

**FINAL REPORT**

**LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING  
STUDY COMMITTEE**

Presented to the Legislative Council  
and the Iowa General Assembly  
March 1997

Prepared by the Legislative Service Bureau



Legislative  
Service  
Bureau

# FINAL REPORT

Law Enforcement Training Study Committee

March 1997

## MEMBERS

Senator Randal Giannetto,  
Co-chairperson  
Senator Richard Drake  
Senator Donald Gettings

Representative Teresa Garman,  
Co-chairperson  
Representative Paul Bell  
Representative Beverly Nelson

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## AUTHORIZATION AND APPOINTMENT

The Legislative Council established the Law Enforcement Training Interim Study Committee and requested that the Iowa League of Cities and the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) convene a law enforcement training summit during the 1996 legislative interim to examine modifications and alternatives to Iowa's current regulations concerning law enforcement training and resources provided for the training, and to provide the Committee with a report containing the recommendations resulting from the summit. The Council provided the Committee with one meeting date and charged the Committee with determining whether changes should be made to Iowa's laws regarding law enforcement training in Iowa. The league and ISAC responded to the Council's request by working together, in association with the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA), on a survey of Iowa's law enforcement professionals. The Committee held its meeting on November 27, 1996.



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### **1. Presenters for Law Enforcement Associations, Agencies, and Alternative Training Facilities.**

Presenters at the meeting included representatives from the following organizations, agencies, academies, community colleges, and police departments:

- ◆ Iowa Police Executive Forum
- ◆ Iowa State Sheriffs' & Deputies Association
- ◆ Iowa Association of Chiefs of Police and Peace Officers
- ◆ Iowa Department of Transportation
- ◆ Decorah City Police Department
- ◆ Des Moines Police Academy
- ◆ Cedar Rapids Police Academy
- ◆ Muscatine Police Department
- ◆ Hawkeye Community College
- ◆ Kirkwood Community College
- ◆ Iowa Department of Education
- ◆ Iowa State Association of Counties
- ◆ Iowa Law Enforcement Academy

### **2. Issues.**

**Centralized Training.** Presenters overwhelmingly agreed that a strong training academy, such as the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA), needs to be maintained and should have curriculum and certification control over all training in the state whether or not the training is conducted by ILEA. The ILEA responded that the establishment of more regional sites will require more resources. Statewide standards for law enforcement training should be maintained and updated as needed.

**Funding.** The majority of presenters indicated support for full-state funding of the ILEA, either through the state general fund or by diverting a greater portion of citation surcharges to the Academy.

**Charging Recruits for Training.** Most agencies testified that the recruit should either be responsible for all training costs, or be charged on a proportional basis for each quarter year of service less than four years the recruit works for the agency that paid the initial training costs, with no costs assessed if the recruit serves at least four years with the initial hiring agency. However, one agency disagreed, and said the only time an individual should have to pay for training is when the individual is not employed by a law enforcement agency. The agency remarked that requiring recruits to pay could reduce the pool of eligible and qualified candidates. It was also suggested by an agency that the costs for testing potential

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recruits be borne by the potential recruits. In addition to the training costs, some agencies remarked on the costs of paying a recruit a salary while in training and the costs of equipping a recruit while the recruit undergoes training. If the recruit is required to pay, however, some felt that financial assistance should be provided or the costs waived for applicants or recruits living at or near the poverty level. The Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) supports allowing a person, at their own expense and without relaxing current requirements, to obtain law enforcement certification prior to hiring. The IDOT also supports extending the probation period.

**Expense Recovery.** The state should establish stronger rules governing the recovery of a department's training and wage expenses accrued when a recruit is sent to the ILEA and, after certification, accepts a position with another law enforcement agency. The gaining agency could be required to pay a portion of the training expenses accrued by the initial hiring agency. In addition, the state's Law Enforcement Officer Training Reimbursement Fund is inadequately funded to meet present agency needs.

**Certification Requirements for Out-of-state Applicants.** It was suggested that hiring jurisdictions alone should have the authority to require law enforcement officers entering the state for executive level positions to meet the same physical standards as for other new officers. Also, that law enforcement officers entering the state with at least five years of service should only be required to pass the current short test to obtain certification in the state.

**Community College Role.** Greater utilization of the community colleges for an increased range of general education classes was encouraged by some agencies. An association recommended restructuring the ILEA basic training course by dividing it into basic education classes and skills training and allowing new officers to obtain credit for the general education portion of the training through testing by ILEA. Those officers exempted from the ILEA basic education classes could begin their training at ILEA with the skills portion of the training. Community colleges should be considered as an alternative for certification of officers who already have a higher education degree or who are coming to Iowa and have been certified in another state.

**Extend Training Period.** The length of law enforcement skills training should be expanded. The Des Moines and Cedar Rapids Police Academies require a longer training period, and IDOT adds more training time for the officers it sends through ILEA.

**Extend Probationary Period.** The majority of presenters recommended that hiring agencies be authorized to add, at their discretion, six months to the current 12-month probationary period for new officers.

**In-service Instruction and the ICN.** The ILEA should monitor all in-service training and seek to provide instruction quarterly through the Iowa Communications Network (ICN). The ILEA is using the ICN for some training.



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**Hiring Prior to Certification.** Few argued against the present system of hiring prior to training, but a minority of those testifying indicated support for allowing a person, at their own expense and without relaxing current requirements, to obtain law enforcement certification prior to hiring.

**Social Skills Training.** Police officer training should stress communication and interpersonal skills with less emphasis on a military-based model of policing.

**Career-long Psychological Testing.** Expanded use of psychological testing of law enforcement officers throughout their career needs to be implemented.

### **3. Law Enforcement Training Survey Results.**

**Background.** The Iowa State Association of Counties and the Iowa League of Cities, with assistance from the ILEA, developed an opinion survey regarding the recruitment process and training of Iowa law enforcement officers. The survey was sent to various law enforcement officials, such as chiefs of police and county sheriffs, as well as local governmental officials. The results of the survey were compiled and submitted to the interim committee along with the recommendations of the Iowa League of Cities and the Iowa State Association of Counties.

### **4. Committee Recommendations.**

Chairperson Representative Garman moved, and the committee adopted unanimously, the following recommendations:

- a. Enact legislation to lengthen the probation period from 12 to 18 months.
- b. Encourage the lengthening of the time period for law enforcement training.
- c. Encourage the use of the ICN for continuing education.
- d. Explore the idea of providing student loan options for persons seeking law enforcement training.
- e. Develop ways of addressing the concerns of local government agencies hiring and paying to train law enforcement recruits who, within a short period after receiving certification, leave the agency to work for another, often larger, agency as a certified law enforcement officer.

### **5. Written Materials Filed with the Legislative Service Bureau:**

- a. A basic answer sheet supplied by Mr. Gene Shepard, Executive Director of the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy, and a description of the qualifications needed to enter and be certified by the Academy.
- b. A copy of a 1967 *Des Moines Tribune* article titled, "Bill for Academy at Camp Dodge Passes."
- c. A copy of a *Des Moines Register* article titled, "Officer Training Criticized," by Tom Suk (October 4, 1995).

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- d. A copy of a *Des Moines Register* article titled, "Iowa Will Put Police Training Under Review," by Thomas A. Fogarty (August 11, 1996).
- e. A map showing community college areas in Iowa and a list of the Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement programs offered at the community colleges — contributed by Dr. Charles Ullom, Chief of the Bureau of Community Colleges, Department of Education.
- f. A summary of the Final Report of the 1972 Law Enforcement Training Programs Study Committee.
- g. Copies of the training curriculums for the Cedar Rapids and Des Moines Police Academies, and the Iowa Department of Public Safety.
- h. Information from Mr. John Laux, Executive Director of the Minnesota POST.
- i. Iowa Association of Chiefs of Police and Peace Officers' Training Position Statement contributed by Grinnell Police Chief Michael Birmingham.
- j. Materials contributed by Dr. Dale Amunson, Director of Community Services at Hawkeye Community College, describing the college's Intermediate Officer Training Program and Curriculum.
- k. "Opinion Survey Regarding the Recruitment Process & Training of Iowa Law Enforcement Officers," developed, compiled, and tabulated by the Iowa State Association of Counties and the Iowa League of Cities, with assistance from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy.
- l. Written comments of Scott County Sheriff Mike Bladel, who testified on behalf of the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies Association.
- m. Written comments of Muscatine Chief Gary Coderoni.
- n. Written comments of Mayor Tom Hanafan of Council Bluffs, who testified on behalf of the Iowa League of Cities.
- o. Written comments of Captain Jack Morton of the Des Moines Police Academy.
- p. Written comments of Captain James Noonan of the Cedar Rapids Police Department.
- q. Written comments of Chief Stanley Rowe of the Burlington Police Department, who testified on behalf of the Iowa Police Executive Forum.
- r. Written comments of Mr. David Vestal, Legal Analyst, who testified on behalf of the Iowa State Association of Counties.