

TELEMASP BULLETIN

TEXAS LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM

May 1994

Vol. 1, No. 2

Citizen Police Academies

The role of the police has always been of interest to the average citizen. Recently, the television media has capitalized upon this curiosity with shows such as "Cops," "American Detective," "Rescue 911" and "America's Most Wanted." Each week, real police action is broadcast into the living rooms of millions of Americans. Some police agencies have also benefitted from the curiosity that citizens have about the police. For these agencies, the creation of a Citizen Police Academy has allowed them to educate citizens about the local police agency. In turn, citizens have learned about the operations of their police department.

Historical Overview

The concept of a Citizen Police Academy was developed in 1977 by the Devon and Cornwall, England, Constabulary. Originally called the Police Night School, the purpose was to familiarize private citizens with the nature of police work and the organization of the police system in England. The Police Night School was taught by police personnel on a voluntary basis. The success experienced by the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary motivated several other police constabularies in England to adopt the program.

In 1985, the Orlando, Florida, Police Department adopted the concept of the Police Night School for their agency and created the first Citizen Police Academy in the United States. The purpose of the Orlando Citizen Police Academy was to increase understanding between the police and the citizens through education. This education enables citizens to better assess issues and influence others concerning police practices and policies. The ultimate goal of the Citizen Police Academy is the reduction of crime through a stronger citizen commitment to the police department and the community.

Objectives

Since 1985, numerous police agencies have created Citizen Police Academies as an expansion of their community-based crime prevention efforts. The academy is intended to open the lines of communication between the community and the police department. The role of the police is ambivalent to those in the field, and to citizens it may frequently appear that the police are not doing their job or are exceeding their boundaries. By allowing citizens a firsthand look at what rules, regulations, and policies the police follow, some of this misunderstanding may be alleviated. During classes, the participants are encouraged to ask questions and give feedback concerning the operation of the police agency. Additionally, citizens bring a wealth of knowledge about their community and, particularly, the problems in their neighborhoods. In this way, police are able to learn firsthand the concerns of the citizens.

Most academies teach a shortened version of actual police academy training. However, the objective of the Citizen Police Academy is not to create "quasi-cops," but to produce informed citizens. The police and the citizens benefit by meeting each other face to face in a neutral, friendly setting. Each becomes a person to the other. No longer do the citizens see a uniform, but they now know that there is a person behind the badge. Police are exposed to citizens, who instead of demanding something, are interacting with them in a non-confrontational milieu. As a result, police officers realize they do have support of some members in the community. Such knowledge may help the officers do their job better and more professionally.

Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas



One Texas police agency reports this incident involving a CPA graduate. An African heritage female, who holds a responsible position and several degrees, was on her way to exercise one morning about 4:30. She was stopped for an equipment violation. When the officer asked for her DL, she reached for her purse, which was in her workout bag in the backseat. The officer then stepped back, and in a firm, direct voice ordered her to put her hands on the steering wheel, which she did. The situation was resolved smoothly.

If she had not been through the CPA she probably would have thought race was an issue in the way the officer responded. With the information she had received from the class, she realized the officer's actions were normal protective behavior. The officer's response would have been the same no matter what race she might have been. **WHAT A DIFFERENCE A LITTLE UNDERSTANDING CAN MAKE!**

Citizen Police Academies in Texas

This TELEMASP bulletin is based on a survey of Texas police agencies that conduct a Citizen Police Academy (CPA). A list of agencies, believed to be holding a CPA, was obtained from the CPA National Database. This database is maintained by the Arlington, Texas, Police Department. The 37 question survey was initially mailed to 56 agencies in February, 1994. In March, an additional nine police agencies were mailed the survey, for a total of 65 agencies.

Most surveys were completed by the CPA coordinator. This person's responses may not necessarily represent a consensus of all members of his/her agency. For this reason, care should be taken when interpreting answers calling for an opinion.

Thirty agencies returned the survey by March 31, resulting in a response rate of 46 percent. Of these, three did not operate a Citizen Police Academy, leaving 27 usable questionnaires. Agencies conducting a Citizen Police Academy range in size from 19 to 4,201 sworn officers, and serve jurisdictions with populations between 7,000 and 1,725,421 people.

The earliest Citizen Police Academy implemented in Texas was in 1985. Eighteen (67%) have started since 1990. In all, 4,178 Texas citizens have attended a CPA. On average, CPA classes are offered two times per year, with 27 students per class. The average academy meets once each week for 11 weeks, three hours each session.

The purpose, cited by 22 agencies, for conducting a CPA was the education of the citizens concerning the operations, policies, and procedures of the police department. Another often cited reason for the CPA was the promotion of communication between the citizens and members of the police agency in an effort to improve relations. Other reasons include dispelling myths and preconceptions that the public may have concerning the police function, enlisting the aid of the citizens in the prevention of crime, and promoting support of the police department and the city. The establishment of two-way communication is the primary means used to accomplish these goals and purposes.

A SUCCESS STORY

One agency reports that for their first class they received an application from a person they knew as anti-police. They did admit her as they felt that if she could handle going to college for nursing and having three kids she had to have something going for herself. Further, it is "good" to have "one" in the class to keep things lively.

Her questions were interesting and proved to be beneficial to the class. Most of the participants stayed away from her, even during break, because of her anti-cop attitude.

During the fifth week the coordinator could see a change in her attitude. At the firing range, she shot and enjoyed herself. She attended the graduation banquet dressed to the "nines" and brought her husband.

About a week later, she stopped by the department to speak to the coordinator. She had brought with her law enforcement books. She had changed her major to Criminal Justice and wanted to become "a member of the brotherhood of the Blue."

Curriculum

Topics taught in the CPA range from traditional police activities, such as accident investigation and crime scene investigation to newer, less traditional areas such as victim services, cults, gangs, and police stress and trauma counseling. Some agencies recommended that every division or unit be discussed and reviewed. For those units that are action oriented, i.e. SWAT, mounted, canine, it is recommended that a demonstration be provided. The topics that are offered in the CPAs and the number of agencies offering them are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 - Topics Taught in CPA

<u>Topic</u>	<u># Agencies</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Detective division	27	100
Patrol division	26	96
Communications	25	93
Drug enforcement	25	93
Departmental organization	24	89
Traffic enforcement	24	89
Crime scene investigation	23	85
Firearm safety and firing	23	85
Recruit selection and training	23	85
Department tour	23	85
Crime prevention	22	82
Juvenile crime/units	22	82
Patrol equipment	22	82
Administration	21	78
Citizen complaint procedures	21	78
Internal affairs	21	78
Ride with officers	21	78
Traffic stops	21	78
Specific crime prevention programs	20	74
State and local criminal laws	20	74
Accident investigation	19	70
Canine demonstrations	18	67
Drunk driving enforcement	18	67
Inservice training	18	67
Other topics:	18	67
Building searches, practical		
Child molestation/abuse		
City government & operations		
Criminal profiles		
Cults		
Different departments/units responsibilities		
Dive team		
Driving/pursuit driving course		
Emergency management		
F.A.T.S.		
Gangs		
History of law enforcement		
Hostage negotiation		
Mounted patrol		
Police stress and trauma counseling		
Sexual assault/sexual assault prevention		
Shoot, don't shoot		
S.W.A.T.		
Use of force		
Vice		
Victim services		
Warrant service		
Jail tour	17	63
Field training officer program	16	59
Mechanics of arrest	15	56
Self defense tactics	12	44
Court operations	12	44
DA's office	11	41
Mock crime scene scenario	11	41
Liquor laws and violations	7	26
Media relations	7	26

CITIZEN BRAINSTORMING

The Longview Police Department devotes two hours of the CPA to a citizen brainstorming session. The participants are divided into subgroups and asked to brainstorm what they consider to be their top police related concerns. Each group list is combined with the lists from the other groups. The entire class then votes on the top five concerns. These concerns are presented to the Chief of Police and the CPA Alumni Association for review and possible action.

Facilitators

All levels of police personnel are involved in teaching. Additionally, district attorneys, judges, juvenile service workers, and city managers also instruct. Personnel that teach are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 - Personnel Teaching CPAs

<u>Title</u>	<u># Agencies</u>
Sergeant	26
Detective	25
Patrol Officer	25
Communications	22
Lieutenant	21
CPA Coordinator	20
Chief	16
Captain	12
Other Top Command	12
Other	12
District Attorney	10
Judge	7
Juvenile or Social Worker	7

The newest place for singles to meet other singles may be the CPA. One agency reports that two participants that met in the CPA are about to get married!

Cost of the CPA

The Citizen Police Academy does not appear to be a large consumer of police personnel or resources. The type of reimbursement offered to personnel for teaching at the CPA is depicted in Table 3. More than one method could be used to reimburse officers by the same agency.

Table 3 - Reimbursement Offered to Officers

<u>Reimbursement</u>	<u># Agencies</u>
Comp Time	20
Overtime	17
Volunteer	10
Flex Time	1
Scheduled as Part of Work Day	1

The coordinator of the CPA dedicates from 2 to 52 weeks per year on CPA related administrative duties. The average was 11 weeks.

The amount spent annually by the police agencies for the CPA ranged from no departmental funds to \$6,000. The agency that did not spend departmental money charged tuition. The average amount spent, for agencies that did not include personnel costs, was \$1,600. The agencies that included personnel costs averaged \$3,500 per year. These agencies reported that personnel costs consumed the largest portion of the CPA budget.

Several agencies use alternative sources of funding, that may supplement or replace departmental money. These sources include alumni associations, citizen contributions, grants, and asset forfeitures.

COMBINING RESOURCES

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Beaumont Police Department and the Port Arthur Police Department are working together to put on one CPA. Each agency sponsors one-third of the participants, is responsible for presenting part of the curriculum, and shares the expenses of the CPA. Through cooperation, agencies that are closely situated and serve the same population, i.e. commuters, university cities, may want to join forces to offer a CPA. This may also be a chance for smaller agencies to work together to offer their citizens a program that may not otherwise be feasible.

Recruitment and Requirements

Police departments use a variety of methods to recruit participants. The most popular method is by word of mouth, including CPA alumni. Methods of recruitment are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Recruitment Method

<u>Method</u>	<u># Agencies</u>
Word of Mouth	24
Dept. Employees	21
Newspaper Announcements	19
Other	15
TV Announcements	11
Radio Announcements	7

The "Other" category include announcements at community service clubs, neighborhood or city newsletters, flyers at the station or substations, utility billing supplements, Citizen on Patrol, and police personnel speaking engagements.

The requirements for participation in the CPA are also varied. Some agencies allow high school students to attend, while others have a minimum age of 21 years. The requirements that the participants must meet are shown in Table 5. Many of the responding agencies reported more than one requirement.

Table 5 - Requirements for Participation in CPA

<u>Requirement</u>	<u># Agencies</u>	<u>%</u>
Criminal History Check	25	93
Age Limit	23	85
Sign Waiver of Liability	22	82
Driver's License Check	22	82
Residency Requirement	21	78
No Prior Criminal History	15	56
Other Requirements	9	33

Of the agencies that conducted a criminal history check, 19 checked department records, 15 checked state records, and 14 checked NCIC. Most of the agencies that had "other" requirements reported that the participant must at least work or own a business within the city, but may live outside the city limits. Some agencies reported that citizens with prior criminal history were considered on a case by case basis.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

The Harlingen Police Department operates a CPA only for high school students. This academy meets once per year and has four students from each grade from each of the two high schools in the city. During the week before school starts, the class meets twice for four hours each. After school starts, they meet two hours one evening a week for twelve weeks. This program has become a prestigious activity to attend. The curriculum is adjusted only slightly from the adult CPA. The Missouri City Department of Public Safety allows one high school senior to attend each CPA.

HISPANIC CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY

The Midland Police Department is currently planning their first Spanish speaking CPA. The community and the police have shown a strong interest in its development. The agency is translating the application, hand-outs, announcements and other materials into Spanish. This academy will be presented at least once per year.

Participant Description

The type of citizen participating in the CPA is diverse. Interestingly, gender among participants is almost evenly balanced; males represent 52 percent of those attending, females 48 percent. The distribution of occupation categories, age, and ethnicity/race is depicted in Table 6.

Table 6 - Occupation, Age, and Race of Participants

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>%</u>
Blue Collar	38
Corporate/Business Manager	21
Educators	10
Other	10
Students	5
Media Representatives	4
City Council Members	3

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>%</u>
40-49	28
30-39	25
50-59	23
18-29	12
60 and Over	10

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>%</u>
White	72
Mexican American	16
African American	11
Asian American	1

HEARING IMPAIRED PARTICIPATION

The Midland Police Department reports that they have volunteers from several churches and the local college that are willing to sign for hearing impaired students. The agency expects the translators to be accepted and go unnoticed, once the class gets underway.

What Agencies Report that the Participants Gain from the CPA

- They become aware of the responsibilities of the police, and gain understanding of the difficulties of the law enforcement profession.
- They gain the ability to make informed decisions about controversial incidents involving the police.
- They get to know the police in their community.
- They establish a personal commitment to the department, as well as to the community.
- They learn that all of society must cooperate to solve Criminal Justice problems—just building more jails or blaming someone else won't be sufficient.
- Although some citizens entered the CPA being a little skeptical, almost every citizen who completes the academy leaves with a pro-police attitude.
- They gain a better understanding of how their police department works, and what they, as citizens, can do to help the police do a better job.
- Some preconceived ideas or myths about police operations are dispelled.

Awards to Participants

All of the responding agencies presented the participants with some type of award or other token for participating in the CPA. All agencies give certificates, some are framed. One agency confers a gold and black engraved woodgrain plaque. Refreshments are provided at 23 CPAs. Refreshments range from coffee provided by the agency to treats brought by the participants. Twenty-five agencies provide a binder or notebook with handouts. Other awards include:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| class photograph | t-shirts |
| mugs | polo shirts |
| hats or caps | most outstanding student award |
| jackets | key chain |
| graduation banquet | pens |
| in-house graduation | |

Some of these are provided by the agency while others are available for purchase, either through the department or the CPA Alumni Association.



Post-Academy Contact

Twenty-one of the twenty-seven responding agencies have some contact with the participants after graduation. Graduates have formed alumni associations in 20 of these agencies. Other types of contact include picnics or similar get-togethers, volunteers at the police department, teaching at future CPAs, and joining Citizen on Patrol. Some Alumni Associations raise funds for crime prevention programs and/or for specialized units, such as S.W.A.T. and dive team. Numerous agencies stressed the importance of continued contact with the graduates and their involvement with other citizen volunteer efforts in the police department.

CPA GRADUATE INVOLVEMENT

The Austin Police Department reports that most of their graduates join the CPA Alumni Association. The principal function of alumni is volunteer role playing during cadet training. This involvement has expanded to role playing with other units, such as the hostage negotiation team and victim services.

What Should I Consider when Developing a CPA?

The agencies that currently operate a CPA gave advice to those agencies that are contemplating starting their own. The advice ranged from planning to the involvement of the graduates after the academy. These comments included:

- Be open, frank, and honest with your presentations and answers to the questions.
- Have the active support of the administration and city government.
- Plan your CPA thoroughly and carefully. Visit other departments that have a CPA, attend a CPA symposium, set your budget and involve as many in planning as possible, especially the instructors.
- Use quality instructors.
- Follow other established CPAs, then tailor your program to your needs.
- Discuss as many, if not all, of the units of your department. Have officers from those divisions do the presentations.

- Involve the participants as much as possible. Have demonstrations or hands-on activities at least once per session. Prepare hand-outs and other materials just for them.
- Have the participants complete a ride-along. Until they experience police work first hand, it is hard to understand.
- Strive for a diverse group of participants representative of your community. Include those that are your most vocal critics, they may be silenced after attending.
- Make your first class small.
- Insist that attendance is mandatory.
- Utilize the media and have media representatives enroll in the CPA. Also, try to entice city or county council members to attend.
- Keep your graduates involved. Have them form an alumni association, but be careful not to spread the volunteers in your agency too thin, or have the different programs compete for them. Involve them in the selection of participants and the development of the curriculum.
- DO IT AND HAVE FUN!!

Many of the agencies experienced reluctance among their officers when the CPA was started. Of these agencies, all report a positive change in attitude towards the program. In fact, several agencies report a number of officers volunteering to instruct. One agency reported officers are teaching without requesting compensation (despite FLSA). Several other agencies report a waiting list of instructors and competition among the officers to teach.

CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY SYMPOSIUM

The North Texas Crime Prevention Association, along with the Arlington, Duncanville, Gainesville, Fort Worth, and Richardson Police Departments are presenting the Second Annual CPA Symposium. It will be held on August 18 and 19, 1994 in Gainesville. Contact Officer Buck Tatem at the Gainesville Police Department (817-668-7777) or Officer Ray Ramon at the Duncanville Police Department (214-780-5027) for more information.

Conclusion

The responding agencies have generally noted positive effects from the Citizen Police Academies. Citizens and police officers received insight into the views held by each other about policing. Citizens gain an insider's knowledge of the police agency, enabling them to make informed decisions on issues affecting the police and the community. The officers are given an opportunity to interact positively with citizens, while gaining a better understanding of the citizens' perception of the police.

The surveys revealed that officers who were previously reluctant to endorse CPAs tended to support them after being involved. In some agencies, the interest of officers is so strong that a majority become involved in some aspect of the academy. Officers are often proud to demonstrate the utility of skills they have acquired, such as SWAT and scuba-rescue.

The intrinsic benefits of the CPA appear to overcome any economic costs incurred by the departments. Many agencies have implemented creative ways of financing their CPAs, such as grants, asset forfeitures, and citizen contributions. The effort expended in finding financing seems to suggest the value police administrators place upon CPAs.

In conclusion, all responding agencies surveyed recommended that other agencies should implement a Citizen Police Academy, if they haven't already done so. If you feel a Citizen Police Academy may benefit your agency, you may wish to investigate the concept further. The Law Enforcement Management Institute maintains a file of materials provided by the respondents to this Bulletin survey. The file is available for review at the LEMIT offices in the Criminal Justice Center, Sam Houston State University.

List of References

The following resources were used as background for this bulletin.

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List of Agencies

Police agencies that were identified as conducting a Citizen Police Academy.

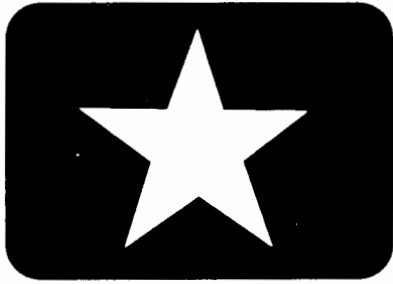
Abilene P.D.*	Harlingen P.D.*
Addison P.D.	Heath P.D.
Alamo Heights P.D.*	Houston P.D.*
Amarillo P.D.*	Houston Metro P.D.
Arlington P.D.	Huntsville P.D.*
Austin P.D.*	Jefferson Co. S.O.*
Azle P.D.	Lancaster P.D.
Bedford P.D.*	Lewisville P.D.*
Benbrook P.D.*	Lockhart P.D.
Bowie P.D.***	Longview P.D.*
Brenham P.D.*	Lubbock P.D.***
Brownsville P.D.**	Mansfield P.D.
Carrollton P.D.**	Marshall P.D.
Cedar Hill P.D.	Meadows P.D.
College Station P.D.	Midland P.D.*
Collin Co. S.O.	Missouri City P.D.*
Conroe P.D.*	N. Richland Hills P.D.
Coppell P.D.	Odessa P.D.*
Corpus Christi P.D.*	Pantego P.D.
DFW Airport D.P.S.	Plano P.D.*
Dallas P.D.	Richardson P.D.
Denton P.D.*	River Oaks P.D.
Desota P.D.*	Rosenberg P.D.*
Duncanville P.D.***	San Angelo P.D.*
Ft. Bend Co. S.O.***	San Marcos P.D.
Ft. Worth P.D.*	Sherman P.D.
Gainesville P.D.*	Sugar Land P.D.*
Garland P.D.*	Tarrant Co. S.O.
Grand Prairie P.D.	Tulia P.D.
Grapevine P.D.	U - TX Arlington P.D.
Grayson Co. S.O.	Weslaco P.D.***
Haltom City P.D.	Wichita Falls P.D.

* responded to survey by March 31, 1994.

** not mailed survey.

*** survey received after March 31, to be included in other papers.

If your agency does conduct a CPA, please contact Janice Hilson at (409) 294-3629 so that a complete list of CPAs in Texas can be developed. Thank you.



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Law
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Texas

Gerald L. Williams, D.P.A.
Executive Director

Kay Billingsley
Publications Manager

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TELEMASP Monthly Bulletins,
ISSN 1075-3702, are produced
under an agreement with the

Police Research Center
Sam Houston State University
Larry T. Hoover, Ph.D., Director
Jamie L. Tillerson, Program Coordinator

For information about TELEMASP
Bulletins, call (409) 294-1704

Ms. Janice Hilson, Doctoral Student at SHSU,
authored this Bulletin. She has been a police
officer and coordinator of a victim/witness
assistance program in Wisconsin. Ms. Hilson
has facilitated at the GMI Writing Work-
shops sponsored by LEMIT.



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