



TRANSFORMATION REPORT

SHERIFF ED GONZALEZ

Transformation **REPORT**

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Introduction

On November 8, 2016, Harris County voters signaled a desire for a more progressive and forward-thinking criminal justice system. Our community demanded a safer, transparent, fair, and inclusive justice system that genuinely works for every person. The people of Harris County elected Ed Gonzalez to change the way business is done in the nation's third-largest sheriff's office. Voters called for equitable justice for all, regardless of place of birth, native language, religion, income, or sexual identity.

Life in one of the largest metropolitan regions in the United States is fast-paced and dynamic, requiring law enforcement agencies to keep ahead of the curve in terms of technology and force readiness, as well as

responsiveness to the public's evolving security needs. Simultaneously, downward pressures on public funding necessitate strong financial stewardship, all the while ensuring consistent safety and law enforcement innovation.

With these realities in mind, Sheriff Ed Gonzalez's transformation team prepared recommendations to keep Harris County safe, use public resources wisely, and enhance public trust. To aid the Sheriff's Office, the team identified core values to guide the Sheriff's office's ability to fulfill its mission of enhancing safety and protecting the trust of the citizens of Harris County.



CORE VALUES

1

Adaptation to changing needs

2

Respect for tax payer dollars by ensuring accountability and maximizing efficiencies

3

Diligent and inclusive representation of the entire Harris County community

4

Development of a sustainable law enforcement and public safety workforce that is skilled, professional, responsive, and ethical

As we continue to build and work within Harris County, we also take stock of what has been completed and set goals and targets for our future.

Mustafa Tameez

TRANSFORMATION TEAM CHAIRMAN

AT LARGE MEMBERS:

**Bobby Singh
Steven David**

**Roberto Contreras
Matthew Shailer**

**Bishop Dixon
Steven Paletz**

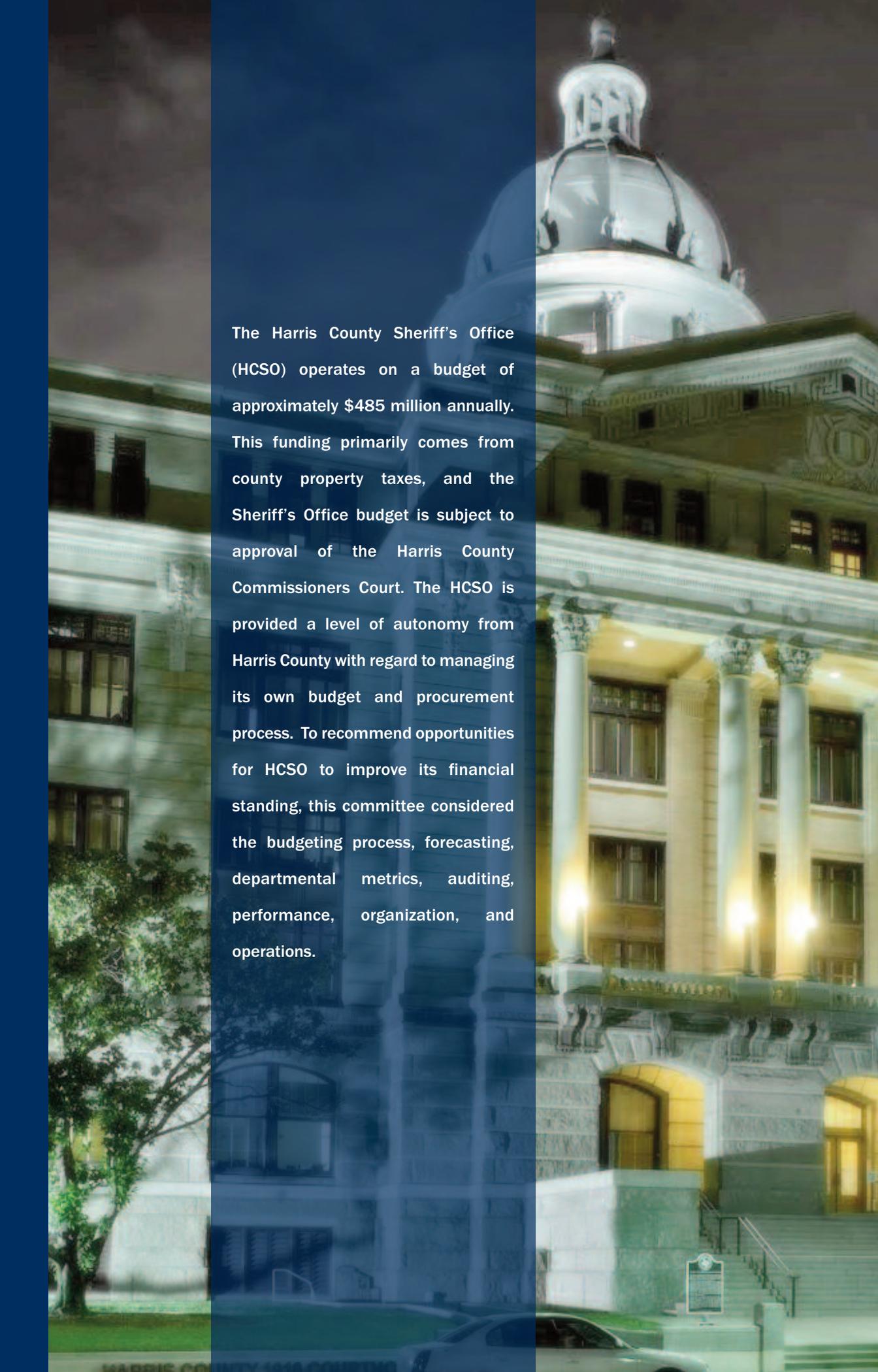
Finance

Committee Chairs:

Commissioner Theldon Branch and Gilbert Garcia

Members:

Aida Araissi, David Arpin, Ruby Dang, Terence Fontaine, Piotr Galitzine, Richard Holt, Thomas Jones, Abelardo Matamoros, Andrew Pidgirsky, Pat Sanchez, Jason Simpson, Yvette Smith, Don Wang, Chris Wilmot



The Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) operates on a budget of approximately \$485 million annually. This funding primarily comes from county property taxes, and the Sheriff's Office budget is subject to approval of the Harris County Commissioners Court. The HCSO is provided a level of autonomy from Harris County with regard to managing its own budget and procurement process. To recommend opportunities for HCSO to improve its financial standing, this committee considered the budgeting process, forecasting, departmental metrics, auditing, performance, organization, and operations.

Findings:

OVERTIME

Over \$20 million was spent on overtime in FY 2017 alone.

- a. Evaluate turnover in detentions.
- b. Set benchmarks for overtime and monitor progress.
- c. Monitor which employees receive overtime and when possible, spread it out amongst employees with comp time balances lower than 240 hours.
- d. Evaluate job duties and assignments that are not critical or necessary.
- e. Positions should be assessed to determine if they are necessary long term or only temporary. If they are necessary long-term, the HCSO should request the Commissioners Court create a Position control number (PCN) designated for that position.

PROCUREMENT

The HCSO should invest in improving procurement expertise.

- a. The HCSO should work with the unit requesting an item to provide their input or/and knowledge regarding scope development, strategic sourcing, and the procurement policies and procedures for each item. This will ensure that the HCSO receives the correct goods and services.
- b. The HCSO should develop formal procurement training. To reduce costs, this training can be made available via the web as opposed to face-to-face or one-on-one classroom training.
- c. The HCSO should review procurement policies & procedures to determine changes and make them readily available to all procurement representatives.
- d. The HCSO needs to improve input and transparency between themselves and the County. Currently, the HCSO is unable to acquire routine purchase order spend reports or open purchase order reports between itself, the Purchasing Agent, and the Audit team.

With the imminent implementation of PeopleSoft, the County and HCSO will have these capabilities (Open PO reporting, Closed PO, etc.). For this reason, the HCSO should coordinate with the County to ensure access to all of the reporting tools it requires from PeopleSoft.

- e. The HCSO needs to develop a process for monitoring effectiveness and value for each new large procurement.
- f. The HCSO must inventory records of visible goods to prevent financial waste. The HCSO should conduct an audit of the current inventory so that the Sheriff knows exactly what the HCSO is responsible for and has at its disposal. This inventory can later be used as a tool to measure inventory levels and monitor spending habits. The trends from these inventories can then be used for budget forecasting.

NON-LABOR

Accounts for approximately 10% of the overall budget.

- a. **Fleet** – A consultant should be hired with fleet management experience to review the current fleet management capabilities and provide recommendations for any necessary reorganization or outsourcing, including pro forma budgetary savings and projections. Current budget plans are only for 100 new vehicles for a fleet of 1,400.

This means roughly a vehicle is replaced only every 14 years, which is neither efficient nor practical. For this reason, a financial analysis on vehicles should be conducted to determine whether it is more advantageous to lease or purchase vehicles. This analysis should include the costs for repairs and maintenance.

b. Medical/Health

- i. Agency Medical - Budget previously \$11M, now \$15M per year. A heavy reliance exists on the utilization of temporary staffing contracts, which are expensive and likely result in inconsistent health services delivery methods. A systematic approach to organizing and delivering health care for HCSO detainees is imperative to achieve cost savings as well as safety for HCSO employees and detainees. Metrics should be put in place to ensure the proper amount of personnel are used and at the right times. This should be managed by a medical administrator with experience running a medical operation. Vendors should also be monitored to ensure the HCSO is getting the best pricing available and audit any waste in spending, purchasing, and distribution.
 - ii. Psychiatric Services – Budget of \$9M per year. The HCSO jail serves as the largest de-facto center for mental health in the State of Texas. For this reason, it should explore the possibility for gaining additional funding to support these services.
 - iii. Pharmaceuticals – Budget of \$12M per year. All pharmaceutical contracts should be re-evaluated to ensure the HCSO is getting the best price and purchasing the most appropriate medicines and other medicinal goods. Metrics should be run on consumption versus waste, name-brand v. generic, and other potential cost saving measures.
- c. **Food for Inmates** – The HCSO spends \$8.5M annually on food for its inmates and an additional \$1.5M in labor costs for kitchen staff. For this reason, the HCSO should explore the cost associated with outsourcing its kitchen to determine if services can be provided for less.
- d. **Commissary** – The HCSO’s current commissary contract guarantees it revenues of at least \$4M per year. It should evaluate whether Aramark’s performance meets expectations compared to the Commissary’s performance under prior Sheriffs when Aramark may not have been the vendor. It should also evaluate any additional costs borne by the inmates as a result of the outsourcing.

Status: *The Commissary contract was executed with Aramark in 2017.*

Throughout this evaluation process, Finance Committee members identified the need for more comprehensive policy and procedure structures related to the areas identified. Well-developed procedures prevent mishaps and reduce overexposure to any financial and procurement missteps. Developing a Service Level Agreement (SLA), with the County for any shared service functions would be valuable. Currently, the departments run on procedures that have been passed down through institutional knowledge as opposed through an updated formal document. The current handbook is an outdated procurement manual, which only provides definitions of items and procedures and lacks guidelines on how to put these procurement procedures into practice.

By creating a new written manual in conjunction with Harris County, each party will not only understand the process but will also increase effectiveness in communication. Having all parties on the same page, sets appropriate expectations and promotes a more efficient process during procurement. Knowing the needs and regulations of each department is key to eliminating waste. As long as the Sheriff’s office is reliant upon the hands of the budget, auditor, and purchasing agents of Harris County, it will be challenged to have significant input when it comes to its budget, procurement process, and product.

Recommendations:

It is paramount for the Sheriff to implement regular standing meetings with the County Judge and key county department heads to review operational needs. These meetings should be designed to create buy-in from the Judge and other department heads to help the Sheriff bring the HCSO into the 21st century in terms of management techniques, operational practices, etc. As the Sheriff's Office accounts for 25% of the total budget for Harris County, it would be mutually beneficial that each interested party work together to make every interaction as smooth as possible. This can be accomplished through the following:

SHORT-TERM PROCUREMENT GOALS:

1. In a highly decentralized procurement model, the need for departmental expertise increases. For this reason, The HCSO should provide industry procurement training and/or certification centered on the business needs of the HCSO utilizing the existing headcount for new hires.

Status: *HCSO Finance has developed and implemented a training plan for its procurement personnel.*



2. Consider mandatory web-based procurement training for all existing staff. Harris County has offered to assist with in-person training so that everyone is on the same page.

Status: *Web-based procurement training will be included in the training plan and will be coordinated with the Harris County Purchasing Dept.*



3. Set expectations between Harris County Purchasing and the HCSO.

Status: *The Harris County Purchasing Dept. establishes best practices and creates policy for all County departments. HCSO Finance will continue to follow up with County Purchasing to ensure compliance with the most recent version of their policy.*

4. A Review of the largest PO's should be conducted and inconsistencies in performance should be identified and any overpriced products or services should be flagged.

Status: *HCSO Finance has begun evaluating large PO's based on frequency, reasonableness and necessity. Currently this process is being conducted informally with the Bureau administrative assistants. As part of the budget cycle this fiscal year we will be formalizing this process to include reports on the bureau commander's dashboard.*



5. Processes should be established to ensure inventory checks are accomplished at least annually.

Status: *The Harris County Auditor's Office conducts annual asset audits in accordance with County policy. HCSO Finance will supplement this control by performing quarterly cycle counts based on turnover, exposure, and risk.*

LONG-TERM PROCUREMENT GOALS:

1. Hire a consultant with health care delivery system design, organization, and delivery experience to review the current health care system at the HCSO and provide recommendations for any necessary reorganization and outsourcing, including pro forma budgetary savings and projections.

Status: *County Purchasing is about to award the bid for a third-party contractor to evaluate HCSO Medical...which should facilitate the Harris Health takeover.*

2. Hire a consultant with fleet management experience to review the fleet management capabilities and provide recommendations for any necessary reorganization or outsourcing, including pro forma budgetary savings and projections.

Status: *An independent consultant was hired to conduct a review of the fleet management operation and the results of that review have been used to improve efficiency.*



3. Update and consolidate Procurement Policies and Procedures. Evaluations of Procurement Policies and Procedures should take place annually.

Status: *Procurement policies and procedures are created at the county level. HCSO Finance is ensuring that all procurement activities are in line with the County Purchasing Manual.*



4. Generate monthly and quarterly purchase order spend reports, outlining commodity, purchase order amounts, and balances.

Status: *Spend reports are currently in development and the second phase of the HCSO Dashboard will include expenditure analysis.*



5. Request departmental annual procurement training from the County Purchasing Agent.

Status: *A formal request has been sent to the County Purchasing agent, and part of our training plan involves County sponsored training.*



6. Identify an Inventory Control Specialist to track existing inventory and freeze spending where inventory exceeds the demand.

Status: *HCSO Finance will utilize spend reports and the HCSO Dashboard described in the response to LTPG #4.*

SHORT-TERM FINANCIAL GOALS:

1. Identify a practice to anticipate adjustments to the budget throughout the year to ensure proper budget forecasting. The practice should also include input and notes from (M. Lanham and S. Jernagin) attendees of staff meetings.

Status: *M. Lanham and S. Jernagin will increase frequency of attending staff meetings with division commanders to enhance financial awareness and literacy. The onus of forecasting and budgeting currently remains with the finance department; additionally, we will utilize the staff meetings to improve communication.*



2. Develop departmental metrics for Fleet, Medical, Overtime spending, etc. This will prevent loss and allow for a more proactive approach to organizing each department with maximum efficiency.

Status: *The HCSO Dashboard is currently in development. Drilldown functionality and real-time data within the dashboard will advance department efficiency in financial management.*



3. Begin developing an in-house auditing report using previous years' budget shortfalls and windfalls.

Status: *M. Lanham and S. Jernagin will perform annual analysis of prior year financials in order to project future needs. As part of the budget cycle this fiscal year we will be formalizing this process, to include comparative analyses to be posted on the bureau commanders' dashboards.*



3. Set benchmarks for how much overtime is allowed per pay period and monitor the progress. Overtime reporting should continually be evaluated in order to inform the level of set benchmarks.

Status: *Overtime reporting will be included in the HCSO Dashboard and should enhance monitoring of established benchmarks.*

4. Work to eliminate the outsourcing of inmates. The HCSO needs to identify causes for the need to do this and then create preventative measures to prevent it from occurring again.

Status: *HCSO, informed by this recommendation, has successfully implemented programming to fully eliminate inmate outsourcing. Implementation was achieved before Hurricane Harvey. Unfortunately, due to Harvey, disruption has slowed court processes, which has resulted in an increased inmate population and a return to outsourcing of some inmates.*



5. Conduct a financial analysis on the cost of turnover in terms of hiring, training, and constant recruiting.

Status: *HCSO, through recommendation of the transition team has created a financial analysis of attrition costs.*

LONG-TERM FINANCIAL GOALS:

1. Identify the best practice indicators and implement a management reporting program for reporting assessed indicators.

Status: *Key performance indicators have been assessed and will continually be included in the HCSO Dashboard.*



2. Implement a Dashboard Initiative. This will be the most useful tool for not only the Sheriff, but anyone else who wants a visual representation of how the departments is functioning.

Status: *Dashboard went live at the beginning of March with Financial reporting, Personnel reporting, Calls for Service reporting, Criminal Investigations Case log reporting, and Jail Population reporting.*

3. Establish Service Level Agreements with County agencies. As the HCSO is 25% of Harris County's budget, it is imperative that both entities communicate and run on similar if not identical procedures.

Status: *HCSO Finance follows Harris County Auditors' standard financial procedures which govern all county agencies.*



4. Meet with the Harris County Auditor's Office and work with them on implementing a long-term forecasting model for the HCSO.

Status: *The County Budget Management Office is responsible for forecasting all County revenues and expenditures. HCSO Finance will discuss modeling and forecasting with the Budget Management Office.*



5. Conduct an annual audit on all purchases below \$50k.

Status: *Procedures are in place to ensure all purchases are properly authorized including an approval workflow (PPA) and segregation of duties. The County Auditors also conduct annual audits to ensure compliance.*



6. Promote the LEAN initiative to help optimize detention operations. This will help derive metrics for use with future budget forecasting.

Status: *HCSO Finance will support the HCSO Criminal Justice Command in developing and publishing analytical metrics for future budgeting and forecasting.*



7. Determine root cause of turnover and develop strategies for correction.

Status: *HCSO Finance recommends an in-depth and documented exit interview process, at a minimum, along with a psychological study of existing long-term detentions employees.*

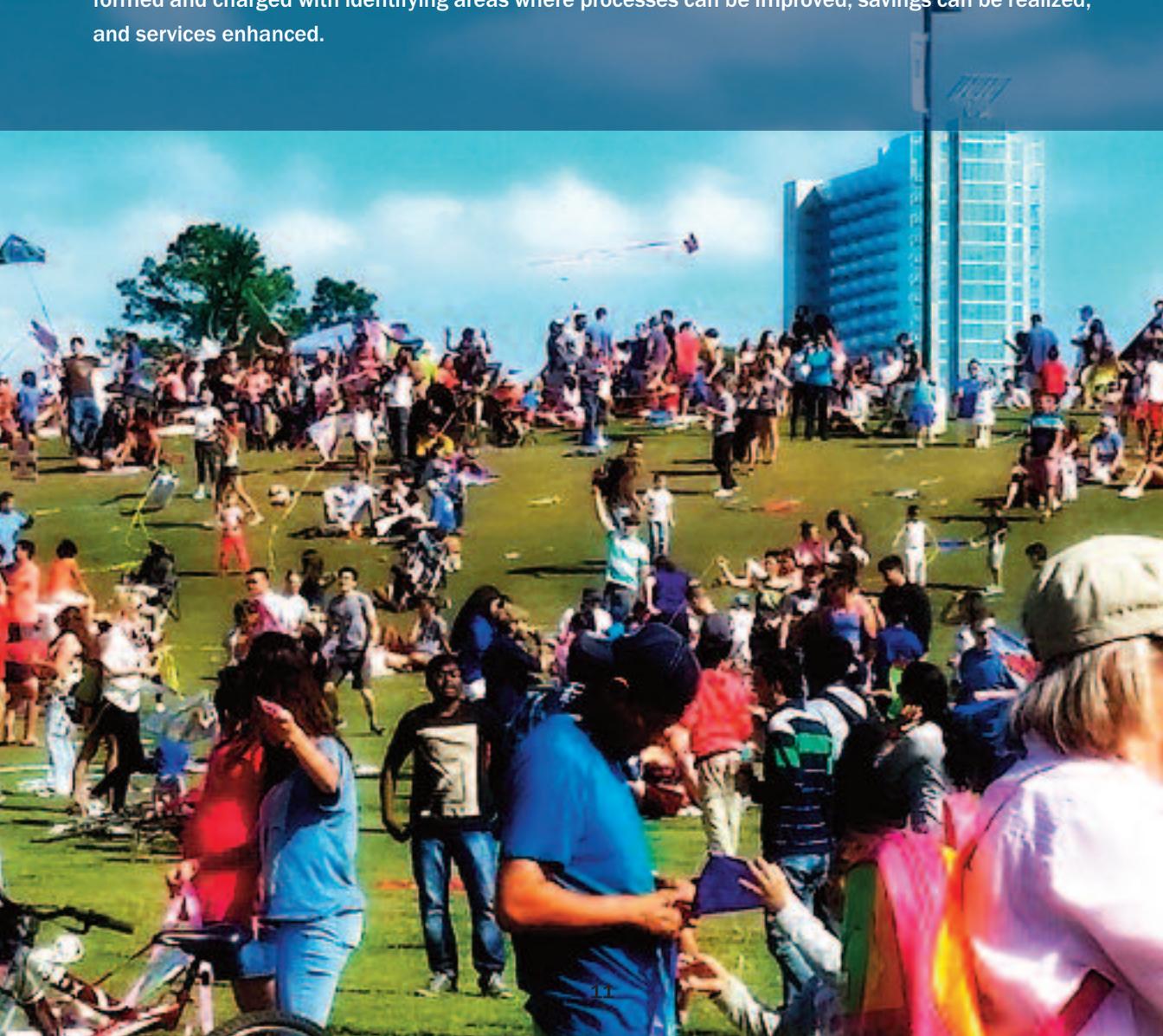
Health Services

Chair: Laurie Robinson

Committee Members:

Dr. Jo Carcedo
Dr. Dakota Carter
Jai Daggett
Kraig Killough
Dr. Jody Lee
Dr. Bakeyah Nelson
Dr. Ahmed Rabie
Cellina Shariff
Shaukat Zakaria

The Health Services Division of the Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) is responsible for meeting the health care needs of the 8,000-plus inmates who are housed daily in the HCSO jail. On any given day, the Health Services Division provides mental health treatment for over 2,000 inmates, making the HCSO's jail the largest mental health hospital in the State of Texas. To improve upon the health services provided and more efficiently provide care to the HCSO's inmates, the Health Services Committee was formed and charged with identifying areas where processes can be improved, savings can be realized, and services enhanced.



Findings:

To meet the healthcare demands of the HCSO's inmates, Harris County has provided the HCSO with funding for 453 full-time positions. Unfortunately, some of these positions are currently unfilled, leaving the required tasks from these positions to be filled by temporary employees from medical staffing agencies.

In fiscal year 2017, Harris County originally budgeted \$62 million to ensure it provided for the healthcare needs of the HCSO's inmates. However, costs totaled \$67,490,000.00, exceeding the budgeted amount by nearly \$5.5 million.

A major area of concern for the HCSO's Health Services Division is its continuous budget shortfalls. After reviewing many of their costs and speaking with agency heads, several areas were identified as unnecessary contributors to budget shortfalls. The most significant contributor to annual budget shortfalls is the high cost of labor. Of this, almost \$12 million was incurred by the HCSO as a result of utilizing high-cost temporary nurses through staffing agencies to fill the work from the vacant in-house nursing positions. An investigation into the cause for so many vacancies determined that a large number of applicants are rejected for having poor financial credit. As these nursing positions must be filled daily, the HCSO fills them at nearly three times the cost through local staffing agencies.

Another area contributing to the Health Services Division's high labor costs is a high ratio of pharmacists to technicians. The HCSO currently employs 10 full-time pharmacists and 11 pharmacy technicians. State law allows for each pharmacist to supervise between three and four technicians depending upon on their license. HCSO is operating on a nearly 1:1 technician-to-pharmacist ratio. Including fringe benefits, each pharmacist position costs the HCSO between \$135,514.59 and \$155,339.55 per year, while a pharmacy technician position costs between \$51,600.05 and \$68,430.96 per year. The HCSO saves between \$67,083.63 and \$103,739.50 per year for each pharmacist replaced with a technician. As pharmacy positions in the HCSO are protected by civil service, pharmacists cannot be replaced by technicians until they are terminated, resign, or retire, meaning correcting this

imbalance could take some time. Further, any correction once a pharmacy position opens will require a PCN reclassification to be approved by Commissioners Court.

Aside from labor costs, the largest expense in Health Services is the purchase of pharmaceuticals. In calendar year 2015, the HCSO spent \$11,431,610.00 or 18.6% of its total 2016 budget procuring prescription medications. The HCSO also has limited capacity for tracking medications.

The HCSO should take advantage of the many collaborative and partnership opportunities that exist with academic institutions, hospitals, and research institutions along the entire continuum of care, especially in the areas of mental health and where functional and grant opportunities may exist. These partnerships are particularly important in order to alleviate the financial and human resources required to provide adequate care to inmates, especially where they require specialized services. Additionally, there are partnerships that existed prior to the previous Sheriff's term that should be looked at for reinstatement.

Finally, the HCSO's Health Services Division is stymied by an absence of staff in key management positions. This lack of experience has resulted in an absence of organizational structure and appropriate management oversight for many of the medical processes and procedures in place at the HCSO. For example, Health Services has not had a permanent medical director for some time and currently has no defined and organized medical management team. The medical director staff lacks experience in managing healthcare from a business mindset, often placing prior operation processes over newer innovative processes that are more effective and efficient.



Recommendations:

SHORT-TERM GOALS:

Consider removing the credit check requirement from background investigations for new hires in the Health Services Division. **-COMPLETED-**



1. Assemble a professional medical management team consisting of a Clinical Medical Director, Assistant Director of Nursing, and Pharmaceutical Director, of which all report directly to a Health Services Division Administrator, who reports directly to the Sheriff. All of these positions should be filled by individuals who are knowledgeable in current medical industry standards and have a grasp of health care processes throughout their area of specialty.
2. Conduct a staff-to-inmate ratio survey to determine if the HCSO is within healthcare industry recommendations and credentialing standards.



3. Begin holding regular meetings with the Grants Management Unit to discuss Health Services needs and explore available grant opportunities.



4. Identify collaborative and strategic partnerships with academic and research institutions, as well as hospitals, in order to alleviate the financial and human resources required to provide care to inmates, especially where they require specialized services.

MID-TERM GOALS:

1. Identify all health services positions, creating job descriptions, and identifying the core tasks to be completed by each PCN assigned.



2. Create a clearly defined organizational staffing structure and workflow/process maps for all health care functions to improve processes and eliminate redundancy.

Status: Review all current vendor contracts to determine the scope of work and assess if vendors are delivering as required and whether the value added from the contract justifies expense.



3. Implement strategic partnerships with academic and research institutions, as well as hospitals.

LONG TERM GOALS:

1. Supplant pharmacist positions with pharmacy technician positions as they become available until the technician-to-pharmacist ratio is closer to the industry standard of 3:1.



2. Invest in a medical Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system that allows for complete integration and communication between the pharmacy, clinicians, medical administrators, case management personnel, etc.



3. Ensure a medical EMR system is in place that is capable of tracking missed medication information, pharmacy on-hand stock and allows for efficient searches of its database.

Status: Harris Health System is in the process of putting out bids to a third party which will perform a comprehensive assessment of County Jail Healthcare operations.

4. In order to decrease the reliance on utilization of temporary staffing contracts, there is now a greater emphasis on hiring medical personnel as HCSO employees, especially nursing.

Since the most personnel are required on first watch, a prudent approach would be to set a goal of eventually using only HCSO employees on first watch. Subsequently, the same for second watch and eventually third watch. These are long term goals.

Status: *HCSO is exploring a nurses' float pool such as is used by Harris Health System to fill nursing staff shortages at their hospitals. The costs would most likely be less than that of using contract personnel. The float pool would help alleviate the problem of numerous open positions in Nursing. The likelihood of retaining personnel would increase as the nursing personnel further their education, e.g. LVN to*

Pharmaceutical contracts are evaluated by the Purchasing Department. Generic medications are used whenever possible and appropriate. The Medical Department providers have to be abreast on what the standard of care for various conditions is in the community. The two types of medications that are most expensive in the Pharmacy budget are meds for HIV treatment and psychotropic meds. Unfortunately, there are few generics available in these two groups of medications.

Human Resources

Chair: Irma Diaz-Gonzalez

Committee Members: Joann Burbridge, Katy Caldwell, Mary Helen Cavazos, Andrea Chow-Leal, Curry Glassel, Howard Jefferson, Charles Montgomery, Danielle Ordonez, Mayor Kim Sanford & Lon Squyres



A sound strategy and system for managing Human Resources (HR) and developing human capital is essential for any organization to thrive. To support the men and women of the HCSO and build a professional, sustainable workforce capable of serving the needs of Harris County, the HR Committee was formed and charged with identifying areas where HR management can be streamlined, best practices can be developed and put into place, and systems built for long-term oversight and management.

Findings:

1. Currently, the HCSO is lacking Human Resources (HR) department director to supervise its various units, or to provide the Sheriff and his command staff with the reports necessary to ensure the HCSO is successful.

Status: *COMPLETED – HCSO hired a goal-driven, accountable professional with over 19 years of Human Resources experience. Areas of expertise encompassing Compensation / Classification, Position Management, HRIS/ERP Systems Implementation, Project Management, Performance Management, Workforce Planning, Talent Acquisition, and Employee Relations.*



2. The majority of the HR employees lack formal training and experience which limits the extent to which HR can effectively carry out the work of a similarly situated HR Department in a large organization. Once an HR Director is hired, the HCSO should consider a reorganization that will lead to greater collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness.

Status: *In progress – HR Director conducted assessment of current personnel's education/experience to determine areas of expertise and reorganized functions within existing personnel as best deemed fit. Based on this assessment, employees are being assigned to take specific courses offered through HRRM that would provide skills needed for positions in HR such as Effective Communication Skills, Effective Time Management, Firm Foundations – Basic Punctuation, Exceptional Customer Service, Increasing Communication Effectiveness, Projecting Professionalism, Ten Critical Communication Skills. Also, employees are being assigned to take MS Office Software classes online, which are offered for free through the County License with Microsoft and implemented a practice to have Formal Official Business Process Guides as well as Consistent Forms, Letters, etc*

3. The HCSO's HR department is currently broken down into several decentralized units: HR, Recruitment, Backgrounds & Investigations, Training, Quality Assurance, and Personnel / Administrative Services. Each unit is treated as a separate entity and there is little to no communication or exchange of information between units. Under its present format, each unit operates autonomously, making it nearly impossible to determine why employees are leaving, how morale can be improved, which areas should be the focus of recruiting, and what challenges are being encountered by backgrounds & investigations.

Status: *In progress – So far, the Recruitment function has been moved from Backgrounds and Investigations to Human Resources. Recruitment is now conducted by civilian recruiting professionals that possess 10+ years of experience recruiting for positions at all levels from Clerks to Physicians/Engineers.*

Pre-employment testing for Detention Officers which used to be conducted by 5-7 Deputies/Sergeants and taking 6-8 hours; is now being conducted by two (2) civilian HR employees and one (1) Deputy and takes 2-3 hours. Human Resources also implemented a process by which Preliminary Background and Credit Check (CCH) is conducted before the testing day rather than on the testing day. This has been a huge savings of resources relating to manpower on testing days, in addition of pulling personnel from backgrounds to assist with testing.

A challenge was discovered with the current applicant tracking system – CRM - which is not user-friendly, doesn't allow for uploading of documents, doesn't permit for reporting/querying for details of data/metrics. Required manual work greatly. Applicants completed a simple application and submission of documents could take 30+ days. HR implemented NEOGOV Applicant Tracking system which is utilized and paid for by the main County HRRM. This system provides HCSO exposure nationwide through governmentjobs.com. It is a user friendly system which allows for uploading of

documents immediately at time of application; it can be accessed from any mobile device as it is completely online; allows for quicker processing of applications through the stages as well as self-scheduling. The Hiring Process that used to take from 4-6 months in the past has been streamlined to 30 days for Detention Officers. We are able to take an applicant from the date of application to starting the Academy Training Program within three (3) weeks. Since the initiation of this system, HR has been able to place 40 Students for every Jail Class since April 9, 2018, instead of 15-20 with prior system.



4. Currently, the management for each division's staffing within the HCSO is managed by that particular division itself. Within the next two years, 1,200 employees will be eligible for retirement, 575 of these employees serve in critical areas in detentions and as patrol deputies. Managing for this potential high turn-over must begin now and requires a holistic approach rather than one focused solely on the needs of a particular unit as it stands today. Further compounding this problem, is the inability of the current HR division to identify a current attrition rate, identify intermittent HR and transitional duty issues, or identify and solve the root causes for the routine and expensive use of temporary labor through staffing agencies. There are currently several staff assigned to transitional duty. All of these requests were approved by the employee's direct supervisor without HR oversight or review, which necessitates oversight and leads to improperly addressing potential staffing shortfalls.

The HCSO's HR does not currently track, measure, or analyze the exit interviews provided to employees when they resign. HR also does not administer the Exit Interview, but has the employee's supervisor conduct it, which results in inaccurate information as employees may not want to confront a supervisor before resignation. Upon completion, an Exit Interview is placed in the departing employee's personnel file and never compiled centrally, preventing HR from determining any systemic cause(s) for turnover.

Status: progress – HR is reviewing Exit Interview tools as the current form utilized does not meet practical standards. HR has taken the lead on conducting Exit Interviews and tracking reasons for separations in order to create an efficient workforce. HR is also developing an

Exit process which will include a Form for returning property, cancelling systems accounts, participating in interview, etc.



5. Current hiring practices have resulted in the placement and promotion of employees with differing, and sometimes lacking qualification and experience levels, throughout the HCSO. Additionally, job descriptions are tailored toward a specific person, rather than the ideal competencies of a candidate for a position. This lowers employee morale and further reduces the operational efficiencies of the HCSO.

Status: COMPLETED – In response to the recommendations, The Recruitment Process has been completely revamped and is now set to promote employee morale and efficiency.. Through this standardized process, HR is now responsible to:

- Review Job Descriptions before preparing a Job Posting to ensure the JD/JP:
 - Outlines essential functions of the job
 - Establishes specific requirements of the job
- Pre-screen applications to ensure minimum requirements are met
- Coordinates pre-employment testing
 - New testing has been implemented to ensure applicants possess skill sets required by the positions (Admin Assistant Test, Paralegal Test, Clerical Test, Excel Test, etc.)
- Assist Hiring department with preparation of Interview questions that directly relate to the Duties/ Qualifications of the job

Note: Only those applicants meeting minimum requirements and passed pre-employment testing are referred to Hiring Department for consideration

If HR is not on the interview panel, an HR Representative proctors the Interviews to ensure an equal format is followed for all applicants.

The same process is followed for Internal and External Postings. Also, positions are now posted simultaneously internally/externally so we don't waste 10 days of exposure.

6. Further impeding efforts to identify the best candidate for a particular position is the fact that the HCSO's current recruitment team has limited experience in talent acquisition and primarily sources its candidates through career fairs and other outreach that require the advanced approval of Commissioners Court. If recruiters attend an event before receiving court approval, they must do so at their own expense and risk not being reimbursed for this cost.

Status: *Although Job Fairs are no longer the best source of acquiring talent, we still participate and should be noted that not all events have an associated cost. There are many Career Fairs that are free, and HR will continue to participate. However, it is significant to note that with the technology innovation of today and the millennial population we are recruiting, the highest sources of referral are online engines (indeed, simplyhired, careerbuilder, etc.), websites, job boards, etc. Thus, NEOGOV was implemented to maintain online exposure nationwide through governmentjobs.com.*

Also, our Talent Acquisition is now conducted by civilian Recruiting professionals that possess 10+ years of experience acquiring talent of all levels from Clerks, IT Personnel, Physicians, Engineers, etc. These individuals possess knowledge and skills to find the appropriate talent by sourcing through different specialized organizations, web engines, Colleges, etc.



7. The HCSO's HR also needs to create a new method for conducting employee evaluations. Under the current system, evaluation forms are ambiguous, disproportionately weigh areas of assessment, fail to adequately assess employee performance, and enable supervisors to over-inflate evaluations. Because the current evaluation scoring matrix weighs each criterion equally and has a large number of unimportant job-related criteria, the evaluations fail to adequately account for poor employee performance and disciplinary infractions, which allows unqualified employees to not only receive favorable evaluations, but to advance within the HCSO. This does not serve the interests of the HCSO.

Status: *In progress – Current process and tools are currently under review.*

8. Employee evaluations are not tied to step increases and there are no established incentives for strong performance (raise, bonus, etc.). Supervisors do not assess performance and provide over-inflated evaluations. This becomes problematic when employees have disciplinary issues, but appraisals show excellent performance.

Status: *progress – Current process under review including additional training for supervisors.*



9. There should also be a review of job titles across the HCSO to ensure that titles are reflective of an individual's capabilities and the job that they are actually carrying out. The tightening of job titles to accurately reflect these concerns will ensure that any systems that are created to identify human resources within the HCSO will identify an employee with the requisite capabilities.

Status: *In progress – There is an ongoing process to review titles. Some changes for Managers, Directors, and Analyst titles took place during the Mid-year Budget Review in September of 2017. Other changes took place during the Annual Budget Year in February of 2018. Since HCSO is a large department, this task will be completed in phases.*



10. Finally, the HCSO needs to invest in its HR hardware and software systems. Its current HR IT infrastructure is antiquated and fails to efficiently provide the information necessary to allow HR to be successful. With nearly 5,000 employees, tracking training, certifications, evaluations and employee information is difficult and time consuming. With so much information, assembling and analyzing the information necessary to conduct routine HR reports on trends and concerns is nearly impossible, which inhibits the HCSO from reacting to problems before they become much larger.

Status: *In progress – The County will be implementing PeopleSoft in January of 2018 HR did ensure that all PCs within the Unit has the same MS Office Software version as that was creating problems with shared documents.*

Recommendations:

SHORT-TERM GOALS:

1. Hire a qualified HR Director with extensive HR experience and education from outside of the HCSO.

Status: *We are excited to report that this recommendation has been completed*



2. Provide the HR Director with a position on the HCSO Command Staff.

Status: *We are excited to report that this recommendation has been completed*



3. Reorganize the HR Division so that all HR functions, Human Resources, Recruitment, Backgrounds & Investigations, Training, Quality Assurance, and Personnel/Administrative Services are under the HR Director/Division.

Status: *PARTIAL COMPLETION- At this time , Recruitment has been transferred to Human Resources.*



4. Prioritize hiring among funded staffing vacancies and track the progress from recruitment through the completion of training.

Status: *This process is currently under review.*



5. Oversee and approve HCSO staffing levels and provide a review for the procurement of all temporary agency staffing, to include a cost analysis of using contractors versus direct hires/employees.

Status: *This process is currently Under Review*



6. Identify all HCSO employees currently on FMLA, Worker's Compensation and Transitional Duty and the purpose of their being in this status.

Status: *This process is currently in progress*

7. Apply fair and consistent hiring and career development processes that result in the hire and promotion of qualified candidates.

Status: *PARTIAL COMPLETION- New Process for consistent Hiring/Recruitment has been implemented.*



8. Determine the hardware and software requirements for HR.

Status: *Partial completion. Software requirements have been completed.*

MID-TERM GOALS:

1. Conduct a professional HR assessment of all HR positions to determine ideal staffing, with an in-depth job description and analysis for each position.

Status: *Completed*



2. Dedicate funding to ensure current HR employees receive appropriate training and certifications for their areas of expertise.new hires to possess the education or certifications prior to selection in a position.

Status: *This recommendation will be reviewed.*



3. Conduct a thorough review of staffing within detentions to determine a more accurate number for the positions required to safely operate the HCSO's jails and IPC. This review should include detailed descriptions for each position, as they are later added, removed, or transferred, the responsibilities associated with the position can be properly reallocated.

Status: *This recommendation will be reviewed. Utilize Reserve Deputies for law enforcement staffing by formalizing assignments and schedules to reduce case overload and assist with data entry for warrants.*

4. Revise the Exit Interview policy and procedures so that HR personnel conduct exit interviews as part of the exit process (i.e. when collecting badges, access cards, equipment, etc.). Training should be provided to HR personnel conducting the interviews to ensure honest and forthcoming responses. This data should then be compiled and analyzed to establish the root cause for turnover and provided to the HR Director and Sheriff regularly.

Status: *This recommendation is still in progress*



5. Create a routine method for paying step increases and incentives in a timelier fashion.

Status: *–COMPLETED- This process is contingent upon Budget Management Directive based on budget availability*



6. Create a line item in the budget for career fair spending so a particular event can be paid for without Commissioners Court approval and the recruitment team can prioritize spending and focus on the career fairs providing the best return on investment.

Status: *This recommendation will be reviewed.*



7. Establish a long-term applicant pipeline through the use of internships at the HCSO.

Status: *–COMPLETED- Upon recommendation we have we have implemented NEOGOV, we are now creating a pipeline (pool) of candidates qualified to assume open positions such as Clerks, RNs, LVNs, Medical Assistants, etc.*



8. Create a new employee evaluation system and ensure that all supervisors are properly trained to administer an evaluation.

Status: *We are currently In the progress of implementing this recommendation.*

9. Conduct a review of job titles to ensure that they accurately represent an individual's capabilities and the job being done.

Status: *We are currently in In the Progress of fulfilling this recommendation.*



10. Create a plan for upgrading the Hard/Software used in HR.

Status: *We are currently in the progress of implementing this recommendation.*

LONG-TERM GOALS:

1. Purchase the necessary hardware/software to allow HR to better accomplish their function.

Status: *Partially completed. Software has been purchased to support HR's function.*



2. Create a career path/development plan for all employees in the Sheriff's Office, every employee should know the value of their position.

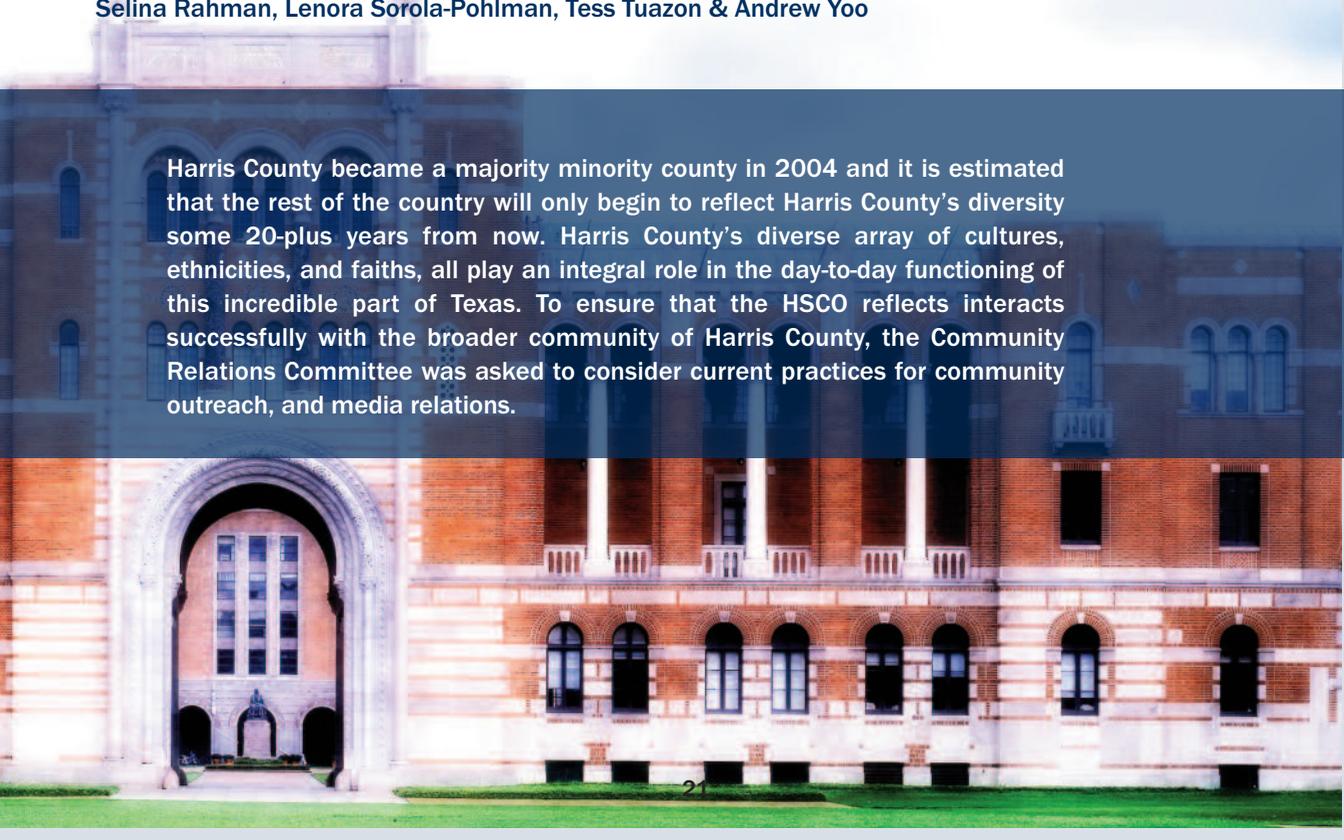
Status: *We are currently in the process of reviewing this recommendation. Will review*

Community Relations

Chairs: Murad Ajani, Luis Elizondo-Thomson & Councilman Gordon Quan

Committee Members: Nelvin Adriatico, Linda Anukwuem, Kaan Camuz, Doug Childers, Jason Cisneroz, Shekira Dennis, Nelson Espita, Kinglsey Ewetuya, Glen Gondo, Bryan Hlavinka, Sam Jaoude, Yemi Koyejo, Gigi Lee, Kenneth Li, Afshi Merchant, Selina Rahman, Lenora Sorola-Pohlman, Tess Tuazon & Andrew Yoo

Harris County became a majority minority county in 2004 and it is estimated that the rest of the country will only begin to reflect Harris County's diversity some 20-plus years from now. Harris County's diverse array of cultures, ethnicities, and faiths, all play an integral role in the day-to-day functioning of this incredible part of Texas. To ensure that the HSCO reflects interacts successfully with the broader community of Harris County, the Community Relations Committee was asked to consider current practices for community outreach, and media relations.



Findings:

The HCSO Community Services Division is committed to the development and perpetuation of community crime prevention and safety programs throughout Harris County. Community Services personnel conduct proactive crime prevention measures, victimization avoidance training, field citizen complaints, generate offense reports, host child passenger safety seat installation inspections, and conduct or assist with community events, including National Night Out. Community Services also works with the HCSO Law Enforcement Explorer Program, to mentor area High School students and prepare them for a possible career in law enforcement.

In spite of these activities, there appears to be a disconnect between the HCSO's Community Relations and Media Relations, which is the HCSO's public voice.

Evidence of this is that the public at large is not aware of how to reach the Sheriff. Citizen complaints include the belief that the HCSO does not provide an avenue for voicing their concerns, nor does it solicit concerns. Improvements in community relations present an opportunity for the HCSO to improve communicating its activities to the public. Whether it is informing the public about safety concerns, how to locate and communicate with inmates, or procedures for their release, the public relies on the HCSO for important information.

Additionally, it is difficult improve what you do not measure. It is recommended that the HCSO create a set of applicable metrics that properly measure the efficacy of the department in its ability to effectively engage the community. Ultimately, the HCSO can improve security through implementing best practices of community engagement.

To emphasize the value of community relations and to bring real depth to the Community Services Division, the Sheriff should actively seek experienced officers and charge them with creating a more robust community relations apparatus.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consolidate the Community Relations and Media Relations Department to more efficiently reach the public and benefit from the mutual mission of these areas.

Status: *With guidance from this recommendation, Directors of Community Relations and Public Affairs now share an office suite and conduct regularly scheduled meetings to coordinate Media Relations and community outreach efforts. The Social Media manager has conducted training for Community Relations staff. The Crime Prevention Unit and the Explorers now have active social media accounts to increase engagement on a wider community scale*



2. Move the HCSO's website from the Technology Bureau to Community Relations.

Status: *Technology Bureau continues to maintain responsibility of the technical administration of the HCSO website. Community Relations and Public Affairs bureaus continue to contribute editorial content (text, photos, videos, tools, etc.).*



3. Employ diverse officers (in terms of age, race, ethnicity, gender identity) in the Community Relations Department as it will improve upon minority hiring, resulting in a more diverse police force.



Status: *The intent is to rebuild community services with additional personnel that reflect the diverse communities that the HCSO serves. Reserve deputies and volunteers from other HCSO entities will be utilized to actively recruit members from the community. Community Relations is forming the Joint Community Policing Partnership that will actively communicate with various communities. The goal is to have regularly scheduled meetings to address issues in these communities, teach*

Recommendations:

crime prevention and to recruit for HCSO. Each group will have a liaison to communicate directly with leaders from the community. The intent is to have representatives for the Vietnamese, Korean, Islamic, Japanese, African, Sikh, Hispanic, Lebanese, and LGBTQ communities.

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create a Community Liaison Committee consisting of diverse community leaders throughout Harris County to meet with the Sheriff every 4-6 months to provide feedback regarding the community's concerns.

Status: Under this recommendation Community Relations has begun surveying law enforcement agencies to identify best practices for gathering key stakeholder input.



2. Hold HCSO job fairs in under-represented minority communities of Harris County to improve upon its diversity and image in minority communities.



Status: Community Relations currently works with Human Resources to actively recruit during community meetings and job fairs. This includes having promotional materials for distribution at events and at the storefronts.



3. Hold community meetings throughout Harris County and educate the citizens on the prevalent crimes in their area.

Status: Community meetings are an ongoing practice in all five patrol districts and will continue to be held on a monthly basis. Community meetings will eventually expand into the city to discuss crime prevention information and educate the public about the functions of the sheriff's office

4. Remove unnecessary barriers for employment with the HCSO and reach out to area schools, four-year institutions, community and other colleges, to fill available law enforcement positions.

Status: Please see prior response from Human Resources regarding efficient hiring practices. Community Relations will continue to work with local law enforcement academies, high school law enforcement programs and the HCSO Explorers. The students will be encouraged to seek employment with HCSO. Students involved in these types of programs should be given strong consideration when it comes to the hiring process.



5. Develop effective PSA's to educate the community that Ed Gonzalez is the Sheriff and how the public can reach him.

Status: Relating to this recommendation, multiple public service announcements featuring the sheriff have been produced both in English and in Spanish. They have been distributed to local media and featured on HCSO social media platforms.



6. Engage the community in the development of goals and metrics that can be used to track, measure, and improve the effectiveness of the HCSO in terms of community relations.

Status: Under consideration of this recommendation Community Relations will work with local academic and private entities to create and conduct community related surveys for HCSO. CALEA requires community survey every 2-3 years.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create a Citizens' Advisory Board similar to those in Dallas and Austin which can provide for an outside review of the HCSO's actions when requested.

Status: *This recommendation is pending review.*



2. Expand the Citizens' Academy to train volunteers to supplement paid civilian positions in HCSO storefronts. This will allow seniors to remain engaged and benefit the HCSO by removing menial tasks from officers and other employees.

Status: *The Citizen's Police Academy is a 13-week program that is held in the unincorporated areas of Harris County. Research has been conducted to incorporate several one-day police academies, a Youth CPA Academy and a 13-week academy in the city of Houston. Several residents have expressed interest in attending the academy, but the geographic distance and class time commitment have prevented them from attending. Instruction for the academy in the city would be designed to expose youth and other residents to the roles and responsibilities of the sheriff's office. Reaching out to the citizens in the city limits will also leverage more volunteers for HCSO CPA Alumni and also serve as another platform for recruiting.*



3. Create a measurable set of goals for the HCSO to measure the effectiveness of its personnel and policing actions.

Status: *Under consideration of this recommendation, Community Relations will explore pursuing a partnership with academic or research organizations to address this recommendation.*

Patrol

A nighttime photograph of a large, multi-story building, likely a government or institutional structure, illuminated with blue and purple lights. The building has many windows, some of which are lit from within. In the foreground, there is a large, shallow fountain or pool of water that reflects the lights from the building and the sky. The sky is dark, and there are some trees and other structures visible in the background.

The most effective way to control and prevent crime is through pro-active policing. Pro-active policing should be the essence of any patrol program. There are a little over 760 deputies assigned to the Patrol Bureau, including Traffic Enforcement Units and County Parks Units, and 834 vehicles. To ensure that HCSO's Patrol units remain proactive, efficiently utilize resources, and keep Harris County safe the Patrol Committee considered decentralization, staffing, equipment, policing approach and real-time crime analysis capabilities.

Chairs: Chief Victor Rodriguez & Randy Sim

Committee Members: Russell Carter, Michael Dirden, Charles Dunn, Craig Goralski, Steven Le, Alice Lee, Bubba Levy, Hasu Patel & Stephen Toups

Findings:

This committee met with over 20 HCSO staff of all ranks and participated in several ride-alongs with patrol deputies. The committee toured several patrol stations and HCSO operations within the TranStar facility, including the Real-Time Crime Center. All personnel encountered by the committee displayed a professional demeanor and possessed an eagerness to cooperate with the process of looking for ways to improve service to the public from the HCSO Patrol Bureau.

All HCSO patrol stations share facilities with other Harris County agencies, primarily with Justice of the Peace Courts, but many are also occupied by Constable Offices, Tax Collector Offices and other agencies. Consequently, the patrol stations not only share the building with these other agencies and the public, but they also share parking and bathrooms. The patrol stations are small when compared to other law enforcement agencies. Officer work areas are small and individual office space within these stations is extremely limited.

An internal HCSO patrol staffing study has recommended adding 173 patrol deputies plus 20 patrol supervisors and bears further discussion. This study was prepared in 2016 by the HCSO Strategic Research & Analysis Unit. There were several assumptions and/or calculations that were applied in this study, including a relief factor, desired amount of free time to conduct pro-active policing, and an adjusted value for contract deputies.

The study may be improved in several areas if used to request additional staffing for the HCSO. The relief factor of 1.6 is well within industry standards and would not face serious challenge. However, the study's 40% pro-active policing time could be challenged as the study does not illustrate how this pro-active policing would be spent or what benefit it would provide. While pro-active policing presents the best opportunity for HCSO to impact the crime rate, the study does not sufficiently make the case.

Committee members went on several ride-alongs, including at least one on each shift, in various patrol districts. We found workload across all shifts to be steady, with calls holding most of the time,

particularly on evening shift. Deputies were typically efficient at managing the call volume, so calls did not hold very long. Supervisors seemed very engaged with deputies, particularly the less-experienced deputies in need of more attention. The contract deputy program should also be evaluated for efficiencies.

Overall, except for a lack of pro-active policing operations and/or units, we found the patrol operations to be effectively managing their response to calls for service from the public and that deputies were professional and conscientious in their handling of calls.

Under current HCSO practice, deputies participate in a system known as car sharing. Two deputies from the same district on different shifts are assigned a patrol car which they share. One deputy, usually the senior deputy, takes the patrol car to his or her residence after the shift, and the other deputy then picks it up from the first deputy's residence and immediately goes to their assigned patrol area. There are approximately 500 deputies participating in car sharing.

This system is very popular with the patrol deputies. However, when a vehicle is taken out of service for accidents, maintenance, or repairs, the deputies are required to find their own replacement. Supervisors often help to locate available vehicles, but ultimately it is the deputy's responsibility to find a replacement. We are told that often a deputy could take an hour looking for an available vehicle. There is no agency wide system or computer software in place to assist with the vehicle replacement process.

Not all Patrol Bureau deputies participate in car sharing. Some deputies are provided their own individual cars. County Parks Unit deputies, Traffic

Enforcement Unit deputies, Field Training Deputies, and some Contract deputies are assigned their own individual cars. There are 68 vehicles assigned to County Parks and 85 vehicles assigned to Traffic Enforcement.

In total, there are 834 vehicles assigned to the Patrol Bureau. Of these vehicles, approximately 60 have over

200,000 miles on them. This is extremely high mileage for a typical patrol car which is driven under demanding conditions. On average, the Patrol Bureau loses five vehicles a month to accidents and two to mechanical failure. That's about 84 vehicles a year that are required to be replaced before the targeted high mileage vehicles can be replaced. Many of these high mileage vehicles are unsuitable for the demands of patrol and require maintenance and repairs to keep them mission ready. Without an agency wide system or computer software to actively manage the per vehicle maintenance and repair costs, determining an exact cost is impossible.

The HCSO tries to purchase around 100 new vehicles a year. However, for budgetary and other reasons, it usually only procures between 80 - 100 vehicles each year. While the plan is to target replacement for high mileage vehicles, the high number of losses due to accidents (about 60 per year) result in only a portion getting replaced, keeping the total high mileage vehicle number constant at around 50 to 60 vehicles exceeding 200,000 miles.

Effective law enforcement to reduce crime requires focused and targeted pro-active operations that are guided by current, accurate, and actionable crime analysis. Discussions with HCSO staff revealed a widespread desire across all ranks to conduct more pro-active policing. The internal staffing study also expressed a desire for more pro-active policing.

Two of the more successful focused operations we found were directed at robberies. One was a collaboration between HCSO Patrol District 1 and HPD North Command and the other was a collaboration between HCSO Patrol District 3 and HC Precinct 3 Constables. Both were highly successful and productive. However, both have since ended. It is these types of focused and targeted operations/units that have the most impact toward reducing crime.

Pro-active poling requires the use of real-time crime data to be effective. To this end, our committee

toured the HCSO Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) as part of our evaluation. The main operational purpose of the RTCC is to push out as much relevant information/criminal intelligence as possible to the officers in the field in real time so they can make more informed decisions. This effects officer safety and is an important function. The RTCC also supports ongoing follow-up of criminal investigations by providing specific criminal offender intelligence.

Overall, we found the RTCC's capabilities to be robust, but underutilized. However, the RTCC only operates Monday through Friday on two shifts, leaving weekends and night shift without their benefit. We were advised by staff that the RTCC could become a 24/7 operation with 6 additional analysts and 1 supervisor.

There is a recognizable deficiency in the amount of crime analysis that is occurring at the HCSO across all major categories (Crime Intelligence, Tactical, Strategic, and Administrative). The use of the RTCC to conduct in-depth crime analysis or emerging crime trends or spikes would improve the ability of the HCSO to effectuate a low crime rate.

Recommendations:

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Evaluate assigning detectives, narcotics units, and other agency units out to patrol stations where they would be under a patrol commander in a more decentralized structure. The feasibility constraints associated with this may merit the implementation of a pilot program in an area where a more decentralized structure could be evaluated.

Status: *While not under the direct command of Patrol - currently each substation/storefront have offices that are utilized by detectives, making the investigators easily accessible to the District supervisors. We are currently discussing the possibility of decentralizing investigative and tactical units to District 1 as a pilot program. Additionally, each District Commander has been tasked with developing specific targeted crime reduction efforts, which include requesting assistance from CIB and other local, state and federal agencies.*



2. Create versatile pro-active units for each patrol district that are responsive to the crime and disorder issues of their districts. These units should have the ability to conduct surveillance, stings, follow-up investigations and other operations to reduce emerging crime spikes or specific targeted criminal offenses. These pro-active units would not only reduce the crime but also the volume of calls for service. Deployment of these units could be on a pilot basis to demonstrate their value and impact to budgetary decision makers.

Status: *Currently, patrol unitizes the Crime Control Units for this purpose. While the number of personnel does not allow for specific teams in each District, each District can and does utilize the Crime Control Units for specific targeted crime reduction efforts. The District Commanders must prepare before and after actions plans of each specific crime reduction effort. These plans included real-time crime and statistical data and list what assistance from CIB and other local, state and federal agencies has been requested.*

3. Purchase fleet management software to monitor vehicle use, fuel usage, maintenance/repair cost per vehicle, and to assist with the car sharing process.

Status: *Please review the fleet management response. Fleet Management has provided a detailed response to this recommendation.*



4. Review driver training program, its vehicular pursuit policy, its disciplinary policy toward at fault accidents and any other policies that will help to bring down this number.

Status: *The pursuit policy is currently under review. The Department has a pursuit review supervisor, who is responsible for reviewing every pursuit. Additionally, the pursuit review supervisor provides an annual report to the Command Staff, which may contain suggestions/recommendations for modification to policy and/or training. Each month a pursuit/fleet board is held, and the board has the power to issue disciplinary action.*

Vehicles Crimes Unit (VCU) regularly puts out driving safety tips to the line personnel.

The patrol training sections conducts EVOC classes in driving and is currently working with the Academy in preparation of providing training in utilizing the Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT). Additional driver safety training has been requested.



5. Work to add additional staffing so that the RTCC is operational 24/7.

Status: *Please see Professional Development and Standards Bureau piece.*



6. Conduct in-depth crime analysis of emerging crime trends or spikes. There do not appear to be any examples of this anywhere in the HCSO.

Status: *Patrol is in the process of requiring each District Commander to not only conduct*

regular (monthly) targeted crime reduction efforts (initiatives), they must utilize and include the real-time crime and Statistical Data received from RTCC.

7. All ranks within the HCSO should be encouraged or required to participate in community meetings in their area of responsibility.

Status: *Patrol is implementing a new program that requires each District to hold monthly community meetings within their geographical boundaries to address community concerns, and to seek their assistance and support. These meetings are being designed to provide each District Commander the opportunity to exchange information and prove to be invaluable in building a stronger relationship between the Sheriff's Office and the communities. The Sheriff's Safety Forum (SSF) began February 2018.*



8. Training should be developed by the HCSO to improve the ability of all ranks to communicate effectively with the diverse communities they serve.

Status: *The safety forums address a component of this recommendation. The Community Services Division can also provide guidance.*



9. Target pro-active policing efforts at the precinct level so that their value and benefits can be demonstrated for precinct level budget decision makers.

Status: *See No. 2 above - Currently, patrol unitizes the Crime Control Units for this purpose. While the number of personnel does not allow for specific teams in each District, each District can and does utilize the Crime Control Units for specific targeted crime reduction efforts.*



10. Identify other agencies who have adjoining or overlapping jurisdiction to collaborate with in these efforts.

Status: *The District Commanders hold regular meetings with other Law Enforcement Agencies working in and around their specific geographical areas. These meetings provide sharing of important information about crimes, trends, and foster multi-agency cooperation.*

The Department of Public Safety and Constable Agencies have assisted us with Operation Northstar.

11. Adopt the philosophy that Crime Analysis will be a central focus of all police operations within the HCSO.

Status: *See #6 above, in addition RTCC information is utilized when allocating resources, evaluating staffing levels, etc. The agency is currently in the planning phase of utilizing the CompStat Model.*

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Establish a formal data sharing partnership with HPD, the Constables and other local law enforcement agencies. HPD Crime Analysis already has a regional server with cases loaded from LinX on a weekly basis. Server contains "normalizing" software whereby analysts can search offense reports from various agencies in a "federated" search looking for common trends and patterns. This will erase the jurisdictional boundaries that agencies follow, but criminals do not.
2. Review and analyze the department's need for a separate dedicated crime intelligence element or determine if that need is met with partnership in the Fusion Center.
3. Reorganize current structure of the RTCC and Crime Analysis Unit. RTCC/Crime Analysis should be a single unit located together sharing resources with an immediate focus on Tactical and Strategic Crime Analysis.

4. Document the productivity and impact of pilot projects to demonstrate their value toward reducing crime and disorder. This means not only documenting the number of reports, arrests, citations, etc., but more importantly documenting the impact on actual crime rates. This requires documenting the crime rates before, during and after these pro-active operations are deployed. Use these successes as part of the justification to secure additional staffing that can then be used to create permanent pro-active units or to conduct additional pro-active operations.

Status: *Patrol is in the process of implementing this recommendation. Each District Commander is being required to develop and submit directed enforcement initiative(s). The initiatives include a formal action plan outlining the goals and objectives of the mission and an After-Action report upon the completion of the initiative. The Compstat model is currently being discussed which will cover the issues.*



5. The District Commanders will work closely with other Bureaus, coordinating with the numerous specialized units within the Sheriff's Office. These specialized units may include, Bait and Decoy Cars, Metal Theft Unit, Graffiti Removal Program, Game Room Task Force, etc., and can be included as part of any specific Action Plan.

The specific crimes targeted will be selected in a large part based on the statistical data provided by RTCC. The District Commanders are required to include statistical data in both their Action and After Action report, which must include a snapshot of the statistical data before and after the initiative to assist in determining the success of a particular proactive measure and identify areas that need improvement.

The HCSO should re-evaluate units that are currently assigned individual vehicles to determine if there is a business necessity for such assignment. Designating some or all of these units to the car share program will enable the creation of a replacement pool of vehicles for each district. The high mileage vehicles can then be assigned to the replacement pools, thus, limiting their use to only when necessary.

Status: *This is evaluated on a continued basis, not only for patrol, but for the entire department. The HCSO does not have large secure parking areas at the substations.*

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

6. Dedicate future funding for Crime Analysts so that while they're still under the same command structure, the RTCC and Crime Analysis can function as independent, collaborative units. Expand and incorporate the use of Administrative Crime Analysis to all aspects of the department.

Status: *We agree with the recommendation that a stand-alone Compstat Unit and Intel Unit should be considered.*

INTERAGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Sheriff Gonzalez requested the Patrol Committee (PC) review and report on several critical areas impacting the HCSO's Patrol Bureau. Among these is the need for additional inter-agency cooperation and coordination among law enforcement officers, which is essential to maintaining public safety in Harris County.

EXECUTIVE LEVEL

1. The first recommendation of this committee is that the Sheriff charge his command staff to conduct a full review of all relevant past and current ILAs and MOUs.

Status: *In consideration of this recommendation a review will be conducted to check on whether any ILA's/MOU's exist.*



The command staff should cull through all these agreements and take the best of what works and has utility, and jettison the rest.

Working with the concerned outside agencies and their legal counsel, the command staff should then update the agreements they recommend the HCSO maintain moving forward.

Once a review is conducted by legal counsel, the command staff should then present all necessary paperwork to the Sheriff and/or Commissioners Court for approval.

Once approved by the Sheriff and/or Commissioner's Court, the outside agencies will need to obtain similar approvals with their own executives and governing bodies.

As these aforementioned agreements are approved and executed by the appropriate parties, the requirements of the agreements should be communicated to affected personnel within the HCSO for execution and follow through.

Finally, the command staff should regularly monitor the execution of the agreements and present a quarterly report to the Sheriff relaying the ongoing costs, benefits, and results obtained from the agreed upon collaborations among the various participating law enforcement agencies.

GROUND LEVEL:

Survey the first line supervisors and ground troops on issues related to interagency cooperation that occurs on a daily basis. This assessment should also include the various community meetings attended by his deputies in conjunction with other governmental entities and law enforcement departments from other jurisdictions.

Status: *We are happy to report that this is the current practice in place.*



The command staff should also assess all task forces and joint operations the HCSO has recently participated in. This assessment should include evidence of results and impact from each task force or joint operation.

Status: *The Patrol Bureau does not have any task forces but we constantly assess Operation Northstar.*

Along these lines, the command staff should also review recent large-scale or high-impact call outs conducted with involvement from other agencies. The review should include whether appropriate NIMS techniques were incorporated in the action and the effectiveness of the response and interagency communication and deployment during the event.

Status: *On Thanksgiving night 2017, we responded to Waller County to assist in the capture of a suspect who murdered a DPS Trooper. Multiple agencies responded to the scene. Although a debrief was not conducted with each responding agency, a debrief was conducted by us with DPS and C5 Constables.*

Moving forward, after-action reports should be required for all large scale/high impact interagency call outs. Such after action reports should be developed, in part, by conducting interagency meetings with all commanders involved from each agency, to include input from responding first line troops as well as the various dispatchers who worked the event.

Status: *We agree with this recommendation, and will work towards implementation.*

REGIONAL COMPSTAT:

Monitor and forward regional crime information using the NIBRS system if possible.

Status: *Please refer to the RTCC.*

Host quarterly "Regional Compstat" type meetings with high level commanders from multiple law enforcement agencies in the Harris County Area.

Status: *We agree with this recommendation and intend to implement.*

Investigations

Chairs: Richard Holland & Brad Rudolph

Committee Members: Dr. Richard Anthony Baker,
Judge Theresa Chang,
Teresa Hoang
Nomi Husain &
Michael Moore



The Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) General Investigations Division is divided into four sections: Homicide, Burglary & Theft, Robbery, and Special Victims. These sections consist of specialized units which focus on specific types of crime.

- **The Homicide Section** has the Homicide Unit, Assault Unit, Missing Persons Unit, Cold Case Unit and Video Forensics Unit.
- **The Burglary & Theft Section** is comprised of the Safe Home Unit, Burglary & Theft Unit, Financial Crimes Unit, Metal Theft Unit and Pawn Shop Detail.
- **The Robbery Section** consists of the Robbery Unit.
- **The Special Victims Section** is made up of the Child Abuse Unit, Domestic Violence Unit, Adult Sex Crimes Unit and Sex Offender Registration Unit.

The Investigations Committee was tasked with studying all areas in the Investigations Division and to provide recommendations for improvement.

Findings:

Recent staffing studies, managerial feedback, and a review of current personnel resources devoted to investigations in the HCSO, indicate serious staffing issues virtually across the board. Staffing was by far the number one issue identified by managers for improving investigations, clearance rates, and ultimately public safety. A number of recent staffing studies were identified and reviewed by the Committee, including the following:

- General Investigations Division Staffing Study- November 2016
- Criminal Investigations Bureau Manpower Review- 2000-2015
- Special Investigations Division Executive Summary/Needs Assessment- September 2016
- Homicide/Cold Case Unit Criminal Investigations Bureau Study- November 2014

Collectively, these studies provide a comprehensive view of staffing throughout the Criminal Investigations Bureau and provided ample support for increased staffing in almost every unit. The department has been unable to keep up with a growing population and crime rate, some of the investigative divisions report having fewer current personnel than they did in years past. Certain units have especially critical staffing shortages given their

caseload and their potential impact on violent crime in Harris County.

All areas require immediate attention to address staff shortages. It is recommended that Commissioners Court, the HCSO, and other relevant agencies take steps to increase staffing levels in Robbery, Crimes Against Children, Warrants Division, Domestic Violence, and Human Trafficking as these are the most critically under staffed.

Investigative units often lose personnel or positions due to promotions or transfers, without replacement or with long delays before replacement. Vacancies occurring in investigative units are often addressed after the fact. Staffing issues also have the potential to effect clearance rates for various offenses.

During 2016, HCSO Robbery investigators participated in an ad hoc task force effort with HPD North Division to address serial robberies committed by crews operating across jurisdictional boundaries in north Houston and Harris County (Approximately 60% of HCSO Robbery cases come from District 1). By most accounts this interagency effort was an effective approach and a force multiplier for the HCSO in addressing serial robberies.

Case management in the HCSO primarily occurs within the Tiburon RMS system. A case management system serves as a tool that helps managers track the assignment, status, and progress of a particular case or a group of cases within their area of responsibility. HCSO investigative divisions report their workload statistics through CompStat reports which are more focused on individual investigators' caseloads, clearance rates etc. (i.e. number of cases assigned, closed, charges filed, etc.).

Findings related to case management include the Compstat-Work management tool used by investigative units to document unit/investigator caseload or work activity. However, HCSO will be transitioning to the new Sungard Records Management System, which may present an opportunity to enhance case management tools available to investigations managers. Some HCSO investigative units have successfully employed a screening matrix/checklist to prioritize the assignment of cases in high volume units (e.g. Crimes Against Children and Domestic Violence).

Finally, CODIS (Combined DNA Index System), NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network), and AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) are valuable investigative resources in terms of identifying suspects and linking cases. However, to be effective, procedures must be in place to ensure that case investigators receive timely notification when identifications result from these systems.

Analytical support for HCSO investigators generally comes from two areas within the department: The Real Time Crime Center and the Research & Development Unit. The Real Time Crime Center and the Research & Development Unit both employ analysts and perform some overlapping functions; however, they are organizationally housed in different bureaus (Professional Development & Standards and Communications and Technology respectively).

Crime Analysis and Investigative Analytical Support are both important forms of analytical support; however, they serve different functions. Crime Analysis should provide patrol and investigations with current information as to criminal activity in a given area, crime trends, similar M.O., related or serial cases, etc. to help direct patrol and investigative operations. Investigative Analytical Support is more reactive in nature, providing a resource for investigators in need of specific records research, case research, database research on suspects and

witnesses, phone records, etc. that are part of most major investigations.

There appears to be uncertainty as to exactly what unit is responsible for Crime Analysis within the HCSO. HCSO has a total of 46 Analyst positions (PCN) in 6 different bureaus or units in the department. The Committee did not delve into the role of these analysts other than in the Real Time Crimes Center and the Research & Development Unit (See list of Analyst positions in Appendices).

The Homicide Unit is the only investigative unit currently authorized for paid overtime. Other investigative units must utilize accumulated compensatory overtime to compensate investigators for time worked beyond normal shift. Compensatory overtime has maximum limits of 240 hours imposed by County policy, which can lead to a situation where investigators cannot work overtime or must burn time off because they are at the maximum limit. This can create staffing issues especially in units that routinely require after-hours work.

Investigative divisions do not have a training budget that managers can use to make informed decisions with regard to outside training for investigators

GROWTH OR ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee identified the following areas for potential expansion of HCSO investigative capabilities in the future.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNIT

Houston, Harris County, Texas has become known as a hub for human trafficking. Other major law enforcement agencies in the area have identified human trafficking as a critical issue and have dedicated substantial resources to target this criminal behavior (e.g. Houston Police Department, Harris County District Attorney's Office, and F.B.I.) As the third largest Sheriff's Office in the nation, the HCSO should give consideration to expanding its current commitment to this issue and possibly forming a fully functional Human Trafficking Unit within the department. Opportunities for grant funding of such an initiative should be explored.

THREAT MANAGEMENT UNIT

With regard to the investigation of "threat" related investigations, the Committee learned that the HCSO does not have an existing policy that mandates what investigative entity is responsible for addressing threats against elected officials, law enforcement personnel, or others. While most of these incidents likely do not involve long-term threatening behaviors, it is recommended that clear guidance be provided to address this matter going forward.

As it relates to Threat Management, the current organizational structure of the HCSO does not include personnel who are formally trained in Threat Assessment/Management methodologies as they relate to situations involving Targeted Violence (Domestic Violence, Stalking, Workplace Violence, School Violence, Hate Crimes, etc.).

In brief, Threat Management investigations differ from traditional, reactive law enforcement investigations that are aimed at apprehending individuals *after* the commission of their crimes. In most circumstances, law enforcement personnel respond to crimes that are in-progress or have previously occurred, conduct an investigation that is focused on identifying and apprehending a suspect, and gather evidence to assist prosecutors in a criminal trial. However, when law enforcement is presented with information about a *possible future* violent crime, their responsibilities, authority, and investigative tools and approaches are in need of defined practices.

THREAT MANAGEMENT is a set of proactive investigative and operational techniques that can be used by law enforcement professionals to identify, assess, and manage the risks of targeted violence and its potential suspects. While arrest and incarceration of a suspect remains an option, the safety of the victim is paramount and the overriding consideration when making all case management decisions.

From an organizational perspective, the dilemma faced by police agencies seeking to implement a Threat Management type unit in today's era of policing models is: *How do you quantify effectiveness when the goal is prevention and interruption before the violent act occurs?* The answer is simple and lies within the following notation:

Unless a specific crime has been committed, police agencies have historically

remained uninvolved in such cases, leaving the victim to deal with his or her problem personally. However, by the time such cases escalate, some victims have experienced tragic consequences before police intervention could be initiated.

This quote clearly underscores the need for a specialized law enforcement unit that is able to provide non-traditional law enforcement services to interrupt persons embarking on a path toward violence.

Recommendations:

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement standardized case clearance guidelines for investigative units which are consistent with UCR/NIBRS guidelines.
2. Establish department policy requiring ARS report or supplement upon arrest of suspect for Class B offense or above in an HCSO case.
3. Ensure that all HCSO investigative and clerical personnel are aware of the UCR case clearance guidelines and are including appropriate information in their incident reports.
4. Evaluate and update most recent staffing studies for investigative units to identify critical staffing levels and establish priorities insofar as addressing critical shortages.
5. Develop and implement a strategic staffing plan to address critical staffing shortages in the Criminal Investigations Bureau.
6. A specific unit should be assigned clear responsibility for the Crime Analysis function and equipped with the necessary analytical resources to provide timely and useful crime data to Patrol and Investigations.

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Integrate strategic investigative staffing plans with the HCSO budget and establish funding benchmarks for consideration by Commissioners Court annually and at midyear review.
2. Develop and implement a case management tool that can be used across the Criminal Investigations Bureau 3. to track and manage the assignment, status and progress of ongoing or pending investigations. This can possibly be accomplished within the new Sungard RMS application.
3. Personnel changes such as promotions or transfers to fill existing or new vacancies should be managed to ensure that critical staffing levels are maintained throughout the department, including the Criminal Investigations Bureau. A Personnel Allocations Committee or similar process can provide the necessary perspective and oversight and also function as gatekeeper.
4. Adopt a case screening model that can be adapted and utilized across the Criminal Investigations Bureau by high volume units. (e.g. screening matrix utilized in Special Victims Unit- Crimes Against Children, Domestic Violence)

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Seek opportunities to collaborate with other law enforcement agencies in ad hoc task forces or working groups, which can serve as force multipliers in efforts to address emerging crime trends.
2. To the extent possible, recent cases involving warrant execution should be updated in the ARS to reflect arrest and case disposition so that these cases can be cleared by UCR.
3. Provide adequate training for patrol deputies, investigators, and support staff pending transition to a new RMS system (Sungard) and NIBRS.
4. Ensure that resources and processes are in place in each investigative division to achieve maximum potential of CODIS, NIBIN, and AFIS hits related to HCSO investigations (i.e. timely notification to case investigators, linkage to related cases, etc.)
5. Consideration should be given to combining analytical support functions under the same bureau or division.
6. Units that routinely conduct complex major case investigations, such as the Homicide Unit, would benefit from having an Analyst(s) embedded within their unit to provide direct investigative analytical support to investigators.
7. Investigative units that routinely require investigators to work beyond their shift would benefit from having the flexibility to utilize paid overtime under appropriate circumstances to effectively manage personnel and investigations (e.g. Crime Scene Unit).

Status: *The primary concern identified by the Transition Team is staffing shortages within the Criminal Investigations Bureau. The report states, "certain units have especially critical staffing shortages given their caseload and their potential impact on violent crimes in Harris County." As of February, there were a total of 14 vacancies in CIB: nine deputies, one sergeant, three clerks, and one victim advocate.*

Efforts to fill the clerk positions expeditiously are currently underway. A reorganization of CIB is also in process. This is expected to add 10 new deputy positions for the General Investigations Division. This draft plan will allow proper staffing amongst crimes against persons units in order to properly conduct thorough criminal investigations and eliminate potential backlogs.

The draft plan also outlines a small Tac Team to proactively attack jugging, ATM robberies, and ATM burglary criminal enterprises. There is a need to realign various sections and squads to enhance supervisory span of control, improve accountability, more accurate case management, and alleviate on-call responsibilities.

The Transition Team report mentions the challenge of not having an overtime budget for other investigative units except for homicide. This is the challenge that HCSO has due to county overtime policy constraints. We are exploring moving the overtime budget in CIB to a "Z Time" bank and be managed by the respective commanders. Investigators who are on-call and who get called-out during off duty hours should be partially compensated, i.e. the first two hours of the call out will be compensated by paid overtime. The commanders are expected to be accountable for their allotted budget and compensation will revert back to comp time once the budget is used. This way, all investigators feel they are fairly treated and valued for the on-call responsibility.

One item the report calls for the HCSO to review the 46 Analyst positions in six different bureaus and entertain combining the Real Time Crime Center and the Research and Development Unit into one unit, under one bureau. We are proud to note that this process has been completed.

One short term recommendation in this report is to standardize case clearance guidelines for investigative units. Clear case assignment and case clearance guidelines utilizing UCR are in development.



WESTHEIMER

Technology

Chairs: Juuhi Ahuja, Raul Dominguez, Amir Mireskandari & Jeff Reichman

Committee Members: Jesus Davila, Phil Jackson, Neeraj Tandon & Umesh Verma

A 21st century policing organization, such as the HCSO, relies on the use of technology in almost every facet of the Office. Whether it is the use of technology for internal systems or the use of technology in how the HCSO interfaces with the public, the Technology Committee was tasked with evaluating this wide breadth of concerns. The Committee considered the overarching big picture technological needs that will eventually move the HCSO in the direction of efficient and innovative agency, and simultaneously identified specific recommendations that can yield short term improvements.

Findings:

The bulk of the Harris County Sheriff's Office's (HCSO) core IT functions are managed and controlled by Harris County's entral Technology Services (CTS). The primary focus of the HCSO's IT Department is system support and the procurement of major new technologies such as body-worn cameras and jail cameras. This section is comprised

of 18 employees and is responsible for managing 124 servers spread out over 69 sites. Overall, the IT department has operated without a continuous strategy, governance process, strategic vision, or management performance metrics. This is reflective of recent and multiple changes in the leadership and strategic vision for the IT department.

Recommendations:

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An IT strategy and assessment of HCSO including a multi-year departmental strategy, capital planning, and an IT governance process should be developed in conjunction with CTS.

Status: *The HCSO IT currently has a governance process which is often bypassed with phone and or email request. The governing process is as follow;*

Project origination form: *completed and submitted by the requester requiring approval.*
The project Scope form: *To gain the detailed needs and requirements from the user.*
User acceptance Form: *Completed after the project is developed for testing*

The IT Division will publish the above steps to the department intranet for future submission.

2. Develop an inventory of existing systems, costs, limitations, and lifespans.

Status: *We are happy to note that this is presently in progress. A new database has been implemented to better track assets and life cycle.*
Develop a data strategy for data management, performance improvement, and public reporting.

3. Develop a data strategy for data management, performance improvement, and public reporting.

Status: *JIMS and Tiburon are managed by CTS. Information that is available to the public is currently accessible via the HCSO Public Website. In the near future Crime Reports will be updated and relaunched to the Public Website.*



4. Relaunch a data section on the HCSO website and include crime map improvements, such as recent data and information from other agencies.

Status: *This recommendation will be assessed in the near future.*

5. Evaluate bottlenecks in the public information request process, such as reviewing bodycam footage and develop ways for addressing them.

Status: *This function has been assigned to the High Tech Crime Unit to address.*



6. Evaluate technical and financial hurdles for digital evidence (e.g. cold storage tradeoffs in speed and cost, digital silos for certain types of evidence, etc.).

Status: *This process is guided by CTS's long-term storage solution. We store digital media based on retention policy until such time it becomes evidence. At that time, the evidence is transferred for long term archiving on CTS storage array. Once provided; the chain of custody is transferred to the High Tech Crime Unit (HTCU).*



7. Develop a process for evaluating system readiness for key policy changes, such as information processing for trace marijuana cases.

Status: *This process will be implemented by a*

8. Develop a process outline detailing the various relationships and workflows between HCSO IT and CTS (e.g. strategic procurement process outlines, help desk workflows, Google partnership, etc.).

Status: *We are proud to note that we are currently in the process of reviewing policies and procedures in the Information Technology Division. Monthly meetings have been established to help better establish the relationship.*



9. Establish a “business advisory committee” for soliciting performance and policy feedback from the Houston business community. This committee can be entirely volunteer run.

Status: *Most applications developed by HCSO IT are designed and developed in accordance with the request from the varying internal entities. Law Enforcement applications are difficult to compare to general standards within the Houston Business Community due to scope and customization.*



7. Develop a process for evaluating system readiness for key policy changes, such as information processing for trace marijuana cases.

Status: *This process will be implemented by a*

10. Establish a “Technology Advisory Committee” for soliciting feedback from the Houston technology community regarding the latest technologies and their potential benefit to the HCSO. This committee can be entirely volunteer run.

Status: *Our technology infrastructure is dependent upon Harris County CTS. CTS has control over the network, the security and the framework. For example, we can only use Microsoft.NET for the public websites versus Java and other technologies available*

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure HCSO IT is afforded the opportunity for input when CTS is evaluating existing IT policy review processes.

Status: *All enterprise applications and policy currently go through the HCLE Technology Committee which the HCSO is a voting member of.*

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As devices and internet access become more ubiquitous throughout the jail, develop a device policy governing all technology devices.

Status: *CTS and the HCSO have been working together to establish policy and procedures to meet federal guidelines and industry best practices governing technology.*



2. Develop an innovation process for evaluating and piloting new technologies and solutions provided by small businesses.

Status: *HCSO continues to utilize county approved vendors that have been vetted through the county's RFP process.*



3. Explore apps that serve critical business functions, such as mobile apps for paying outstanding fines / removing warrants / requesting police reports.

Status: *This is a great suggestion and has been considered however, the current need is for experienced Mobile App. developers. Our current developers are skilled and trained for developing Windows and Web applications but not Mobile.*

ARB/Grants

A night cityscape with fireworks exploding in the sky. The fireworks are in various colors, including yellow, orange, and purple. The city buildings are lit up, and the sky is dark.

Chair: Melanie Flowers

Committee Members: Nomi Husain, Janet Gonzales & Ivan Sanchez

Although they are functionally quite different, the administrative review process and the management of grants both play key roles in the success of the quality of services that are offered by the HCSO. The administrative review process ensures that the more than 5000+ employees are held accountable in their service to the residents of Harris County, while the Grants Management Section also ensures that the HCSO has adequate outside financial resources to support a variety of projects throughout the agency. The Administrative Review and Grants team was tasked with reviewing existing processes in both areas and making recommendations for improvement.

Findings:

The Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) currently utilizes its Internal Affairs (IA) department to investigate its employees who are alleged to have conducted any form of misconduct. While all IA investigations are conducted with fairness in mind, many decisions have the ability to appear subjective and based on the discretion of the Major in charge of IA. There exists a lack of standard policies and practices to ensure transparency and consistency throughout the IA process, which publicly challenges the possibility for an impartial finding.

Once a negative employment finding has been reached, cases are referred to the Administrative Disciplinary Committee (ADC). This is a four-member panel of the Sheriff's Command Staff who render their recommendation to the Sheriff after hearing all of the evidence from the IA investigator. IA investigators are charged with providing a "strictly factual" presentation of the facts and evidence to the ADC. However, the accused is never allowed to present their side, which results in a perception of bias and unfairness.

Further compounding this perception and the appearance of undue influence, is that the IA Major attends each hearing. To overcome the perception of bias, accused employees should be allowed to make a brief statement in their defense after the IA investigator completes the presentation of facts, the HCSO should create formal training, policies and procedures to direct ADC members in how hearings should be conducted and be provided with a matrix for disciplinary actions for various infractions, which ensures consistent treatment for all employees throughout the process.

Status: *The Internal Affairs Major does not decide nor vote on the guilt or innocence of the employee. The IAD Major is responsible for ensuring the IAD investigators conduct a thorough and complete investigation to include only the facts of the case without bias or prejudice.*

The Transition Team's findings state once a negative employment finding has been reached, cases are referred to the ADC. However, this is not accurate. The facts of the case are presented to the ADC and ADC determines the finding.

According to the Transition Team's findings, the accused are unable to present their side, which results in a perception of bias and unfairness. This is not accurate. In every IAD investigation, accused employees are presented with the allegations and afforded an opportunity to respond. The employee's response is documented in a sworn affidavit and included in the investigation. The employee's response is then presented to the ADC.

The purpose of the IA Major in the ADC hearing is to, 1) ensure the IAD investigator is presenting just the facts without his/her opinion, 2) ensure the investigations are addressing issues ADC needs to render a decision, and 3) answer any procedural questions regarding the process.

The HCSO's Grants Management Section manages 51 separate grants and grant funded projects in excess of \$18 million annually. It is staffed by two civilian employees who report to the Finance & Business Office. Direction for grant applications come from the Command Staff and are often self-identified. Of the current grants the HCSO receives, three are from the Department of Justice and amount to \$3 million dollars that can be spent at the discretion of the Sheriff. Although these grants are not guaranteed from year to year, they should be considered to assist with accomplishing some major funding priorities of the HCSO. With the HCSO Inmate Processing Center projected to come on line shortly, there are many opportunities for new grants and grant collaborations with other area law enforcement agencies.

Further, the large medical offerings of the HCSO's jail should continue seeking unexplored grant opportunities. With this in mind, the HCSO should consider increasing the size of its Grant Management Section, as two is an insufficient number of personnel to meet all of the needs of the HCSO, particularly as most grant positions pay for themselves many times over.

Recommendations:

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create policies and procedures for conducting IA investigations.

Status: *The policy for this recommendation is currently in practice. See policies 231 and 301*

2. Create policies and procedures in consultation with HR and Legal regarding the selection, training, and duties of the Administrative Disciplinary Committee.

Status: *The policy for this recommendation is currently in practice. See policies 231 and 301*

3. Expand the Grants Management Section to add additional grant funds to assist with the overall funding of HCSO.
4. Pursue additional grants that address non-law enforcement needs like the Joint Processing Center, officer training and inmate re-entry.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consult with HR and Legal to determine what, if any, rights the accused officer should have in the IA and ADC process.
2. Consider the confidentiality, or lack thereof of the ADC process, particularly if the accused is not afforded the opportunity to make a statement.

Status: *The employee's rights are addressed in the Employee Bill of Rights, policies 231 and 301, IAD SOP, and the Sheriff's Civil Service Rules. Accused employees are required to provide a statement regarding the allegations against them. The Harris County Attorney's Office currently provides guidance during the process.*

3. Reach out to established community-based organizations, faith-based and City/County agencies to establish collaborations and co-grantee opportunities.
4. Assess collaborations and grant opportunities to supplement funding needs for the Joint Processing Center and Medical.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Explore alternative methods for handling officer complaints such as a permanent IA committee or a 3rd party Arbitrator, who is impartial and without personal ties to the accused.
2. Investigate the best practices of other Counties to see how IA and ADC cases are handled.

Status: *A permanent IA committee and a disciplinary matrix could be beneficial to ensure disciplinary action is fair and consistent. The matrix has been created and is currently pending administrative review.*

3. Include grants management staff in long term goals and budget planning.

Policy



Chairs: Dr. Jim Granato and Rabbi Samuel Karff

Committee Members: Wafa Abdin, Diana Benitez, Feldon Bonner, Elsa Caballero, Carlos Duarte, Shah Haleem, Tiffany Hogue, Jay Jenkins, Mary Moreno, Steven Paletz, Shumana Salauddin, Lenora Serola-Pohlman, Tammy Tran, Frances Valdez, Tammi Wallace, Lou Weaver, George Willy, and Kenneth Yellowe.

The Policy Team was tasked with reviewing existing policy challenges faces by the HCSO and asked to make recommendations for improvement. To provide the most in-depth and appropriate guidance possible, the Policy Team split its focus across several important areas, each with its own set of review, findings, and recommendations. Areas considered by the Policy Team include:

- Body Cameras
- Drug Diversion
- Bail Reform
- Human Trafficking
- Community Policing
- Reentry Programming
- Raising the Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction
- Homeless Outreach

Each of these issues is of vital importance to earning and maintaining and trust and support of the greater Harris County Community. They also represent a broad cross section of areas where smart policy can yield positive outcomes that have a measurable impact on life in Harris County.

Findings & Recommendations:

On the issue of Body Cameras for use by Deputies, we have determined broad conclusions. First, that it is too early to measure the effect and effectiveness of body cameras as they have not been deployed long enough for sufficient data. However, we are encouraged by early findings. Body Cameras and their footage must be carefully managed to avoid the problems caused by their wide release and public availability. Privacy and due process concerns must be taken into account when crafting and implementing policies that govern the use of body camera footage. The public is generally, and widely supportive of body cameras for officers, however, this support should not be taken to indicate a panacea effect, as body cameras alone cannot address all concerns.

Status: *Policy # 618 Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs) is a comprehensive policy which addresses the proper use of the cameras as well as the prohibited use of the cameras. The policy also addresses the retention, storage and handling of videos to ensure the release of these videos is in compliance with CALEA standards and state law.*

The simple and uncomplicated definition of Community Policing is – A strategy of policing that focuses on police building ties and working closely with members of the local communities. This should be a major driving force that governs all police civilian interactions. Essentially, Community Policing is a matter of the ‘coming together’ of law enforcement with the people of the community they

serve. It involves day-to-day positive contact between the officer(s) and the residents of the assigned area; working with youth organizations, attending social functions and public meetings. Participation in local improvement projects such as those sponsored by Local Initiatives Support Corp. is a critical component of the community policing strategy.

We recommend convening a small study group within HCSO, with participation by independent professionals in the fields of organizational psychology, social behavior, and negotiation to:

- Assess Community Policing programs in other jurisdictions, to include HPD, to determine ‘lessons learned.’
- Identify geographical areas of concern in the county.
- Identify within those areas of concern potential collaborative resources.
- Identify the resources (personnel, equipment, support) that would be required to start a Community Policing program within HCSO.
- Research grant opportunities through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).
- Develop a draft strategy and budget for a Community Policing unit.
- Prepare findings and recommendation to the Sheriff for his consideration.

Status: *Under this recommendation we have happy to detail that we are currently studying Community Policing Programs in other jurisdictions.*

The Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) in an effort to maximize effectiveness and overall

communication is now providing the Patrol Bureau with Heat Maps and Violent Crime Stats on a monthly basis.

The Patrol Bureau has collaborated with surrounding law enforcement agencies for several crime reduction initiatives.

The Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) recent partnership with the Harris County District Attorney's Office (HCDAO) in the implementation of a new misdemeanor marijuana diversion program¹ was an encouraging step toward safely and effectively reducing the Harris County Jail population. In looking to further reduce the jail population in a safe and effective manner, it is recommended that Sheriff Gonzalez partner with the necessary stakeholders to develop a new, expanded diversion program that applies to substances other than marijuana. Implementing a drug diversion program by diverting arrests for possession of less than one gram of a controlled substance into other programs has the potential to benefit all parties involved.

The HCSO should continue to collaborate with HCDAO to expand diversion programs so that individuals charged with drug possession offenses are eligible for diversion. The HCSO should also partner with Houston reVision, an organization that works to pair incarcerated individuals with mentors within jail facilities across Texas, to develop and supervise the new drug diversion program. Finally, the HCSO should explore options for partnering with the Houston Police Department on drug diversion programs, including utilizing the Houston Recovery Center as a resource (and potential site) of a diversion program.

Every day, overcrowded and underfunded jails and prisons across the United States struggle to provide individuals leaving detention with the resources necessary to ensure a smooth transition back into society. With approximately 81% of its inmates having been in the jail system, recidivism is an issue that is always of concern to HCSO, and, despite the existence of a number of programs within the jail dedicated to reentry, more resources are needed. HCSO should look to improve its reentry programming options by focusing on short-term reentry programming and partnering with local organizations to ensure that individuals leaving the Harris County jail are equipped with the tools to ultimately become a taxpaying member of society.

In order to provide a higher level of quality re-entry programming we recommend that the HCSO

partner with Harris County Pretrial Services to ensure a full reentry assessment is done for every inmate at intake and follow up with that inmate to start their reentry process. Further assistance could be from partnerships with local organizations like Healthcare for the Homeless to help ensure that inmates are aware of timelines to register for healthcare and other social services. The HCSO should also follow the CSG model for establishing a network of community and faith-based groups to be integrated into the reentry process.

Status: Reentry Director Herring hired (Feb 2018) a Coordinator for the new Reentry Center that will be part of the Joint Processing Center. This first of its kind center for the HCSO will be staffed with numerous organizations from the community that will provide much needed services for inmates as they exit from our jail facility. The HCSO also has a new Chaplaincy Manager who is working closely with Director Herring on providing faith-based services at the Reentry Center.

Through Sheriff Gonzalez, HCSO has already taken a bold stance against Harris County's bail system with a declaration in the federal lawsuit that "the current operation of the money bail system, including the Sheriff's active participation in that system, violates the United States Constitution." Despite Sheriff Gonzalez's declaration, the litigation remains unresolved, leaving HCSO to manage nearly 7,000 pretrial inmates per day. With the nearly 80% of the inmates held at the Harris County jail not yet convicted of a crime, the resources that could be freed up with bail reform has the potential to fundamentally transform HCSO. Sheriff Gonzalez should also consider the role that technology can play in alleviating the bail crisis, while maintaining his position for the duration of the bail reform litigation.

In Texas, a person who commits a crime at the age of 17 is considered an adult for criminal justice purposes. Texas is one of only 9 remaining states that charge 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system, regardless of the crime or the teen's personal experiences. Sheriff Gonzalez should continue to champion the position that the age of juvenile jurisdiction be raised to 18.

The Harris County Sheriff Office (HCSO) has an important role in the efforts to combat Human Trafficking in the Greater Houston Area. The HCSO applied for the first cooperative grant for Human Trafficking and was a founding member of the Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance (HTRA). HTRA is a coalition of law enforcement, social service agencies, and victims' advocacy groups serving the Greater Houston Area.

The Sheriff's Office would greatly benefit from at least two more Sheriff Deputies to sustain its anti-trafficking efforts. Having a new supervisor over human trafficking would make the process easier. Currently the deputy working on the domestic side of combating human trafficking is under the supervision of the VICE supervisor. The Deputy working on the international issues report to the FBI. Adding a supervisory position to oversee both domestic and international efforts would allow for a more focused response by the HCSO, better continuity for victims, and a more efficient procedure in responding to trafficking victims and reports.

Status: *There are currently two human trafficking investigators assigned to a sergeant. Hopefully, as agency staffing increases we will be able to allocate more personnel to this unit.*

We currently have four Victims Advocate positions to support crime victims in Harris County.

We have shifted our focus away from arresting victims of human trafficking and toward arresting the Johns who seek to take advantage of them. In 2014, we arrested 146 illegal sex buyers. In 2017, that number nearly tripled to 433 and we led the nation in arrests during the National Johns Suppression Initiative.

Creating a position for a Victims Assistance/Advocate role for victims of HT that would be following up with the victims and responding to their questions and needs would be beneficial. Currently the victims contact the deputies who are supposed to be working on investigations.

Centralization of Victims Services for U and T Visa Applicants: The committee's understanding is that the Sheriff's Office currently does not have a procedure for handling T visa certification requests, even for cases where the trafficking investigation originated in the HCSO. Our recommendation is that the HCSO establish a protocol/procedure for processing these requests by building on the existing process for requesting U certifications. All requests could be processed by the same victim coordinator, who would require training and institutional support to begin that process. A number of other policy recommendations are outlined in the appendix.

Working with homeless populations has taken two tracks – prior to contact with the Jail System, and after contact. The current Homeless Outreach Team (2 deputies in one unit) has been successful in reaching out to the homeless and finding them permanent housing. This single unit, however, is inadequate for the entire area in which the HCSO operates. The current intake system utilizes the

current technology to best identify those that are homeless, however limitations of the current system do not always allow the information that an inmate is homeless to set in motion a process to help get them off the street. Recidivism is very high among the homeless population. Because of this unique populations extensive needs, a more comprehensive set of policy recommendations is available in the appendix.

Status: *We are currently interviewing for future Homeless Outreach Team positions and plan on implementing a second team by May 2018, with the ultimate goal of having one HOT team per district within the next 12-24 months.*

¹ See Meagan Flynn, "DA Ogg, Police Leaders Announce Landmark Marijuana Diversion Program," Houston Press, February 16, 2017, at <http://www.houstonpress.com/news/da-ogg-police-leaders-announce-landmark-marijuana-diversion-program-9206751>.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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BODY CAMERAS

–Jay Jenkins, Shah Haleem

In a sample of police departments surveyed in 2013, approximately 75 percent of them reported that they did not use body-worn cameras. The survey was funded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF).

PERF's report about the survey notes a number of perceived benefits for using body-worn cameras, including better evidence documentation and increased accountability and transparency. But the report also notes many other factors that law enforcement executives must consider, such as privacy issues, officer and community concerns, data retention and public disclosure policies, and financial considerations. The costs of implementing body-worn cameras include not only the cost of the cameras, but also of any ancillary equipment (e.g., tablets that let officers tag data in the field), data storage and management, training, administration, and disclosure.

A fairly common recommendation for improving the quality of investigations into police misconduct allegations is to increase use of body cameras. By recording police-citizen encounters, police supervisors, judges, reporters, and others can get objective evidence of what. Those costs have to be weighed against other police needs and other reform measures.

Do police body cameras improve police behavior?

The short answer is that it is too early to tell. However, the results from the several studies on police body cameras are encouraging.

What are the privacy implications of body cameras?

Police body cameras raise privacy concerns. The indiscriminate release of body camera footage could have a devastating effect on the victims of crime. Those crafting police body camera policy have to effectively balance privacy with the desire to improve investigations into allegations of misconduct.

Improvements in technology will undoubtedly make the redaction and storage of police body camera footage less expensive. But, for the foreseeable future, the redaction and storage of police body camera footage will continue to impose a significant cost to law enforcement agencies. Indeed, cost is sometimes cited by police agencies as a reason why body cameras have not been deployed. In 2014 PERF conducted a survey of police departments and found that “39 percent of the respondents that do not use body-worn cameras cited cost as a primary reason.”

It is possible that some of the fiscal impact of police body camera footage redaction and storage could be offset by the impact the cameras have on litigation arising from bogus complaints. However, it remains to be seen if that will be the case.

Of course the cost of a police body camera policy will depend in part on what footage is redacted. As noted above, redaction contributes to the cost of body camera programs. A policy that strictly limits redaction of footage captured in public and redacts some material filmed inside a private residence would be less expensive (all else being equal) than a policy that requires a heavy degree of redaction of footage captured in public.

CONCLUSION

- The research on police body cameras is limited but encouraging.
- Police body cameras do pose privacy concerns, but those concerns can be resolved with the right policies in place.
- The public widely supports police officers wearing body cameras, but the technology alone is not a panacea for police misconduct.

HOMELESS OUTREACH

Introduction

The Sheriff's office currently operates several programs to help the homeless. The Sheriff's Homeless Outreach Team has been successful but is limited to 2 deputies. Individuals that are arrested are identified as homeless on their jail cards and social workers and a Sheriff's deputy are engaged with trying to assist those that are homeless find housing, however limited resources only provide assistance during daytime hours or when very specific circumstances occur.

Analysis

Helping the Homeless before they engage with the jail system – The current Homeless Outreach Team (2 deputies comprising one unit) has been successful in reaching out to the homeless and finding them permanent housing. This single unit, however, is insufficient for the entire area in which the HCSO operates. This unit does not operate in the same areas as the HPD program and therefore there is no overlap. The program is successful however the current staffing levels are insufficient

Helping the Homeless once they engage with the jail system – The current intake system can only utilize the current technology to best identify those that are homeless, however limitations of the current system do not always allow the information that an inmate is homeless to set in motion a process to help get them off the street. Recidivism is very high among the homeless population. When the system that is in place does work, very often the Judge can release an accused or convicted person into the care of a homeless and/or mental health assistance program OR the person can voluntarily agree to go to a similar program.

There is some success when these programs are utilized by the inmates. There is currently only one shift of a social worker that is grant-funded available to help as people are released. This is insufficient for the current schedule of release (24 hours a day) as only one shift (6-8 hours) ends up covered by the social worker. Chaplains are an

important part of the engagement of the jail system with the homeless and cooperation with chaplains requires improvement. This is an important element of getting those that are homeless the help they need. Certain homeless people do not want help, have lived on the streets for years and are content with that lifestyle; not everyone can be helped.

Recommendations

- Add an additional homeless outreach unit to increase the number of homeless individuals that have a positive first contact with the Sheriff's office.
- Build relationships between community organizations and shelters that already have programs in place for homeless individuals. Deputies will coordinate with the inmate release staff to help get individuals assistance through community organizations. Once communication between the deputy and the social worker/inmate release is established, it will be easier to ensure that departments collaborate with community-based homeless case managers.
- Increase grant funding for an additional social worker to help fund an additional shift.
- Re-engage Chaplains to improve relationship building between inmates requiring housing assistance and chaplains that have access to assistance through community organizations.
- In the future Inmate Processing Center, there will be a specific process in place once a person that is processed is identified as homeless. A program will be activated that identifies certain persons as eligible for programs that will help get them back on their feet and off the street and an HCSO employee will be assigned to engaging these programs and identifying persons that would benefit from an assistance program.

LGBTQI POLICY

-Tammi Wallace

LGBTQI Transition Sub-Committee: Dakota Carter, M.D., Bryan Hlavinka, Tammi Wallace & Lou Weaver

Introduction

The Harris County Sheriff's Department implemented strong LGBTI policies in 2013 under Sheriff Adrian Garcia. The 2013 policies were considered "model policies" and replicated by a number of other agencies across the county and serve as foundational policies for agencies considering the adoption of such policies. The majority of the 2013 LGBTI policies were effectively dismantled in 2015 leaving a gap in policy support of both LGBTQI employees and inmates. Sheriff Gonzalez has a unique opportunity to build on the groundbreaking LGBTI policies previously implemented and establish the Department as leader and role model once again in the nation

Findings

Some 2013 LGBTI policies are being followed and other key policies need to be re-implemented or updated to reflect current acceptable practices. The LGBTQI policy recommendations focus on several key areas including existing LGBTQI policies, LGBTQI community engagement, medical policies and the PREA Unit. The recommendations include a proposed implementation timeline and key next steps to move forward with a specific recommendation. In addition, the implementation and update of such policies should include steps towards accountability and formal tracking to monitor LGBTQI policy implementation and results.

Resolution/Action

- **Enforce existing 2013 LGBTI policies (Policy #413)**
 - Update to reflect LGBTQI as policy title and within policy
 - Audit/review existing 2013 policies using an external source on an annual basis
 - Implement LGBTQI diversity and inclusion training for the Department
- **Create a formal reporting mechanism (e.g., LGBTQI policy dashboard) that is reviewed monthly by Sheriff and implement other internal tracking mechanisms:**
 - Monitor compliance of all LGBTQI policies
 - Implement tracking for complaints and concerns related to LGBTQI inmates
 - Implement tracking of LGBTQI hate crimes
 - Reengage internal LGBTQI Advisory Committee
- **Implement changes within the PREA Unit**
 - Rename PREA Unit to PREA/LGBTQI Unit
 - Change vulnerable victimization armbands to a color not similar to high risk inmates
 - Assign specially trained people to vulnerable victimization cell blocks
 - Engage behavioral health counselor with LGBTQI specialization
 - Staff should participate in annual PREA conference with focus on LGBTQI education
- **Implement changes to Medical Policies**
 - Ensure cultural competency and diversity training of healthcare providers, medical staff
 - Ensure broad formulary of medication for inmates or prescription equivalents.
 - Implement a jail diversion program for LGBTQI individuals experiencing a mental illness
- **Develop an LGBTQI Community Engagement Strategy**
 - Create and adopt a formal LGBTQI community engagement strategy
 - Establish LGBTQI Community Advisory Board

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

–Conducted by: **Wafa Abdin, VP of Immigration and Refugee Services**
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese-Galveston Houston & Steven A. Paletz.

Introduction

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) was passed in 2000, and reauthorized by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2003, 2005, and 2008. The TVPA and TVPRA provided the tools to combat trafficking in persons both worldwide and domestically. The Act authorized the establishment of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to assist in the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts. Among the goals of the TVPA were the increased prosecution of trafficking offenses, the protection of victims, and the prevention of trafficking in the future.

The Harris County Sheriff Office (HCSO) applied for the first cooperative grant for Human Trafficking and was a founding member of the Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance (HTRA). HTRA is a coalition of law enforcement, social service agencies, and victims' advocacy groups serving the Greater Houston Area. HCSO applied for the renewal of the grant, but did not receive the funding. That resulted in a loss of resources for HTRA.

Findings

HCSO has an important role in the efforts to combat Human Trafficking in the Greater Houston Area. However, currently there are two deputies working on Human Trafficking issues: one on the domestic side and one on the International side. Advocates and non-profit organizations working on providing services for victims of human trafficking observe that HCSO has become less involved in recent months and years. They are still signing certifications and scheduling interviews, but they have been much less responsive to requests for assistance. HCSO deputies also have not been as involved in the various task forces and coalition meetings. They have not requested as many trainings for their officers. The decrease in cooperation from victims of human trafficking has increased the difficulty of convictions against human trafficking operations. Juvenile cases of

human trafficking are usually not prosecuted and cases are diverted away from courts through the District Attorney's office.

Resolution/Action

In order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of HCSO in combating Human Trafficking we recommend the following:

- 1 Create a Human Trafficking unit within HCSO and add a supervisory position to oversee both the domestic and international investigations.
- 2 Create a Victims Assistance/Advocate to provide services to the victims and centralize the services for victims of U and T visas. Coordinate with the District Attorney's office to serve survivors of crimes more effectively.
- 3 Identify new funding sources to increase the number of staff in the Human Trafficking Unit.
- 4 Establish a protocol for responding to interview requests for victims of human trafficking that includes time frames parties involved.
- 5 In addition to accepting interview requests through HTRA's rotating system, be open to direct communication from victim advocates, who work with vetted organizations, such as Catholic Charities and YMCA International that provide services to victims of human trafficking.
- 6 Establish mandatory annual training for patrol officers.
- 7 Participate actively in HTRA, HAC-HT, and other HT coalitions to improve relationships with other stakeholders in the Houston area.

IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

Conducted by: Frances Valdez, Wafa Abdin, Mary Moreno,
Shumana Salauddin (Expert consultation from Angie Junck
and Nikki Marquez from Immigrant Legal Resource Center)

Current Situation:

Harris County, Texas is home to 1,064,000 foreign born residents. The County is home to Houston, the most diverse city in the U.S. Immigrants currently live in a state of fear and anxiety as a result of President Trump's rhetoric and practice to expand deportation and make all undocumented people a priority for removal from the U.S. Governor Abbott has signed SB 4 into law which makes it unlawful for the Sheriff to issue a policy that prohibits Sheriff Deputies from asking immigration status of anyone detained or arrested. It also mandates that the Sheriff honor all ICE detainers. SB 4 diminishes the trust of the immigrant community and people of color in law enforcement and makes all Harris County residents less safe. Now more than ever the immigrant community needs strong local leadership to push against policies that are causing fear and separating families. The recommendations below attempt to repair community relations between The Harris County Sheriff and the immigrant community which will ultimately lead to a safer Harris County. See the full report for more detailed explanation of the recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

Provide Quarterly Updates on the implementation of Recommendations and the End of Harris County's 287(g) Agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Recommendation 2:

Do not honor ICE detainer and hold requests

Recommendation 3:

Do not comply with civil immigration warrants

Recommendation 4:

Do not notify ICE of release dates

Recommendation 5:

Do not use local resources to assist ICE, including information sharing

Recommendation 6:

Do not allow ICE unrestricted access to individuals while in custody

Recommendation 7:

Provide "Know Your Rights" information to detainees and obtain their written consent prior to ICE interviews

Recommendation 8:

Adopt a policy against biased policing

Recommendation 9:

Adopt a policy for not arresting individuals for driving without a license

DIVERSION AND RE-ENTRY

This summary report focuses on two generally recognized problem areas: the challenges of re-entry upon release from prison and the need for diversion programs which offer alternatives to incarceration for low level non-violent offenders. The Diversion Program we recommend for consideration was pioneered by the Seattle law enforcement authorities. LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) trains a coterie of police Officers to offer low-level offenders engaged in sale and possession of crack, heroin, and other illegal drugs the option to meet with a counselor at a social service agency and avoid the court system entirely. The counselor will help such persons apply for employment, food relief programs, health insurance, and other living essentials. An evaluation of LEAD in 2016, conducted by the University of Washington, found statistically significant less recidivism or re-arrest in LEAD enrollees than in the control group. The Program is currently conducted in Portland as well.

Major Mike Lee has been assigned by Sheriff Gonzales to explore the feasibility of LEAD for Harris County.

In response to the challenges of Re-entry (and to lower recidivism) we recommend drawing on *ReVision*, which enlists, trains, and supervises volunteers from Houston's faith community to visit prisoners between the ages of 17 and 22 during their incarceration, and to provide a bridge of support during their transition to civilian life. Apart from providing practical counsel they represent for many of these inmates the first caring and responsible adults who have appeared in their lives. This program could substantially lower the levels of recidivism. The contact person is Charles Rotramel, Director of ReVision.



BAIL REFORM

–Jay Jenkins & George Willy

Through Sheriff Gonzalez, HCSO has already taken a bold stance against Harris County's bail system with a declaration in the federal lawsuit that "the current operation of the money bail system, including the Sheriff's active participation in that system, violates the United States Constitution." Despite Sheriff Gonzalez's declaration, the litigation remains unresolved, leaving HCSO to manage nearly 7,000 pretrial inmates per day. With the nearly 80% of the inmates held at the Harris County jail not yet convicted of a crime, the resources that could be freed up with true bail reform has the potential to fundamentally transform HCSO. The county judges (as defendants) have given no indication that they're open to changing their position on the bail schedule or relinquishing much of their power to detain defendants pretrial, so the outcome of the litigation is going to be extremely important to the day to day operations at the Harris County jail. Having staked out a position prior to his election, it is important that Sheriff Gonzalez and the remainder of the HCSO continue to lead the push for reform.

Recommendations

Having already testified in the preliminary injunction hearing, Sheriff Gonzalez must continue to closely monitor the happenings of the lawsuit and take action, if necessary, in order to help expedite its resolution. Because Sheriff Gonzalez has already testified, there's no immediate action to recommend on the case, but Sheriff Gonzalez should be prepared to explore the following options: asking for independent counsel to be appointed by the county, ensuring that operations can continue should an order enjoining the present system be entered, and exploring legal options for release of low risk inmates should jail population pressures continue to build.

Following the issuance of Judge Rosenthal's blistering decision against the County's bail practices, the County Attorney's choice to appeal has created a massive conflict between the County Attorney's Office and Sheriff Gonzalez – one that must be remedied by Sheriff Gonzalez requesting independent counsel going forward.

COMMUNITY POLICING

Conducted by: Gordon Dilmore and Jim Granato (UH Hobby School of Public Affairs)

Assisted by: Lieutenant Michael Miller

Introduction

The simple and uncomplicated definition of Community Policing is – A strategy of policing that focuses on police building ties and working closely with members of the local communities. (1) The concept originated with Sr. Robert Peele's Nine Principles to Modern Law Enforcement, published in 1829, under the premise that the police exist to prevent crime and, in order to do so, they must gain the willing cooperation of the general public. He further postulated that public cooperation is lost proportionately to the amount of force they employ. (2) Community policing involves the creation of partnerships between police agencies and local organizations, service agencies, non-profits, civic & social groups, businesses, individuals and the media, to identify common goals and work together to achieve those goals. It requires a close working relationship between the officers involved, with local leaders as well as members of the general public.

Essentially, Community Policing is a matter of the 'coming together' of law enforcement with the people of the community they serve. It involves day-to-day positive contact between the officer(s) and the residents of the assigned area; working with youth organizations, attending social functions and public meetings. Participation in local improvement projects such as those sponsored by Local Initiatives Support Corp. is a critical component of the community policing strategy.

Findings

Is Harris County a suitable candidate for Community Policing? Houston Police Department (HPD) has had a Community Policing program since the mid 1970's, and was one of the first departments in the nation to initiate such a program. (3) The entire Houston Metroplex, including Harris County is a growing, ever-changing hodgepodge environment of diverse ethnic groups and sub-communities, each with its own language, with equally diverse cultures. Pockets of gang activity, drug trade, criminal acts are growing and

constantly migrating of new areas of opportunity and criminal enterprise. Their common goal is to overwhelm and control the population by intimidation or brute force if necessary. Currently, a large share of the population is generally ambivalent concerning this activity because of their negative attitudes toward the police. Unless this trend is reversed and the residents of these areas learn to trust and respect the police, matters will continue to deteriorate. Unabated, criminal behavior will continue to grow. A Community Policing unit, properly budgeted, staffed, and trained, could be the key to turning this rapidly worsening situation around, leading to improvement in the relationship between the police and the people they are sworn to serve.

Resolution/Action

- Convene a small study group within HCSO, with participation by independent professionals in the fields of organizational psychology, social behavior, and negotiation to:
- Assess Community Policing programs in other jurisdictions, to include HPD, to determine 'lessons learned.'
- Identify geographical areas of concern in the county.
- Identify within those areas of concern potential collaborative resources. Identify the resources (personnel, equipment, support) that would be required to start a Community Policing program within HCSO.
- Research grant opportunities through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).
- Develop a draft strategy and budget for a Community Policing unit.
- Prepare findings and recommendation to the Sheriff for his consideration.

1. U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community-Oriented Policing Office (COPS)
2. Understanding Community Policing – A Framework for Action; NCJ 148457; pg. 5

