignation or the circumstances that commonly cause academic, physical, or skills-based failures need to be identified and evaluated, so that where warranted, appropriate adjustments to training operations can occur.

### **Recommendation 76: Reexamine the efficacy of the “Black Monday” ritual**

The LASD operates what could reasonably be considered a high-stress disciplinary environment at the Academy. Focus group sessions with recruits as well as internal survey results seemed to indicate that the Academy staff does a reasonably good job explaining and indoctrinating the recruits into the premise behind this approach, as generally most recruits had little negative to say about the high-stress environment. Many recruits, however, did indicate that what they described as excessive stress inoculation during “Black Monday” week was cause for concern, as several recruits described either sustaining or witnessing injuries that they viewed as unnecessary and excessive.

According to Academy staff, “Black Monday” is a long-standing tradition at the Academy and is considered a rite of passage necessary for new recruits to experience. It should be evaluated to determine at what point the actions of the DIs could become excessive, and thus detrimental to the health and overall wellbeing of recruits. More importantly, the LASD should reevaluate whether some of the disciplinary practices are necessary, relevant, or if they serve a useful purpose. The department especially needs to consider the high number of resignations that occur that week and determine if this attrition is caused by practices that may be counterproductive to achieving a successful learning environment.

### **Cultural Approach for Academy Learning**

Organizational culture is defined as *the shared values, beliefs, or perceptions held by employees within an organization or organizational unit*.<sup>73</sup> Culture is socially learned and transmitted by members of the organization and provides guidance to employees about how they should

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<sup>73</sup> Tsai, Y. (2011). Relationship between Organizational Culture, Leadership Behavior and Job Satisfaction. BMC Health Services Research, 11, 98. <http://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-11-98>

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perform their jobs. Every organization, including the LASD, has its own unique culture that is based on its core values, mission, history, and quite often, on tradition.

In May 2015, the President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing released its Final Report. The Task Force was charged with identifying best practices and offering recommendations on how law enforcement practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust. The Task Force Report contained numerous recommendations, organized around six main topic areas or “pillars.” These included:

- Building Trust and Legitimacy
- Policy and Oversight
- Technology and Social Media
- Community Policing and Crime Reduction
- Training and Education, and
- Officer Safety and Wellness<sup>74</sup>

In the report, under Pillar 5: Training and Education, the task force members expressed that *“a starting point for changing the culture of policing is to change the culture of training academies.”* The task force members recommended that 21<sup>st</sup> Century law enforcement academies should *“use adult-based learning and scenario-based training in a training environment modeled less like boot camp.”*<sup>75</sup> Law enforcement agencies should examine the culture that exists in their training academies to ensure that those responsible for training its newest members are modelling the core values of a leading 21<sup>st</sup> Century police or sheriff’s department.

### **Assessing the Disciplinary Culture at the LASD Training Academy**

The IACP project team interviewed numerous members of the Academy staff for this study. The Academy staff, at all levels, present a high level of commitment and pride in their work. Every staff member indicated their strong desire to contribute to the success of the Academy. Those interviewed explained that the Academy, beginning with the hiring process and continuing through training, is not strictly empirically and/or statistically driven. Instead, it is driven by spirit, pride, integrity, a sense of responsibility, and to some extent, by tradition. The Academy

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<sup>74</sup> President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing. 2015. Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Published 2015

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

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personnel expressed that they strive to hire and train only the best candidates to serve as Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriffs.

As part of its process in conducting this examination of the Academy, the IACP engaged a variety of data collection methods. Most of the information that relates to the Academy culture was gleaned from qualitative data sources, including interviews with Academy staff, personal observations, as well as from interviews of focus groups and survey questionnaires administered to current and former recruits. Sharing the analysis of this data should prove to be helpful in providing the LASD with an understanding of the socialization process that their newly hired deputy recruits are exposed to.

The analysis of interviews with Academy staff, and interviews and survey responses from current recruits, and recent graduates of the Academy indicates that the disciplinary culture at the Academy is between a moderate-stress to a mostly high-stress environment. During the initial phase of the training, the disciplinary climate was described as extremely high stress. Staff and students both described a mostly rigid disciplinary environment where practices such as yelling at recruits and imposition of group punishment for individual infractions are commonplace. Recruits described an environment where most instructors conduct themselves professionally and seem to genuinely care about the recruits' success in their training, even when operating in "drill instructor" mode, while other instructors engaged in actions that seemed excessive, humiliating, or demeaning. Recruits indicated that they are more likely to seek out those instructors who are perceived to be approachable for necessary guidance or clarification but will avoid those who are more "military-like" and standoffish.

### **LASD Recruit Training Manual**

The introductory paragraph in the Academy's Recruit Training Manual for Recruit Code of Conduct reads as follows:

*As an Academy recruit, you are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of age, race, gender, physical disability, religion, marital status, sexual orientation or national origin. You are also entitled to an environment that is not demeaning or hostile. Behavior which detracts from the dignity or self-esteem of others will not be tolerated. Respect the rights of others. Your relationships with other recruits, staff, and civilian personnel, on or off Academy grounds shall be professional. Your conduct at all times reflects not only on yourself, but on this Academy, the Department and all of law enforcement.*

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Further, pertinent sections of the Academy Staff Code of Conduct in that same document include the following:

*The staff and instructors must emphasize the development of character in each recruit. The goal is only attainable in an environment of trust, choice and reasonableness. The environment must be conducive to learning and allow the recruit to grow strong physically and emotionally.*

*Academy staff and instructors shall adhere to the following code of conduct:*

*Commit to an environment that promotes learning, trust, and a climate that allows each recruit to be the best they can be. Personal ridicule without a direct nexus to a specific learning domain is strictly prohibited.*

*Teach ethics by being a worthy role model and by helping recruits to reason clearly about what is right and wrong.*

*Practice and teach ethical values such as respect for life and liberty, responsibility, honesty, fairness, tolerance, courtesy, self-discipline, integrity, kindness, compassion, courage, and accountability for one's actions.*

*Encourage the development of empathy; looking beyond individual biases and responding to fellow human beings on a personal, respectful level.*

*Practice and teach recruits to be self-managed. Model and teach personal leadership skills.*

*At no time will an instructor stress a recruit solely for their own satisfaction. There shall never be negative references made toward a recruit's family members. Such behavior is grounds for removal from Academy instruction.<sup>76</sup>*

The performance expectations outlined in the Recruit Training Manual suggest an academy cultural approach to learning that is respectful and supportive and that is reinforced by positive role modeling by Academy staff. Many staff who were interviewed indicated their belief that, for the most part, the training instructors are reasonably effective at transitioning from creating a purposeful high-stress environment (e.g., screaming at recruits) back to a supportive learning

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<sup>76</sup> LASD Recruit Training Manual 2018

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environment where the instructors also act as mentors and coaches. Others have indicated that a few instructors are less effective transitioning into the supportive role.

During the onsite visits to the Academy, members of the IACP project team observed mostly professional interactions between instructors and recruits, however; a few Academy instructors were observed acting in a manner that appeared to be contrary to the behavioral expectations listed in the Recruit Training Manual. Most of these instances involved instructors making demeaning comments about a recruit's performance. There were also several instances of reported conduct by Academy instructors from interviews with current or former recruits that, if accurate, also would be contrary to the published expectations.

### **The Correlation between Academy Culture and Recruit Socialization**

Most law enforcement agencies have characteristics that resemble the military including a rank structure, a clearly defined chain of command, and at times, its deputies operate in a command and control environment. For these reasons, it is not surprising that many training academies have developed curriculum, training exercises, and disciplinary practices in their entry-level recruit training classes that also closely resemble military recruit training.

Teamwork and self-discipline are developed in a command and control environment through strict conformance to orders, daily inspections, and military drill. This model of law enforcement training became the norm for most American police agencies in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Training academies in the U.S. have continued to evolve regarding their training philosophies and curriculum, including community policing, terrorism, unbiased policing, and the development of new technologies all impacted training protocols. One area that has not evolved as much with the changing times is the quasi-military, high-stress environment that still exists in some basic recruit academies.

From previous studies and collaboration with training academies in which the IACP has been involved, the primary reason identified by those agencies that practice the quasi-military stress model in their academies stems from the belief that it is important for the socialization of the new recruit to "break them down, so they can build them up again" and that a stressful training environment is necessary in order to better prepare recruits for dealing with challenges they will encounter as law enforcement officers on patrol or working in jails. The vast majority of LASD staff who were interviewed for this study expressed this same opinion. A concern that has been identified when academies operate under this model is that abuses can occur when the behavior of some instructors degrades into harassment, intimidation, and hazing of recruits.

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Studies of human behavior indicate that some people who are put into positions of power will abuse that power. Unfortunately, there have been recent examples of such bad behavior occurring in law enforcement academies and in military basic training programs. In an article about the abuse of police authority, the authors offer more perspective about this condition:

*Even good people, placed in the wrong situation, will do the wrong thing. Bad supervision, intense peer pressure, and an organizational culture that sends unclear signals can cause honorable men and women to behave in dishonorable ways. The key moral problem for police departments is the same as it is for corporations, universities, labor unions, and government agencies: how can you create a culture that will induce members to strike the right balance between achieving an organizational goal and observing fundamental principles of decency and fairness?<sup>77</sup>*

There can be additional negative influences on the socialization of recruits when instructors abuse their positional power. In a 2015 National Institute of Justice and Harvard Kennedy School article, Sue Rahr, the Executive Director of the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission and former King County Sheriff, wrote the following regarding the behavior modeled by instructors in some quasi-military stress academies:

*Another, more insidious problem in a military-style academy is the behavior modeled by the academy staff. Those without power (recruits) submit without question to the authority of those who have power (academy staff). Rule violations are addressed by verbal abuse or physical punishment in the form of pushups and extra laps. Upon graduation, we send our newly trained recruits out into the community — they finally have power. Despite the way they were treated during their training, we expect them to treat the powerless people they encounter in the community with dignity and respect.<sup>78</sup>*

The previous comments reinforce the importance of the role of Academy instructors. Many educators believe that students will often model the same behaviors projected by their teachers during their training experience. Regardless of the type of academy environment that exists, the

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<sup>77</sup> Weisburd, David, Rosann Greenspan, Edwin E. Hamilton, Kellie A. Bryant, and Hubert Williams. 2001. *The Abuse of Police Authority: A National Study of Police Officers' Attitudes*. Washington, DC: Police Foundation.

<sup>78</sup> Rahr, Sue and Stephen K. Rice. *From Warriors to Guardians: Recommitting American Police Culture to Democratic Ideals*. *New Perspectives in Policing Bulletin*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2015. NCJ 248654.

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conduct of the training staff will leave a lasting and memorable impression on recruits. Recruits learn many new ideas and concepts and must demonstrate mastery of numerous academic, physical, and cognitive skills during their training. To be successful, the environment needs to be more highly structured than training for veteran deputies. The primary focus should be ensuring that recruits are well trained and well prepared for patrol or custody work. However, it is even more important to assure that they are exposed to exemplary role models and positive behaviors that they will be expected to model in the jails and on the street.

As previously discussed, a recent three-year study conducted by BJS, involving 591 participating state and local law enforcement academies, indicates that recruit success rates for completing basic training is improved in academies that are mostly non-stress environments.<sup>79</sup>

### **Trainers as Positive Role Models**

There are more effective methods that can be employed for preparing recruits for the challenges of law enforcement duties than emulating military basic training. Transitioning from a quasi-military model to one emphasizing adult learning does not equate to a reduction in high standards or challenging training. Training intended to purposefully induce stress should remain part of the curriculum but does not need to be integrated into most of the training. The key is to present the training curriculum in a balanced, professional manner and in such a way that allows the recruits to learn effectively. Regardless of which type of disciplinary environment (high stress/quasi-military model, low stress model, or a blend of the two) the department chooses to implement or maintain, we strongly recommend that instructors are required to consistently model and reinforce the highest degree of professionalism in all interactions with recruits.

Role modeling is one of the most effective instructional practices used in the basic academy. Since newly hired recruits learn the values and performance expectations of their departments and of the law enforcement profession while in the basic recruit training program, it is critically important that the Academy's culture reflects the most positive examples of what the law enforcement profession values. The behaviors exhibited and reinforced by training instructors have a major influence on new recruits. Recruits look at instructors as positive Deputy Sheriff role models and, as such, instructors should always strive to model those positive behaviors (integrity, professionalism, respect, compassion, fairness, and empathy) that the department wants recruits to exhibit to members of the public or to those they supervise in the jails once they graduate from the Academy. While there will be times that instructors will need to make corrections

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<sup>79</sup> Reaves, *supra* note 71

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regarding student performance, it is important that this always be done in a professional manner and that instructors remain approachable to students.

The training environment, similar to the training curriculum, should integrate the behaviors listed above through positive reinforcement and exemplary role modeling from the Academy staff. Additionally, the relationship between staff and students should be centered on the principles of procedural justice. As described in the section titled *Curriculum Review*, procedurally just behavior is based on four central principles:

1. Treating people with dignity and respect
2. Giving individuals “voice” during encounters
3. Being neutral and transparent in decision making
4. Conveying trustworthy motives

There are both internal and external aspects to procedural justice in law enforcement agencies. Internal procedural justice refers to practices within an agency and the relationships deputies have with their colleagues and leaders. Research on internal procedural justice indicates that deputies who feel respected by their supervisors and peers are more likely to accept departmental policies, understand decisions, and comply with them voluntarily. It follows that deputies who feel respected by their organizations are more likely to bring this respect into their interactions with the people they serve.<sup>80</sup>

A procedurally just disciplinary philosophy would involve purposeful teaching and discipline. Many recruits are new to the law enforcement profession, and therefore, do not fully understand the concepts of chain of command and tactical command and control as they apply to the operations of a law enforcement agency. And, the training program for recruits is lengthy (20 weeks long) and progressive. For these reasons, there are clear differences in how recruits are treated in the basic training program compared to training for veteran deputies. During certain simulated exercises, the recruits should be subjected to profanity, challenging words, and harsh treatment by role players/instructors in order to achieve a specific training objective. Outside of these purposeful training venues, recruits should be treated with the same respect that any other student or any visitor to the Academy is shown. In the end, reducing the stress level and transitioning away from a boot camp model in recruit training in no way diminishes the quality of the training provided or the performance expectations that the staff should have for the

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<sup>80</sup> President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing. 2015. Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Published 2015

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recruits. As Director Rahr points out in the passage below, sometimes all that it needed to achieve the same goal is to transition from a DI style to a coaching style.

*The standards for physical performance remain high, and training officers still push the recruits far beyond their physical limits. But, rather than screaming and berating the recruits, the training officers vigorously coach and encourage them to keep pushing. Instead of trying to instill a sense of fear, training officers strive to build a sense of camaraderie and pride for the success of the whole team.<sup>81</sup>*

### Summary

Given the important role that training instructors play in the assimilation of new recruits into the law enforcement profession, it is important that training staff epitomize the most positive examples of professionalism, positive role-modeling, and procedural justice in the academy setting. Beyond that, through their actions and performance, instructors should continually reinforce to the recruits the importance of modeling conduct that is representative of a leading 21<sup>st</sup> century law enforcement agency.

### **Recommendation 77: Review the Academy's culture and disciplinary environment to ensure it promotes a supportive learning environment**

A primary goal of the LASD is to recruit and hire the highest quality Deputy Sheriff Trainees. Once these men and women successfully complete the background and medical processes, only four out of every one hundred applicants are selected to attend recruit training. While it would be unrealistic to expect that every trainee who enters the Academy will successfully complete the program, the department should still seek the most effective strategies for assisting more trainees to be successful. From studies of a large number of law enforcement training academies across the U.S., those academies that used an all or mostly non-stress training environment experienced a lower attrition rate among their recruits.<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, the LASD should review the current culture and disciplinary climate at the Academy and consider ways to promote a more supportive learning environment through increased positive role modeling, mentoring, and coaching of recruits by Academy instructors.

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<sup>81</sup> Rahr, *supra* note 78

<sup>82</sup> Reaves, *supra* note 69

## Injury Reporting, Prevention, and Analysis

Safety is always a primary consideration in every police training venue. When weighing the benefits of safety versus achieving training realism, safety and safe training practices must always come first. Every Academy staff member should be responsible for ensuring that safety protocols are followed, and safety equipment is used in every applicable training venue that they supervise, participate in, or observe. Any member of the training staff who observes an unsafe condition must immediately call for a cessation of training in order to correct the condition or deficiency. Students should always be made aware, prior to the start of training, of any safety or protective gear that is required, and instructors should ensure that all such gear is utilized during training.

Law enforcement trainers aim to constantly seek the most realistic training scenarios, and by nature, many physical and tactical skills training venues involve some potential risk of injury. While it is unrealistic to expect that trainers can prevent all injuries, it is incumbent upon every staff member to strive to reduce preventable ones. The ongoing analysis of training injuries is necessary to provide Academy staff the opportunity to identify injury trends and causation factors and to quickly implement changes, wherever warranted, to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Within this section, the IACP will evaluate injury reporting practices and analysis of injury patterns. We will also examine safety protocols employed by the Academy.

### Injury Reporting Procedures

The procedures for trainees to report injuries are contained in the Recruit Training Manual, which reads as follows:

*It will be the responsibility of the recruit receiving an injury to report the injury to his/her Recruit Training Officer as soon as possible.*

- A. *In no case shall a recruit leave the facility without notifying their Recruit Training Officer the nature of the injury, circumstances and causal factors of the injury.*
- B. *The Recruit Training Officer will fill out the appropriate forms and refer the recruit to an authorized county doctor or medical facility.*
- C. *All injuries will be reported immediately even if medical attention is not desired at the time.*
- D. *If a recruit is hospitalized away from the academy, notify any Academy staff. If it is an extreme emergency after hours and all attempts to contact Academy staff has*

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*failed, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department – Department of Operations Center may be contacted at (323) 980-2101 (24 hour number).*

All injuries are documented by an Academy staff member (Recruit Training Officer) on both a Workers' Compensation Employer's Report of Occupational Injury form and on a two-page Sheriff's Department Supervisor's Investigation – Industrial Injury / Illness form. Once notified of a reportable injury, a Recruit Training Officer will call the claim into the third-party medical approver (CorVel), so that a claim number can be assigned. The forms are then completed, printed, and forwarded to an Academy supervisor for review. Following that review, the data is forwarded to the Injury Coordinator in the Training Bureau Operations, who enters the data onto an Excel spreadsheet. The entire package is then forwarded to the Department's Injury and Health Support Unit for additional data entry. When interviewed, the department's Injury and Health Support staff indicated that they collect and document data related to all departmental injuries, but due to other workload demands, no formal analysis for causation or trends is conducted.

The injury reporting and documentation process utilized by the LASD is well-defined and is largely consistent with other processes that the IACP has studied. The department's Supervisor's Investigation – Industrial Injury/Illness form utilized for documentation and reporting of injuries captures the employees' biographical information, the type and classification of injury, and several additional narrative blocks that describe how the injury occurred, who may have witnessed the injury, or to provide additional information. The form also asks for answers to the following questions: *Could this type of injury/illness be reduced or eliminated in the future through discussion, training, safety inspections, procedural changes, etc.? If yes, please explain action(s) taken to prevent/reduce risk of similar incidents.* Although this does not occur in practice, reviewing, analyzing, and having formal discussions about the information contained in these two questions would be very useful for Academy leaders to help recognize injury trends, or operational or environmental factors, and identify necessary actions to mitigate the occurrence or severity of some injuries.

### **Injury Prevention and Analysis**

The IACP examined both the policies and the practices at the Academy as they relate to injury prevention and analysis. Conducting ongoing injury analysis is a best practice as described in an IACP Training Key:

*Understanding the nature of injuries will assist officers and agencies in prevention efforts. Examining how and why officers are getting injured can*

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*open up conversations about physical readiness and mental resiliency, as well as how current policies and practices may encourage or discourage safe operations. Agencies and officers should be encouraged to examine how and why they currently operate a certain way to determine if all their practices are in accordance with a culture focused on wellness and safety.<sup>83</sup>*

While Academy staff have indicated that some word-of-mouth analysis of injuries does occur, there is no formal process for injury analysis and no reports are completed. As has been identified in other aspects of the department's data collection, we believe that the manner in which data is collected, shared, and its ability to be retrieved and analyzed is inadequate. The current process for collecting data for training injuries requires repeated manual entry of the same data which creates delays in report processing and increases the potential for errors. Moreover, it makes injury data analysis more challenging. That factor, combined with the reported lack of sufficient administrative support at the Academy, are the primary reasons given for why no formal injury analysis is conducted.

The LASD would benefit by requiring that all injuries be reviewed by everyone in the chain-of-command, from the Recruit Training Officer to the Training Bureau Commander, to assure that a comprehensive review of all injuries occurs. This additional review would assist in creating a "culture of safety" at the Academy by involving everyone in the training program in the process of assessing the circumstances of each injury and whether any changes or adjustments should be made to policies, training, practices, equipment, or the training environment. This additional focus would also allow the Academy to more quickly and effectively assess the likely trends and causes of training injuries in the future.

### **Analysis of LASD Training Injuries**

Few studies have been conducted about law enforcement training-related injuries. While it is difficult to determine if the number of training injuries experienced at any law enforcement Academy is excessive, the IACP believes that it is as important that agencies collect and analyze injury-related data in a comprehensive manner in order to identify preventable injuries and compare injury data to its own past and future injury trends. The costs of employee injuries are significant, and whenever possible, efforts to minimize these injuries need to be a high priority. A joint IACP and United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance report provides further iteration on this topic:

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<sup>83</sup> International Association of Chiefs of Police. Training Key # 708. 21st Century Policing: Pillar Five - Training and Education and Pillar Six - Officer Wellness and Safety. Pg. 4.

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*It is important to collect data [regarding injuries] other than those related to assaults for three reasons. First, from a management perspective, officer injuries, no matter how they are sustained, are a significant cost to the organization. These costs include lost wages, medical expenses, and insurance claims. These problems decrease productivity, while also having an impact on the individual officers and their families. Second, in order to develop the best possible policies and training to prevent injuries in the future, it is important to have a complete picture of the scope and magnitude of injuries. Third, despite these previous efforts, little is known about the national scope of police officer injuries outside of line-of-duty deaths and assaults; as a result, relatively little is known about the impact of injuries on law enforcement agencies.<sup>84</sup>*

The LASD provided data related to all training injuries, including those that did not result in separation from the Academy. The IACP conducted an examination of this data for the period of March 19, 2018 (start of Class 430) to February 8, 2019 (end of Class 434). During that timeframe, a total of 439 LASD Deputy Sheriff Trainees began training at either the Biscailuz Academy (BC) or at the North Academy at the College of the Canyons (COC). According to the data provided, there were a total of 96 reported injuries during this timeframe. A few recruits reported more than one injury.

As can be seen in the table below, a higher percentage of injuries (35 percent) were reported by female recruits in comparison to their population in the five recruit classes that were examined than were reported by male recruits (17 percent). The overall percentage of reported injuries in comparison to the total number of recruits in all of the classes was 22 percent. The average percentage of reported injuries in comparison to the total number of recruits attending classes at both the BC and COC Academies was the same, at 21 percent. Class 432 had the highest percentage (38 percent) of reported injuries, while Class 431 reported the lowest percentage (7 percent). Finally, of the 96 total reported injuries, 43 injuries (45 percent of the total) were reported to be related to running activities.

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<sup>84</sup> Reducing Officer Injuries: A Summary of Data Findings and Recommendations from a Multi-Agency Injury Tracking Study. Bureau of Justice Assistance U.S. Department of Justice. Page 17.

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Table 20: LASD All Recruits – Attrition by Ethnicity

Class Number	Class 430	Class 431	Class 432	Class 433	Class 434	Total
Location	COC	BC	BC	BC	COC	All
Total Recruits Started	85	89	90	90	85	439
Total Injuries	10	6	34	17	29	96
Males – Started/Injured	70 / 6	67 / 4	64 / 18	73 / 14	64 / 17	338/59 (17%)
Females – Started/Injured	15 / 4	22 / 2	26 / 15	17 / 2	21 / 12	101/35 (35%)
Running Activity Involved	5	1	11	6	20	43
% Running Related	50%	17%	32%	35%	69%	45%

Source: LASD provided data

Note: The gender for one recruit in Class 432 and for one recruit in Class 433 could not be determined.

The IACP also obtained data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) related to the percentage of recruits who become injured during FBI new agent training. In 2011, FBI released a study of injury rates and injury risk factors among 426 male and 105 female new agents during the 21-week training program at the FBI Academy. The FBI study determined that 35 percent of men and 42 percent of women experienced one or more injuries during their 21-week training program. The activities most commonly associated with these injuries (percentage of total) were defensive tactics training (58 percent), physical fitness training (20 percent), physical fitness testing (5 percent), and firearms training (3 percent). We believe that this study was most instructive in that it pointed out that from an injury analysis and prevention standpoint, it was difficult for the FBI to determine the injury-causing event since the recording of injuries lacked sufficient detail to identify the specific training activity involved.<sup>85</sup> This observed shortcoming with the FBI injury data is instructive in that it should reinforce to other agencies the importance of accuracy and specificity when capturing injury data for later analysis.

The IACP also reviewed training injury statistics reported by the United States Army in two of its studies. According to the Army, about 25 percent of men and about 50 percent of women in its basic training course incur one or more training-related injuries during basic combat training. These injuries include minor muscle strains, contusions, muscle or tendon tears or ruptures, ligament tears, bone fractures, stress fractures, and other related injuries. According to the Army, about 80 percent of these injuries are in the lower extremities and are of the overuse type and

<sup>85</sup> Joseph J Knapik, Tyson Grier, Anita Spiess, David I Swedler, Keith G Hauret, Bria Graham, James Yoder, Bruce H Jones. Injury rates and injury risk factors among federal bureau of investigation new agent trainees. *BMC Public Health*. 2011; 11: 920. Published online 2011 Dec 13.

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the common reasons for these types of injuries include excessive physical training (PT) volume, overuse of a specific muscle group, or muscle groups not given sufficient recovery time.<sup>86</sup> Another study of 838 male and 553 female military police (MP) recruits determined that at least one training injury was experienced by 34 percent of the men and 67 percent of the women. The Army's MP training is a 19-week course designed to introduce new recruits to basic soldiering skills, Army values and lifestyle, and law enforcement skills and knowledge. The study also determined that recruits were at higher injury risk if they reported that they were older, had smoked in the past, or had performed less frequent exercise or sports prior to MP training.<sup>87</sup>

None of the studies cited above helps to determine the point at which the number or percentage of reported injuries should be considered excessive. Very few studies about this have been conducted. Instead, we believe that the focus should be on injury risk assessment, analysis, and prevention. We especially believe that the high incidence of injuries occurring during LASD recruit training that were described as related to running activities should be cause for concern. Both the training staff and a medical doctor who spent more than a year embedded at the Academy to observe the physical training program identified excessive running as a contributing factor for injury causation. Having pride in the department's traditional "running culture" at the Academy has frequently been cited as the reason why the physical training program has not been changed, even in spite of the recognition that excessive running has likely led to a high incidence of training injuries. Some staff have indicated that the longer distance runs are good for recruit class morale, comparing this activity to their impression of military physical training. Again, we believe that there are many positive lessons to be learned from recent injury-reduction initiatives and changes to Army physical training that would be instructive for the Academy.

As an example, the Army provides insight about injury reduction in its Technical Bulletin associated with PT. This bulletin highlights the importance of identifying strategies to review PT procedures and injury data in order to assess whether changes can be implemented to reduce training-related injuries. Among some of the requirements for all Army unit commanders who supervise PT are the following:

- Foster a culture of injury risk reduction in all aspects of PT.

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<sup>86</sup> Department of the Army, Technical Bulletin TB MED 592, Prevention and Control of Musculoskeletal Injuries Associated with Physical Training, May 2011.

<sup>87</sup> Knapik, J. J., Graham, B., Cobbs, J., Thompson, D., Steelman, R., & Jones, B. H. (2013). A prospective investigation of injury incidence and injury risk factors among army recruits in military police training. *BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders*, 14, 32. <http://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2474-14-32>

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- Coordinate with medical subject matter experts for consultation related to injury prevention.
- Identify and assess training hazards related to PT and musculoskeletal injury, develop and implement prevention interventions, supervise to ensure controls are implemented and monitored, and evaluate effectiveness.
- Ensure Soldiers receive PT appropriate to their levels of physical conditioning and follow a gradual progression of PT in order to avoid unnecessary overuse injury.
- Prohibit use of PT as a punitive, corrective, or disciplinary tool that can lead to overtraining.
- Ensure Soldiers are monitored for injury, and that those with musculoskeletal complaints or exhibiting signs of musculoskeletal injury receive prompt medical attention.<sup>88</sup>

Today's 21<sup>st</sup> Century law enforcement academies can learn a lot from the current physical training philosophy espoused by the United States Army. As is discussed in more detail in the section titled Cultural Approach for Academy Learning, too often police academies strive to emulate a military style of training that is not at all similar to today's military. The IACP recommends that the Academy adopt similar requirements for its oversight of physical training as those currently practiced by the Army.

### Physical Training Injuries Resulting in Separation from the Academy

The Academy classifies serious injuries that result in a recruit being separated from the Academy in one of the following ways:

- **Medical PT Separation** – an injury at the Academy that resulted in accruing the number of “PT Failures” over the limit
- **Medical Separation** – a severe injury (Academy related) or an aggravation of a prior condition sustained outside of work
- **Medical Limitation** – a medical condition, injury, work restriction, etc. that prevented the recruit from participating in the Academy (any area other than PT); for example, it may be an injury that prevented firearms or arrest and control participation

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<sup>88</sup> Department of the Army, TB MED 592

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An analysis of the 52 total injuries that resulted in recruits being separated from the Academy during the period of this study (January 30, 2017 to March 29, 2019) determined the following:

- 25 were Medical PT separations (48 percent)
- 19 were Medical Separations (37 percent)
- 8 were Medical Limitations separations (15 percent)

A review of the injury data during the study period has determined that at least 25 recruits suffered a PT-related injury that was serious enough to lead to their separation from the Academy. Data for 17 of the 52 injuries did not indicate the type of injury suffered. 50 of the 52 injuries were to lower extremity body parts (knee, ankle, shin, and lower back). Male recruits experienced 39 separation causing injuries while female recruits incurred 13. Finally, of the total injuries, 13 injuries (25 percent) occurred during the first 14 days (2 weeks) of the Academy, 20 injuries (38 percent cumulative) occurred during first 20 days (4 weeks) of the Academy, and 34 injuries (65 percent cumulative) occurred during the first 40 days (8 weeks) of the Academy. A table listing each of the reported injuries that resulted in Academy separation is listed in Appendix D.

When interviewed, several of the Academy PT staff agreed that the running and calisthenics portions of the circuit training are, in their opinion, excessive. They suggested that the continued popularity of distance running at the Academy may be related to the department's long-standing participation in the "Baker to Vegas" foot race. This event, held annually, is a 120-mile long, 20-stage event, that is considered to be the most prestigious and unique law enforcement foot race in the country.<sup>89</sup> It has, in the opinion of staff, created a "running culture" at the Academy. As a further example, in a recent post on the official LASD Facebook page titled *Distance Running is a Tradition at the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department*, the accompanying message reads as follows:

*"We run for the obligation to stay as physically fit as possible for the job; We run, for the promise to our family, our partners and our community to be not only physically fit, but mentally fit for all and ready for the challenges we face every day!"*

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<sup>89</sup> <http://bakervegas.net>

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*Distance running is not just exercise. It pushes each of us for the will to endure and challenge our physiological limitations. It's brain training, which continually broadens and expands our physical and mental makeup.*

*LASD department members have been running through pain and joy and will continue running to embrace the new challenges to keep Los Angeles County a safe place to live. Tell us why you run.<sup>90</sup>*

While the Facebook post was, no doubt, a positive message intended to highlight a proud departmental tradition, it also reinforces some of the underlying negative consequences (chronic injuries and pain) that excessive running and overtraining can cause.

Finally, beyond the scheduled physical training, other factors may also contribute to fatigue and chronic injuries from muscle overuse and these include frequent “incentive training,” which is additional PT administered as discipline or punishment, along with additional daily physical exertion activities (e.g., carrying heavy gear bags to and from their cars, running in dress shoes between training venues, etc.). These are activities that are not factored in when estimating the total daily training volume of physical activities of recruits.

Dr. Joseph Horrigan, who specializes in tactical sports medicine and rehabilitation at the Southern California University Health System, recently spent more than a year observing the physical training program at the Academy. When interviewed, Dr. Horrigan offered that the amount of distance running in the Academy’s PT program is excessive and that it has resulted in numerous chronic injuries to both recruits and Academy staff due to overuse/overtraining. According to the POST workbook for Lifetime Fitness, *chronic injuries are usually the consequence of overtraining or overuse. Chronic injuries do not result from one incident. Instead, they result from several exercise sessions when the person does too much too soon or when the body mechanics of the person are abnormal. Examples of chronic injuries include soft tissue inflammation, shin splints, and tendinitis. These and other chronic injuries can generally be prevented by using an appropriate progression of duration, frequency and intensity during the workout.*<sup>91</sup>

With regard to the injuries listed above, many of which have been described by staff as likely being related to physical training exercises or other overuse/overtraining conditions that led to chronic injuries, we believe the Academy staff should more closely examine these injury trends

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<sup>90</sup> Source: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Facebook Page – May 2, 2019

<sup>91</sup> California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, Basic Course Workbook Series, Student Materials, Learning Domain 32, Lifetime Fitness Version 4.2, March 2015. (Page 80).

to better understand the patterns observed and to assess the need for operational, policy, or environmental changes to address them. Constant vigilance in the area of injury documentation, analysis, and prevention is required given the high-risk nature of Academy training.

### **Additional Research on Physical Training and Injury Prevention**

There exists significant evidence that increasing the number of miles run per week also increases the risk of injury. In fact, military studies have determined that recruits assigned to units that run greater distances experience more injuries.<sup>92</sup> In another study, Bullock et al. discussed the issue of overtraining, which was described as “the physiology of musculoskeletal overuse due to exercise or physical training.” With regard to running volume, Bullock’s study concluded the following:

*There is a preponderance of military and civilian research and descriptive epidemiology that demonstrates that high running volume substantially increases the risk for lower-extremity injury. During initial military training about 25% of men and about 50% of women incur one or more physical training-related injuries. Roughly 60% - 80% of these injuries occurs to the lower extremities and are of the overuse type – a condition brought about by physical training-volume overload (presumably excessive running relative to initial fitness level and individual running capability).<sup>93</sup>*

According to the study, the most effective strategy for injury prevention is to avoid overtraining by reducing the amount of running, by conducting running exercises according to ability-based groups, and by implementing more cross-training activities in place of running activities. The authors believe these same interventions can be broadly applied to populations similar to the military (police, firefighters, athletes) who also may have frequent physical training requirements.<sup>94</sup>

Further, the issue of unintentional physical activities also can contribute to an increase in training injuries. In their report on basic training in the Australian Army, the authors introduced the concept of program-induced cumulative overload (PICO). According to the study, PICO is “the excessive cumulative physical workload that can be imparted to military personnel by a military

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<sup>92</sup> Jones, B., Cowan, D., and Knapik, J. Exercise, training and injuries. *Sports Med* 18: 202–211, 1994.

<sup>93</sup> Bullock, S. Jones, B. Gilchrest, J. and Marshal, S. (2010). Prevention of Physical Training-Related Injuries. Recommendations for the Military and Other Active Populations Based on Expedited Systematic Reviews.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

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training program with an embedded physical training component.”<sup>95</sup> In other words, this is physical workload that is unintentional as opposed to planned PT. It may involve such activities as incentive PT or running between classes, or it could result from training activities that are not well sequenced, such as when PT is scheduled on the same day that recruits are performing ground fighting in defensive tactics training. The report further concludes that PICO “can be acute (accumulating within a single day) or chronic (accumulating across the entirety of the training program)” and that it “results in adverse outcomes for affected military personnel, including detrimental fatigue, performance degradation, injuries, or illness.”<sup>96</sup> In light of the findings from these various studies, we believe there is ample justification for the LASD to reexamine and to implement improvements to its recruit physical training program.

### **Physical Environment for PT Training**

A final consideration regarding PT and injury reduction relates to the physical environment where such training occurs. As an example, at the Biscailuz Academy, the running track and the PT field are both in substandard condition for PT. The dirt running track has several ruts and potholes and is uneven and eroded in places, thereby creating trip hazards. The field is also uneven and contains numerous gopher holes. Additionally, this area is shared by the K9 unit for training, and a helicopter landing pad is in the center of the field.

Another area where physical activities take place at the Biscailuz Academy is referred to as “the grinder.” This is a large rectangular area of concrete where formations and inspections also occur. Distance runs occur along residential streets adjacent to the Academy, some of which include steep hills. Finally, the Academy itself is located in a hilly area and recruits are often required to run up and down a steep concrete walkway known as the “green mile.” None of these areas are especially conducive to safe or practical PT.

At the North Academy, which is located on a college campus, environmental conditions there are somewhat better than at the Biscailuz Academy. Nonetheless, some physical training occurs in the asphalt parking lot in an area designated as “the grinder,” and some circuit exercises involve running up and down on the steep sports stadium stairs, which has been identified as contributing to some of the reported injuries.

The POST Student Safety Guidelines indicate that physical training “shall occur in a suitable location.” The guidelines further state that “the risk of student injury increases when training

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<sup>95</sup> Orr, R., Knapik, J., and Pope, R. (2016). Avoiding Program-Induced Cumulative Overload (PICO)

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

occurs in inappropriate locations,” and that “callisthenic exercises shall typically be performed on shock absorbing, nonabrasive surfaces when available. To the extent possible, running areas shall afford adequate traction and shall be free from hazards such as physical obstructions, steep embankments, and excessive inclines or declines.”<sup>97</sup> The physical training environments at both Academy locations are not ideal as they relate to the POST safety guidelines, and in some cases (such as the Biscailuz running track) are hazardous.

### **Safety Protocols and Safety Equipment**

In the examination of safety protocols and safety equipment in use at the Academy, a large number of measures in place intend to provide a safe training environment and to minimize the risk of injuries. The Academy has sufficient first aid equipment, including automated external defibrillators (AEDs), at its Academy locations, at the Weapons Training Facility, and at the EVOG Facility. Additionally, most of the training staff is certified in First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), and several staff members have advanced certification in emergency medical care.

Serious injuries and medical emergencies are not a regular occurrence in the training environment, but it is critically important to always know where the highest trained medical personnel are located when such incidents occur. With ever increasing numbers of recruits in training, the LASD has recognized that it is often the case that one or more recruits are certified emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or paramedics. Knowing this, the LASD employs a best practice that should be shared with all training academies across the country. At the start of each recruit session, the Academy staff determine whether any, or how many recruits are certified EMTs, paramedics, or who otherwise possess advanced medical skills or training. These recruits are identified, equipped with emergency medical equipment bags, and are available to be called upon to assist in events of a medical emergency.

The safety protocols in place at the Weapons Training Range are extensive and reflect the LASD’s strong commitment to firearms safety. The four fundamental rules of firearms safety and the LASD’s range safety guidelines are incorporated into the lesson plans and are repeatedly stressed throughout the course of firearms training. Firearms instructors require all students to wear eye and ear protection on the firing ranges. Safety briefings occur prior to the start of every training course, and instructors always conduct classroom demonstrations with inert training weapons.

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<sup>97</sup> POST Guidelines for Student Safety in Certified Courses (2007), 9.1.

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Soft body armor is not worn by recruits as deputies are not issued vests until they are assigned to patrol.

At the EVOC facility, which is located at the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, the training vehicles are equipped with seat belts and roll bars. Helmets are available for recruit training, although it is not known how often they are utilized. One instructor indicated that recruits wear helmets during training, while another instructor indicated that they do not due to the lack of disinfectant procedures for sanitizing the helmets after each use. According to EVOC staff, safety guidelines are constantly reviewed with students. For safety reasons, the instructors enforce a maximum speed (70 miles per hour) for high-speed driving. When asked about the frequency of vehicle crashes during EVOC training, a long-serving instructor indicated that the last crash that occurred at the facility was approximately 15 years ago and that it was not serious.

The Field Operations Force Training Unit is responsible for teaching defensive tactics, arrest and control, and use of force training. Safety protocols observed by the training staff include a requirement that safety headgear be worn during expandable baton (ASP), Simunition, boxing, and ground-fighting training. Further, the level of force used in defensive tactics training and boxing is reportedly decreased and well regulated. There was one identified concern, however, that involved recruits training with their issued service weapons. According to staff, these weapons have been “rendered safe” by inserting barrel plugs and wrapping orange tape across the magazine well, and the staff also conducts frequent weapons checks. Nonetheless, the use of “rendered safe” service weapons in a training environment where the weapons may be pointed at others, while not a violation of POST safety guidelines, is still not the safest practice and lends itself to the potential for an accidental or negligent discharge.

The POST Student Safety Guidelines require that “all weapons used in scenario training shall be: rendered incapable of firing a live round, readily identifiable as a training weapon, and easily identifiable by either permanent means (e.g., red grips) or temporary means (e.g., red tape) to indicate that they are incapable of discharging a live round.”<sup>98</sup> Sadly, there have been enough tragic examples of reported deaths and serious injuries to law enforcement personnel from the use of service weapons in training environments. When inert training weapons, sometimes referred to as blue guns, are instead used in these training scenarios, there is absolutely no possibility of having a weapons discharge or of misidentifying a training weapon. Accordingly, the LASD should reexamine its use of service weapons in the training environment.

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<sup>98</sup> POST Guidelines for Student Safety in Certified Courses (2007), 16.2.

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Accordingly, these safety recommendations are repeated to provide additional emphasis:

- Use only readily identifiable training weapons that are incapable of discharging a live round
- Implement a concussion awareness program
- Closely monitor the level of force used, especially in boxing and ground fighting exercises
- Assure that EVOC helmets are being used in all “behind the wheel” training

### **Additional Safety Recommendations**

Through the course of other studies and in previous collaboration with law enforcement training academies, the IACP has identified additional best practices for training safety. The most effective method to enhance the importance of training safety is to create a culture of safety at the Academy. In view of this, the IACP recommends that the LASD implement a formal program that promotes the integration of safety themes throughout the Academy’s lesson plans, so that both students and instructors are hearing, repeating, and reinforcing safety messages throughout the course of the basic training session and in all other training programs. These messages emphasize injury prevention and risk assessment as well as the importance of wearing ballistic vests, always wearing seat belts, controlling vehicle speeds, avoiding complacency, and promoting overall employee wellness. The advantages of having such a program are outlined in a combined IACP Center for Officer Safety & Wellness and Bureau of Justice Assistance Final Report entitled, *Reducing Officer Injuries: A Summary of Data Findings and Recommendations from a Multi-Agency Injury Tracking Study*.<sup>99</sup> Creating and sustaining a culture of safety in the training environment also reduces the likelihood that the focus on safety will diminish over time or with staff turnover.

Another best practice that the LASD should consider is to implement *Concussion Awareness* training to increase awareness, recognition, and prevention of head injuries. Due to the recent national attention related to concussions and traumatic brain injuries, some law enforcement academies have prohibited all intentional head strikes in defensive tactics training and have eliminated boxing instruction. Other academies have required practices that allow only very low levels of force used, usually just enough to teach recruits proper blocking techniques. Regardless of what LASD’s policies are for intentional head strikes, this is an area of safety concern that should be reviewed. Additionally, LASD may want to consider requiring recruits and all instructors

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<sup>99</sup> Reducing Officer Injuries Final Report. [http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/IACP\\_ROI\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/IACP_ROI_Final_Report.pdf)

who participate in defensive tactics training or boxing to take an online concussion baseline test at the beginning of each session. In the event of a suspected head injury, the affected recruit or instructor can take the online post-injury test and share the results with the appropriate medical doctor. This can help medical personnel better determine the appropriateness and timeline for a return to duty.

### Summary

It is evident from its policies and standard operating procedures that the LASD places strong emphasis on providing safe and realistic training. The safety equipment in use at the Academy and the safety protocols in place, except for the use of service weapons in scenario training, are similar to practices in many agencies that the IACP has studied. A notable shortcoming is the lack of formal injury analysis occurring at the Academy or throughout the department. Based on the review of injury reporting and analysis and safety protocols in use at the Academy, the following recommendations are made:

#### **Recommendation 78: Review and revise the PT Program in accordance with evidence-based practices for injury reduction**

As has been described elsewhere in this section, there is considerable evidence that an ability-based PT program can reduce the likelihood of injuries to both students and training instructors. In the section titled *Fitness Standards Assessment*, we made, among others, the following recommendations:

- Conduct a Review of the LASD Physical Fitness Testing Standards
- Scale Physical Training Exercises to More Closely Match the Physical Abilities of the Recruits
- Support the Ongoing Professional Development of the PT Staff
- Implement the Existing Policy for Alternative Physical Training for Short-term Injuries

These recommendations were based on an examination of the LASD's PT testing standards, comparative testing standards from other studies, attrition in the recruit academy, and the number of apparent PT or running-related injuries experienced by LASD recruits. Based on interviews with the Academy's training staff, evidence exists that the current PT program directly contributes to some injuries that result from overtraining, and in particular, from excessive running and from unintentional additional physical workload that occurs during Academy training. Accordingly, these additional recommendations are offered:

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- Ensure a gradual progression to avoid overuse injuries
- Reduce the amount of running in the PT program
- Be mindful of the potentially detrimental impact when additional PT is used as discipline/punishment
- Implement more cross-training and strength training activities in place of running
- Foster a culture of injury risk reduction in all aspects of PT

Finally, the LASD should review the current disciplinary climate at the Academy during PT (high-stress environment) and consider whether a more relaxed climate, similar to the disciplinary climate that exists in training venues such as firearms and EVOC, may produce better results. LASD Academy attrition for both firearms and EVOC is low, and according to staff, is well below the statewide average. And as previously mentioned, the Army recently prohibited the use of PT as a punitive, corrective, or disciplinary tool out of concern that it can lead to overtraining.<sup>100</sup> Leaders at the Academy should examine the contemporary PT philosophy practiced by the military and consider how adopting similar practices might help to reduce injuries and improve student performance.

### **Recommendation 79: Engage the services of both a professional strength coach and an athletic trainer**

The LASD would benefit significantly by hiring or contracting with, both a professional strength coach and an athletic trainer, even if on a part-time or temporary basis. Academy staff receive only minimal training and education related to physical fitness and injury prevention, and they should not be expected to possess the knowledge and expertise necessary to design and oversee such an important training program. A qualified strength and conditioning coach could guide and assist the PT staff with the development and implementation of a revised, evidence-based PT program. Similarly, an athletic trainer could assist the entire Academy staff with injury prevention and mitigation. Given the vast numbers of recruits who participate in PT each year at the Academy locations and the high cost of injuries, both in terms of medical and workers' compensation payments and of lost productivity or separation from the Academy, these positions should prove to be well worth their cost.

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<sup>100</sup> Technical Bulletin TB MED 592, Prevention and Control of Musculoskeletal Injuries Associated with Physical Training, May 2011.

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### **Recommendation 80: Establish a formal process to conduct injury analysis and regularly scheduled command review of such analysis for all training injuries**

Currently, all training injuries are reported on a departmental Injury Report. These reports are forwarded to the LASD's Injury and Health Support Unit for recordation. Beyond documentation, there is no formal analysis conducted, either at the Academy or at the department level, of root causes of injuries. As a result, there is a missed opportunity to mitigate injury causes since it is not always apparent in which training venues injuries occur, the specific tasks being performed when injuries occur, or any environmental factors that may be contributing to injuries.

As previously identified regarding other aspects of the department's data collection, the way data is collected, shared, and its ability to be retrieved and analyzed for training injuries is inadequate. A process should be established to thoroughly document, evaluate, and follow up on all training injuries, so that trends related to environmental, operational, or procedural deficiencies can be quickly addressed and adjusted. Without injury analysis and regularly-scheduled review of such analysis, there may be ongoing root causes of injuries that could be minimized or prevented but which continue to occur due to the lack of focus and attention in this regard.

Accordingly, the LASD, and more specifically for the purposes of this study, the Training Bureau, should make ongoing injury analysis a priority, so that any discernible patterns or systemic problems that may lead to preventable injuries at the Academy can be remediated.

### **Recommendation 81: Create a "Culture of Safety" at the Academy**

Although, for the most part, the LASD has adequate safety protocols in place, these could be significantly enhanced with an affirmative commitment to implementing a culture of safety at the Academy. We believe this is a highly effective method to enhance the importance of and focus on training safety. This would involve the integration of safety themes throughout the Academy's various lesson plans so that safe practices are discussed, modelled, and consistently repeated and reinforced by staff and students alike. Further, the Academy should conduct a comprehensive review of all written policies regarding safety protocols, including any checklists that are utilized for high-risk training, to ensure consistency across policies. All documented reports or checklists involving safety protocols should include a review by supervisory staff to assure that the policies are being followed.

The establishment of a culture of safety at the Academy, starting in recruit training, would naturally progress out into the field. Common unsafe practices, such as not wearing seat belts

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and driving too fast, are frequent causes of law enforcement injuries nationally. These injuries are costly in terms of medical costs, missed time from work, workers' compensation claims, family implications, and reduced staffing. Recruit-level training would be an ideal place to begin to change unsafe practices. Since the LASD has a goal of hiring several hundred new Deputy Sheriffs over the next several years, establishing a department-wide culture of safety, beginning with new recruits, will assist the LASD in improving workplace safety and reducing preventable injuries.

### **Recommendation 82: Assure that PT is conducted in a safe and appropriate environment**

Controlling the actual locations where physical training occurs might be challenging, especially given the geographical limitations at both the Biscailuz Academy and at the North Academy. It is, nonetheless, important that PT not take place in areas where training cannot be conducted safely in order to reduce the potential for preventable injuries. This may require utilizing offsite locations such as the nearby college facilities located near each training site.

### **Physical Training and Fitness Standards Assessment**

The cost of poor nutrition and physical conditioning in the United States has been staggering in terms of its contribution to the dramatic rise in lifestyle-related diseases, including obesity, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, and various types of cancer. According to reporting by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the prevalence of obesity has reached nearly 36 percent among U.S. young adults aged 20 to 39 years.<sup>101</sup> Another study reported that 38 percent of U.S. police officers are clinically obese, a number significantly higher than the already unacceptable national average.<sup>102</sup> Ironically, despite the obvious physical demands of the profession, far too many law enforcement officers are not even as healthy or physically capable as those they are sworn to protect and serve.

PT is a high risk, potential high liability area of recruit training that requires conformance to industry best practices, accountability, and ongoing oversight. The desired outcome of the PT

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<sup>101</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

<sup>102</sup> Gu, J. K., Charles, L. E., Bang, K. M., Ma, C. C., Andrew, M. E., Violanti, J. M., & Burchfiel, C. M. (2014). Prevalence of Obesity by Occupation among US Workers: The National Health Interview Survey 2004–2011. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine / American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 56(5), 516–528.

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program should be to physically prepare trainees for the demands of the law enforcement profession. During recruit training, each trainee should be encouraged and motivated to demonstrate improvement in all fitness categories from their initial assessments at the beginning of their training to their final assessments just prior to graduation from the Academy. Another, and perhaps more important outcome, should be to provide each trainee with the knowledge, motivation, and foundation from which to continue a healthy lifestyle once they graduate from the Academy. To help achieve this goal, the trainees should receive not only fitness training but also nutrition and wellness education.

A comprehensive and professionally presented PT program at the recruit level is an important starting point in order to prepare new deputies for the physical and mental stresses they will encounter throughout their careers in law enforcement. How such training is presented is also important if deputies are going to maintain long-term physical fitness and healthy lifestyle habits. The LASD has demonstrated the importance it places on physical fitness and its relationship to successfully performing the duties required of a law enforcement officer. This positive emphasis on high standards for physical fitness is one characteristic that separates the LASD from some other law enforcement agencies and is, no doubt, a source of pride for the department. Given the importance that physical fitness and optimal wellness presents for law enforcement officers, the LASD should be applauded for focusing such a strong emphasis on physical fitness.

While having high regard for physical fitness is a positive attribute, it is equally important to assure that the training program is continually assessed and that the testing standards conform to industry best practices. Within this section, the IACP will describe the physical fitness training function at the Academy. This includes minimum training standards required by the state, the course of instruction conducted by the LASD, the standards required for successful completion, attrition rates, and feedback from Academy staff and trainees about the program.

### **California POST Physical Training Standards**

In addition to required coursework related to methods for evaluating and managing physical fitness for a healthy lifestyle, the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requires that recruits complete a minimum of 30 one-hour PT sessions. The POST also requires that each trainee successfully complete a Work Sample Test Battery (WSTB). The WSTB must be administered for practice and assessment during the foundational phase of the physical conditioning program and administered as a final examination at the conclusion of the physical conditioning program. The test consists of the five elements listed below:

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- **Obstacle Course/Agility Run** - Run a 99-yard obstacle course consisting of several sharp turns, a number of curb-height obstacles, and a 34-inch high obstacle that must be vaulted
- **Body Drag** - Lift and drag 165-pound lifelike dummy 32 feet
- **Chain Link Fence Climb** - Run 5 yards to a 6-foot chain link fence, climb over fence, and continue running another 25 yards
- **Solid Fence Climb** - Run 5 yards to a 6-foot solid fence, climb over fence, and continue running another 25 yards
- **500 Yard Run** - Run 500 yards

The POST guidelines indicate that because a student's total test performance is the best indication of overall ability to perform the physical demands of the job, scores on the individual events of the WSTB are combined to arrive at a total test score for each student. Scoring the tests in this manner, as opposed to scoring each individual test on a pass/fail basis, allows students to compensate for performing less than optimally on one test by performing extremely well on other tests. Each test is timed, and times are converted into a numerical score.

A minimum score of 384 must be obtained to demonstrate significant physical ability to perform as a patrol officer. Students who fail the final WSTB on their first attempt shall: (a) be provided with their scores on the initial attempt; (b) have a reasonable period of time established by the Academy to prepare for a retest; and (c) be provided with an opportunity to be retested on the final WSTB. If a student fails their second attempt on the final WSTB, then the student fails the course.<sup>103</sup>

### LASD's Physical Training Program

The development of fitness standards should begin in the initial hiring process so that applicants will have a realistic understanding of the rigors and expectations of fitness training in the recruit Academy. The LASD employs several best practices in this regard. As part of the hiring process, applicants are required to pass the Validated Physical Ability Test (VPAT). The VPAT, which was revised in November 2018, consists of four components (push-ups, sit-ups, 75-meter run, and a 20-meter shuttle run) and requires a cumulative passing score. Additionally, throughout the hiring process, applicants are encouraged to attend pre-academy PT workouts, which are offered four times a week (twice each week at each Academy location).

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<sup>103</sup> Source: POST Work Sample Test Battery Proctor Manual

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PT for each recruit class at the Academy is supervised by a class sergeant who oversees sworn instructors who have received required training in law enforcement fitness instruction. The LASD's PT requirements are outlined in the Sheriff's Academy Physical Training Program manual. These requirements meet, and in many cases, exceed the PT standards required by the POST. The LASD's physical fitness program requirements include both an aerobic exercise circuit with a calisthenics regimen and a distance running regimen. Both regimens are progressive in the intensity of the workouts with circuit training repetitions increasing and running, sprinting, or jogging allotted times reduced while distances are increased in two-week intervals throughout the Academy. The charts that follow outline the progression of the LASD's circuit training and distance running requirements.

### Aerobics Exercise Circuit with Calisthenics

Run Circuit Twice **							
Activity	Week 1-2	Week 3-4	Week 5-6	Week 7-8	Week 9-10	Week 11-12	Week 13+
1. Push-ups (military)	15	20	25	30	35	40	Add 5 reps every 2 weeks
2. Sprint 220 yards at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00
3. Abdominal crunches	20	25	30	35	40	45	Add 5 reps every 2 weeks w/ 4 sec pause
4. Jog 440 yards	2:30	2:26	2:22	2:18	2:15	2:15	2:15
5. Mountain Climbers (4 count reps.)	10	12	14	16	18	20	Add 2 reps every 2 weeks
6. Sprint 220 yards at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00
7. Push-ups (prayer)	6	6	8	8	10	10	Add 2 reps every 2 weeks
8. Jog 440 yards	2:30	2:26	2:22	2:18	2:15	2:15	2:15
9. Bicycle crunches (4 count)	20	20	25	25	30	30	Add 5 reps every 2 weeks
10. Sprint 220 yards at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00
11. Mountain Climbers (4 count reps.)	10	10	15	15	20	20	25
12. Jog 880 yards	5:00	4:52	4:44	4:36	4:30	4:26	4:26

Source: Sheriff's Academy Physical Training Program Manual

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## Distance Running Chart

Activity	Week 1-2	Week 3-4	Week 5-6	Week 7-8	Week 9-10	Week 11-12	Week 13+
1. Distance (miles)	1.5 – 2.0	2.0 – 2.5	2.5 – 3.0	3.0 – 3.5	3.5 – 4.0	4.0 – 4.5	4.5+
2. Pace (min/mile)	10:00	9:45	9:30	9:15	9:00	9:00	
3. Pace (sec/440 yds)	150	146	142	138	135	133	

Source: Sheriff's Academy Physical Training Program Manual

The Sheriff's Academy Physical Training Program manual further outlines the following pertinent aspects of LASD PT:

### Training Philosophy

*The POST physical training program has a two-fold purpose: to train students to successfully pass the Work Sample Test Battery (WSTB) and to inspire them to adhere to a lifestyle of physical fitness. The training program is designed to improve the physical fitness level of all students regardless of entry-level ability, and to identify those who are unable to successfully participate in the program and improve their fitness level to the point they can pass the WSTB and graduate without injury.*

*This process is accomplished through an initial physical assessment test using Cooper's\* standards, followed by a period of 6 weeks of conditioning, a mid-program assessment, and a final 6 to 8 week period of conditioning, concluding with the administration of the Work Sample Test Battery. The vigorous training program itself has become an area where students are evaluated on their character, commitment to the profession, and the practical ability to sustain the rigors of training and successfully work in the field of law enforcement.*

### Program Requirements

*In order to successfully complete the Basic POST Academy physical training program, each student must complete the following:*

- *Successfully participate in at least 30 out of the scheduled 36 training sessions.*
- *Complete the Work Sample Test Battery with a score of 384 or higher at the completion of the physical training program.*

### Course Description

*The training program, which satisfies the requirements for Learning Domain #32, Physical Fitness, consists of the following:*

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## *Session #1 - Physical assessment testing*

*In the absence of an entry-level physical agility test, each student is tested in the areas of anaerobic power, dynamic strength, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, and body composition using CIAR norms.*

## *Sessions #2 through #15 - Initial conditioning phase*

*Using a three session per week format, each student will be exposed to aerobic circuit training, calisthenics, circuit weight training, and distance running. During the fourth to sixth week a diagnostic Work Sample Test Battery will be administered to identify students who may require additional training to pass the individual events of the test).*

## *Session #16 - Mid program assessment (Week #6)*

*Using the traditional Sheriff's 500 test, each student is measured again for the same fitness areas of cardiovascular fitness, anaerobic power, and dynamic strength. At this point those students who have failed to maintain successful participation in the training sessions have the opportunity to demonstrate their improvement in these critical fitness areas.*

## *Sessions #17 through #35 - Final Conditioning Phase*

*During these sessions students will continue participating in aerobic circuit training, distance running, calisthenics, and circuit weight training, with a gradual increase in distance, repetitions, and reduction of allotted times for circuit training.*

## *Session #36 - Administration of the Work Sample Test Battery*

*Each student must pass with a minimum score of 384 points. Those that fail to achieve the minimum score will receive a notice of failure, similar to that for academic tests. After a period of remediation (2 - 3 weeks) the student will be retested. Upon failing the remediation test, the student will be separated in accordance with POST standards.*

*\*Note: The entire 36 sessions must be completed within 10 to 14 weeks in order to satisfy POST requirements for minimum program standards.*

## *Physical Training Failure*

*Each student is required to successfully participate in a minimum of 30 out of the 36 scheduled physical training sessions. In accordance with Academy standards, and in recognition of injuries, illnesses, and unforeseen emergencies, each student may accumulate 3 modified physical training sessions in addition to the 6 failures to participate, for a total of 9 sessions. This constitutes 25% of the physical training program. If the failure is due to an excused medical absence, the student may be able to make up*

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*the non-participation, provided the makeup session can be scheduled within the curriculum.*

*A physical training failure occurs when a student is unable to complete a standard percentage of the prescribed aerobic circuit or weight training program for the day using the progressive table listed below, or falls further than 1/4 of a mile behind the class during any distance run (critical for safety concerns when using a chase vehicle).*

***Weeks 1 - 4:*** Each student is required to perform at least 50% of the prescribed aerobic circuit training or circuit weight training for the day. This includes both the running portion and callisthenic portion of circuit training.

***Weeks 5 - 8:*** Each student is required to perform at least 60% of the prescribed aerobic circuit training or circuit weight training for the day. This includes both the running portion and callisthenic portion of circuit training.

***Weeks 9-14:*** Each student is required to perform at least 70% of the prescribed aerobic circuit training or circuit weight training for the day. This includes both the running portion and callisthenic portion of circuit training.

*An excused non-participation occurs when a student is unable to participate in the scheduled training session and has appropriate medical documentation to excuse their participation. Regardless of medical condition, POST requires each student to participate in a minimum of 30 out of the 36 scheduled physical training sessions.*

*A modification to the scheduled training session may be made to accommodate a specific injury, provided the modification meets the same goals of the prescribed activity for the day (i.e. stationary cycling would meet the same aerobic exercise goal as a prescribed distance run, but would not be a substitute for an aerobic circuit session).*

### *Daily Physical Training Session Activities*

*During the course of each training session, the students will be provided with a warm-up period, stretching exercises (Refer to Attachment D), a conditioning period (25-45 minutes), and a gradual cool-down period. The total duration of each session shall be no less than 60 minutes in length. A sample weekly program with 3 scheduled physical training sessions is included as Attachment E.*

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### Physical Training Sessions

Due to the relatively large size of each class, the different types of physical training are restricted by the availability of resources and equipment. Listed below are the three types of training employed by the Academy staff:

**Aerobic circuit training** - After a warmup and stretching period, the students perform callisthenic exercises followed by short distance runs of 220, 440, and 880 yards.

**Circuit weight training** - Students rotate through various Universal and free weight stations, performing up to 10 repetitions per set, alternated with running in place between stations. Weight used or resistance is based on individual ability.

**Distance running** - Performed either on the athletic track or off-campus, distance running begins at a 1 ½ mile to 2 mile distance, progressively increasing pace and distance throughout the Academy, culminating in a 4 ½ mile run at a 9:00 minute per mile pace and the "Colors" run at the conclusion of the program.

During this study, the IACP conducted onsite interviews with numerous members of the Academy staff, with several then-current recruits, and with a medical doctor who was recently embedded at the Academy to review its PT program. Some of the common themes identified about the PT program from these interviews indicated the following:

- The instruction generally consists of running, circuit training, and calisthenics;
- The PT program sometimes lacks definition and consistency;
- On a regular basis, the Academy experiences a high number of recruit injuries in PT. These injuries mainly involve strains, sprains, and reports of pain;
- The intensity of the PT workouts is not scaled according to the varied physical fitness abilities of the recruits;
- Environmental conditions, especially the running track at the Biscailuz Academy, contribute to PT injuries; and,
- PT staff do not receive ongoing or advanced training beyond the minimal POST-required PT instructor training.

## Fitness Standards across the United States

According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, Public Health Reports, being physically fit is defined as “the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, while maintaining sufficient energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits without undue fatigue and with ample energy to meet the above average physical stresses encountered in unforeseen emergencies.”<sup>104</sup> There are six components of physical fitness:

- *Cardiovascular endurance* is the ability to take in and deliver oxygen to the working muscles to produce energy to sustain activity. Cardiovascular endurance is necessary in approximately 11% of foot pursuits and over 50% of use of force encounters
- *Anaerobic power*, the ability to make short, intense bursts of maximal effort, underlies the ability to run short distances and upstairs.
- *Muscular strength* refers to the muscles’ ability to generate maximal force; it is necessary for performance in control and restraint situations.
- *Muscular endurance* refers to the muscles’ ability to sustain sub-maximal force, which is necessary for lifting, pushing, pulling, or carrying. Absolute muscular strength diminishes quickly after several seconds of strenuous exertion, such as a serious scuffle with a resisting arrestee.
- *Flexibility*, the ability to use the available range of motion at a given joint or structure, is challenged in common tasks such as bending over as well as much less frequent ones, for instance a foot pursuit.
- *Body composition*, the ratio of fat to lean tissue, is associated with physical performance as well as health. Excessive body fat is an obvious handicap for physical movement and is a health risk for many diseases.<sup>105</sup>

Physical fitness standards vary among law enforcement agencies in the United States. In spite of the critical importance of physical fitness to effectively perform the duties of a law enforcement officer, it is ironic that most police agencies place the greatest emphasis on physical fitness at the entry level of the profession. In many departments, once students graduate from the basic recruit

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<sup>104</sup> Caspersen, C. J., Powell, K. E., & Christenson, G. M. (1985). Physical activity, exercise, and physical fitness: definitions and distinctions for health-related research. *Public Health Reports*, 100(2), 126–131.

<sup>105</sup> J. E. Smit, Jr. and G. Gregory Tooker, “Health and Fitness in Law Enforcement: A Voluntary Model Program Response to a Critical Issue, no. 87 (February 2005). 28, <http://www.calea.org/calea-update-magazine/issue-87/health-and-fitness-law-enforcement-voluntary-model-program-response-c> (accessed June 7, 2018)

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academy, there are seldom any physical fitness standards beyond voluntary fitness goals for veteran deputies and officers.

The LASD's fitness standards for academy trainees are on the higher end of the spectrum, and this reflects the value and the importance that the LASD places on physical fitness. However, having high fitness standards can be both positive and negative. It is positive in that the recruits who graduate from the Academy have achieved a high level of physical fitness. It can also be negative in that some otherwise highly qualified recruits fail to graduate if they cannot achieve these high standards. It is also recognized that having an absolute standard for trainees of both genders and all ages is more likely to lead to adverse impact on female trainees, even though the language of the Civil Rights Act makes it clear that a department cannot have fitness standards that are different for men and women who are doing the same job.<sup>106</sup>

A consistent theme identified during staff interviews, including with the Academy command staff, was that the current LASD PT program is outdated and that the validity of the department's fitness standards is questionable. In view of this, the IACP recommends that the LASD review its fitness training program and reexamine its fitness standards. Any decision about whether to make changes to the fitness standards will likely involve policy and legal questions that require a more in-depth analysis. However, other agencies around the country have implemented improved physical fitness training programs and this information is available to the LASD should they wish to compare it to their current standards.

As an example, colleagues of The Cooper Institute (Fitness Intervention Technologies and FitForce) have conducted validation studies for nearly 180 federal, state, and municipal agencies. A summary of how their validation studies on 77 of these federal, state, and municipal agencies were performed was reported in *Police Chief* magazine. (Collingwood, Hoffman, and Smith, March 2004, pages 32-37).<sup>107</sup> While not a part of the article per se, the studies defined specific job-related fitness standards for each agency. There were a range of scores defined as standards for the various agencies. In other words, different standards were validated (identified) for each agency. However, the range was not very large.

The following table shows the range of absolute standards recommended for each test for these federal, state, and municipal agencies combined:

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<sup>106</sup> Means, R., Lowry, K., & Hoffman, B. (2011a, Apr). Physical fitness standards: Do your officers meet the physical requirements for your department? *Law & Order*, 59(4), 16-17.

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/underlying-physical-fitness-factors-for-performing-police-officer-physical-tasks/?ref=bb9dd89591ab639fe73148a895ab4de4>

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Table 21: Range of Recommended Absolute Standards

Physical Activity Tested	Range
1.5-mile run	14:40 – 15:54
300-meter run	64.3 – 66.0 seconds
1RM bench press raw score	151 – 165 pounds
1RM bench press ratio	.78 - .84 of body weight
Push-up	25 – 34 repetitions
Sit-up	30 – 38 repetitions
Vertical jump	15.5 – 16 inches

To further highlight the need to reexamine fitness standards and PT programs in light of their impact on recruitment, the U.S. military recently changed its fitness standards and training regimen in response to the fitness levels of incoming recruits. The Army has acknowledged that the decreased level of fitness of incoming recruits mimics the decreased fitness and increased obesity evident in our population as a whole. Accordingly, the Army is now focusing on finding ways to identify those less physically fit recruits who are likely to become injured and develop a PT program that improves fitness without resulting in injuries.<sup>108</sup>

## LASD's Physical Training Standards

The department's PT testing standards are outlined in the Sheriff's Academy Physical Training Program manual. None of the staff interviewed were certain how the criteria were established for the progression schedules, the required run times or distances, or the number of repetitions required to successfully complete some of the exercises. Further, it was the opinion of the training staff that these standards were designed many years ago by the department and likely are not based on a job task analysis or other valid testing instrument. If these statements are accurate, there is a strong case to be made for reexamining the department's fitness standards.

Best practices suggest that a law enforcement agency should not arbitrarily set standards for physical fitness as it could place the agency in a vulnerable position if challenged to defend the standards in court. Randy Means, an attorney who specializes in providing training and legal advice to law enforcement agencies across the U.S., emphasized the importance of having valid fitness standards when he explained, "Physical performance standards should involve specific activities which are clearly job-related and may be required of any police officer at any time."<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Sefton, J. M., Lohse, K. R., & McAdam, J. S. (2016). Prediction of Injuries and Injury Types in Army Basic Training, Infantry, Armor, and Cavalry Trainees Using a Common Fitness Screen. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 51(11), 849–857. <http://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-51.9.09>

<sup>109</sup> Means, R., & Lowry, K. (2011, January). Police officer hiring criteria: Part One. *Law & Order*, 59(1), 10, 12.

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He emphasized that law enforcement agencies need to ensure that fitness standards are validated, and that they measure the job tasks that will actually be performed.

Additionally, from the review of PT failures, it is evident that female recruits failed the PT standards at a higher percentage (52 percent) than male recruits did (45 percent) even though females make up a much smaller percentage of the overall recruit class. This may suggest that the current standards create a disparate impact on female recruits. Finally, if the current standards are determined to be subjective, and are subsequently changed, this would likely translate into a larger percentage of recruits successfully graduating, which would positively address staffing shortages and provide the LASD with more opportunities to better serve its communities. The LASD must reexamine its fitness standards, and as appropriate, revise its physical fitness training program. It is further recommended that approved studies be conducted to ensure that the physical testing standards are valid.

### **LASD Academy Physical Training Attrition**

The IACP requested data related to PT failures at the Academy during the period January 30, 2017 to March 29, 2019 (Class 420 – Class 435). During that period, there were 31 recruits who failed out of the Academy due to a PT failure. PT failures accounted for 11 percent of all Academy attrition. As was mentioned in other sections of this report, the data provided was sometimes incomplete due to the collection methods used. Consequently, the data did not reveal the specific reason for the failures in 14 of the 31 separations. Nonetheless, as can be determined from the table below, female recruits accounted for a higher number of PT failures (52 percent) than their male counterparts (45 percent). When known, the reasons for the PT failures were also provided.

Table 22: LASD Physical Training (PT) Failures

Reasons For Pt Failures	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
Failed PT Learning Domain	8	2		10
Failed to complete PT in a timely manner	2	1		3
Failed to complete minimum number of PT sessions	0	2		2
Medical PT separation	0	1		1
No reason listed	5	9	1	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>

Source: LASD provided data

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Not every recruit successfully completes Academy training for a variety of reasons and law enforcement academies should expect this to be the case. The IACP, nonetheless, recommends that the LASD conduct a closer review of all PT failures. From the data provided and from interviews with Academy staff, it was determined that only two of the 31 PT failures were due to a recruit failing the POST-required PT standard of achieving a score of 384 by the second attempt on the final WSTB. Twenty nine of the 31 failures were due to the recruits not achieving the department's fitness standards with regard to its a prescribed aerobic circuit or weight training program for the day according to its progressive tables or whenever a recruit falls further than 1/4 of a mile behind the class during any distance run. Accumulation of more than six daily PT failures out of the scheduled 36 PT sessions results in a separation from the Academy as a PT failure.

In addition, interviews with staff indicate that injured recruits who are not able to fully participate in the scheduled daily PT activities, even those recovering from a temporary injury, are not scheduled to participate in any alternative form of PT during their recovery. The lack of having any alternative PT training has, in some cases, also led to the accumulation of the maximum number of missed PT sessions and the dismissal of some recruits who may have otherwise been able to eventually achieve the fitness standards prior to graduation. The LASD Physical Training Program Manual states that in cases of injuries, illnesses, or unforeseen emergencies, recruits are supposed to be able to accumulate up to three modified PT sessions, thereby allowing them to miss up to a total of nine sessions before a PT failure is designated. When Academy staff were asked about this policy regarding modified PT sessions, they indicated that due to logistical difficulties in scheduling and supervising modified workouts, the Academy does not follow this policy in practice. Therefore the Academy should find ways to implement its existing policy to allow those recruits who sustain temporary injuries an alternative form of PT during their recovery so that they are not unnecessarily dismissed from the Academy for accumulation of missed PT sessions.

### **Scalability – “One Size Does Not Fit All”**

Some recruits enter the Academy in excellent physical condition while others are much less fit. The Academy's goal should be to provide a professional training environment where every recruit is challenged to improve their fitness level. Significant improvements in fitness levels, however, are seldom attained in the relatively short amount of time that is dedicated to PT during the Academy. Rather, successful improvements are developed over time in a step-by-step process so that, eventually, small, short term goals can become cumulative long-term changes. For law enforcement officers, it is especially important that these long-term changes become

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transformative, resulting in improved health, confidence, productivity, and safety throughout their professional lives. The intensity of the PT workouts at the Academy is not scaled according to the varied physical fitness abilities of the recruits. Implementing scalability in the PT program will prove highly beneficial in furthering the LASD's goal of achieving maximum fitness results. The benefit of grouping the recruits also provides the necessary motivation and growth for those who are in the lowest percentile without penalizing those who enter the Academy in better physical condition. As an example, it is the current practice that all recruits run together with no segregation based on individual abilities as determined by their fitness assessment scores. Accordingly, those in better physical condition often do not get as much benefit from a workout while those in poorer physical condition may be worked beyond their abilities, which can make them more susceptible to daily PT failures and injuries, and also less likely to embrace fitness as a way of life.

The United States Army has recently experienced the benefits of using scalability as an injury-reduction strategy. The Army now groups soldiers into running-ability groups in basic training to improve fitness training and reduce musculoskeletal injuries (MSI). MSIs refer to health problems affecting muscles, nerves, spinal disks, joints, cartilage, tendons, and ligaments.<sup>110</sup> MSIs have been identified as among the most important challenges facing the military. These injuries influence career success and directly affect military readiness.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, MSIs are extremely costly to police agencies.

The PT curriculum should be based on a scalable model with progressions and regressions to fit the varied fitness levels of each recruit. The expectation to give maximum effort should be the same for each group. However, the intensity of the more advanced groups may be higher and for a more prolonged period than that of the less fit groups. When fatigue causes bad mechanics and technique, the PT staff should regress the workout by reducing intensity or number of repetitions to ensure optimal performance and safety. In the end, each group should be able to achieve their desired fitness goals and with less chance of incurring injuries due to overexertion.

### Summary

An unfortunate reality is that many of today's law enforcement applicants do not possess the high level of physical fitness to ensure their success at meeting the fitness expectations at

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<sup>110</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Press Release dated January 17, 2001. <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=10032>

<sup>111</sup> Sefton, J. M., Lohse, K. R., & McAdam, J. S. (2016). Prediction of Injuries and Injury Types in Army Basic Training, Infantry, Armor, and Cavalry Trainees Using a Common Fitness Screen. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 51(11), 849–857. <http://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-51.9.09>

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academies like the LASD's. This reality requires today's law enforcement leaders to consider a more balanced approach to fitness expectations in order to achieve the department's goal to hire, train, and retain otherwise highly qualified applicants whose fitness levels may require additional investment. Accordingly, a primary goal of physical fitness training should be to encourage and motivate trainees to develop and improve their fitness level and embrace a healthy lifestyle, to reduce the causes of PT-related failures and injuries, and reinforce the long-term benefits of fitness and wellness.

It is quite evident that the LASD places great value on the training of its deputies, and specifically, on PT during basic recruit training. This emphasis starts during the pre-hire phase and continues during recruit training. The department also encourages veteran employees to voluntarily participate in the Sheriff's PT Pin Test that all recruits participate in, but very few incumbent employees do so. For this test, those who attain a passing score receive an award pin that may be worn on their uniform. After graduation from the Academy, there are no continuing physical fitness standards for veteran deputies. This condition is not unique to the LASD, as many law enforcement agencies around the country do not have mandatory fitness standards after graduation from the recruit Academy. With this in mind, the IACP encourages the LASD to focus its PT in the recruit academy as much on the benefits of long-term physical fitness and wellness as on the short-term achievement of departmental testing standards and to strive for positive progress from every recruit based on their individual fitness status.

### Recommendations

#### **Recommendation 83: Conduct a review of the LASD Physical Fitness Testing Standards**

The LASD has very high standards and expectations for physical fitness at the recruit training level, and for that, they should be applauded. It is important, however, to assure that these high standards are also consistent with current industry best practices, are valid, and that they do not unintentionally contribute to higher than necessary attrition from the Academy. Interviews with the training staff have indicated that the current PT testing standards are outdated and may not have been based on a valid testing instrument.

The LASD should reexamine its fitness standards, and as appropriate, revise its physical fitness training program. It is further recommended that approved studies should be conducted to ensure that the physical testing standards are valid. This effort alone, the potential revamping of PT testing standards, may result in significant cost savings through significantly less attrition, thereby reducing the need to hire as many recruits as currently projected.

### **Recommendation 84: Scale physical training exercises to more closely match the physical abilities of the recruits**

As is further detailed in the section titled Injury Reporting and Analysis, placing recruits into different PT groups according to fitness levels is a best practice that has also been shown to reduce PT injuries. It is an important goal to promote a safe, professional, and progressive PT environment, within a rigorous program. The Academy staff and the recruits should strive for positive PT progress in a respectful and motivating training environment based on individual fitness abilities.

Additionally, the LASD should segregate recruits into different PT groups according to fitness level. The entire PT curriculum should be based on a scalable model with progressions and regressions to fit the varied fitness levels of each recruit. Each group can participate in the same fitness training, with the intensity of the workouts varied depending on the cardiovascular abilities of the individual groups, so that all recruits are able to work out safely and at an appropriate level.

### **Recommendation 85: Support the ongoing professional development of the PT staff**

Physical Fitness training is currently conducted by Academy instructors who have only received the initial 36-hour POST training course required of all PT instructors. In the case of some of these instructors, this training was received years ago. From interviews with Academy command staff, it was stated that there has been very little progress to promote the strategic development of Academy personnel. Commanders indicated that this is an area where they would like to improve, but the lack of instructor development has been wholly attributed to the ongoing and increasing staffing demands at the Academy.

PT is a high risk/high liability area of instruction due to the potential for injuries. It is critically important that those responsible for teaching and supervising recruit fitness training should receive advanced training and certification so that PT is conducted in a safe and appropriate manner. Minimally, each class should have a certified, lead instructor to supervise subordinate instructors.

### **Recommendation 86: Improve data collection and conduct more in-depth analysis on the reasons for physical training failures**

The LASD collects a significant amount of data, utilizing various systems and processes. Many of these data collection systems involve recording and storing data on written documents

that are filed without any recordation or analysis. In some cases, different department units collect similar data but in different formats that often are not shared throughout the department. Further, these various data systems are not integrated.

As has been mentioned in other areas throughout this report, there is a strong need for process improvement regarding data collection, recordation, aggregation, analysis, and sharing. The data provided by the Academy related to PT failures was incomplete, thereby making it difficult for Academy leaders to better understand how and why recruits fail the PT testing standards and what changes, if any, could help to improve the PT program or the testing process.

### **Recommendation 87: Implement the existing policy for alternative physical training for short-term injuries**

From the data supplied by the LASD, many of the PT failures that led to Academy separation were due to accumulation of the maximum allowed daily PT failures. From interviews with the training staff, it was determined that the Academy has a policy to allow for alternative PT when a recruit sustains a short-term injury that prohibits them from engaging in a full PT workout, but due to staffing shortages, this policy is rarely implemented. While a policy allowing for alternative workouts may not work for every injured recruit, the staff believes, and we agree, that it might have allowed some previously separated recruits to complete the program on time. It is recommended that the training staff consider finding ways to allow alternative workouts in those cases where temporary injuries can be reasonably accommodated.

### **Review of Recruit Training Curriculum**

The landscape of our country has changed dramatically over the past few decades and has become much more complex. Our entire society, particularly law enforcement, has been significantly impacted by advances in technology, rising immigration, cultural immersion, continual law changes, increased mental health issues, the opioid epidemic, and community members suffering from varied levels of post-traumatic stress. Additionally, there has been an increasing lack of trust within some communities regarding law enforcement because of recent, well-publicized force encounters with police. Today, it is recognized that law enforcement agencies must evolve in concert with the changing expectations of the communities they serve. To a large extent, this requires changes to the content and the way training occurs.

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The LASD Training Bureau is responsible for all training provided to the department's sworn and non-sworn employees. In addition to the Recruit Training Unit, the bureau is comprised of several other units, including the Advanced Officer Training Unit, the Field Operations Training Unit, the Weapons Training Unit, the Emergency Vehicle Operations Center, the Tactics and Survival Unit, and the Professional Development Unit. The various units within the Training Bureau provide department personnel with ongoing professional development training. For the purpose of this review, the study team initially focused on the curriculum taught to Deputy Sheriff Trainees in the Recruit Training Academy.

The Recruit Training Academy curriculum rises well above the basic requirements mandated by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). The POST requires that all peace officer recruits in the state of California be provided a minimum of 664 hours of training and testing, which is separated into 42 different areas known as learning domains. The LASD meets or exceeds the POST-required hours of training in every learning domain and also provides additional hours of training on topics identified as important to the department.

### **Teaching Methodologies**

Not unlike many other law enforcement training academies in the United States, the LASD Academy primarily utilizes a traditional, mostly lecture-based teaching method in its classroom instruction in the recruit training program. From previous examinations of recruit training in other departments that the IACP has studied, it has been determined that the majority of instructional staff in police academies receive very limited advanced training in adult learning and other interactive learning methods. This factor, coupled with the necessity to convey all state and department-mandated topics required for certification in a limited amount of time, has stifled the ability of many academies to enhance its teaching methodologies. This condition was further articulated in an article discussing the efficacy of problem-based learning in law enforcement academies:

*With respect to police training, one of the current issues within police academy training has been the inability to teach critical thinking and field-based problem-solving skills, while conveying the required legal, administrative, policy, and protocol of the agency. The training process inherently focuses on*

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*the latter at the detriment of the former—an unfortunate result of the pressure to meet arbitrary standards.<sup>112</sup>*

The advantages of a problem-based learning (PBL) environment are said to include improved staff commitment and student motivation to learn. However, research has also identified disadvantages, chiefly among them that PBL covers roughly 80 percent of what traditional curriculum may cover in the same period of time, and that there is insufficient evidence to indicate that PBL significantly improves knowledge base and clinical performance.<sup>113</sup> For these reasons, some academies are reluctant to undergo a major transformation in their training curricula. Still, the traditional lecture-based teaching method can and should be improved.

A common theme identified in interview and survey comments from current recruits and recent Academy graduates was a desire for more scenario-based instruction to help them better understand how the concepts introduced in the classroom relate to actual field performance. Aside from patrol tactics, PT, and scenario training, recruits and staff have indicated that a preponderance of their training consists of classroom lecture, which is also a common condition identified in many other recruit training programs. The traditional style of instruction “builds on the pedagogical approach used when teaching children. The pedagogy is teacher-centered and structured, and it relies heavily on a lecture format. This style emphasizes mastery, obedience and discipline, and supports the narrow focus on law enforcement that characterizes traditional policing. Police recruits are adults and are likely to benefit from interactive adult learning techniques, such as andragogy. Andragogy is a self-directed/learner-center approach that promotes the teacher as the catalyst of education.”<sup>114</sup>

Unlike in most educational institutions, the teaching and instruction that occurs in law enforcement training academies generally comes from deputy sheriffs or police officers who usually have very limited advanced education and training in the field of education. According to a Bureau of Justice Statistics study of 591 law enforcement academies, “three-quarters (75%) of academies required full-time instructors to have a minimum number of years of law enforcement experience and the average requirement was about 4 years. About a third of academies required full-time instructors to have a 4-year degree (15%), 2-year degree (10%), or graduate degree

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<sup>112</sup> Makin, David A. (2016). A Descriptive Analysis of a Problem-Based Learning Police Academy. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 10(1).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Chappell, Allison T. *Police academy training: comparing across curricula*. Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. 2007 Page 38-39.

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(8%).<sup>115</sup> While the LASD does not have an educational requirement for its Academy instructors, applicants for the position must apply and participate in a coveted testing process that includes a panel presentation, oral interview, and a written scenario test. The minimum qualifications for this position also include two and a half years' experience as a patrol deputy (beyond completion of field training) and at least six months experience as a Field Training Officer. Deputy instructors assigned to the Academy receive an additional 5.5 percent bonus pay.

All full-time instructors at the LASD Academy are required to complete the Academy Instructor Certification Course (AICC). The AICC is a 40-hour, POST-approved basic instructional course that includes the following components: instructor roles and responsibilities, adult learning concepts, lesson planning, presentation and facilitation skills, use of training aids, evaluation techniques, legal issues, and safety protocols. Each student instructor must also complete a written, oral, or demonstration assessment. Additionally, depending on any specialty classes an instructor is assigned to teach, there are also additional courses that the POST requires instructors to complete. Included among these specialized topics are firearms, force, PT, emergency vehicle operations, and first aid. The POST also has three additional levels of potential advancement for instructor training, up to the Master Instructor level. While the Academy command staff have indicated they would like to see more of their instructors take advantage of these opportunities, few staff members have been able to advance to these levels due to the high volume of workload at the Academy. Aside from the initial training required by the POST, the majority of the training staff do not receive any additional or advanced training in the subject areas they teach. The result is that the quality of presentations and the methods of instruction are largely dependent on the individual skills of each instructor.

### **Assessment of Training Programs and Instructors**

An important phase in training development and continuous improvement involves the evaluation process. Evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of both courses and of instructors is necessary so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified and improvements made. Many law enforcement academies utilize a variety of evaluation instruments to measure the effectiveness of their training, including class audits of instructors by supervisors, course and instructor evaluation tools, and facilitated focus group discussions. These types of evaluations “assist an organization in assessing a student's reactions to a course's instructor, setting, materials, and learning activities. This level of training evaluation involves gaining direct feedback. Many organizations use this level as their sole means of evaluation. The strength of

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<sup>115</sup> Reaves, *supra* note 69

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this level of evaluation is the ease of obtaining the information. However, positive satisfaction numbers do not ensure learning and subsequent application of the course content.”<sup>116</sup>

According to the BJS study of law enforcement academies, ninety-one percent of training academies used student feedback when evaluating the performance of Academy instructors. Further, supervisory evaluations of instructors were also widely used (74%) by academies.<sup>117</sup> From staff interviews, it was determined that audits of instructors by Academy supervisors are not commonplace.

The LASD Recruit Academy conducts limited assessments of instructors who teach in the various learning domains as well as for each recruit’s assigned Recruit Training Officer. Students provide feedback to the training instructors after the completion of training for each learning domain and the Recruit Training Officers receive feedback near the end of the training session. These assessments consist of having recruits complete a written form that evaluates the instructors in areas such as preparedness, knowledge of the subject being taught, and their class presentation skills. The students record a numerical score between 1 and 5 for each category. There is additional room on the form for optional written comments. However, for these evaluations, the students are required to list their names on their assessment forms.

Following this assessment, a staff member reviews all of the scoring or comments for each instructor, summarizes the information, and then sends all of the original forms to the instructor being assessed. There is no formal command-level review of student feedback, although it was reported that when supervisors become aware of any concerns related to instructor performance, they address them through performance coaching or counseling. Further, the Academy does not provide an opportunity for an overall, final student evaluation of the entire training program.

### **Recruit Training and Education**

Recent events across the country involving police use of force have caused a paradigm shift in community expectations and the need for both trust and transparency. *The Final Report of The President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing* (The Report) identified six pillars of focus for improving law enforcement. They are:

1. Building Trust and Legitimacy

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<sup>116</sup> Rouse, D. (Nick). (2011). Employing Kirkpatrick’s Evaluation Framework to Determine the Effectiveness of Health Information Management Courses and Programs. *Perspectives in Health Information Management*.

<sup>117</sup> Reaves, *supra* note 69

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2. Policy and Oversight
3. Technology and Social Media
4. Community Policing and Crime Reduction
5. Officer Training and Education
6. Officer Safety and Wellness<sup>118</sup>

For this section of the report related to the Academy curriculum, the primary focus areas will be on *Pillar #5 - Officer Training and Education*, and *Pillar #6 - Officer Safety and Wellness*.

To improve the quality of training provided to the recruits and to better prepare them for the challenges of today's policing expectations, we encourage the LASD to continue to do what they currently do well, while also giving additional attention on developing more training that advances the "softer skills" utilized by law enforcement officers. Although considered "softer," these skills are critical to the success of an agency.

In the Report, it was recommended that the following areas of law enforcement training should have a stronger focus:

- Community policing and problem-solving principles
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Bias awareness
- Scenario-based, situational decision making
- Crisis intervention
- Procedural justice and impartial policing
- Trauma and victim services
- Mental health issues
- Analytical research and technology
- Languages and cultural responsiveness<sup>119</sup>

It is evident that the Academy leadership has taken strides to integrate many of these topics in greater frequency and in more depth. A review of the Academy's recruit training curriculum

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<sup>118</sup> The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, May 2015, Pillar 5, Training and Education, pg. 51

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

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determined that many of the contemporary policing topics recommended by the *President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing* are incorporated in the various LASD Academy lesson plans. As examples, the importance of fair and impartial policing is addressed in the Leadership, Ethics, and Policing in the Community classes, de-escalation is emphasized as a strategy in the Use of Force classes, strategies for employing effective communications and to successfully defuse and resolve conflict are mentioned in both the Handling Disputes and Domestic Violence classes, and prohibitions against discriminatory law enforcement practices and racial profiling are stressed in the Cultural Diversity classes. The community policing philosophy and problem-solving models are well explained in its block of instruction, and the importance of providing assistance to crime victims and strategies for dealing with the mentally ill are both presented in the Victimology and Crisis Intervention classes.

Procedural Justice was one important focus area recommended in *The Report* that we found no specific reference to in the curriculum. Procedural Justice is a philosophy that operates from the following four principles: *Impartiality* (in decision making); *Transparency* (in actions); *Voice* (opportunities for voice); and *Fairness* (in the process). The elements of Procedural Justice are typically conveyed as follows:

- Treating people with dignity and respect
- Giving individuals voice during encounters
- Being neutral and transparent in decision-making
- Conveying trustworthy motives

We feel it is important to point out that procedural justice is a philosophy that relates to both internal and external dynamics and encounters. Embracing the aforementioned pillars of Procedural Justice has been shown internally to increase adherence to internal rules and processes, increase morale, and decrease grievances by officers over new rules, procedures, and promotions. It has also been shown to contribute to the generation of new ideas and innovation, as it allows all stakeholders affected by departmental decisions to give insight, opinion, and perspective.<sup>120</sup>

From an external perspective, Procedural Justice helps to improve relationships with the public and contributes to community trust in the sheriff's department. We see this as a critical element of contemporary policing, and we urge the LASD to teach and promote a Procedural Justice philosophy, both internally and externally. To ensure this, the philosophy must be integrated into

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid. pg. 10

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multiple lesson plans for both recruits as well as for incumbent deputy training, into policy, into discussions, and into promotional exams.

Procedural Justice can effectively be integrated into these following areas of study: *Leadership, Professionalism and Ethics, Policing in the Community, Handling Disputes/Crowd Control, Arrest and Control (Defensive Tactics), Cultural Diversity/Discrimination, Leadership, and Respect Based Leadership (Orientation)*. Further, the elements of procedural justice should be modeled and reinforced by the Academy staff. As is further explained in the following section, continuous exposure of a training objective reinforces and provides greater assurance the topic becomes part of the culture the agency is working to enhance and/or change.

### **Integration of Curriculum – Modelling and Reinforcing Important Themes**

Law enforcement training begins at the entry level, continues through field training and on to professional development or advanced officer training, is reinforced through daily supervisory feedback, and continues throughout a deputy's entire career. Newly hired recruits immediately learn the values and performance expectations of their departments while in the basic recruit training program. The two most critical components of training are the type of culture reflected at the Academy and the ability of the training staff to model and impart the positive values of the law enforcement agency in a professional, consistent, and repeated manner.

The values, beliefs, and behaviors exhibited and reinforced by training instructors creates the culture in an agency. Since recruits view their instructors as positive law enforcement officer role models, it is important that instructors conduct themselves in a highly professional manner. As important as the content of curriculum is in recruit training, it is equally important how this information is taught. There will be times when recruits will be exposed to intimidation, harsh language, or use of profanity in order to further a learning objective, but these times should be limited to purposeful, role play training scenarios. At all other times, instructors should model and reinforce the positive behaviors prescribed in the department's core values (*Courage, Compassion, Professionalism, Accountability, and Respect*), behaviors that the LASD should want their recruits to learn in the Academy and exhibit to members of the public once they graduate from the Academy.

The continual reinforcement of positive themes and messages is referred to as *integrated curriculum* and is similar to what has been successfully incorporated into the educational field. Some of its benefits have been described as follows: "A major driving force behind integrated teaching and learning is the belief that when themes, subjects, or projects are combined students begin to see meaningful connections between the subject matter. Material then serves as a

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vehicle for learning rather than simply pieces of information.”<sup>121</sup> When describing the effectiveness of this strategy for training in medical schools, the authors of a recent study indicated that prior to teaching clinical skills, “students are ideally exposed to the “attitudes” of medical practice (professionalism, ethics, etc.) throughout their education, either in the classroom or in practice. This is accomplished through repetitive discussion and progressive development of concepts.” The authors went on to relate that through curriculum integration, “students are first introduced to foundational concepts (ideas), after which they connect or incorporate them with other learning (connections) to develop a fundamental conceptual framework. Learners then apply the concepts to real-life examples (extensions).”<sup>122</sup> While the curriculum in a basic law enforcement recruit class is not nearly as long or as in depth as medical school training, the concept and importance of curriculum integration is very similar.

To successfully integrate important themes into the curriculum, the entire training staff must consistently and repeatedly reinforce these major themes so that the recruits will be hearing repeated positive messages in their classroom presentations, in skills training, in interactions with instructors, and in practical training evaluations. As an example, 21<sup>st</sup> century policing practices focus on the following areas that are the most important considerations in any deputy/citizen interaction:

- Respect for the sanctity of life
- Constant focus on the safety of everyone
- Providing fair and impartial policing (procedural justice & police legitimacy)
- Valuing integrity and ethical decision-making

A strong focus on the sanctity of life is of paramount importance. When deputies keep the preservation of life foremost in their thoughts, they are more likely to de-escalate potential conflicts, not just for the safety of those they are interacting with, but for their own safety and for that of their fellow deputies and bystanders. By extension, this theme (preservation of life), when continually reinforced, strengthens the idea of valuing officer safety and the safety of others. Safety should always be emphasized as more important than the chase, the arrest, or

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<sup>121</sup> Contardi, G., Fall, M., Flora, G., Gandee, J., and Treadway, C. *Integrated Curriculum - A Group Investigation Project*. 2000. Retrieved from URL [http://www.users.miamioh.edu/shermalw/edp603\\_group3-f00.html](http://www.users.miamioh.edu/shermalw/edp603_group3-f00.html)

<sup>122</sup> Brauer, D. G. and Ferguson, K. J. (2015). The integrated curriculum in medical education. Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, MO. pg. 314. Retrieved from URL [https://medicine.hofstra.edu/pdf/faculty/facdev/facdev\\_the%20integrated%20curriculum%20in%20medical%20education.pdf](https://medicine.hofstra.edu/pdf/faculty/facdev/facdev_the%20integrated%20curriculum%20in%20medical%20education.pdf)

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winning the argument. The philosophy of Procedural Justice is explained in greater detail in the section that follows. Its primary elements should be integrated, through both words and actions, throughout the training program. Finally, it is important to stress integrity as an overriding theme in all deputy decision-making. The vast majority of law enforcement officers in this country are honest, ethical, and hard-working public servants who do their jobs in an exceptional manner. Unfortunately, it is the dishonorable actions of the few that generate media attention and public notice. Performing their jobs with the utmost integrity is a value that needs to be emphasized throughout every training class.

The ultimate goal of curriculum integration is to refocus the training program around these important themes to better prepare recruits to serve their communities professionally, impartially, and fairly. This would assist the LASD to better achieve its goal of improved service delivery and increased community trust and support. In order to more effectively integrate these themes into all aspects of the recruit program, the LASD Academy will need to engage the training staff and challenge them to find numerous opportunities to repeat and reinforce these themes throughout the course of the 20-week basic training program.

### **Deputy Safety and Wellness**

Deputy safety and wellness should also be integrated and highlighted in every training curriculum possible. This would be especially beneficial to recruits as it would help to make a strong impression about safety and wellness early in their careers. In fact, the mental health wellness needs of law enforcement personnel should receive the same level of attention as their physical health and well-being. In its March 2019 report to Congress on the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act, the U.S. Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services reported that:

*Patrol officers face a national undercurrent of heightened public scrutiny of the profession that overshadows the legitimacy of their individual efforts. Corrections officers can expect to encounter verbal abuse and physical assaults from prisoners and exposure to hazardous materials and blood-borne pathogens. All of these things added to the ordinary hassles of the workplace and their personal lives can lead to cumulative stress and burnout.*<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Spence, Deborah L., Melissa Fox, Gilbert C. Moore, Sarah Estill, and Nazmia E.A. Comrie. 2019. *Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act: Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

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This condition underscores the very nature of the wellness risks and challenges faced by LASD deputies on a daily basis. The report further indicates that:

*Psychological stress may also have serious consequences for the individual officer's health. In particular, traumatic law enforcement work has been shown to increase officers' risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. PTSD is associated with major depression, panic attacks, phobias, mania, substance abuse, and increased risk of suicide. PTSD can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, heart disease, and possibly stroke as well.<sup>124</sup>*

Realizing these challenges, it is extremely important that mental health wellness needs be openly discussed at the onset of a deputy's career and that any stigmas that were previously aligned with these conversations be eliminated.

In addition to mental health and wellness and, as explained in more detail elsewhere in this report in the section titled *Injury Reporting, Prevention, and Analysis*, the IACP has identified some additional best practices for training safety. In view of this, and as was mentioned in the previous section, the IACP recommends that the LASD should implement a formal program that promotes the integration of safety themes throughout the Academy's lesson plans, so that both students and instructors are hearing, repeating, and reinforcing safety messages throughout the course of the basic training session and in all other training programs.

## Summary

Based on the review of the recruit training curriculum at the LASD Academy and in consideration of established best practices, we suggest that the LASD leadership improve the process of evaluation of its programs and instructors and consider enhancements to the existing curriculum according to the following recommendations.

## Recommendations

### **Recommendation 88: Integrate important themes into the Basic Training Curriculum**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Training Academy curriculum provides significantly more training than is required by the California POST. It is evident that the Academy leadership and staff are in tune with today's 21<sup>st</sup> Century policing environment as their current recruit

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

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curriculum incorporates the topics of ethics, leadership, cultural diversity, and crisis intervention. We believe that by employing the practice of *curriculum integration*, as described in this section, recruits will, through repetition, witness these concepts becoming a part of the law enforcement culture. These important themes include:

- Respect for the sanctity of life
- Constant focus on the safety of everyone
- Procedural justice (providing fair and impartial policing)
- Practicing integrity and ethical decision making in all actions

The desired result is that the conduct and decision-making of recruits during training and after graduation from the Academy will more closely reflect the expectations that LASD leadership has for sustaining positive law enforcement and community relations as well as improved relationships between deputies and inmates under their supervision. We further strongly recommend that these same important themes be integrated into the Advanced Officer Training (AOT) curriculum provided to veteran deputies during annual AOT training.

### **Recommendation 89: Schedule ongoing career development training for the Academy staff**

Ongoing career development training for the Academy staff, including team training, should be provided so that training instructors can improve their presentation and leadership skills. The training topics should include adult learning, scenario development and other interactive learning, and incorporation of integrated curriculum techniques. The use of scenarios, role playing, and case studies will help students better understand how to apply the knowledge learned in the classroom, well beyond mere memorization of the information. This training will also help to promote staff development, consistency in instruction, and ongoing team building among instructors.

### **Recommendation 90: Enhance the climate of process review for continuous improvement in the quality and effectiveness of training programs**

The Academy currently conducts only minimal quality assessment of the Recruit Training program and of its instructors. We believe that by conducting more in-depth evaluations of instructors and of programs, with regularly scheduled supervisory audits, the leadership at the Academy would be better prepared to make more timely adjustments or address any deficiencies in instructor performance or course content. The Academy should improve its

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internal methods of gathering information about the quality of recruit training. To do so, we suggest the following:

- Conduct confidential survey evaluations twice (midway through the training and another at the end of the session). Conducting the survey only at the end of the session does not allow the Academy to make timely corrections or adjustments that may be necessary. The Academy should consider utilizing an online survey instrument for the recordation of feedback as this process is more efficient and produces a quality product that requires less time to tabulate respondent data.
- Consider conducting a facilitated focus group discussion with a representative sampling of recruits at the end of the session. Doing so will allow the command staff to identify more specific information than that which is provided in written surveys and to further examine any concerns that might have been listed in the anonymous surveys. Consider utilizing personnel from outside the Academy's chain-of-command to facilitate these discussions in order to promote more candid discussion.
- Conduct formal supervisory audits of instructors at least once per session and review these evaluations at the command and supervisory levels to assess the quality of the instruction and to adjust as needed.

These enhancements will allow the Academy to gain better insight about the quality of the Recruit Training program and of the performance of individual instructors so that any areas in need of improvement can be more quickly addressed.

### **Review of Academy Training Facilities**

The IACP project team assessed the various facilities utilized by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Training Academy. The team members conducted onsite visits to the various training sites and also engaged the training staff in detailed interviews. Despite numerous challenges presented by facility limitations, it was obvious to the IACP project team that the department highly values the training of its recruits and veteran deputies. This section outlines our initial findings and recommendations regarding the Academy's training facilities.

The LASD operates its own training Academy and offers a full range of both recruit-level and in-service training programs. The Training Bureau is responsible for the department's training function at each of the Academy's training facilities. The Academy provides training programs that vary from civilian training, Security Officer training, Custody Assistant training, to basic recruit and in-service training for sworn Deputy Sheriffs. The Academy also provides in-service

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and advanced officer training curriculum to comply with state POST mandates for re-certification of its deputies.

Due to the large number of recruits in each class, and in consideration of the volume of additional training that the Training Bureau provides, the classrooms and other facility resources at both locations are barely adequate. Based on projected increases to the number of recruit classes anticipated to occur in the years ahead, the LASD will likely reach the point where they will not be capable of accommodating those numbers and achieving its staffing goals without either facility enhancements, additional facilities, or changes in the training schedule (e.g., scheduling day and evening recruit classes). In addition to recruit training, a significant volume of additional training also occurs at these various facilities throughout the year, often placing them at maximum capacity. In fact, our present assessment is that the current facility capacities are only marginally adequate to effectively provide for the recruit training needs of the LASD. Photos of the training facilities have been included in Appendix F.

## **Deputy Sheriff Recruit Training**

Deputy Sheriff Recruit training occurs at two different facilities in Los Angeles County. The primary training facility is the Biscailuz Training Academy in East Los Angeles. A satellite facility (the North Academy) is located on the campus of the College of the Canyons in Valencia. Currently, the LASD conducts eight entry-level basic training programs (20 weeks) per year at the two academy sites. Twice each year, three overlapping recruit classes of up to 100 students per class are being conducted at the Biscailuz Academy while a single class of up to 90 students is being conducted twice each year at the North Academy.

## **Biscailuz Training Academy**

LASD deputy training originally started at the Biscailuz Center in 1946. Academy training classes continued there through 1984, when Biscailuz was closed due to space limitations. From 1984 until 2014, recruit classes were conducted at the Sheriff's Training Academy and Regional Services (STARS) Center in Whittier. In 2011, new construction and renovations began at Biscailuz, including classrooms, offices, a gym, locker rooms, a parade deck, and a stage that holds nearly 800 people. The new center also included an expanded parking lot which can accommodate 232 staff and visitor parking spaces. The total cost of the project was more than \$22,000,000 dollars. Academy recruit training resumed at Biscailuz on June 23, 2014.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Source LASD - Years in Review 2013 / 2014. A Period of Transition. Creating a Foundation for the Future

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In spite of the recent construction and renovations, the Biscailuz facility is inadequate to accommodate the size of the current recruit classes and could not accommodate training of additional recruits without transitioning to a separate day and evening class schedule. The Biscailuz Academy does not have an indoor breakroom or a cafeteria for the recruits. Further, the locker rooms, showers, and rest room facilities are cramped and inadequate to accommodate the number of students involved in training at any given time. This facility is also not a secure facility, and due to limited parking at the facility, recruits are required to carpool (3-4 per car), and many must park their vehicles a considerable distance away from the Academy.

Finally, the physical fitness training area and running track are in very poor condition. The dirt running track has numerous holes and ruts which makes it potentially dangerous for physical fitness runs for the recruits. The grassy area inside the running track is also pocked with gopher holes. This area is also used as the K9 training area and as a landing zone for department helicopters. All of these conditions render this area unsuitable for conducting the PT that is required in the recruit curriculum.

Whenever feasible, Academy staff and the recruits participate in PT at an off-site location (the East Los Angeles College). While the facilities there are well-suited for this training, the Academy incurs lost training time due to the travel distance involved. Additionally, there are sometimes scheduling difficulties to secure use of the college facility for recruit training. One member of the command staff has indicated that the cost estimates to properly repair the running track are so high that they just add a little more dirt every so often to fill the holes and ask the Academy staff to try to do more of their PT training at the college.

### **North Training Academy**

The North Academy is located on the campus of the College of the Canyons. It consists of one small, one-story building containing a 100-seat classroom and an adjoining small area for staff offices. The recruit lockers are located in a college building which is 300 yards away from the classroom. The staff locker area consists of a converted shed adjacent to the Academy building. Similar to the Biscailuz Center, the training site is not in a secure area as the college is open to the public. Further, the facility capacity for students and staff is currently at maximum and is inadequate to accommodate additional recruit classes, unless either additional office and classroom space is made available or if the North Academy also transitioned to conducting recruit training during the day and evening hours. This facility also does not have an indoor breakroom or a cafeteria, and its locker rooms and changing facilities are cramped.

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There are no restrooms in the North Academy building or within 100 yards of the building. Recruits and staff need to walk outside and use restrooms at the nearby stadium facility at the college. There are no indoor eating or break areas for the recruits. When conducting defensive tactics training, the recruits need to put mats down on a basketball court and remove and store them when the training is over. There are no scenario training areas (simulated apartments, stores, offices, etc.) for conducting practical training, so scenarios take place outdoors in “pretend” settings. Staff have indicated that there is significant lost training time and productivity due to the extra time needed for restroom breaks or relocating to other areas of the campus for PT or defensive tactics training.

According to LASD command staff, the College of the Canyons recently passed a bond initiative to build a public safety building (sheriff, fire, probation) that will include training facilities. The college plans to first build an Arts Center, so this project is likely at least several years away. Should this expansion project be completed, and include such things as adequate classroom, office, and storage space, security features, adequate parking, dedicated defensive tactics and PT areas, and scenario training rooms, there is great potential for the North Academy to become a state-of-the-art law enforcement training facility.

### **Moving back to the Sheriff’s Training Academy and Regional Services (STARS) Center**

There have been recent planning discussions to consider the feasibility of conducting additional recruit classes at the Sheriff’s Training Academy and Regional Services (STARS) Center in Whittier, which was a former training site for recruit training. From interviews with Academy command staff, most indicated that holding additional recruit training classes at the STARS Center would be, in their opinion, the best temporary option until or unless a different facility is made available. They did not see any expansion of the Biscailuz Academy as a realistic option. If additional classes are conducted at the STARS Center, in addition to the need for more training staff, they would also need additional office space. Custody training, which currently takes place there, may also need to be relocated. Senior staff, however, reiterated that this site is not ideal as a long-term solution for recruit training due to limited parking and lack of a PT area.

### **Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC)**

Training EVOC training occurs at the Fairplex in Pomona, the home of the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds. EVOC training for LASD has occurred at this location since 1960. The LASD owns a small, deeded portion of the Fairplex grounds where it has a building structure containing classrooms, driving simulators, and offices. It has an adjoining maintenance garage, a dedicated

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mechanic, and dedicated EVOC vehicles. The EVOC facilities are located within a fenced-in area providing some level of security.

The size of the driver's training "track" on the property is adequate for EVOC training, but that part of the property is owned by the Fairplex. The LASD must set up and remove hundreds of tires and cones prior to every weekend for other uses of the fairgrounds. The Fairplex also has the right to stop EVOC training on short notice to the department for any revenue-generating fairgrounds event that may take precedence. Scheduling recruit EVOC training at the Fairplex is very challenging, requires much flexibility, and sometimes causes other components of training to be adjusted due to scheduling conflicts with the fairgrounds. Working within the EVOC scheduling availability is usually a determining factor in the scheduling of all other recruit training courses.

The state POST requires 40 hours of EVOC training for recruits. Ideally, recruits would receive EVOC training on 4 consecutive 10-hour training days. According to staff, because the recruits are required to have PT training each week, they come to EVOC training for two consecutive days, then there is often a gap of a few weeks before they return for additional EVOC training. This sometimes results in recruits receiving instruction one day but not being tested on that instruction until their delayed return. Also, due to the scheduling demands of conducting POST-required recruit driver's training, very little "behind the wheel" in-service driver's training for veteran deputies occurs since there are not sufficient time slots available for scheduling more training at the fairgrounds.

Department command staff have indicated that the LASD has been involved in the planning process for designing and opening a department-owned driver training facility, likely located within the property adjacent to the Pitchess Detention Center. This should remain a high priority for the department, especially as it anticipates expanding the number of recruits hired and trained in the coming years. One of the primary daily responsibilities of patrol and transport deputies is operating police vehicles in both a non-emergency and an emergency response. Currently, there is little to no additional scheduling availability at the Fairplex for additional training classes for recruits or to offer "behind the wheel" refresher training for veteran deputies. This situation will only get to be more of a challenge in the years ahead. Having a designated facility designed and available for these purposes will be necessary for preparing both recruits and veteran deputies for the safe operation of emergency vehicles, and that the department continue to make this a high priority.

## Weapons Training Facility at the Pitchess Detention Center

All LASD weapons training occurs at the weapons training facility adjacent to the Pitchess Detention Center. This facility is a secure facility as visitors must first enter through the controlled access gate to the detention center. For recruit training, the weapons staff utilizes four main pistol ranges, breaking the students into four shooting relays of 24 students each. Recruit weapons training consists of 12, 8-hour range days (96 hours), plus a 5-hour lecture on range safety. The staff conforms to the POST recommendation of a ratio of 1 instructor for every 5 students. Each recruit fires approximately 5,000 handgun rounds and 500 shotgun rounds during basic training.

There is only one classroom at the weapons range, and it has a maximum capacity of approximately 100 students. When more than one group or class is at the range for training on the same day, the start times need to be staggered due to the limited classroom space. As other classes or groups leave the classroom buildings, there are no permanent structures on any of the ranges and only a few shelters elsewhere on the facility to provide protection from rain or shade from the sun. Further, the office space for staff instructors and supervisors is extremely cramped. Additionally, from interviews with Academy command staff, it was expressed that if the number of recruit classes increases in the future, additional facility modifications and an increase in staffing will be necessary.

## Facility Security

Today's reality is that law enforcement facilities in the U.S. have already been the target of attacks. Other businesses and industries now regularly engage in target hardening and conduct active shooter and workplace violence drills. In fact, as evidenced by the following statement, workplace safety is considered to be a leadership responsibility:

*From moral and legal perspectives, organizational leaders have an obligation to establish violence prevention systems as an integral part of strategic crisis management. Such violence prevention systems include anti-violence policies, procedures, and processes as well as physical and structural means of preventing violence.<sup>126</sup>*

Accordingly, the LASD should conduct a formal security assessment of each of its training facilities to determine points of vulnerability and implement appropriate measures to safeguard those

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<sup>126</sup> Taneja, S. (2014). Violence in the Workplace: A Strategic Crisis Management Issue. *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 16(1), 32-42.

who work, visit, or train there. Beyond that, the LASD should include security considerations in any new construction or renovations to existing facilities.

### Summary

As was mentioned in the Introduction Section of this report, aside from the Weapons Training Facility, none of the existing facilities for conducting department training, including Deputy Sheriff Recruit training, are ideal for the type of training that takes place, and most of these facilities are barely adequate to handle the number of staff and students currently in the various training programs. The LASD projects to increase the number of DST classes in the years ahead, and an agency its size will continue to experience high training volume for years to come. This condition will require enhancements to some of its existing training facilities and possibly the accrual of additional training sites. Even then, important and necessary features such as appropriate PT, defensive tactics training, scenario training venues, sufficient cafeteria and break room areas, adequate locker rooms and rest room facilities, staff offices, security features, and adequate parking will likely not be sufficiently addressed.

#### **Recommendation 91: Engage in a strategic planning process to assess future Training facility requirements**

The County and the Sheriff's Department should engage in a strategic planning process to explore mapping the future direction of law enforcement training in Los Angeles County. According to interviews with LASD command staff, the department has been involved in the planning and design for a new Emergency Vehicle Operations Center. This process must remain a high priority. And, while temporary modifications and enhancements to existing facilities will need to occur to address the current and immediate future training needs of the LASD, the County and the department should also consider longer-term plans for the funding and design of a modern, state-of-the-art training campus.

#### **Recommendation 92: Continue to prioritize the acquisition of a new Emergency Vehicle Operations Center**

The LASD has been involved in the planning process for designing and opening a department-owned driver training facility. This should remain a high priority for the department, especially as it anticipates expanding the number of recruits hired and trained in the coming years. One of the primary daily responsibilities of patrol and transport deputies is operating police vehicles in both a non-emergency and an emergency response. Currently, there is little to no additional scheduling availability at the Fairplex for new training classes for recruits or to offer "behind the wheel" refresher training for veteran deputies. This situation will only

get to be more of a challenge in the years ahead. Having a designated facility designed and available for this purpose will be necessary for preparing both recruits and veteran deputies for the safe operation of emergency vehicles.

 **Recommendation 93: Continue to pursue a partnership arrangement with the College of the Canyons for an expanded recruit training facility in the northern part of the County**

LASD executive staff have advised the onsite team that a bond initiative was passed to construct a public safety building, which would include facilities for recruit training on the campus of the College of the Canyons. This would present the County and the Department with a great opportunity to enrich its already existing partnership with this academic institution while expanding its training capacity in the northern end of the county.

 **Recommendation 94: Conduct security assessments of the training campuses and facilities**

From interviews with Academy staff and from observations by the onsite team, we have identified potential security vulnerabilities at both the Biscailuz and the North Academies. From observations, the project team witnessed that most doors to the buildings were always kept locked and secure. However, both students and staff frequently travel between buildings, locker rooms, and other training areas. Given the open access at these two sites, a thorough assessment of the security features and vulnerabilities will need to be completed. Further, the LASD should develop plans to address vulnerabilities. Annual security reviews should be conducted, and emergency evacuation plans, with regularly scheduled drills, should also be developed and implemented.

 **Recommendation 95: Conduct a review of facility enhancements at the Weapons Training Center**

Over the past few years, the size of the recruit classes at the Academy has increased significantly, and current hiring goals for the LASD project even larger or more classes in the years ahead. The LASD should initiate physical assessments of range, office space, and classroom capacities at the PDC Range, along with the need for protective structures for outside training.

## Review of Patrol Field Training

The Recruit Training Academy, referred to as the Regular Basic Course, is a 20-week training program, certified by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). Upon successful completion of the Academy, new Deputy Sheriffs are certified as peace officers in the State of California. The curriculum at the Academy is “patrol oriented” and is designed to prepare new deputy sheriff graduates for patrol duties.

The field training (FTO) program at the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department is commonly referred to as Patrol Training. The POST requires that prior to being assigned to perform general law enforcement uniformed patrol duties, every peace officer, with some exceptions, must complete a POST-approved Field Training Program after completion of the basic recruit academy. One of the exceptions to completing field training immediately after graduation from the recruit academy is made for deputies assigned to custody positions in a jail.<sup>127</sup>

The current practice of the LASD is to assign all newly graduated Deputy Sheriffs to custody assignments in one of the County’s jail facilities. Accordingly, these new graduates of recruit training do not immediately enter the patrol FTO program. Instead, they are required to attend a six-week training program to certify them in jail operations in preparation for their assignments in custody. Once assigned to custody, the new deputies can choose to request a future patrol assignment, or they can elect to remain in a custody position. Currently, a new recruit could stay in custody as long as they want, including seeking promotion to sergeant and lieutenant while still in custody positions. For most new deputies who request a patrol assignment, transferring to patrol field training does not occur for several years after they have completed the recruit training academy.

Almost everyone involved in Patrol Field Training who were interviewed for this study expressed the opinion that due to the significant length of time between completion of recruit academy training and the start of patrol field training, the knowledge and skills learned by deputies in the Academy significantly declines during their custody assignments, making successful transition into patrol field training more challenging. To try to address this, the department conducts a three-week Patrol School that deputies coming from custody assignments are required to complete prior to the start of patrol field training. The Patrol School is designed to provide a refresher on basic patrol skills and tactics.

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<sup>127</sup> California Code of Regulations. § 1005.B.1.

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The LASD requires that Field Training Deputies (FTOs) have a minimum of 2 ½ years' time in patrol. FTOs must successfully complete a POST-certified Field Training Officer Course prior to training new deputies and complete 24 hours of update training every three years.<sup>128</sup> This update training can be satisfied by completing a POST-certified Field Training Officer Update Course or by completing 24 hours of department-specific training in the same field training topics contained in the Field Training Officer Update Course. All of the FTOs that were interviewed had completed the POST FTO training certification course; however, rather than attending the course prior to conducting field training, the majority attended the course sometime within their first year as being an FTO. Field Training Officers receive additional pay (5.5 percent pay above base; after 1 year, they receive 11 percent pay above base) during their training assignment. According to the department's FTO coordinator, since being an FTO is a temporary position, poor performing FTOs can be removed from their positions, either temporarily or permanently.

The LASD currently has between 280-300 Field Training Deputies for patrol training. Field training is six months long and consists of six phases. FTOs complete Daily Observation Reports (DORs) on their assigned trainees, utilizing a numerical rating system (0-6). These reports are handwritten as the department does not possess a field training software program.

The LASD FTO program is modeled after the San Jose FTO model. According to the San Jose Police Department's field training website:

*The purpose of the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTO) is to train new officers so that each is prepared to function as a solo beat officer at the conclusion of their training cycle. The training cycle consists of 17-20 weeks of intensive on-the-job training and daily performance evaluations. Training is conducted and staffed by field training officers and sergeants on a 24-hour basis.*

*Field training officers have the dual responsibility of providing police service in their assigned beats, as well as conducting training and evaluations for new officers. Field training sergeants are responsible for the supervision of all personnel assigned to their teams and for coordinating and supervising the on-the-job training of recruit officers. One of the goals of the San Jose field training program is to achieve a 90% success rate for all recruit officers trained.<sup>129</sup>*

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<sup>128</sup> California Code of Regulations, § 1004. Field Training Program

<sup>129</sup> San Jose FTO Website - <http://www.sjpd.org/bfo/fieldtraining/>

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The department has a uniform Field Training Manual, but according to all field training personnel who were interviewed, the manual is interpreted and applied differently at each of the 22 patrol training stations. This condition, defined as a lack of uniformity and consistency, was described as a significant systemic challenge that the LASD faces regarding field training. The department's FTO coordinator is responsible for administering and supervising all aspects of the field training program; however, that person holds the rank of Master Deputy, a non-supervisory rank and position. In the San Jose model, field training sergeants are not only responsible for the field supervision of all personnel assigned to their teams, but also for coordinating and supervising the on-the-job training of recruit officers. LASD patrol supervisors (sergeants), on whose team field training occurs, are not involved in the field training process.

If the LASD would provide FTO supervisory training to patrol supervisors and involve them in the field training process, they would immediately have direct daily supervision and additional coaching resources available to both the FTO and the deputy in field training.

In 2009, a Master FTO program was established. Initially, a senior "Master FTO" was assigned to each station. Many stations still have a Master FTO, but some do not. The Master FTO program was designed to provide a conduit between the training and operations bureaus and to assure consistency of field training throughout the department. Master FTOs report directly to the station Captains and not to the department's FTO coordinator.

From interviews with Master FTOs and field training deputies, it was acknowledged that patrol training in the LASD can be extremely challenging and intense. A few implied that what they described as hazing probably exists at some stations, as patrol training is considered a rite of passage and comes with its own traditions. Several custody deputies who were interviewed shared that Patrol FTO training is even tougher and more stressful than the recruit academy. Some reported that it involved hazing, being treated subserviently, as well as including rituals such as not being allowed to eat or being required to stay beyond their shift hours to finish reports. These reasons were stated as explanations why some Custody deputies do not want to leave the jail— for fear of failing FTO or for not wanting to be treated in this manner after having achieved several years of seniority on the department. Others have stated that these stories of hazing during FTO are overstated. They said that the reasons why trainees do not get to eat lunch or have to eat in the car is more self-imposed as trainees coming from custody have heard these stories from people who failed out of training, so they just opt to go along with the behaviors.

Several FTOs indicated that deputies coming out of custody assignments should have done more to prepare themselves for patrol training. Staff who were interviewed indicated that custody deputies are expected to volunteer their time to prepare for patrol work without compensation.

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They can participate in patrol ride-alongs or in orientation programs offered by some patrol stations, but there is reportedly no standardization in how this preparation is administered. Others have indicated their belief that the safety net of being able to return to a custody assignment after a patrol failure causes deputies to put less effort into field training because they won't lose their job if they fail out of the program.

### Field Training Attrition

The LASD experienced a 26 percent patrol training failure in 2018. According to staff, the statewide average attrition in field training is about 10 percent. The most common reasons cited for patrol training failures included lack of preparation, personal reasons, officer safety issues, or poor decision-making. Majority of these failures are reportedly voluntary, wherein deputies assigned to custody agree to fail out of the program and return to custody.

An analysis of LASD's reported reasons for patrol training failures in 2018<sup>130</sup> indicated that of the 75 deputies who failed to successfully complete patrol training, 45 (60 percent) were listed as "not prepared," and the reason 24 others (32 percent) failed was listed as "personal." Only five deputies (less than seven percent) had "failure" listed as the reason, while one deputy resigned during patrol training to laterally transfer to another law enforcement agency. While the specific causes for being "not prepared" or failing due to "personal" reasons are not known, the significant gap in time between basic Academy training and the field training (patrol training) program is a likely factor. Best practices for training and education adhere to the principles of Just-In-Time Training (JITT). JITT is defined as training "in which the required knowledge and skills are imparted for immediate application, to avoid loss of retention due to a time gap."<sup>131</sup> Due to the sequencing of its training programs, the LASD not only fails to achieve maximum efficiency, but it also must provide additional short-term training for the specific job requirements of deputies based on department staffing needs. A more effective training sequence would provide for the immediate application of the necessary knowledge and skills without creating the gap in time that contributes to a loss of retention.

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<sup>130</sup> Note: One LASD FTO attrition document listed 75 patrol FTO failures in 2018. A second FTO attrition document listing total attrition for years 2007 – 2018 listed 70 patrol FTO failures in 2018.

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/just-in-time-instruction.html>

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Table 23: LASD Patrol Training (2007 – 2018)

Year	Number in Training	Completed Patrol Training	Failed Patrol Training	Attrition Percentage
2007	615	565	50	8%
2008	437	379	58	13%
2009	348	312	36	10%
2010	391	337	54	14%
2011	138	121	17	12%
2012	399	344	55	14%
2013	335	259	76	23%
2014	392	331	61	16%
2015	269	222	47	17%
2016	361	313	48	13%
2017	351	304	47	13%
2018	270	200	70	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,306</b>	<b>3,687</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>14%</b>

Source: LASD provided data

From previous studies of 10 police agencies that the IACP has conducted, it found the dropout rate for the surveyed agencies during the FTO program was 11.22 percent.<sup>132</sup> Common reasons for quitting were: officers discovering that the job was not what they thought it would be, shiftwork, and work/life balance. Other reasons for failure were performance-related issues including misconduct, difficulty with confrontation, officer safety issues, inability to multi-task, and report writing. The LASD has averaged a higher separation rate in field training compared to other agencies previously studied and compared to the reported state-wide average of 10 percent. And, the 26 percent attrition rate in 2018 is significantly higher and should be cause for concern.

## Summary

The California POST Field Training Program Guide provides guidance for departments to follow for administering a field training program. This guide underscores the significant contributions and influence that field trainers can have on the future of their departments in the following description of a model training program:

*Field training has a significant impact on the individual trainee in terms of imprinting attitudes, style, values, and ethics in carrying out the duties of*

<sup>132</sup> Recruiting for Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Lessons Learned from 10 Cities. A study by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. February 2017

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*policing that will remain with the officer throughout a career. Because of this, it is probably the most effective influence on the future direction of a department. The law enforcement department head and his/her field training staff must be certain that their field training program not only develops the necessary technical skills but also reflects the policing philosophy of the department and the community that it serves.*

*The field training staff has the responsibility of building the future of the department through the people they train. The field training program must have a training philosophy that ensures that each trainee is given the maximum opportunity to show that he/she can do the job. To accomplish this, the program must create a positive environment in which learning is maximized and in which trainees are able to perform to the best of their ability. The approach must be fair, firm, friendly, and professional. The example set must be beyond reproach. Evaluation must be sincere and given in a straightforward manner emphasizing the positive as well as the negative aspects of performance. At no time should trainees be demeaned or ridiculed. Trainees should never be treated in a way that deprives them of their dignity. Every effort must be made to ensure that the stress felt by the trainee is caused by the job and not from the words or actions of the field training officers.<sup>133</sup>*

The first months on the job are the most impressionable for a new patrol deputy. This makes the FTO program one of the most critical times in their career. The FTO program is designed to teach new patrol deputies how to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the Academy in the *real world*.

During this process, the values, behaviors, and standards of conduct of the organization are solidified. Those individuals who do not perform to the standards set by the department should be removed. To accomplish this, new patrol deputies are under constant supervision of a veteran training officer, who evaluates them according to established standards of performance.

As highlighted in the model FTO Program Guide, Field Training Officers serve such a critical role in instilling the values and culture of a Department; they should be highly regarded for the role they serve. Above having solid patrol skills and the ability to train, it is imperative that an FTO

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<sup>133</sup> Source: POST Field Training Program Guide 2014

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have high ethical standards, great respect for their community, and be self-motivated and professional.

Because of the long-term impact of the decisions FTOs make regarding new deputies, they perform one of the most important functions within the department. Only the best deputies should be provided an opportunity to serve in these positions. In return, serving as a FTO provides an exceptional opportunity to practice and develop many of the skills required of a first line supervisor. These include fully understanding and adhering to policy, modeling exceptional work behaviors, producing and reviewing written reports, providing on-going performance evaluation and feedback, and making on-the-spot correction.

### **Recommendation 96: Assign all Deputy Sheriff Trainees to field training upon graduation from the Academy**

Newly hired Deputy Sheriff Trainees (DST) attend a 20-week basic Academy that, upon successful completion, certifies them as peace officers in California. The majority of recruit training is patrol-focused, and this training includes knowledge and skills that are intended to prepare DST for the transition into field work in patrol. Much of the knowledge and skills learned at the Academy can become stale over time if not immediately transferred into the field.

Upon graduation from the Academy, DST are immediately assigned to custody positions within one of the jail facilities. Since they have not been trained for custody work, they must first undergo six additional weeks of jail operations training. Once assigned to a jail facility, the new deputies complete a custody field training program. According to staff, the vast majority of new deputies successfully complete the custody FTO program.

Under the LASD's Dual Track Career Path system, deputies who are newly assigned to custody assignments may apply for a patrol assignment at one or several of the stations. They may also choose to remain in a custody assignment. According to staff, the average time that deputies interested in patrol assignments remain in custody positions is between 3 to 4 years. By that time, since their initial Academy training occurred years earlier, these deputies are sent to a three-week Patrol School at the Training Academy designed to refresh their patrol knowledge and skills. Those who successfully complete Patrol School then begin the six-month patrol training (FTO) program.

If LASD's training sequence was changed to assign Academy graduates immediately to patrol field training, then the success rate of patrol training would likely increase, and the number of deputies who need to repeat field training after an initial failure would also decrease. Once

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deputies had successfully completed both Academy and field training, they would be eligible to be assigned anywhere in the department. If their assignment is in custody, they could then receive the six weeks of custody training prior to working in the jails. If a future assignment opened in patrol, based either on the deputy's career choice or on the department's staffing needs, that deputy would be ready to immediately begin the patrol assignment.

Deputies who remain in patrol after completing the patrol field training and are not assigned to custody would not have to undergo custody training. The time and expense invested in conducting Patrol School for non-patrol trained Custody Deputies and for training all deputies in the six-week Custody Training course, especially once future staffing levels in the jails are achieved, would be completely eliminated. Interviews with training staff, as well as with the majority of FTOs and Master FTOs who were interviewed for this study, have resulted in strong support for this change in sequencing for patrol field training. One training sergeant, who regularly supervises 10-12 deputies in the patrol field training program, indicated that those deputies coming to patrol and having spent the least amount of time in custody perform much better than others who have been assigned to custody for longer periods.

### **Recommendation 97: Evaluate, document, and publish expectations for the professional relationships between Training Officers and Trainees and conduct updated training for all Training Officers**

Most field training officers interviewed expressed that the vast majority of patrol training, while challenging, does not involve unprofessional conduct on the part of training officers. In those instances where trainees do not associate with their trainers or with other veterans during meal breaks, it has been described as more "tradition" than as an act of disenfranchising the trainee. In a few cases, trainers and trainees have both described unprofessional actions that they characterized as hazing (being required to eat alone, to buy food and alcohol for trainers, or to work long hours after a shift to finish reports).

In order to clearly articulate the department's expectations of both training officers and of Deputy Trainees, the LASD should evaluate and implement 21<sup>st</sup> Century model field training programs that emphasize the roles of trainers as mentors, coaches, and positive role models. Doing so will positively address the perception that some level of unprofessional conduct is still occurring during field training. All department training officers should receive training on this model program, and the department should emphasize how this will position the LASD to be an industry leader for law enforcement training.

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### **Recommendation 98: Ensure patrol field training is consistent and the culture is developmental and appropriate**

As mentioned in previous reports, differences in location of and personnel conducting field training can lead to variation in the experiences across deputies. However, in order to have confidence in the abilities of deputies passing field training, it is important that the training is largely consistent across location and personnel. Additionally, some concerns were raised regarding the culture of field training, with some individuals mentioning hazing, arduous conditions, and demeaning rituals as common occurrences. Such impressions of the field training experience have caused some deputies to stay on the custody track, even if they would prefer to go out into patrol, as well as some to leave LASD for other agencies. Emphasizing and enforcing consistency and appropriateness of the field training culture and experience may help to retain additional personnel.

### **Recommendation 99: Consider requiring all shift supervisors who supervise Training Officers to attend FTO Supervisor's Training; further, require these supervisors to play an oversight role in the training program**

Currently, oversight for training officers who conduct patrol field training is the responsibility of the station's Master FTO (if one is assigned) and/or of the station's Training Sergeant. In most cases, those supervisors do not work the same scheduled hours as the training officers or trainees. The shift supervisor (sergeant) who has supervisory responsibilities for the training officers and of the trainees in all other regards (job performance, attendance, investigations, etc.) does not have any direct involvement in the field training efforts, even though that supervisor works the same hours as both the trainers and the trainees. That supervisor is in the best position to make daily observations about the quality of the training deputies' efforts and about the trainees' performance. Shift supervisors whose assigned deputies are training officers should receive FTO supervisory training and should play a more active role in the training process.

### **Recommendation 100: Improve data collection regarding reasons for FTO attrition and conduct periodic analysis**

As was previously mentioned, only three primary reasons were listed for deputies who failed to successfully complete the patrol field training program. These included "not prepared," "personal," and "failure." In order for the LASD to effectively assess the quality and the improvements that are needed in the field training program, they will need to improve data collection. Areas of data collection to consider for better analysis would include the following:

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- Station where training occurred
- Names of training officers
- Length of time between patrol training and when trainee attended recruit training
- Phase of patrol training where failure occurred
- More specific descriptions (behaviors, actions, inactions) for the reasons for failures

### **Recommendation 101: Acquire field training software for the processing and dissemination of daily and weekly field training observation reports**

The LASD should explore the use of software to support Field Training Officers and their training documentation (Daily Observation Reports). Currently, all reports are handwritten on paper forms. At minimum, these forms should be electronically accessed by FTO's, and software should be designed for the transfer, approval, and storage processes for these reports.

Automating the DORs would allow the system to be accessed at any location. This would provide flexibility for the FTO, reviewing staff, the probationary deputy, the Academy, and any other staff member with a vested interest.

### **Recommendation 102: Upgrade the Position of FTO Coordinator to Lieutenant**

The FTO coordinator is responsible for administering and supervising all aspects of the department's field training program. The coordinator holds the rank of Master Deputy, a non-supervisory rank and position. This individual is expected to oversee and supervise Master FTOs and Training Sergeants, most of whom outrank him. This position should be upgraded to Lieutenant.

## Report Summary

The analysis of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Training Academy suggests that leaders are currently consciously engaged in operating the Training Academy in a highly effective manner, and that those within the Academy, from supervisory to line staff, take great pride in providing quality training to both Deputy Sheriff Trainees and to veteran deputies. Irrespective of some of the conditions identified and the recommendations we have provided, we found the staff at the Training Academy to be a dedicated team of professionals, working exceptionally hard to respond to ever increasing training demands.

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The primary objectives of this component of the larger study were to identify needs, concerns, and practices within the LASD Academy that might impede organizational and operational effectiveness and contribute to unnecessary attrition and to provide governing body officials and sheriff's department command staff with a prescriptive series of actionable measures to effect meaningful organizational change. This study has identified numerous practical recommendations, intended to upgrade the effectiveness of the LASD Academy's recruit training functions. The goal was to provide a comprehensive and balanced report that emphasizes actions the department and the Academy can employ to achieve objectives more effectively and meet future requirements in an informed and orderly manner.

Despite the many positive aspects of the work environment observed at the LASD Academy, as the comments suggest, there are opportunities for improvement. The most notable categories of recommendations, aside from facility improvements and staffing considerations, are offered to address the negative consequences of high attrition and training injuries, the desired disciplinary culture at the Academy, curriculum integration and enhancements to reflect 21st century policing principles, and improvements for the professional development of Academy staff. There is also the need to significantly improve the use of data collection, storage, and analysis, not just at the Academy, but throughout the department.

Finally, some recommendations call for significant cultural changes that likely will conflict with long-standing traditions at the LASD Academy. For change management to be successful, it will require significant support and a major commitment from not just Academy leadership, but from leadership throughout the department. Buy-in and support for changes in recruit training from department and Academy staff, at every level, will be needed to successfully implement the strategies and best practices listed in some of the recommendations.

## Section VI: Recruitment and Retention Report

This section proposes recommendations and actions for improving LASD's ability to reduce turnover in the Deputy Sheriff ranks. It also provides a review of LASD's recruiting initiatives. The recommendations in this report are informed by (1) findings from the initial site visit in December 2018 and (2) a subsequent literature review of best practices in law enforcement, military, and civilian organizations.

Recruitment and retention of trained and qualified employees is a critical human capital issue. With current national unemployment rates near historic lows,<sup>134</sup> many organizations struggle to attract and retain high-performing employees. As competition for qualified candidates increases, effective talent recruitment and retention strategies must be a top priority, particularly for public sector organizations, who may otherwise struggle to adapt to labor market trends and compete for talent.

To meet mission requirements in this environment, organizations like LASD must rely on, and pay for, mandatory and voluntary overtime. For example, in FY2017-2018 LASD projected excess expenditure of more than \$142,000,000 in overtime; although that deficit was expected to be partially offset by the vacancies in 564 sworn positions.<sup>135</sup> Each time an employee separates, an organization can expect to spend between 90% and 200% of the salary associated with the position to recruit, hire, train, and develop replacement staff,<sup>136</sup> in addition to the costs associated with lost productivity and overtime while the position is vacant. Given the extensive recruitment, selection, and training demands associated with hiring a new Deputy Sheriff, this estimate may be higher for LASD.

### Current State Assessment

#### Meetings, Presentations, and Focus Groups

The project team was provided a description of each step in the hiring process, from application to the medical/psychological evaluation, as it pertains to the eHire system. LASD must receive

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<sup>134</sup> Frazee, G. (2018, October 5). The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been since 1969. Here's why. Retrieved January 15, 2019 from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/making-sense/the-unemployment-rate-is-the-lowest-its-been-since-1969-heres-why>

<sup>135</sup> County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office (April 3, 2018). Sheriff's Department Budget Status Report (Item No. 2D-8, Agenda of June 26, 2017).

<sup>136</sup> Allen, D.G., Bryant, PC., & Vardaman, J.M. (2010). Retaining Talent: Replacing Misconceptions with Evidence-Based Strategies. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24, 48-64

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applications from 16,000 candidates to meet the annual goal of 720 Deputy Sheriff Trainees (DSTs) entering the Academy and that it may take applicants more than 12 months to complete the hiring process. Each presenter noted modifications or enhancements to the hiring process that LASD has implemented to reduce the length and complexity of the hiring process. For example, the Sworn Exams unit described a recent modification to the test administration procedures that allows for the Validated Physical Abilities Test (VPAT) to be administered concurrent with the written exam, thereby reducing the dropout rate between the two tests.

In addition, the project team conducted focus groups with custody staff at Twin Towers Correctional Facility. These sessions included LASD sworn personnel from the ranks of Deputy to Commander. The sessions provided first-hand experiences of Deputy Sheriffs in custody roles, including what they like and do not like about working in custody and their thoughts on the dual-track system. Also discussed were operational issues, such as the effect of consent decrees on jail operations, the use of mandatory overtime, and the distinction between Deputy Sheriff and Custody Assistant responsibilities.

### **Recruitment Marketing Strategy Presentation**

The project team also attended a presentation by Phelps (9th Wonder) consultant group who was hired to work on advertising and recruiting. The presentation described ongoing work to improve the number of applicants LASD receives. 9th Wonder conducted a survey of Southern California residents to understand the attributes of those interested in a career in law enforcement. They presented five “personas” that possess habits, behaviors, and mindsets that tend to be most akin to what LASD is looking for, including Legacy Led (those with friends and relatives in law enforcement), Military Naturals (those separating from military service), Law Learners (college students with law-related majors), College Players (Division II and III college athletes), and Career Questers (high school students) and discussed specific recruiting strategies for targeting each.

9th Wonder’s recruitment work clearly provides value to LASD. The personas they developed based on detailed primary and secondary research will help LASD recruiters develop targeted strategies for high probability prospects. 9th Wonder’s paid search strategy on Google and Bing and paid social strategy on Facebook and Instagram increased recruiting metrics such as the percent of prospects starting and completing applications on NeoGov. The Recruitment unit noted that the volume of candidates has increased significantly and that they are now more concerned about increasing the quality of the applicants than the quantity.

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To increase applicant quality, we recommend that LASD consider several actions related to the 9th Wonder personas. First, consider whether additional personas should be developed or whether the existing “personas” should be modified. For example, the “Law Learners” persona could be expanded to include additional fields of study, such as social work, that capitalize on community policing trends. In addition, it may be fruitful to further develop the existing personas to better help recruiters target promising prospects. This could include information on the number of people in LA County who fall into each persona, for example, as well as additional detail on the interests, experiences, and characteristics of each persona.

9th Wonder noted that the personas are intended to identify prospects who share habits, behaviors, and mindsets that are associated with interest in a law enforcement career. They are not, however, intended to be associated with specific demographic groups. Instead, 9th Wonder claims that the personas will produce “natural diversity.” To comply with federal regulations, case law, and professional guidelines (e.g., Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, 2014; Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures, 2018; Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, 1978), we recommend that LASD, at a minimum, monitor the demographic makeup of the applicant pool throughout the selection process. Not only does a diverse force support community policing goals, but diversity is also widely recognized as contributing to organizational performance (cf., Bantel & Jackson;<sup>137</sup> Hartenian & Gudmundson;<sup>138</sup> Wright, Ferris, Hiller, & Kroll<sup>139</sup>). A well-managed diverse workforce supports positive organizational outcomes, such as an ability to compete for the best talent, effective problem-solving, and reduced costs associated with turnover, low productivity, and absenteeism.<sup>140</sup> As the demographics of the United States continue to shift, with some projections indicating that the United States will become a “majority minority” nation by 2050,<sup>141</sup> employers must proactively implement programs to attract, select, develop, and retain a diverse

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<sup>137</sup> Bantel, K. A. & Jackson, S. E. (1989). Top management and innovations in banking: Does the composition of the top team make a difference? *Strategic Management Journal*, 10, 107–124.

<sup>138</sup> Hartenian, L. S. & Gudmundson, D. E. (2000). Cultural diversity in small business: Implications for firm performance. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 5, 209–219.

<sup>139</sup> Wright, P., Ferris, S. P., Hiller, J. S., & Kroll, M. (1995). Competitiveness through management of diversity: Effects on stock price valuation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38, 272–287.

<sup>140</sup> Cox, T. H. & Blake, S. (1991). Managing cultural diversity: Implications for organizational competitiveness. *The Executive*, 45-56.

<sup>141</sup> Colby, S. L. & Ortman, J. M. (2015). Projections of the size and composition of the US population: 2014 to 2060. *Current Population Reports*, 25-1143.

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workforce. This requirement is even greater in public sector organizations because competition for top talent is so great.

An emerging trend in recruiting is the use of social media data to augment recruiter performance. Historically recruiters have sent emails, relied on personal contacts, and made phone calls to find likely candidates,<sup>142</sup> but increasingly recruiters turn to social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter to identify and pre-screen high quality prospects. Researchers have developed techniques for inferring personality and other job-related characteristics from social media posts<sup>143</sup> as well as from “likes” and preferences,<sup>144</sup> although questions about the reliability, validity, fairness, and ethics of this approach remain.

## Turnover Rates

LASD provided historical data on turnover rates. LASD’s Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data from 2013-2018 show that 2,502 sworn personnel left LASD, with a range of 364 (2014) to 488 (2017) cases annually. The majority of cases were classified as separating due to retirement (52.96%), unknown (14.71%), or service-connected disability (10.75%) reasons. Average attrition rates for 2013-2018 (417/year) are near LASD’s projected annual hiring rate of 554, assuming 720 recruits and a graduation rate of 77%.<sup>145</sup> Data provided by LASD on separations since 2000 follow a similar pattern, with the majority of cases (69.6%) due to retirement. As discussed in more detail below, the LASD Employee Service Center conducts an exit interview for all separating employees on which employees can designate up to 16 reasons for their separation (e.g., retirement, dislike police work). In addition, employees who indicate they are moving to another law enforcement agency can select from up to 34 reasons for that

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<sup>142</sup> Guilfoyle, S., Bergman, S. M., Hartwell, C., & Powers, J. (2016). Social media, big data, and employment decisions: Mo’ data, mo’ problems? In R. Landers & G.B. Schmidt (Eds.), *Social media in employee selection and recruitment: Theory, practice, and current challenges* (pp. 127– 156). Springer.; O’Brien, J. (2014, June 11). Big data is changing the game for recruiters. Retrieved January 15, 2019 from <https://mashable.com/2014/06/11/big-data-recruiting/#928F7ktfQgqL>

<sup>143</sup> Schwartz, H.A., Eichstaedt, J.C., Kern, M.L., Dziurzynski, L., Ramones, S.M., Agrawal, M., Shah, A., Kosinski, M., Stillwell, D., & Seligman, M.E. (2013). Personality, gender, and age in the language of social media: The open-vocabulary approach. *PLoS one*, 8(9), 73791.

<sup>144</sup> Kosinski, M., Stillwell, D., & Graepel, T. (2013). Private traits and attributes are predictable from digital records of human behavior. *PNAS*, 110, 5802—5805.

<sup>145</sup> County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office (February 9, 2016). *Update: Sheriff’s Department Hiring Strategy* (Item 50-A, Agenda of April 14, 2015; Item 10, Agenda of June 22, 2015; and Item 54, Agenda of September 29, 2015).

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decisions (e.g., cost of living in LA, immediate patrol assignment). Completed exit interview forms are stored in each employee's jacket and were not available for analysis as part of this report.

Table 24: Reasons for Separation 2013-2016

Reason for Separation	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	Percent	Average
Regular retirement	222	228	180	182	287	226	1,325	52.96%	221
Service-connected disability			72	62	71	64	269	10.75%	45
Discharged	56	21	30	41	27	31	206	8.23%	34
Other employment	11	23	24	38	27	24	147	5.88%	25
Personal	28	13	8	10	5	3	67	2.68%	11
Deceased	18	5	7	8	8	4	50	2.00%	8
Released	3	5		3	7	10	28	1.12%	5
Moved out of State	9	3	9	2		4	27	1.08%	5
Personal Health	1		2	1	1	1	6	0.24%	1
Non-service-connected disability			2		1		3	0.12%	1
Return to school					1	2	3	0.12%	1
Working conditions				2	1		3	0.12%	1
Unknown	25	66	88	76	52	61	368	14.71%	61
<b>Total Separations</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>2,502</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>417</b>

Source: LASD provided data

### Best Practices from Review of Retention Literature

To improve recruitment and retention, it is important to understand the factors that matter to candidates and employees and cause them to join, and stay with, an organization. To supplement the data collected during our site visit and to inform identification of effective strategies for reducing turnover among sworn personnel, we reviewed research on turnover/retention from law enforcement, military, and civilian organizations. Military research is particularly informative because 1) military and law enforcement agencies seek to recruit and retain similar candidates, 2) military and law enforcement agencies often share similar organizational cultures, and 3) military and law enforcement service both have a substantial impact on non-work aspects of an employee's life. In addition, due to very competitive recruiting goals, military researchers conducted many studies on recruiting and retention effectiveness when unemployment was most recently low in the early 2000s.

These sources suggest several factors that might be affecting turnover and retention. However, before we review those factors, it is important to note that the best predictors of turnover may

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change over the course of a career.<sup>146</sup> One testament to this is that the U.S. Army has different dynamic retention models for officers<sup>147</sup> and enlisted soldiers<sup>148</sup> indicating the direct and indirect pathways by which numerous personal (e.g., demographics, personality, expectations, tenure), organizational (e.g., job duties, leadership, career development), and external (e.g., other job opportunities) factors impact decisions to stay or leave. A look at these models demonstrates that 1) many variables affect a person's decision to stay or leave an organization and 2) many of these variables affect each other. Similar research with law enforcement officers has shown that the highest rates of attrition occur in the first five years,<sup>149</sup> and that factors like gender and race/ethnicity interact when voluntary attrition occurs.

While the factors to be discussed provide a framework for understanding the causes of turnover, it is important to remember that the circumstances of voluntary turnover usually vary: individuals may quit on an impulse, they may quit for an alternative job, they may quit with a definite advance plan, or they may quit when an anticipated event occurs.<sup>150</sup> Environmental shocks (i.e., specific and significant events such as a new management structure or a new baby in the employee's family) also affect retention.<sup>151</sup>

Below, we discuss the factors that affect retention and turnover for the LASD in terms of the three categories used in the retention model research above: personal, organizational, and

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<sup>146</sup> Kerr, S. A. (1997). *Retention of First-term and Second-term Marine Corps Enlisted Personnel*. Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School. <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA328839&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>

<sup>147</sup> Shneider, R.J., Johnson, J.W., Cochran, C.C., Hezlett, S.A., Foldes, H.J., & Ervin, K.S. (2011). *Development and evaluation of a career continuance model for company grade officers in the United States Army* (ARI Research Note 2011-05). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

<sup>148</sup> Young, M.C., Kubisiak, U.C., Legree, P.J., & Tremble, T.R. (2010). *Understanding and managing the career continuance of enlisted Soldiers* (Technical Report 1280). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

<sup>149</sup> Koper, C.S., Maguire, E.R., & Moore, G.E. (2001). *Hiring and Retention Issues in Police Agencies: Readings on the Determinants of Police Strength, Hiring and Retention of Officers, and the Federal COPS Program*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Justice Policy Center. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/61721/410380-Hiring-and-Retention-Issues-in-Police-Agencies.PDF>; Wilson, J. M., Dalton, E., Scheer, C. & Grammich, C.A. (2010). *Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium: The State of Knowledge*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG959.html>. Also available in print form.

<sup>150</sup> Maertz, C.P., & Campion, M.A. (2004). Profiles in quitting: Integrating process and content turnover theory. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47, 566-582.

<sup>151</sup> Weiss, H.M., MacDermid, S.M., Strauss, R., Kurek, K.E., Le, B., & Robbins, D. (2003). *Retention in the armed forces: past approaches and new research directions*. West Lafayette, IN Military Family Research Institute.

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external. These causes are reviewed, and the data identified to support them is also provided below.

### Personal Factors

Work-life balance may be particularly important for LASD deputies. Work-life balance is a strong predictor of turnover in the military,<sup>152</sup> as are related issues such as spouse and family support<sup>153</sup> and work-family conflict.<sup>154</sup> In-person interviews revealed that many new deputy sheriffs were surprised and concerned about the long and unpredictable hours associated with patrol positions in particular. Unpredictable issues common on patrol affect the work-life balance of deputy sheriffs, including staying late to write reports, dealing with a call at the end of a shift, or having a rotating schedule. Interviewed staff also mentioned commuting challenges and preferences for alternative shift arrangements that allowed them to accommodate their needs outside of work.

Another issue is personal characteristics. Research with police officers suggests that individuals who have high anxiety are more likely to leave law enforcement, while “tough-minded” individuals are more likely to stay.<sup>155</sup> In ongoing work with LASD, we understand that Dr. Matt Bostrum has identified several personal characteristics that need more attention in the hiring process, and that the selection unit has begun developing a written assessment of personality characteristics.

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<sup>152</sup> Castro, C.A., & Huffman, A.H. (2002). *Predicting retention rates of U.S. Soldiers stationed in Europe*. Heidelberg, Germany: U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe.; McDonald, G.K. (2007). *Work-home conflict: A study of the impact of role conflict on U.S. Air Force company grade officer turnover intentions*. Unpublished Master's Thesis; Riddel, K.C., (2010). *An analysis of factors that influence Air Force civil engineer company grade officer turnover intentions*. Wright Patterson Air Force Base, OH: Air Force Institute of Technology. <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA522754&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>

<sup>153</sup> Waugh, G.W., Medsker, G.J., & Jones, J.T. (1998). *Modeling determinants of turnover of U.S. Army Officers: A longitudinal study using survival analysis* (SOC Special Report). Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.; Wilcove, G.L., Burch, R.L., Conroy, A.M., & Bruce, R.A. (1991). *Officer Career Development: A Review of the Civilian and Military Research Literature on Turnover and Retention*. San Diego, CA: Navy Personnel Research and Development Center.

<sup>154</sup> Castro, *surpa* note 152; McDonald, *surpa* note 152; Riddel, *surpa* note 152.

<sup>155</sup> Drew, J., Carless, S. & Thompson, B. (2008). Predicting Turnover of Police Officers Using the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 36, 4, 326–331.

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## Organizational Factors

In his book detailing recruitment and retention issues in police organizations, Dwayne Orrick points out areas of organizational dysfunction that impact turnover.<sup>156</sup> Some aspects of organizational dysfunction include an unwieldy bureaucracy, poor supervision,<sup>157</sup> inadequate training, lack of procedural justice, lack of feedback,<sup>158</sup> or lack of a well-defined career path.<sup>159</sup>

One organizational issue that might affect turnover at LASD is periodic changes in the career paths for deputies. Currently, the LASD uses a dual-track approach, where, after an initial assignment in custody, deputies can choose to either remain in custody or transfer to patrol. As of the initial onsite, it was unclear whether the existing dual-track approach would remain. A positive of this approach is that deputies have decision-making power for the course of their careers. However, there are associated negatives, such as the potential for deputies to lack a sufficiently diverse set of skills and experiences.

Another organizational issue that might be affecting attrition at LASD is that the custody assignment is not perceived as desirable by recruits. Although senior staff are needed in custody, and some deputies prefer working in custody, others reported that “no one wants to make custody a career.” Although Deputies can advance in rank within custody, they usually must take a demotion to move from custody to patrol within LASD. In contrast, other jurisdictions may offer an immediate patrol position.

Interviewees indicated that there are no formal ceremonies for promotions or retirements. However, employee recognition can have a positive impact on retention. Such recognition is not limited to formal, monetary awards; rather, it is ideally a combination of formal, informal, and frequent recognition. A survey regarding employee recognition in the public sector found that all types of recognition improve employee morale, belonging, commitment, satisfaction, and overall

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<sup>156</sup> Orrick, W.D. (2008). *Recruitment, Retention, and Turnover of Police Personnel: Reliable, Practical, and Effective Solutions*. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas.

<sup>157</sup> Lynch, J. E., & Tuckey, M. (2004). *Understanding Voluntary Turnover: An Examination of Resignations in Australasian Police Organizations*. Payneham, Australia: Australasian Centre for Policing Research, Report 143.1.

<sup>158</sup> Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (1980). *Work redesign*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

<sup>159</sup> McGonigle, T. & Butler, S. (In press). Career Pathways as a Strategic Human Capital Management Program: MyCareer@VA. In J.W. Hedge & G. W. Carter (Eds.) *Career Pathways – School to Retirement, and Beyond*. Oxford University Press.

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retention.<sup>160</sup> Regarding formal awards specifically, the same survey found that a well-planned presentation of awards (e.g., a personalized celebration) was a significant factor in increasing the effectiveness of recognition.

A notable desirable aspect of working for LASD is the variety of job roles available. Patrol qualification opens up the possibilities for a wide variety of jobs within LASD, including more opportunities than individuals would have with most other law enforcement agencies. Many people stay for this reason. The flipside of this issue is that some jobs may become so specialized that there is little variety in them. Research indicates that lack of skill variety in a job can lead to boredom and poor performance.<sup>161</sup>

### External Factors

Cross-organizational research suggests that other job opportunities affect turnover. For example, research with the military suggests that pay and career opportunities outside of the military,<sup>162</sup> and economic conditions and other perceived alternatives<sup>163</sup> are particularly important predictors of turnover.

Los Angeles County and surrounding areas have many law enforcement agencies and it is relatively easy to move from one law enforcement agency to another. The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) was established to set minimum state-wide selection and training standards for California law enforcement. Given that LASD follows the standards established by POST, the training provided by LASD is portable to law enforcement jobs within other agencies that abide by the POST standards. LASD has no pre-employment agreement regarding voluntary termination, so deputy sheriffs can leave LASD at any time without consequences. LASD has a lateral program that allows staff to come from other agencies, but LASD follows an unwritten guideline to avoid actively recruiting from other agencies.

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<sup>160</sup> Saunderson, R. (2004). Survey findings of the effectiveness of employee recognition in the public sector. *Public Personnel Management*, 33(3), 255-275.

<sup>161</sup> Hackman, *supra* note 158

<sup>162</sup> Kocher, K.M., & Thomas, G.W. (2000). *A Preliminary Analysis of the 1999 USMC Retention Survey*. Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School. [www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA379204&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA379204&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf)

<sup>163</sup> Hulin, C.L. (1991). Adaptation, persistence, and commitment in organizations. In M.D. Dunnette & L.M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (2nd ed., Vol. 2, pp. 445-505). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

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It goes without saying that compensation may affect attrition if an organization's pay is seen as too low in comparison with other, accessible alternatives. During the site visit, several interviewees mentioned that compensation is better at other local law enforcement agencies and one interviewee commented that he would receive a \$15,000 raise when he joined a new organization. The San Diego Police Department (SDPD) is seeing a decrease in turnover and an increase in recruiting success coincident with a 25 percent increase in pay.<sup>164</sup> However, it is important to note that compensation may only affect turnover when if it is out of line with typical compensation at other agencies. For example, the increase in pay offered by the SDPD may not have been as effective had it not moved them from having the worst compensation among law enforcement agencies in their region to having one of the best compensation packages. An obvious challenge that LASD faces is that the cost of living in Los Angeles County is relatively high and the competition for well qualified candidates in the county is likely to be strong. Therefore, LASD must provide competitive compensation.

### Summary

The retention of trained and qualified employees is a critical human capital issue for any organization. Each time an employee leaves an organization, that organization needs to spend considerable time and money (90%-200% of the salary associated with the position<sup>165</sup>) in order to recruit, hire, train, and develop replacement staff.

There is an extensive record of research on the factors that affect recruitment and retention of employees. Figure 1 below summarizes recent research on the effects of seven common personnel programs (i.e., reward for performance, compensation, benefits, career development, support for wellness, sense of belonging, and meaningful work) on five critical organizational outcomes (i.e., motivation, satisfaction, willingness to recommend the organization, commitment, and intention to stay) from over 5 million employees from 149 organizations.<sup>166</sup> The graphic shows the correlations between each program and each outcome. For example,

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<sup>164</sup> Himchak, E. M. (2019, January 9). Police chief: Crime is down, officer retention and hiring up. San Diego Union-Tribune. Retrieved from URL: <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/rancho-bernardo/sd-cm-pow-news-police-chief-at-cogg-2019-story.html>

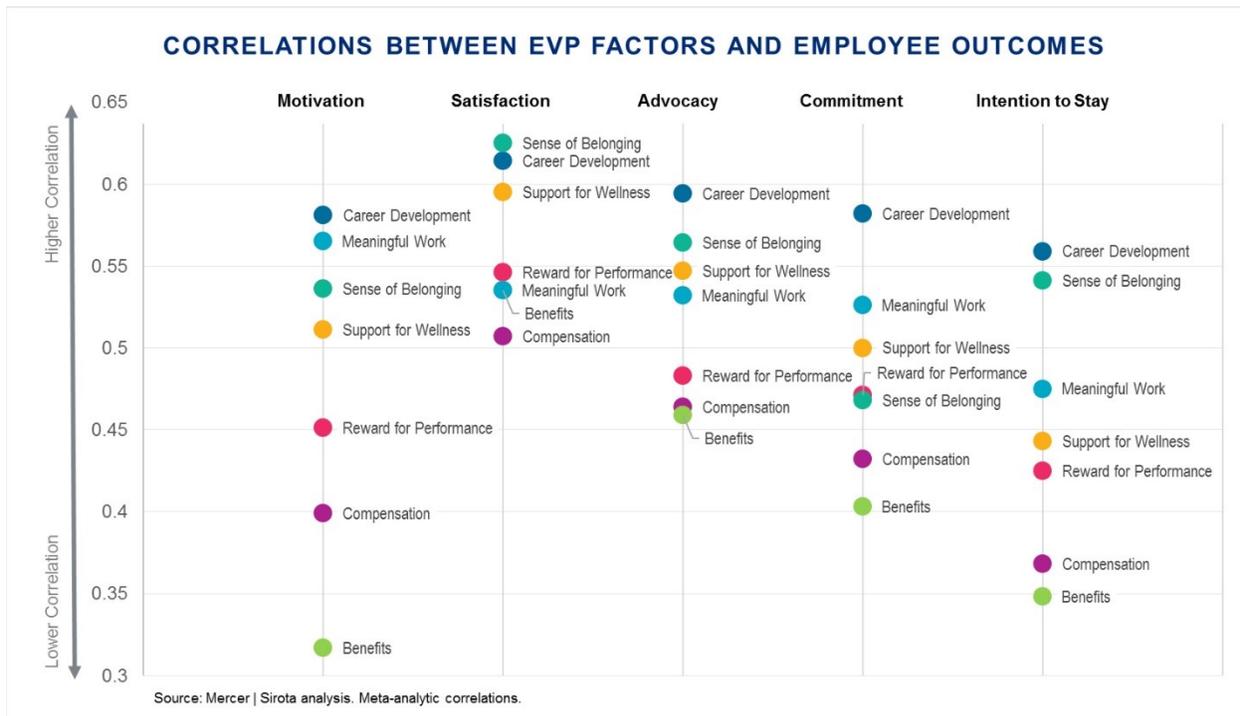
<sup>165</sup> Allen, D.G., Bryant, PC., & Vardaman, J.M. (2010). Retaining Talent: Replacing Misconceptions with Evidence-Based Strategies. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24, 48-64.

<sup>166</sup> Reeves D. & Hyland, P. (2018, September 14). *Preparing for the Future of Work: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Your Employee Value Proposition*. Retrieved January 15, 2019 from <https://www.mercer.com/our-thinking/career/voice-on-talent/preparing-for-the-future-of-work-evaluating-the-effectiveness-your-employee-value-proposition.html>

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employee motivation is most related to career development opportunities and employee satisfaction is more related to having a sense of belonging.

Most striking in this research is that opportunities for career development, access to meaningful work, a sense of belonging, and support for personal wellness are all more strongly related to important organizational outcomes than are traditional programs, such as compensation and benefits. As will be discussed in the recommendations below, these factors are all strong points of law enforcement careers, especially at LASD.



### **💡 Recommendation 103: Improve data collection and management to support analysis and metrics tracking**

Critical to any personnel program is access to high quality, timely, accurate data are critical to the success of any personnel program. While LASD currently collects some personnel data, it often came up that these data are not maintained in a usable or analyzable format (paper records). Creating a database that tracks personnel throughout their entire employee lifecycle and that is consistently maintained will allow LASD to conduct more advanced analyses to assess and determine factors such as hiring needs, reasons for attrition, and causes of injuries, among many others. Such data will allow for a more comprehensive and accurate evaluation of the current state of affairs at the department, which will then increase the quality and feasibility of recommendations for improvement.

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Many leading organizations have begun to embrace human resource (HR) analytics, in which organizations systematically develop, track, and report on critical HR metrics. Waters, Streets, McFarlane and Johnson-Murray describe four levels of HR analytics maturity:<sup>167</sup>

- **Level 1:** Operational reporting. Using data to understand and reflect on what happened in the past—and maybe going further to draw conclusions as to why past events played out in the ways they did. The fundamentals of this level of HR analytics are understanding already available data and eventually coming to an agreement as to what the data mean for the company.
- **Level 2:** Advanced reporting. The significant difference that separates Level 2 from Level 1 is the frequency of the data reporting. The authors define this level of reporting as proactive, routine or even automated. The top functionality at this level is simply looking at relationships between variables.
- **Level 3:** Strategic analytics. HR departments operating at Level 3 may develop causal models or look at how relationships between variables effect outcomes.
- **Level 4:** Predictive analytics. HR departments functioning at Level 4 are gathering data and using it not only to predict what will happen in the future, but also to plan for it.

LASD should invest in developing a mature HR analytics function, which would require both information technology/database support and functional expertise in the form of HR Analyst positions. A mature HR analytics program would allow LASD to analyze existing turnover data by location, rank, reason for leaving, and destination, thereby identifying important trends and allowing LASD to adjust course as needed to meet strategic goals.

## **Recommendation 104: Recruit Retention - managing expectations**

Although LASD has implemented several procedures to provide prospects with a realistic understanding of the role of a Deputy Sheriff, such as requiring applicants to complete a ride-along during the hiring process, we repeatedly heard that recruits' expectations are not met on the job. We recommend that LASD consider several additional programs to provide a more realistic preview of the job:

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<sup>167</sup> Waters, S.D., Streets, V.N., McFarlane, L.A., & Johnson-Murray, R. (2018). *The Practical Guide to HR Analytics: Using Data to Inform, Transform and Empower HR Decisions*. Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resources Management.

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- Infuse the hiring process with realistic previews of the job. Realistic job previews have been shown to reduce turnover (Phillips, 1998). IACP and HumRRO previously developed a Virtual Ride Along job preview that is publicly available and could be used in recruiting.<sup>168</sup> Using high-fidelity selection procedures, such as work samples, rich-media simulations, and other realistic representations of the job also assist in improving the validity of the hiring process and will encourage candidates who are not appropriate to self-select out. Assessments of personal characteristics that are predictive of turnover (e.g., personality) may also improve retention.
- While LASD does not actively recruit officers from other jurisdictions, some do seek out employment with LASD. In these cases, LASD should consider fast-tracking individuals from POST-certified departments to reduce the time it takes to hire them.
- Increase/maintain the quantity and quality of information about the variety of work available at higher levels. In recruitment materials and internal communications, LASD should continue to emphasize the benefits of the variety of work available to deputy sheriffs. No other departments offer the diversity of work that LASD can offer.
- Communicate the meaningfulness of LASD's work. Meaningful work drives employee engagement, which then predicts employee retention. It is important to ensure that employees understand the purpose of the organization and its positive impact on the community. Employees are increasingly connected to social causes and want to make an impact in and out of their workplace. Having an organization show support for a local charity or cause can give employees an increased feeling of meaning in their work. At LASD, the connection to and impact on the community is clear, however it may be beneficial to continuously emphasize the larger meaning of the work and any positive resulting outcomes.
- Ensure compensation is fair and comprehensive by conducting a review of salary and benefits to ensure that compensation is competitive with other local agencies. Define compensation broadly to include improvements in the equipment used or benefits such as take-home cars. Examine use of hiring bonuses and retention incentives.

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<sup>168</sup> <https://www.discoverpolicing.org/explore-the-field/take-a-virtual-ride-along/>

### **Recommendation 105: Deputy retention - Consider including relevant past experience as part of the selection process for coveted positions**

A common issue that came up when individuals were asked what they would like to change about their job, or the department was the current coveted position testing process. A testing process was implemented for coveted positions to help prevent against factors like favoritism and nepotism determining who would be considered and selected for these positions. However, it is now the perception that only test performance, not relevant experience and expertise, is considered when selecting people for these positions. For example, individuals described that they could get a supervisor in a certain unit (e.g., narcotics) who does not have any experience in that assignment but performed well on the test. While the test can be a part of the selection process, it was frequently emphasized that the test cannot effectively assess all factors of the job that are important for successful performance. Factors such as years of relevant experience and past performance evaluations should be included as part of this selection process. Frustration from the current process and the resulting coveted position assignments was common in our conversations as a factor lowering the overall morale of employees, especially those most motivated to progress and promote in their careers.

### **Recommendation 106: Deputy retention - Support career development**

Career development is one of the most important factors in predicting turnover. Nearly every individual who was asked in our conversations mentioned the variety of options for career paths as one of the primary advantages of the department and a main reason for staying at LASD. However, some individuals also felt overwhelmed by the number of options, stating that they likely were not aware of all options and that they would not know where to start in exploring these. Because the vast number of opportunities is a clear distinguishing factor for LASD and a prime retention motivator, we encourage the department to continue promoting this aspect of LASD and helping facilitate the process for current employees to explore and experiment with a variety of options.

A 2017 retention report by the Work Institute<sup>169</sup> found career development to be a top reason people leave or remain with an organization. Effective strategies for career development include the implementation of career paths or career mapping in an organization. These tools illustrate what career progressions look like in the organization, emphasizing how progressions align with the organization's strategic goals, and asking

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<sup>169</sup> <http://info.workinstitute.com/retentionreport2017>

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employees to think strategically about their career paths and how to meet their goals within the organization.

There are three general steps to career mapping. First, in a self-assessment, employees explore their knowledge, skills, abilities, past experiences, accomplishments, and interests. Second, personalized career maps identify other positions within the organization, whether lateral moves or promotions, that meet the employee's interests and skills. Finally, in the exploration of other opportunities, employees explore other job opportunities within the organization as they become available and strategies for preparing for them. McGonigle and Butler<sup>170</sup> describe the development, use, and outcomes associated with a career pathing program at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that successfully increased employee recruitment and retention. These programs also document both formal (i.e., classroom) and on-the-job (e.g., job rotations, mentoring programs) activities that employees can take to meet their career goals. It may be beneficial for LASD to identify various positions and paths within the organization and then begin engaging in these three steps with its employees. This initial assessment did not indicate a clear advantage or disadvantage of the dual-track program; however, we recommend that the department make the decision soon and try to retain the decided approach for the long-term.

### **Recommendation 107: Conduct regular pulse surveys and stay interviews**

As mentioned in prior reports, keeping a pulse on the state of the department as it relates to employee satisfaction and morale is critical to retaining top performers. Stay interviews with key personnel which ask why these employees are choosing to stay with the organization can help get a sense of what is working best in the organization and can help get ahead of any potential attrition or morale problems. These interviews also indicate to top performers that the department is invested in them and interested in their perspective, which will increase the likelihood that these employees remain with the department. Additionally, larger department-wide periodic pulse surveys are helpful in gathering similar information from a wider, more diverse group of perspectives, in a more labor-efficient manner.

Conducting such surveys on a regular basis can help indicate important trends in factors such as employee satisfaction, commitment, or intention to stay with the organization. Such trends will help indicate the success of particular changes or initiatives implemented in the department. It also indicates that the organization cares about the wellbeing of its employees, which leads to increased satisfaction and retention. Because these interviews

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<sup>170</sup> McGonigle, *supra* note 159

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require devoted time from both employees and supervisors, we recommend targeting these interviews to LASD's top performers who are considered the most critical to retain.

### **Recommendation 108: Administer Engagement Surveys**

As discussed previously, stay interviews are helpful to determine current employee satisfaction, but, because of their individualized nature, should therefore be targeted to a subset of employees. Engagement surveys, on the other hand, are also helpful in determining employee satisfaction and require less devoted time to administer to the overall employee population. Engagement surveys generally ask a small number of questions to measure factors such as employee commitment, motivation, sense of purpose, and passion for the work. Results from engagement surveys will help indicate what LASD is doing well and what can be improved in the eyes of the employees. Additionally, if engagement surveys are regularly administered (e.g., annually), changes over time can be analyzed to indicate the effectiveness of any initiatives aimed at improving employee satisfaction.

### **Recommendation 109: Encourage and support a culture of appreciation and recognition**

As mentioned in previous reports, employee recognition has been shown to have a positive impact on morale, belonging, commitment, satisfaction, and retention. Such recognition can take many forms (e.g., monetary awards, informal praise), but should be public, frequent, and meaningful to be most effective. While nearly all deputies expressed that they complete their job duties for personal satisfaction and meaningfulness, many deputies also expressed that they would appreciate and be increasingly motivated by some form of recognition for extra effort and important accomplishments.

### **Recommendation 110: Revise Exit Interview Process**

For many years, LASD has gathered data from individuals departing the organization, but the data has not been entered into a database or analyzed. Recently, LASD began using a kiosk as part of the exit survey process, but no analysis is currently being conducted on the data being collected.

In addition to compiling and analyzing data from the existing exit interviews, we also recommend updating the overall exit interview process to better align it with best practices. Currently, the exit interview consists of a standardized form that is required of all departing employees. Sometimes an informal chat with a captain will also occur, though discussions

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during the onsite indicated that this usually only happens if employees are leaving on good terms.

Ideally, an in-person meeting should be a component of the formal exit interview process for all departing employees, with the goal of uncovering accurate reasons behind the departure and identifying any factors that contributed to the decision, particularly those factors that may have been preventable. Interviewers should be trained in active listening to be able to probe for the full truth. Additionally, the confidentiality of the interview should be strongly emphasized and respected. If possible, outsourcing the exit interview to an independent third party is recommended, so long as the cost is not prohibitive. LASD could also consider the use of a third party to conduct exit interviews to gain a detailed and anonymous understanding of why people are leaving.

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## Appendix A: Recommendations

Recommendation		Priority Level		
		Low	Moderate	High
<b>Section II: Strategic Department Recommendations</b>				
<b><i>Strategic Planning</i></b>				
1	Develop a Strategic Human Capital plan		x	
<b><i>Strategies for Data Driven Decision Making</i></b>				
2	Establish a Human Resources Analytics program			x
3	Utilize a data-driven strategy for recruitment, hiring, and retention initiatives			x
4	Consider implementing more standardized data collection, retention, and analysis procedures			x
5	Conduct a complete inventory of all the data collected or should be collected			x
6	Provide Personnel with dedicated IT support			x
7	Consider purchasing statistical software to assist in analyzing data	x		
8	Implement talent management technology		x	
<b><i>Communication and Coordination</i></b>				
9	Personnel issues, strategies, and priorities should be clearly and regularly communicated department-wide		x	
10	Identify an individual to oversee and coordinate efforts across steps in the recruitment, hiring, and retention employee life cycle		x	
<b><i>Custody Assistant Pathway</i></b>				
11	Clarify if there is a Custody Assistant pathway to becoming a Deputy Sheriff		x	
<b><i>Review of Administrative Positions. Sworn and Civilian</i></b>				
12	Conduct a departmentwide personnel management review of sworn staff assignments			x
13	Civilianization of Personnel staff		x	
<b><i>Dual Track Career Program</i></b>				
14	Reevaluate the Dual Track Career Path Program	x		

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Recommendation		Priority Level		
		Low	Moderate	High
15	Assess job classifications and assignments	x		
<b>Section III: Hiring Process Report</b>				
<b><i>Application and Supplemental Questionnaire</i></b>				
16	Consider adding questions to help prioritize applicants for further stages			x
17	Consider including a realistic job preview in the application and supplemental questionnaire phase of the hiring process	x		
<b><i>Written Test</i></b>				
18	Consider developing a standardized writing component of the test		x	
19	Any new content on the written test (including the elements discussed above) should be subjected to field-testing and data analysis with a goal of streamlining the assessments	x		
20	Consider adding an instrument measuring personality or work styles to the selection process		x	
21	Consider adding a computer-based video or animation-based instrument to the selection process	x		
22	Consider computerizing the written exam			x
23	Consider revising the cut scores	x		
<b><i>Validated Physical Ability Test</i></b>				
24	Consider continuing to administer the VPAT-S and the written test together in the same appointment	x		
25	Consider increasing the number and intensity of workout sessions offered to potential candidates	x		
26	Reevaluate physical assessments following any POST changes		x	
<b><i>Structured Interview</i></b>				
27	Consider using the structured interview to measure maturity and readiness for the job		x	
28	Consider developing and using a wider pool of interview questions		x	

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Recommendation		Priority Level		
		Low	Moderate	High
29	Consider using multiple interviewers per interview		x	
30	Consider training interviewers on the proper way to conduct a structured interview and requiring a refresher training at regular intervals		x	
31	Consider developing and requiring the use of anchored rating scales for the evaluation of interview responses		x	
32	Consider training interviewers on common rating biases and errors (e.g., halo error, leniency, similarity)		x	
33	Consider calibrating the ratings of interviewers during training to ensure a common frame of reference		x	
34	Consider recording interviews		x	
<b><i>Administrative Case Review</i></b>				
35	Background investigators should not make candidate ranking recommendations unless they are always followed		x	
36	Base final hiring decision on the results of the total hiring process		x	
37	Final case review and candidate ranking should be the responsibility of a multi-member panel comprised of stakeholders from the Academy, Custody, and Patrol divisions			x
<b><i>Medical and Psychological Screening</i></b>				
38	Increase the number of providers permitted to perform medical and psychological testing			x
39	Regularly review medical and psychological provider decisions		x	
40	Consider publicizing commonly misunderstood criteria at the time of the conditional offer		x	
<b><i>Transparency of "Qualifications Criteria"</i></b>				
41	Review and consider publishing hiring disqualification criteria		x	
<b><i>Dynamic Ranking of Candidates</i></b>				
42	Improve screening to identify high probability candidates			x
43	Establish a ranking mechanism based on prior steps			x

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Recommendation		Priority Level		
		Low	Moderate	High
<b><i>Communication and Coordination</i></b>				
44	Communication between step owners			x
45	Include Academy stakeholders throughout the process			x
<b><i>Data Analytics and Information Technology</i></b>				
46	Establish quality control on testing criterion and validity	x		
47	Consider acquiring information systems and applicant tracking technologies that talk to one another as opposed to multiple different systems			x
48	Provide Personnel Unit staff with necessary software	x		
<b><i>Testing Facilities</i></b>				
49	Explore the need for a dedicated testing facility			x
50	Consider conducting computer administration of the written test			x
51	Consider administering the test in additional areas of the county that might be easier to access by candidates from areas where recruiting is a challenge			x
<b><i>Candidate Preparedness</i></b>				
52	Continue providing candidates with test preparation resources		x	
<b>Section IV: Background Investigations Report</b>				
<b><i>Pre-Background Investigations Screening</i></b>				
53	Create a process to provide an earlier assessment of an applicant's eligibility and viability as a successful deputy sheriff trainee candidate			x
54	Examine the impact of adjusting the pass threshold of earlier steps on background investigation success	x		
55	Prioritize the most viable applicants for background investigations			x
56	Expedite backgrounds investigation of internal applicants (Custody Assistants and Security Officers) applying for Deputy Sheriff positions		x	
<b><i>Backgrounds Investigation Process</i></b>				

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Recommendation		Priority Level		
		Low	Moderate	High
57	Standardize or manualize the background investigation process and stick to it		x	
58	Assess the value and purpose of the current writing assignments during the background investigation		x	
59	Remove the social media review from the process			x
<b><i>Polygraph</i></b>				
60	Clarify the purpose of the polygraph			x
61	Consider placement of the polygraph later in the background investigation process	x		
<b><i>Backgrounds Investigations Staffing</i></b>				
62	Monitor, quantify, and evaluate the workload for background investigators		x	
63	Convert background investigators to a coveted position		x	
64	Convert some background investigative positions to non-sworn		x	
65	Invest in the professional development of background investigators		x	
<b><i>Communication During the Background Investigations Process</i></b>				
66	Evaluate the professional relationship between background investigators, polygraph examiners, and applicants			x
67	Improve communication and coordination between background investigations unit and recruitment unit		x	
<b><i>Equipment for Backgrounds Investigations</i></b>				
68	Provide background investigators with necessary equipment		x	
<b>Section V: Training Academy Report</b>				
<b><i>Mission, Organizational Structure, and Staffing</i></b>				
69	Engage a process to strategically align the department's training operations			x
70	Add or supplement the basic training staff to meet increased Academy volume			x

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Recommendation		Priority Level		
		Low	Moderate	High
71	Conduct short- and long-term analysis of staffing and workload demands for the Weapons Training Unit		x	
72	Enhance internal communication within the Academy	x		
73	Develop proactive measures for the professional development and retention of training staff		x	
<b><i>Reasons for Attrition at the LASD Recruit Academy</i></b>				
74	Evaluate the reasons for recruit attrition			x
75	Improve the process for conducting exit interviews		x	
76	Reexamine the efficacy of the “Black Monday” ritual	x		
<b><i>Cultural Approach for Academy Learning</i></b>				
77	Review the Academy’s culture and disciplinary environment to ensure it promotes a supportive learning environment	x		
<b><i>Injury Reporting, Prevention, and Analysis</i></b>				
78	Review and revise the PT Program in accordance with evidence-based practices for injury reduction			x
79	Engage the services of both a professional strength coach and an athletic trainer			x
80	Establish a formal process to conduct injury analysis and regularly scheduled command review of such analysis for all training injuries			x
81	Create a “Culture of Safety” at the Academy		x	
82	Ensure that PT is conducted in a safe and appropriate environment			x
<b><i>LASD’s Physical Training Standards</i></b>				
83	Conduct a review of the LASD Physical Fitness Testing Standards			x
84	Scale physical training exercises to more closely match the physical abilities of the recruits	x		
85	Support the ongoing professional development of the PT staff		x	
86	Improve data collection and conduct more in-depth analysis on the reasons for physical training failures			x

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Recommendation		Priority Level		
		Low	Moderate	High
87	Implement the existing policy for alternative physical training for short-term injuries	x		
<b><i>Review of Recruit Training Curriculum</i></b>				
88	Integrate important themes into the Basic Training Curriculum			x
89	Schedule ongoing career development training for the Academy staff		x	
90	Enhance the climate of process review for continuous improvement in the quality and effectiveness of training programs	x		
<b><i>Review of Academy Training Facilities</i></b>				
91	Engage in a strategic planning process to assess future Training facility requirements			x
92	Continue to prioritize the acquisition of a new Emergency Vehicle Operations Center			x
93	Continue to pursue a partnership arrangement with the College of the Canyons for an expanded recruit training facility in the northern part of the County			x
94	Conduct security assessments of the training campuses and facilities		x	
95	Conduct a review of facility enhancements at the Weapons Training Center		x	
<b><i>Review of Patrol Field Training</i></b>				
96	Assign all Deputy Sheriff Trainees to field training upon graduation from the Academy			x
97	Evaluate, document, and publish expectations for the professional relationships between Training Officers and Trainees and conduct updated training for all Training Officers		x	
98	Ensure patrol field training is consistent and the culture is developmental and appropriate		x	
99	Consider requiring all shift supervisors who supervise Training Officers to attend FTO Supervisor's Training; further, require these supervisors to play an oversight role in the training program		x	

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Recommendation		Priority Level		
		Low	Moderate	High
100	Improve data collection regarding reasons for FTO attrition and conduct periodic analysis		x	
101	Acquire field training software for the processing and dissemination of daily and weekly field training observation reports		x	
102	Upgrade the Position of FTO Coordinator to Lieutenant		x	
<b>Section VI: Retention Report</b>				
<i>Best Practices from Review of Retention Literature</i>				
103	Improve data collection and management to support analysis and metrics tracking			x
104	Recruit Retention - managing expectations		x	
105	Veteran retention - Consider including relevant past experience as part of the selection process for coveted positions		x	
106	Deputy retention - Support career development			x
107	Conduct regular pulse surveys and stay interviews		x	
108	Administer Engagement Surveys		x	
109	Encourage and support a culture of appreciation and recognition	x		
110	Revise Exit Interview Process			x

## Appendix B: Methodology

This study analyzed existing organizational and operational data provided by LASD, to include interviews, surveys, and focus groups with members of the department across all ranks. Additionally, the project team conducted a literature review of best practices in law enforcement, military, and civilian organizations. The table below summarizes the groups with whom the team met across the site visits. We also conducted a national survey to examine the practices of other departments.

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Group	Date		
	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	March 2019
Recruitment Unit	X		
eHire and Hiring Process	X		
Test Development and Sworn Exams Unit	X		
Intake Unit	X		
Background Investigations Unit	X		
Employee Service Center (Exit Interviews)	X		
Deputy Sheriff (Custody) focus group – MCJ/TTCF	X		X
Deputy Sheriff (Custody) exit interview – MCJ/TTCF	X		
Training Academy drill instructor, supervisor, and commander interviews		X	
New recruit focus interviews		X	
Training staff interviews		X	
Recent Academy graduate focus group		X	
Current recruit focus group		X	
Custody Assistant focus group		X	
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – Temple			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – East Los Angeles			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – Lancaster			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – Walnut			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – West Hollywood			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – Compton			X
Deputy Sheriff (Patrol) focus group – South Los Angeles			X
Background investigator focus group			X
Deputy Sheriff (recent hire) focus group			X
Deputy Sheriff (high performer) focus group			X
Polygraph Unit			X
Recruitment Unit			X
Clinical Unit			X
Field Training Officer focus group			X
Tour - Men's Central Jail and Twin Towers Correctional Facility			X

Table 25: Summary of data collection activities during current state assessment

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IACP and HumRRO conducted onsite visits to engage Academy employees, field training deputies, agency employees, recruit trainees, and recent Academy graduates in one-on-one interviews and focus groups. The interviews served to gather data to identify any gaps between policy and practices. The purpose of the focus groups was to solicit more detailed information to identify strengths of the program, as well as problem areas and/or unfulfilled training expectations with the aim to identify areas to improve the overall quality of the training program. To facilitate active dialogue and candid feedback, pre-arranged questions were posed to the group as a whole and participant comments were not identified for individual attribution but reflect having come collectively from the group of participants.

Four custom surveys of LASD were specifically designed for this project. The first survey targeted current recruits at the Academy and the second survey targeted recent (within two years) graduates of the Academy. The third survey queried LASD field training deputies and the fourth survey queried field training supervisors. The fifth survey was designed to target deputy sheriffs who recently completed patrol field training. Each of these surveys was designed to gauge responses from each cohort on how well the department is meeting organizational needs. All responses are confidential, and the overall responses have been analyzed to identify data patterns and report those findings. In addition, we conducted a national survey of recruitment, hiring, training, and retention practices used by other departments. All responses have been aggregated and pattern data provided.

Following the collection of this information, the IACP engages a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the data, which results in various recommendations for the agency. These recommendations, and this report, are subjected to significant review by subject matter experts, the study team, and IACP staff, with an emphasis on ensuring a quality product that provides recommendations that conform to industry standards and best practices. Once the IACP review is completed, the draft report is reviewed by the client to ensure accuracy, relevance, and that all aspects of the scope of the project have been addressed. Through this process, a final report is completed, which is provided to the agency as the key deliverable product from the study.

## **LASD Internal Survey Summary Results**

### **Review of Internal Hiring Process and Training and Surveys**

Survey results are most useful to isolate conditions and practices that need attention, and/or those that offer an opportunity to advance the effectiveness of operations, achievement of outcomes, and the overall health of the workplace. The IACP provided comprehensive questionnaires to the LASD to forward to both Current Recruits and Recent Graduates of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Training Academy. Surveys were also provided for Field Training Officers (FTOs) who had recently trained Academy graduates and to supervisors who oversee the FTOs who train new deputies. Finally, surveys were provided for Deputy Sheriffs who had recently completed Patrol Field Training.

### **Survey Analysis – Quantitative Responses**

For each content survey dimension, respondents chose between the following responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. For the question related to disciplinary climate, respondents chose between High Stress, Moderate Stress, Balanced, Low Stress, or Very Low Stress. For the question related to satisfaction levels, respondents chose between Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, or Very Dissatisfied. Numeric values of 1-5 were assigned (with 1 being low and 5 being high), respectively.

### **Survey Analysis – Qualitative Responses**

Unlike quantitative analysis, which can be broken down into numeric representations, ratios, or percentages, qualitative data is more difficult to present. The process of evaluating and reporting qualitative data involves looking for similarities in the data, which are then grouped into a small number (usually 4-6) of overarching themes. There can also be sub-categories of data within each of these themed areas, but when done properly, each of the responses have a connection to the main theme. Data within these themed areas may be positive or negative, or neither, such as comments that merely make a suggestion. The analysis provided in this report engages a contemplative process of considering each of the data elements (narrative responses) to determine within which themed area it may be most appropriately categorized, and then to consider the substance of each response in relation to the theme area, and the other data within that category.

## Appendix C: National Survey Summary Results

Los Angeles County contracted with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) team to review and make recommendations to improve the recruiting, hiring, retention, and training programs of the LA County Sheriff's Department (LASD). To effectively and thoroughly evaluate LASD's recruitment, hiring, and retention practices, IACP and HumRRO administered a national survey to a police and sheriff's departments in major cities and major counties across the United States. This survey will help determine common practices related to recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of law enforcement officers by large departments and was used to inform and validate the recommendations for LASD's practices. This report describes the design and administration of the survey and provides results for the responding departments.

### Survey Design and Administration

IACP and HumRRO developed a flexible survey structure that was broken into the following modules:

- Department background information
- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Training
- Retention.

In total, the survey includes over 75 questions, but each section contains a more limited number of questions that could be completed individually by a staff member with relevant knowledge (e.g., a representative of the recruitment unit could complete the recruitment module). The survey was designed so that IACP could provide a single link to a representative of each department and that representative could send the link to relevant staff member(s) for completion.

When respondents begin the survey, the first question asks, "Were you asked to complete the department background information section of the survey?" Respondents who selected yes were directed to the questions associated with that module. The first question in each module asked respondents to select their department, so that responses in the different modules for the same department could be linked. At the end of each module, the final question asked if they

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respondent was asked to complete the next section. If so, the respondent then completed the next module. If not, the survey ended.

IACP delivered the survey link to 161 members of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) and Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) as well as additional departments not in either association (e.g., smaller departments in Southern California). In total, 15 departments completed the survey (not all departments completed all question). The departments completing the survey included:

- Fresno, California
- Tucson, Arizona
- Salt Lake City, Utah
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Los Angeles, California
- Cleveland, Ohio
- Miami-Dade Police Department, Florida
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Fairfax County, Virginia
- Wichita, Kansas
- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Alameda County, California
- Beverly Hills, California
- Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

### Survey Results

This section reports the results of the national survey by question. For selected response (i.e., yes/no) questions, we report the average, range, or count of each response option. For open-ended questions, we report each department’s response verbatim.

#### Department Background Information

Questions	Response
How many full-time sworn Deputy Sheriffs/Police Officers do you currently have on staff?	1,377 (average)
How many sworn positions does your department have?	Budgeted: 1,199 (average)
	Filled: 1,213 (average)
	Vacant: 38 (average)
Has your department had to reduce any types of services or disbanded any units due to challenges in hiring, recruiting, retention, and maintaining your authorized strength?	Yes: 2 No: 10
For how many jurisdictions do you provide contract law enforcement services?	None: 7 One: 3

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Questions	Response
	Four: 1
How does your department ensure that you have both 1) experienced officers working in custody and 2) sufficient numbers of staff available for patrol in emergency situations?	Only one department reported having both custody and patrol officers.
Do you have a strategic human capital plan or other document guiding your approach to hiring and retention?	Yes: 7 No: 3 Not sure: 3

### Recruitment

Questions	Response
How many new hires do you make each fiscal year?	Responses ranged from 25 – 500
How many Academy slots do you have in each session?	Responses ranged from 15 – 125
Do you hire lateral transfers from other departments?	Yes: 10 No: 4
Are you having difficulty recruiting qualified candidates?	Yes: 2 No: 12
Have you changed any policies in an effort to enhance recruiting and/or retention? (i.e., tattoo, residency, etc.)?	Yes: 10 No: 4
Have you put any incentives in place to enhance recruiting and/or retention?	Yes: 11 No: 3
What percentage of your recruits come from your jurisdiction?	Responses ranged from less than 10% to 85%
What recruiting tactics do you use that are aimed at local candidates (e.g., targeted advertising, job fairs, social media)? How successful are they?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our recruiting tactics utilize a combined approach, with a strong emphasis placed on personal contact and developing relationships with our applicants during the recruiting, hiring, and training process of sworn employees. Community relationships with several community groups and faith-based groups Social Media. Local and regional job fairs referrals from sworn department members developing and maintaining with schools, including our local colleges. Targeted advertising. Hiring incentives for lateral applicants. Increased emphasis on hiring Lateral Police Officers from the local area</li> <li>• All of the above</li> <li>• We use advertising, job fairs and social media and are very successful.</li> <li>• Online advertising, career fairs, and social media are the most successful recruitment efforts.</li> </ul>

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Questions	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online advertising, career fairs, and social media are the most successful recruitment efforts.</li> <li>• Job fairs, military functions, college events, social media, online advertising, billboards, etc. We are seeing an increase in effectiveness with digital advertising.</li> <li>• We hired a marketing firm to help with recruiting efforts and branding. Includes digital billboards, social media, targeted advertising, radio. It has been successful as of right now.</li> <li>• Social media, PORAC, public posting, recruiting booths, officers' referrals of their friends are our best source of laterals</li> <li>• Job fairs, social media, news media, community events. Success is varied. Some events bring in many applications but of non-qualified candidates where some bring 1 or 2 applications of qualified candidates.</li> <li>• Recruiting and hiring is handled by our civilian oversight board, the Fire and Police Commission.</li> <li>• Local radio stations. Recruiters have begun holding Shop Talks in Beauty, Barbershops and Nail salons locally. To date we've held 16.</li> <li>• Job fairs, social media, attending classes at local universities and colleges, Billboards, use of local media, employee referrals, and community events. These efforts have been very successful, as we have met our annual hiring goal of 300 new police recruits.</li> <li>• Career Fairs, Community Events, Info Sessions, Social Media - Info Sessions seem to be a great tool for engagement (averaging 100 participants/session - 4 sessions 2017 - 2018)</li> <li>• Job Fairs, social media, college and military base visits. We revamped our recruiting materials in the last year. We generally get between 10-15 contacts per visit and then have a recruiter follow up within two weeks with a phone call.</li> </ul>
Does the cost of living in your area affect your ability to attract high quality applicants?	Yes: 8 No: 4 Not sure: 2
Do you recruit from other locations outside of your region or state?	Yes: 10 No: 3 Not sure: 1

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
<p>If you could pick one thing your department does well to attract and recruit high-quality recruits, what would it be?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and develop strong relationships with our applicants and place a priority on them. This has also assisted us with retaining our police officers.</li> <li>• Social Media and Open Houses</li> <li>• Face to face interaction with candidates and mentoring them thru the hiring process.</li> <li>• The posting of essential information about the Miami-Dade Police Department in the employment section of the Miami-Dade County website which is accessible to the public.</li> <li>• The posting of essential information about the Miami-Dade Police Department in the employment section of the Miami-Dade County website which is accessible to the public.</li> <li>• The hustle of the recruiters getting the information to the public is our strongest asset. Our pay rate, longevity and retirement programs are huge selling points.</li> <li>• Opportunity for growth and movement</li> <li>• Good morale is good for recruiting.</li> <li>• We have become more flexible in the testing process. We offer an entire weekend to process. Can take a written exam on Friday Saturday or a Sunday, as well as the physical ability test. The applicant picks the days for each. Works well for out of state candidates as well even getting an opportunity to complete a polygraph while they are in town also if possible, even before written and physical scores are compiled.</li> <li>• Recruiting and hiring is handled by our civilian oversight board, the Fire and Police Commission.</li> <li>• A full-time recruitment team that mirrors the demographics we are seeking.</li> <li>• The Department has received national recognition for innovative training in the areas of de-escalation and mental health.</li> <li>• Police Cadet Program – two-year paid program that assists with professional development and academy preparation</li> <li>• Having contacts with local colleges with criminal justice programs.</li> </ul>

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

### Hiring

Questions	Response
Of those that apply, what percent of your applicants complete the process and are successfully hired by your department?	Responses ranges from 3% to 35%; most departments indicated 20-30%
What is the average time (in months) between application and offer/hire for your department?	Responses ranged from six weeks to 12 months; most departments indicted 3-6 months
Which of the following steps do you use in the hiring process?	Medical assessment: 13 Psychological assessment: 13 Written test: 12 Physical abilities test:12 Background investigation: 12 Structured interview:10 Polygraph: 9 Personality test: 6 Other: 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firearms training simulator and ride-along</li> <li>• Screening committee of approximately 12 officers (supervisors and union reps) that individually recommend or don't recommend each candidate to the Safety Director who along with recommendations from the Chief makes the final selection</li> <li>• Drug Screening.</li> </ul>
Do you track how many candidates pass and fail each stage of the hiring process?	Yes: 12 No: 0
What specific steps in the hiring process screen out the most candidates?	Background: 4 Polygraph:3 Application: 2 Written Test: 2 Physical Test: 2 Pre-Screen:1
Do you track how many applicants you need to fill an Academy class?	Yes: 11 No: 2
Do you track any other recruiting, hiring, or retention metrics?	Yes: 5 No: 6 Not sure: 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal of the Department is to hire a workforce with minimum representation by race, ethnicity, and gender as set forth by the figures of the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau for our county.</li> </ul>

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We track all recruiting our Unit officers do and try to keep where they found us. We keep track of every step the applicants complete.</li> <li>• We have just begun calling those who've separated from the Division within the last three years and will be instituting a one-year interview and exit interviews.</li> <li>• Surveys of applicants, exit interviews for current employees, percentage of applicants who take and pass the written test, tracking retention in Academy classes based on recent training protocol changes.</li> <li>• Number/demographics of test takers (civil service)</li> </ul>
<p>What do you do to make sure your strongest applicants maintain interest throughout the hiring process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and Maintain strong individual relationships with our applicants. We have streamlined our hiring process for sworn applicants. Work closely and cooperatively with our city's personnel department</li> <li>• Personal contact through a mentoring program.</li> <li>• Maintaining a connection with the candidate and keeping them motivated, ride alongs, etc.</li> <li>• Maintaining a continuous communication between the investigative specialist and the applicant at each step of the hiring process.</li> <li>• Constant communication</li> <li>• Contact with investigator throughout the process and honest communication about steps and timing of the process.</li> <li>• Sergeant stays on top of the background process</li> <li>• We keep in constant contact with all applicants via email and phone when necessary to ensure they know the process and where and when they need to be somewhere</li> <li>• Our recruitment team just had the first 'Motivation and Direction' meeting with candidates who received conditional offers. We will also begin sending out emails to all candidates at each phase of the process to stay engaged.</li> <li>• Ensure the applicant is consistently engaged by their assigned background investigator throughout the hiring process. Additionally, applicants are pre-hired and assigned to bureaus where they can learn about department culture while awaiting assignment to their Academy class.</li> <li>• Regular contact with the pre-employment detectives</li> </ul>

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
<p>What is your philosophy of treatment of applicants/candidates? For example, do you tend to focus on screening in candidates or screening out candidates?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a very "humanistic" recruiting philosophy that places a strong emphasis on developing, maintaining, and building relationships with our applicants. We don't screen out, we screen in applicants. In the end, we are hiring people who will provide services to our citizens, be promoted to lead our organization in the future, and will have the responsibility of providing vision and direction for our organization in the future.</li> <li>• Screening out candidates.</li> <li>• We don't screen</li> <li>• We are an equal opportunity employer and complies with federal, State, and local regulations to ensure continued affirmative action is taken at all levels of selection, management, and supervision to eliminate discrimination in personnel practices and procedures.</li> <li>• Screening in. The process is built to have qualified applicants succeed. Less than qualified applicants are identified at various stages of the process.</li> <li>• Screening in candidates, we have moved to a positive encouraging way of hiring...we want the applicants to succeed.</li> <li>• We treat everyone the same, so neither</li> <li>• I believe the philosophy is on both. We certainly have standards that are pass/fail, but we also are flexible with respect to certain aspects and making sure opportunities are available when/where we can afford to do so.</li> <li>• Unfortunately, our process is still one of primarily screening out candidates, however those who make it to the screening committee benefit from the committee having much more robust conversations around the WHOLE person, including age/maturity and additional attributes that were added onto the end of the personal history statement. (i.e. Volunteer work, working in an urban community, etc.)</li> <li>• Our philosophy is to "screen in" applicants. Recruitment and hiring staff are all encouraged to see the candidate as a potential asset for the department. If there are issues with their background that would automatically "screen them out", these processes will occur naturally.</li> <li>• I believe of focus is fair and neutral - try to look at each applicant individually on their own merit - not sure I would characterize it as screening in/out</li> </ul>

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are open with our hiring process, so applicants know what all of the steps are to be successful.</li> </ul>
Does your department use applicant tracking software through the hiring process? If so, did you develop it in-house or buy it?	<p>We use a program purchased from a vendor: 6                      We use a program developed in house: 2                      We do not use applicant tracking software: 5</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the applicant tracking software track? Do you analyze the data? What are the benefits and limitations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eSoft is the program and it tracks information the applicants enter for background and the progress of the application.</li> <li>It tracks from when they apply online thru the Academy and probation.</li> <li>The SAGE ABRA Self-Service software empowers our investigative specialists and supervisors to enter, view, and update the applicants' information at each step of the hiring process.</li> <li>Real Time Solutions. The program works well, however, there are frustrations with time delays in having the vendor make changes or updates.</li> <li>On-line Application - Neo Gov, tracks each step for each candidate written test (Vendor) - keeps track of scoring and adverse impact ratios for races and diversity. Background software (Vendor)-keeps track of the background and what has been done and of disqualifications/hires We do analyze data and it gives us solid legal ground to stand on during the entire process.</li> <li>We use City jobs application through the City HR department. It will tell us where persons are failing out. For example, we were losing a lot of women in the physical testing we were using and made a change</li> <li>We utilize NEOGOV for the application and an Access database for the background investigation information. We are going to release an RFP for a third-party background software solution on July 5th.</li> <li>Our Human Resources uses NeoGov. We track the applicant in that software but much of the heavy lifting in tracking is done manually by the pre-employment section.</li> </ul>
Do department staff administer your tests?	<p>Yes: 4                      No: 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City personnel staff</li> <li>HR administers the written test</li> </ul>

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Florida Basic Abilities Test is administered by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, approved colleges, and universities</li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• City HR is responsible but there are commissioned personnel assisting at times</li> <li>• Our civilian oversight board</li> <li>• We test through the National Testing Network</li> <li>• Civil service</li> <li>• Human Resources handles the initial written testing for all applicants</li> </ul>
How quickly do candidates know if they passed or failed?	Responses ranged from immediately to “within 10-15 days;” the most common response was immediately/same day/within 24 hours
How are candidates’ scores on the physical abilities test and/or the written test used? Do they only serve to screen out applicants or do you use them for other purposes (e.g., to prioritize candidates for the remainder of the hiring process)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined with outer scores</li> <li>• Pass fail on the PT test. Written test helps place them numerically on the hiring list.</li> <li>• The written test is pass/fail (70%) but your score will not affect the process</li> <li>• The Department’s role is to ensure that the applicants have provided a copy of the Florida Basic Abilities Test (FBAT) results indicating a passing score, and a Physical Abilities Test (PAT) Certificate of Completion in order to initiate the hiring process.</li> <li>• We have specific physical standards that must be met.</li> <li>• Screen out</li> <li>• Pass/fail</li> <li>• Candidates are ranked by scores and their backgrounds go out in that order.</li> <li>• The written test is used to prioritize candidates for the remainder of the hiring process.</li> <li>• The candidates are ranked by their score on the video portion of their NTN [National Testing Network] test. There is no ranking done by physical abilities. It's pass or fail depending on their age/gender utilizing the Cooper standards.</li> <li>• Scores are only used to screen candidates.</li> <li>• Written test - ranked through civil service with exception of failing score PAT is pass/fail</li> <li>• Both written and physical tests are used to determine the applicants’ suitability for this line of work.</li> </ul>

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
Given the physical fitness levels of today's applicants, do you believe your existing physical fitness entry-level standards for recruits are too strict, too lenient, or about right?	Too strict: 1 Too lenient: 2 About right: 10
How long do your typical background investigations take to complete?	Responses ranged from one week to 24 weeks; most departments reported less than 12 weeks
When do the background investigations occur in the hiring process (e.g., before or after a job offer)?	Before job offer: 11 After the polygraph exam: 1 After the passing of the physical ability test: 1
Are your Background Investigators sworn officers/deputies, civilian investigators, contract employees, or a combination of any of these?	Sworn officers/deputies: 11 Civilian Investigators: 7 Contract employees: 3
Do background investigators have a standardized way to prioritize cases?	Yes: 11 No: 2
What proportion of candidates are eliminated as a result of the background investigation?	Responses ranged from 10%-75%; most departments reported at least 50%
Do you have a documented procedure for "scoring" or weighing the background investigation?	Yes: 5 No: 8
How do you ensure that the background investigation is fair?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed by staff officer(s)</li> <li>• They are all reviewed by command staff</li> <li>• Guidelines and standards</li> <li>• The Department has a recruitment standard operating procedure (SOP) which is very specific with regards to the recruitment objectives and clearly outline specific steps to be taken to achieve the objectives.</li> <li>• Reviewed process through the chain of command.</li> <li>• Once assigned an investigator (after polygraph), each applicant is evaluated in the same areas and all the information is collected. Information is then given to Hiring Board members to review and after the interview with the Hiring Board, the Board members make a recommendation.</li> <li>• Each is reviewed by the sergeant</li> <li>• The background is checked by a supervisor and all applicants go to a Police Officer Recruit selection committee</li> <li>• Our background investigators are trained former law enforcement members who are required to follow the</li> </ul>

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Questions	Response
	<p>same steps and process as required by our civilian oversight board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divide investigation leads between officers.</li> <li>• Multiple review levels</li> <li>• Standard operating procedure is in place to attempt to have each applicant held to the same standard</li> <li>• Same standards apply regarding what are disqualifiers.</li> </ul>
Do you conduct a polygraph examination?	<p>Yes: 9 No: 4</p>
How much interaction is there between the background investigators and polygraphers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have a great deal of interaction</li> <li>• Direct and continuous contact</li> <li>• At least one but possibly more if issues</li> <li>• None, the investigators receive the report through a supervisor.</li> <li>• Examiner communicates the result of the test to the investigator and supervisor and any significant issues that may have come up.</li> <li>• As needed</li> <li>• Daily interaction.</li> <li>• The communicate for scheduling and general information purposes.</li> </ul>
Who conducts the polygraph examination?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private vendor</li> <li>• In house/Officers</li> <li>• Non-sworn Officers</li> <li>• Two independent vendors contracted by the county</li> <li>• Outside vendor</li> <li>• Full-time polygraph examiner [from the department] and vendor</li> <li>• Contractor and internal staff</li> <li>• Contract</li> <li>• Internal and external contractors</li> <li>• We contract with 2 providers</li> </ul>
Are there any other steps in your hiring process that we have not asked about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final department interview</li> <li>• The "interview board" or structured interview. 5 questions with time to prepare and when they are answering questions there are no follow ups. It allows us to give points for military service and our Cadet program.</li> <li>• Psychological screening</li> </ul>

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## Training

Questions	Response
What has been your average recruit class size during the past three years?	Responses ranged from 5 to 60 per class; most departments indicated 25-50 per class
How would you describe the disciplinary climate at your recruit training academy (high stress, moderate stress, low stress)?	Moderate Stress: 8 High Stress: 2
How does the disciplinary climate at your recruit academy contribute to an effective learning environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective</li> <li>• They seem to flourish</li> <li>• It's fair environment</li> <li>• The disciplinary climate at our recruit academy is an integral part of the total recruit selection process in order to develop police officer applicants into competent, productive employees and contributes to the transition from average citizen to police officers.</li> <li>• Keeps cadets focused and creates habits necessary for success.</li> <li>• it allows the recruits and staff to be confident they can handle themselves in stressful situations and react appropriately.</li> <li>• We find that the recruits attending the high stress academies are more prepared for field although doesn't always mean they will be successful</li> <li>• The Training Division is responsible for the training of recruit officers and holds recruits accountable to ensure they are applying their training through both written and practical exercises. Recruit officers learn this in a paramilitary environment that is meant to prepare them for their duties as a police officer. Remedial training and the disciplinary climate ensure that officers are held accountable while functioning in this learning environment.</li> <li>• The climate is now reflective of a higher learning atmosphere</li> <li>• We have a structured environment that promotes learning. We have incorporated more scenario-based training into our curriculum</li> </ul>
How long after the Academy do Deputies/Police Officer go through field training?	Most departments reported that Deputies/Police Officers within one month of graduating from the Academy. [Note: some departments responded with information on the length of the field training program]

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Questions	Response
If your field training is delayed post-Academy, what do you do to prepare deputies for field training?	If delayed because of academics, our agency uses a remediation process before termination
What happens to a deputy/officer who fails field training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on the reasons that the officer has failed our field training program. We prefer to rehire that officer as a civilian employee for a period of 6 to 12 months. During that time we will mentor, coach, and provide remedial training to that employee so they can be promoted back to a police officer and successfully complete our FTO program and set them up become a successful police officer at our department.</li> <li>• They are terminated</li> <li>• Offered to resign or terminate</li> <li>• During the probationary period, remedial training is utilized to provide additional training methods and effort when the routine daily training fails to attain the desired results. There are two types of remedial training: one is most common, spending a few extra minutes explaining or demonstrating a skill or task to a probationary police officer. If several attempts at this type of remedial training fail to alleviate the problem, more intensive methods might be implemented.</li> <li>• Several steps of remedial training and extensions, termination if necessary.</li> <li>• They can resign or are terminated. They may re-apply at a later date.</li> <li>• Some are offered civilian employment</li> <li>• The field training and evaluation period may be extended if there are deficiencies and/or serious remedial assignments. The member may be given an extended field training period, returned to the Training Division for formal remedial training in a specific topic, or commencement of the termination process may occur.</li> <li>• Officers can resign in lieu of termination, termination or offered other employment within the department if available</li> <li>• There is 2 to 4 weeks of remedial training.</li> </ul>
What is the field training failure rate?	Responses ranged from "less than 5%" to 16%; most departments indicated field training failure rate of less than 5%

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
What is the field training non-completion rate (percentage of people who don't fail, but quit)?	All responses were less than 5%
What are the primary reasons listed for officers/deputies failing to complete the field training program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report writing. Decision making. Communication. Inability to effectively problem solve. Inability to apply laws, tactics, policy, procedure, to the real world</li> <li>• Several areas of concerns such as Officer Safety, Decisiveness, Investigation, Geography, Criminal Statutes and Report Writing, have been identified as the primary cause of officers failing to complete the field training program.</li> <li>• Failure to perform under stress</li> <li>• Officer safety is the primary reason</li> <li>• Don't think they can do the job or don't have the skill set to be an officer</li> <li>• The member does not respond to formal remedial training in areas of deficiency</li> <li>• Officers who are not meeting standards of a solo capable police officer</li> <li>• They did not realize the demands of the job.</li> </ul>
What is the basic training attrition rate for your recruits during the past three years (number of recruits who started the academy compared to the number who graduated)?	Responses ranged from "less than 5%" to 16%
What are the primary reasons for recruits not completing the academy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to pass written or practical skills testing</li> <li>• Not for them or not meeting standards</li> <li>• A combination of academics and have not prepared to be in the academy</li> <li>• Not passing mandated FDLE exams (Failures).</li> <li>• Injury, personal choices, failure of high-risk skills (firearms, defensive tactics, etc.)</li> <li>• Those who quit the first week cannot handle the mental and physical stress. Otherwise, they fail certain required portions of the training</li> <li>• Unable to meet standards</li> <li>• Failure to pass written or practical exams.</li> <li>• Academics</li> <li>• They did not realize the demands of the job.</li> </ul>

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## Retention

Questions	Response
<p>What is one thing that you do to make sure that officers are given adequate feedback and recognition on the job?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive verbal and written feedback from leadership</li> <li>• Chiefs attending Line-up and providing the recognition for good work performed.</li> <li>• Training officers have this responsibility</li> <li>• A recognition program has been established to formally award Miami-Dade Police Department employees or units for a heroic act or meritorious service.</li> <li>• Re-design our current evaluation procedure so that it more accurately measures the performance of an officer, based on their specific job assignment.</li> <li>• Open communications with police union</li> <li>• Members are evaluated annually and receive feedback through both this process and daily by their supervisors. The department also has a very active merit award program as the department holds a merit award presentation twice a year to honor members.</li> <li>• Annual Performance Management Guide</li> <li>• Awards and annual evaluations</li> </ul>
<p>What is one thing that you do that is particularly effective at ensuring that candidates fully understand the job before completing the hiring process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being accessible and forward with applicants on an individual basis</li> <li>• Open house with all the Units in the Department represented in an open forum.</li> <li>• Seminars to all candidates of what to expect in each phase and the hiring process</li> <li>• Eligible applicants will be scheduled for an orientation session in which the duties and responsibilities of a Police Officer, and what is expected of a successful applicant, will be explained in general terms. The applicant will be apprised of the advantages and disadvantages of police work and expectations during participation in the overall training process until certification as a Police Officer. All applicants are required to attend the orientation session.</li> <li>• We require one ride-a-long to be conducted while the applicant is in the background process. We also put the applicants through three use-of-force scenarios during the background process so that they can see how difficult some decisions can be.</li> <li>• Ride along with FTO</li> </ul>

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A as the hiring process is handled by our civilian oversight board, the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission.</li> <li>• Job advertisement</li> <li>• Encourage them to do internships and ride alongs</li> </ul>
Would most of your sworn employees say they have predictable schedules?	Yes: 8 No: 1
Would most of your sworn employees say they have a schedule that fits their needs?	Yes: 7 No: 0 Not sure: 2
What is one thing that you do to make sure that scheduling fits the needs of both the agency and employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual assessments of our scheduling needs and personnel assigned to patrol division and seeking feedback from our employees and our POA.</li> <li>• Trimesterly sign-up which allows officers to move to any shift their seniority will allow them.</li> <li>• Shift bidding three times a year for road patrol personnel in accordance with appropriate collective bargaining agreement.</li> <li>• We could conduct a survey of varying bureaus and ask the employees what sort of schedule change would benefit the both personally and professionally. This feedback could be compared to the current manpower study for viability.</li> <li>• They work 3 days a week. That's pretty good</li> <li>• Members may speak with their supervisors and/or file transfer requests that are evaluated by the Human Resources Division if they would like to request a different shift or schedule.</li> <li>• Operational needs and transfer opportunities</li> <li>• In cooperation with the FOP, we hold 2-3 drafts a year where officers can move shifts and days off. Additionally, officers may apply for specialty units.</li> </ul>
Do you conduct exit interviews?	Yes: 7 No: 2
Do you analyze data from your exit interviews to identify trends?	Yes: 7 No: 2
Are exit interviews conducted internally or by an outside party?	Internally: 6 Outside party: 1
Do your exit interviews consist of a form, conversation, or both?	Form: 1 Conversation: 3 Both: 3

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Questions	Response
<p>What are the most common reasons deputies/officers leave the department before retirement?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family needs</li> <li>• Moving to another job</li> <li>• Recruits: Not emotionally prepared for the academy.</li> <li>• Personal health and resignation in lieu of termination.</li> <li>• For opportunities at other agencies or personal reasons.</li> <li>• in the last three years, officers haven't left outside of retirement, or while in FTO program</li> <li>• They receive a different job opportunity or they are looking for a different career path.</li> <li>• Retirement time frame, over 20 years of service</li> <li>• Family or other job opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there career points where turnover is more (or less) common?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 20 - 25 years on the job movement is more likely</li> <li>• Five years seems to be a common trend lately</li> </ul>
<p>What is your average annual retirement rate for officers/deputies during the past three years?</p>	<p>Responses ranged from 5/year to 75/year</p>
<p>What is your average annual non-retirement turnover rate for officers/deputies during the past three years?</p>	<p>Responses ranged from 10-50/year</p>

## Appendix D: Academy Attrition Rates, Physical Training Failures, and Injury Separation Tables

### Academy Attrition Rates

#### LASD Academy General Attrition (Classes 387 – 420)

January 18, 2012 – May 5, 2017

Class	Number Started	Number Graduated	Attrition Rate
387	80	66	17.50
388	80	63	21.25
389	85	73	14.12
390	70	55	21.43
391	100	83	17.00
392	71	54	23.94
393	100	90	10.00
394*	N/A	N/A	N/A
395	60	45	25.00
396	99	85	14.14
397	60	44	26.67
398	80	62	22.50
399	79	68	13.92
400	63	51	19.05
401	65	46	29.23
402	72	62	13.89
403	80	68	15.00
404	64	50	21.88
405	79	56	29.11
406	70	51	27.14
407	70	51	27.14
408	81	66	18.52
409	87	67	22.99
410	85	68	20.00
411	90	79	12.22
412	90	71	21.11
413	84	70	16.66
414	85	63	25.88
415	89	79	11.24
416	90	66	26.66
417	88	73	17.05
418	74	61	17.57
419	90	74	17.77

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

420	89	65	26.97
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2649</b>	<b>2125</b>	<b>19.78</b>

Source: LASD provided data

\*Class 394 listed as Public Agency. No enrollment data provided.

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

### Attrition rates for Classes 421 to 435 (January 2017 – March 2019)

Class 421 BC      Jan 30 - Jun 30, 2017

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	79	87.78	63	16	20.25
LASD Female	11	12.22	9	2	18.18
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20.00</b>
Other Male	7	87.50	3	4	57.14
Other Female	1	12.50	0	1	100
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>62.50</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23.47</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 422 COC      Mar 6 - Aug 4, 2017

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	61	91.04	52	9	14.75
LASD Female	6	8.96	5	1	16.67
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14.93</b>
Other Male	2	100	2	0	0
Other Female	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14.49</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 423 BC      Apr 17 - Sep 15, 2017

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	55	79.71	49	6	10.91
LASD Female	14	20.29	10	4	28.57
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14.49</b>
Other Male	11	91.67	10	1	9.09
Other Female	1	8.33	1	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8.33</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13.58</b>

Source: LASD provided data

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Class 424 BC      May 29 - Oct 27, 2017

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	48	82.76	42	6	12.50
LASD Female	10	17.24	8	2	20.00
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13.79</b>
Other Male	10	71.43	10	0	0
Other Female	4	28.57	3	1	25.00
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7.14</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12.50</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 425 BC      Jul 17 - Dec 16, 2017

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	63	78.75	48	15	23.81
LASD Female	17	21.25	13	4	23.53
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23.75</b>
Other Male	11	91.67	10	1	9.09
Other Female	1	8.33	1	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8.33</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21.74</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 426 COC      Sep 11, 2017 – Feb 9, 2018

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	64	78.05	53	11	17.19
LASD Female	18	21.95	14	4	22.22
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18.29</b>
Other Male	6	75.00	6	0	0
Other Female	2	25.00	2	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16.67</b>

Source: LASD provided data

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Class 427 BC      Oct 30, 2017 – Mar 30, 2018

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	57	79.17	39	18	31.58
LASD Female	15	20.83	7	8	53.33
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36.11</b>
Other Male	18	85.71	13	5	27.78
Other Female	3	14.29	2	1	33.33
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28.57</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34.41</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 428 BC      Dec 14, 2017 – May 17, 2018

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	67	85.90	62	5	7.46
LASD Female	11	14.10	7	4	36.36
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11.54</b>
Other Male	8	80.00	7	1	12.50
Other Female	2	20.00	2	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10.00</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11.36</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 429 BC      Feb 5 – Jul 6, 2018

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	76	87.36	69	7	9.21
LASD Female	11	12.64	10	1	9.09
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.20</b>
Other Male	3	75.00	3	0	0
Other Female	1	25.00	0	1	100
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25.00</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9.89</b>

Source: LASD provided data

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Class 430 COC      Mar 19 – Aug 17, 2018

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	70	82.35	57	13	18.57
LASD Female	15	17.65	10	5	33.33
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21.18</b>
Other Male	5	83.33	3	2	40.00
Other Female	1	16.67	1	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33.33</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21.98</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 431 BC      May 7 – Oct 5, 2018

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	67	75.28	49	18	26.87
LASD Female	22	24.72	17	5	22.73
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25.84</b>
Other Male	11	64.71	11	0	0
Other Female	6	35.29	4	2	33.33
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11.76</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23.58</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 432 BC      Jun 18 – Nov 16, 2018

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	64	71.11	48	16	25.00
LASD Female	26	28.89	16	10	38.46
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28.89</b>
Other Male	9	100	8	1	11.11
Other Female	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11.11</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27.27</b>

Source: LASD provided data

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Class 433 BC      Aug 6, 2018 – Jan 4, 2019

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	73	81.11	63	10	13.70
LASD Female	17	18.89	10	7	41.18
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18.89</b>
Other Male	9	90.00	8	1	11.11
Other Female	1	10.00	1	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10.00</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18.00</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 434 COC      Sep 10, 2018 – Feb 8, 2019

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	64	75.29	51	13	20.31
LASD Female	21	24.71	15	6	28.57
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22.35</b>
Other Male	3	60.00	3	0	0
Other Female	2	40.00	1	1	50.00
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20.00</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22.22</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Class 435 BC      Oct 28, 2018 – Mar 29, 2019

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	70	77.78	55	15	21.43
LASD Female	20	22.22	12	8	40.00
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25.56</b>
Other Male	8	72.73	6	2	25.00
Other Female	3	27.27	3	0	0
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18.18</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24.75</b>

Source: LASD provided data

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Total Attrition (BC Academy Only)

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	719	80.52	587	132	18.36
LASD Female	174	19.48	121	53	30.46
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>20.72</b>
Other Male	105	82.03	89	16	15.24
Other Female	23	17.97	17	6	26.09
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17.19</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>1021</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>20.27</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Total Attrition (COC Academy Only)

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	259	81.19	213	46	17.76
LASD Female	60	18.81	44	16	26.67
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>19.44</b>
Other Male	16	76.20	14	2	12.50
Other Female	5	23.80	4	1	20.00
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14.29</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>19.11</b>

Source: LASD provided data

Total Attrition – BC and COC Combined (Classes 421 – 435)

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
LASD Male	978	80.69	800	178	18.20
LASD Female	234	19.30	165	69	29.49
<b>Total LASD</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>20.38</b>
Other Male	121	81.20	103	18	14.88
Other Female	28	18.80	21	7	25.00
<b>Total Outside</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16.78</b>
<b>Total All</b>	<b>1361</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1089</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>19.99</b>

Source: LASD provided data

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

LASD Male Recruits – Attrition by Ethnicity      Class 421 – Class 435

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
Hispanic	594	60.74	492	102	17.17
White	234	23.93	194	40	17.09
African American	53	5.42	39	14	26.42
American Indian	17	1.74	14	3	17.65
Asian	55	5.62	40	15	27.27
Filipino	25	2.56	20	5	20.00
<b>Total All</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>18.30</b>

Source: LASD provided data

LASD Female Recruits – Attrition by Ethnicity      Class 421 – Class 435

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
Hispanic	170	72.65	113	57	33.53
White	38	16.24	28	10	26.31
African American	10	4.27	8	2	20.00
American Indian	6	2.56	6	0	0
Asian	10	4.27	6	4	40.00
Filipino	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total All</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>31.20</b>

Source: LASD provided data

LASD All Recruits – Attrition by Ethnicity      Class 421 – Class 435

Category	Started	Percent	Graduated	Attrition	Percent
Hispanic	764	63.03	605	159	20.81
White	272	22.44	222	50	18.38
African American	63	5.20	47	16	25.40
American Indian	23	1.90	20	3	13.04
Asian	65	5.36	46	19	29.23
Filipino	25	2.06	20	5	20.00
<b>Total All</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>20.79</b>

Source: LASD provided data

## LASD Attrition from January 30, 2017 – March 9, 2019 (Class 421 – 435)

Class Enrollment between 60 – 69 Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
422	69	14.49

Class Enrollment between 70 – 79 Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
424	72	12.50

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## Class Enrollment between 80 – 89 Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
423	81	13.58
428	88	11.36
	<b>Average Attrition</b>	<b>12.47</b>

## Class Enrollment between 90 – 99 Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
421	98	23.47
425	92	21.74
426	90	16.67
427	93	34.41
429	91	9.89
430	91	21.98
432	99	27.27
434	90	22.22
	<b>Average Attrition</b>	<b>22.21</b>

## Class Enrollment 100 or more Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
431	106	23.58
433	100	18.00
435	101	24.75
	<b>Average Attrition</b>	<b>22.11</b>

## LASD Attrition from January 18, 2012 – May 5, 2017 (Class 387 – 420)

### Class Enrollment between 60 – 69 Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
395	60	25.00
397	60	26.67
400	63	19.05
401	65	29.23
404	64	21.88
	<b>Average Attrition</b>	<b>24.39</b>

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

### Class Enrollment between 70 – 79 Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
390	70	21.43
392	71	23.94
399	79	13.92
402	72	13.89
405	79	29.11
406	70	27.14
407	70	27.14
418	74	17.57
	<b>Average Attrition</b>	<b>21.77</b>

### Class Enrollment between 80 – 89 Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
387	80	17.50
388	80	21.25
389	85	14.12
398	80	22.50
403	80	15.00
408	81	18.52
409	87	22.99
410	85	20.00
413	84	16.66
414	85	25.88
415	89	11.24
417	88	17.05
420	89	26.97
	<b>Average Attrition</b>	<b>19.21</b>

### LASD Attrition from January 18, 2012 – May 5, 2017 (Class 387 – 420)

#### Class Enrollment between 90 – 99 Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
396	99	14.14
411	90	12.22
412	90	21.11
416	90	26.66
419	90	17.77
	<b>Average Attrition</b>	<b>18.38</b>

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## Class Enrollment 100 or more Recruits

Class	Beginning Enrollment	Attrition
391	100	17.00
393	100	10.00
	<b>Average Attrition</b>	<b>13.50</b>

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## LASD Physical Training Failures

Classes 421 to 435 (January 2017 – March 2019)

Gender	Reason Listed
M	5 Pt Failures
F	None Listed
F	Failure to Complete Minimum # Of Pt Sessions
F	None Listed
M	Failed LD 32 – Lifetime Fitness
M	None Listed
M	Failed LD 32 – Lifetime Fitness
M	Failed LD 32 – Lifetime Fitness (7 Pt Failures)
M	None Listed
M	4 Pt Failures
F	None Listed
M	Lifetime Fitness (Did Not Complete In Timely Manner)
M	None Listed
F	7 Pt Failures
M	7 Pt Failures (Class 427)
M	Same Person as Above - 7 Pt Failures (Class 431)
F	Lifetime Fitness (Did Not Complete in Timely Manner)
Unk	None Listed
M	Failed LD 32 – Lifetime Fitness (7 Pt Failures)
F	None Listed
F	None Listed
M	None Listed
F	Failed LD 32 – Lifetime Fitness (7 Pt Failures)
F	Lifetime Fitness (Did Not Complete In Timely Manner)
F	None Listed
F	None Listed
F	Failure to Complete Minimum # Of Pt Sessions
F	Medical Pt Separation
M	None Listed
F	None Listed
F	None Listed

Total PT Failures	31	
Female PT Failures	16	(52%)
Male PT Failures	14	(45%)
Unknown Gender	1	

PT Failures accounted for 11% of all academy failures (31/271)

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

### Injury Separations

Classes 421 to 435 (January 2017 – March 2019)

Date	Gender	Injury Classification	Injury Type	Days Completed	Other Information
12/21/16	F	Medical - PT	Ankle Sprain	29	Resigned
UNK	F	Medical Limitations	UNK	74	none
09/29/17	M	Medical Limitations	Ankles / Foot	19	none
UNK	F	Medical Separation	UNK	6	none
12/11/18	M	Medical - PT	Knee Pain (left)	33	none
08/01/17	M	Medical - PT	UNK	12	none
07/02/18	M	Medical Separation	Knee Pain (left)	27	none
10/05/18	M	Medical - PT	Bicep Bruise (left)	92	none
UNK	M	Medical Limitations	Severe Shin Splints	UNK	Failed 7 PT
UNK	F	Medical Separation	UNK	UNK	none
08/02/18	F	Medical Separation	Calves Tendonitis	69	none
UNK	M	Medical - PT	UNK	26	none
07/25/17	F	Medical - PT	Knee Pain (right)	10	none
10/01/18	M	Medical - PT	Knee Pain (left)	23	none
11/02/18	M	Medical - PT	UNK	UNK	VPAT Injury
05/18/18	M	Medical Separation	Knee / Shin Pain	13	none
01/12/17	M	Medical Separation	Ankle (left)	27	Pre-existing
03/21/17	M	Medical Separation	Knee Pain (right)	61	none
11/13/18	F	Medical Separation	Ankle Sprain (right)	17	none
07/27/17	M	Medical Separation	Hip Strain (right)	20	*Add'l Injury
07/25/17	M	Medical – PT	Leg Cramp (upper)	13	none
12/28/18	M	Medical - PT	Knee Pain (left)	11	none
UNK	M	Medical Separation	UNK	21	none
UNK	M	Medical Separation	UNK	30	none
01/22/18	M	Medical - PT	Back Pain (lower)	34	none

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Date	Gender	Injury Classification	Injury Type	Days Completed	Other Information
03/29/18	M	Medical - PT	Hip Pain (right)	17	DT Injury
UNK	F	Medical Limitations	UNK	UNK	none
12/26/18	M	Medical - PT	Knee Pain (both)	13	Pre-existing
12/13/16	M	Medical Separation	Ankle / Neck Pain	4	none
01/05/18	M	Medical - PT	Foot / Ankle Pain	24	none
11/13/18	M	Medical - PT	Shins / Knee Pain	14	none
UNK	F	Medical Separation	UNK	UNK	none
11/19/18	M	Medical - PT	UNK	UNK	DT Injury
05/16/18	M	Medical Separation	Feet / Skin Blisters	11	none
12/27/17	F	Medical Separation	Pulled Hip Muscle	22	none
09/07/17	M	Medical Separation	Knee Sprain (left)	47	none
UNK	M	Medical Limitations	UNK	UNK	none
11/08/17	F	Medical - PT	Shoulder Injury	16	none
UNK	M	Medical Separation	UNK	9	none
06/25/18	M	Medical - PT	Calf Muscle Pull	9	none
UNK	M	Medical Limitations	UNK	UNK	none
09/26/18	M	Medical Limitations	Knee Pain (left)	93	none
06/05/17	M	Medical Limitations	Ankle Pain (right)	12	none
07/27/17	M	Medical Separation	Foot Pain (right)	15	none
11/11/18	F	Medical - PT	Knees / Hands	22	none
12/30/16	F	Medical - PT	Hip Pain (both)	17	none
12/29/16	M	Medical - PT	UNK	54	none
08/01/17	M	Medical - PT	Knee (right)	49	none
07/24/17	F	Medical - PT	Foot / Ankle Sprain	18	none
08/01/17	M	Medical - PT	Quadriceps Pain	24	none
UNK	M	Medical Separation	UNK	UNK	none
UNK	M	Medical - PT	UNK	UNK	none

\*Also sustained off-duty shoulder injury

52 Total Injury Separations

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

39 Males (75%)  
13 Females (25%)

Male LASD recruits started – 978 (81%)  
Female LASD recruits started – 234 (19%)

17 injuries – Type of injury is listed as not known  
All other injuries (except for 2) are lower extremity injuries

## Appendix E: LASD Best Practices

During the course of the study, the team identified areas wherein LASD was already engaging in professional best practices. Additionally, preliminary reports and recommendations for the four focus areas were provided to the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. Following the delivery of those preliminary reports, LASD identified recommendations that could be initiated immediately. This section highlights both the best practices LASD had previously implemented as well as those best practice recommendations where LASD has initiated review or implementation.

### **Partnership with SEU Tactical Sports Medicine Program**

The LASD has partnered with the Southern California University of Health Sciences in an innovative pilot program involving early treatment of both academy staff and recruit injuries that leads to faster return to duty. This program has shown promising initial results that should be studied further for consideration of adopting a formal partnership agreement.

### **Identification of Personnel with Advanced Medical Skills or Training**

With ever increasing numbers of recruits in training, the LASD has recognized that it is often the case that one or more recruits are certified emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or paramedics. Knowing this, the LASD employs a best practice that should be shared with all training academies across the country. At the start of each recruit session, the Academy staff determines whether any, or how many, recruits are certified EMTs, paramedics, or who otherwise possess advanced medical skills or training. These recruits are identified, equipped with emergency medical equipment bags, and are available to be called upon to assist in the event of an injury or medical emergency.

### **Mentoring of New Academy Instructors**

Through interviews with academy supervisors and instructors, we learned that new instructors at the Academy are paired with a veteran instructor to assist them as they learn and develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities that are unique to the training assignment. The project team views the formal process of mentoring new instructors at the academy as a best practice and applauds the LASD for providing their new instructors with this opportunity to learn from those who have a broader level of experience.

### **Implementation of Preliminary Report Recommendations**

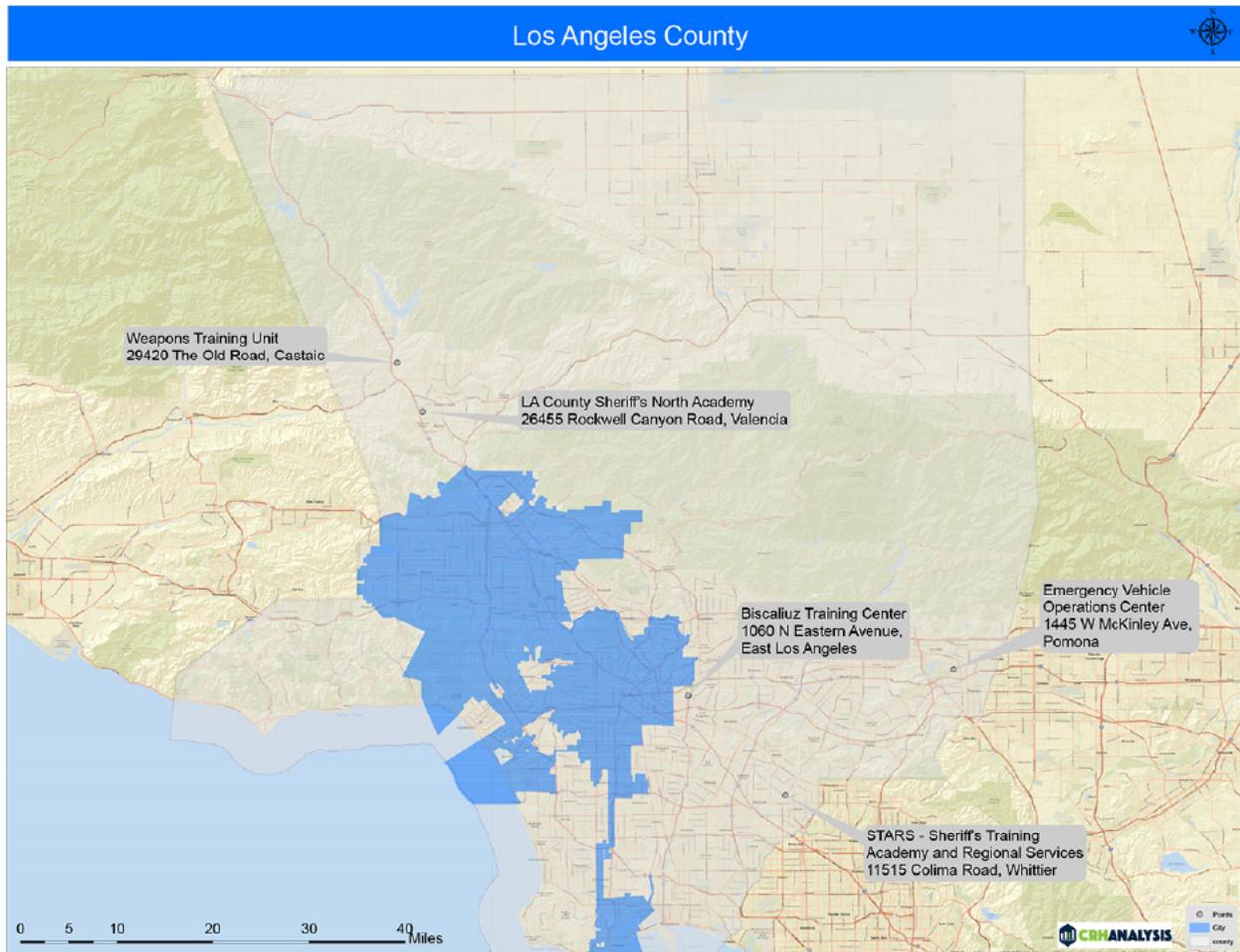
At the time of the final report, recommendations were in various stages of implementation with some completed such as computerizing the written exam and administering the VPAT-S and the written test together in the same appointment. Others remain in progress or under consideration.

## Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

Those recommendations are identified here:

- Consider computerizing the written exam
- Consider continuing to administer the VPAT-S and the written test together in the same appointment
- Consider increasing the number and intensity of workout sessions offered to potential candidates
- Increase the number of providers permitted to perform medical and psychological testing
- Regularly review medical and psychological provider decisions
- Explore the need for a dedicated testing facility
- Consider conducting computer administration of the written test
- Consider administering the test in additional areas of the county that might be easier to access by candidates from areas where recruiting is a challenge
- Continue providing candidates with test preparation resources
- Clarify the purpose of the polygraph
- Monitor, quantify, and evaluate the workload for background investigators
- Deputy retention - Support career development

## Appendix F: Pictures of the Training Facilities



### Trainee Travel Distance

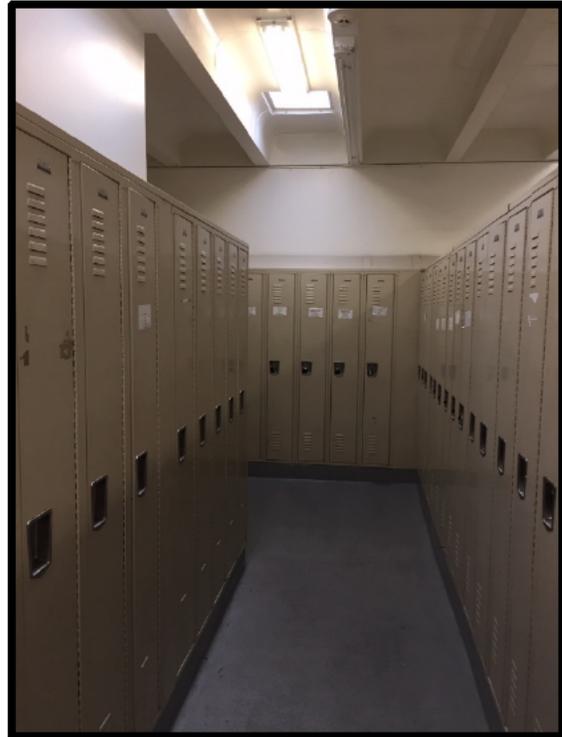
- 41.5 miles Biscailuz to Pitchess Weapons Facility
- 24.29 miles Biscailuz to Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC)
- 5.3 miles North Academy to Pitchess Weapons Facility
- 59.6 miles North Academy to Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC)
- 55.0 miles STARS to Pitchess Weapons Facility
- 22.3 miles STARS to Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC)

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## Biscailuz Training Facility



*Biscailuz Training Facility - the Green Mile*



*Biscailuz cramped locker space that is inadequate to accommodate the number of recruits at any given time.*



*Biscailuz - Outside break and lunch area. There are no inside facilities, this is the only area for recruits to eat. Each table can sit 6-8 people, for a total of 40 people max; however, the typical recruit class is 90-110 recruits.*



*Biscailuz recruit classroom building*

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report



*Biscailuz Track*



*Biscailuz track hazards*



*Biscailuz track*

As shown, the physical fitness training area and running track are in very poor condition. The dirt running track has numerous holes and ruts which makes it potentially dangerous for physical fitness runs for the recruits. The grassy area inside the running track is also pocked with gopher holes. This area is also used as the K9 training area and as a landing zone for department helicopters. All of these conditions render this area unsuitable for conducting the PT that is required in the recruit curriculum.



*PT Area*

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## North Academy (at College of Canyons)



*North Academy outside break area. Limited protection from the elements*



*North Academy recruit classroom – this is the only classroom available at this facility*



*North Academy Staff locker and restroom; space is cramped and inadequate*

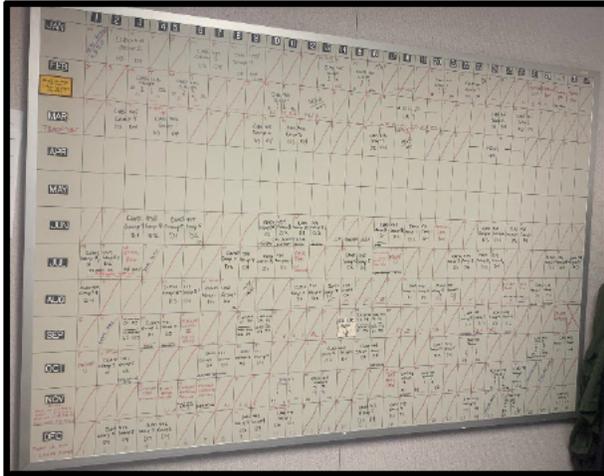


*North Academy – training facility is located in an unsecure area*

North Academy consists of one small, one-story building containing a 100-seat classroom and an adjoining small area for staff offices. The recruit lockers are located in a college building which is 300 yards away from the classroom. Similar to the Biscailuz Center, the training site is not in a secure area as the college is open to the public. This facility also does not have an indoor breakroom, only the outside break area with limited seating, or a cafeteria, and its locker rooms and changing facilities are cramped.

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (EVOC)



EVOC Administrative Building

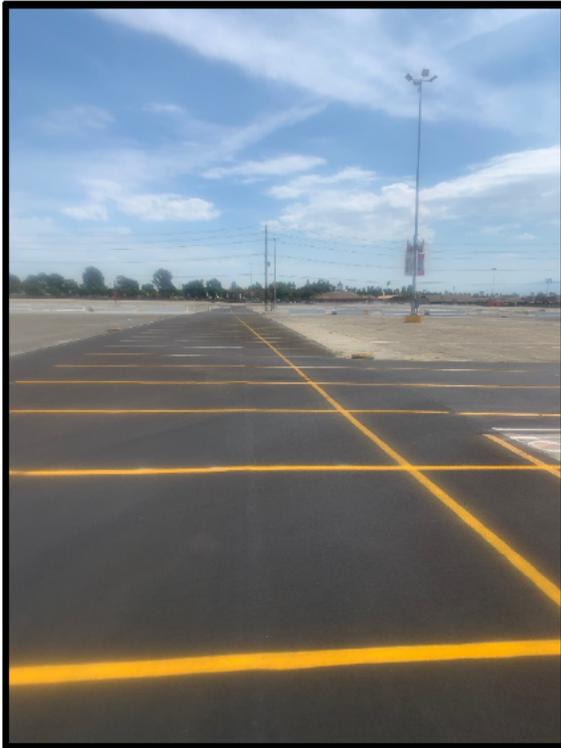
*Scheduling recruit EVOC training at the Fairplex is very challenging, requires much flexibility, and sometimes causes other components of training to be adjusted due to scheduling conflicts with the fairgrounds.*



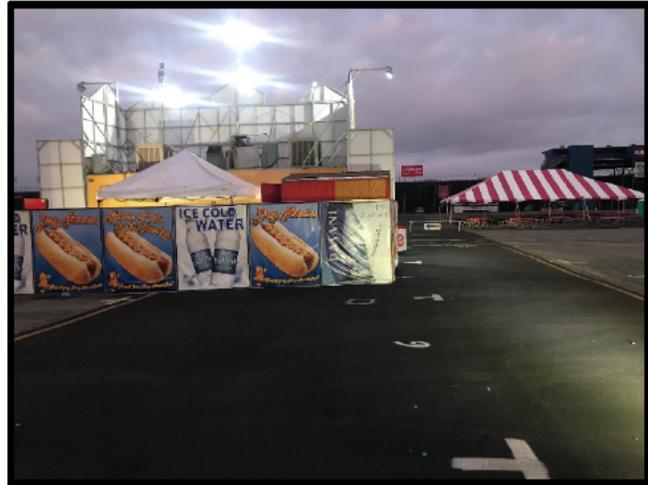
EVOC Track overlaid on Fairplex grounds.

Map Credit: Google

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report



*Parking and traffic lines painted on the training surface makes it difficult for students to delineate the intended course.*



*This image depicts the scheduling issues LASD often encounters. A hotdog stand was left across the track at the conclusion of a swap meet. LASD was scheduled to begin training at 0730 but delayed until the stand was moved.*



*Post holes were hammered into the track shortly after LASD spent the annual \$55,000 on resurfacing the track earlier in the year.*



*This image depicts the Fairplex's intrusion onto the track during a previously scheduled weekend training day. Barriers were placed at the northeast corner of the track to provide additional parking for the event.*

# Sheriff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention Process Improvement Report

## Weapons Training Facility at the Pitchess Detention Center



*Range - Staff Office*



*Range - No shelter from elements*



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**International Association of Chiefs of Police**

44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 200  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Direct: 703-836-6767  
Main Line: 800-THE-IACP  
Fax: 703-836-4543

**[www.theIACP.org](http://www.theIACP.org)**