

SAN JOSE:

Creating A Shared Vision Through Leadership Training

The Advancing Community Policing Grant	61
Department Observations	65
Lessons Learned	66
Panel Commentary	67

SAN JOSE

Creating a Shared Vision Through Leadership Training

The Advancing Community Policing Grant

Background

The San Jose Police Department started community policing efforts in earnest in 1991 and chose to make community policing every member's responsibility—there were no specialized community policing officers.

The police department currently operates out of a single station, although there are now two Community Policing Service Centers and plans for two more. The department is in the design phase for a separate substation to serve the southern portion of the city. San Jose is divided into four patrol divisions, each overseen by a captain. Patrol

captains have 24-hour problem-solving responsibility within their divisions.

Every six months, the department has a “shift change” in which patrol officers can bid for their next assignment based on seniority. Typically, transfers in and out of other bureaus occur at the same time. San Jose has an active rotation policy for its members, which limits most specialized assignments to three to five years. Even so, many patrol officers remain in a specific area for longer than a single six-month shift. The department wants to implement one-year shift changes for greater consistency in the community. This is a labor/management issue, and contract negotiations have not resulted in a change.

San Jose has achieved a relatively high level of implementation of its community policing philosophy and partnerships/programs. The department

has active partnerships with schools, neighborhood and community groups, and other city and county agencies. The mayor and city manager have each supported a coordinated response to community problems.

Beginning in the late 1980s, Project Crackdown was the city's most comprehensive program that used principles of community partnership, community development, neighborhood empowerment, and coordination of a broad range of city services to address the problems of gangs, drugs, and neighborhood blight. Following Project Crackdown, the city continued its collaboration with a Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, which has now operated for 10 years. This task force is a highly collaborative grouping of city and county agencies, schools, businesses, and community-based organizations. It has created many strategic alliances and pursued initiatives involving gangs, school violence, truancy, and community empowerment.

At the time of the Advancing Community Policing (ACP) grant in 1997, the department's community policing efforts had lost momentum. A number of focus groups revealed that a comprehensive program to address leadership development and the creation of a consistent vision for community policing were needed to reinvigorate the department's efforts.

The Project

The San Jose Police Department requested grant money to pursue a number of departmentwide initiatives. A professional development course was planned for all 300 sworn and civilian supervisors to teach them the skills critical to implementing community policing. Thirty peer facilitators/mentors were to be identified and trained to lead the professional development classes and act as mentors to newly promoted supervisors. The department also proposed conducting additional training for command personnel. An executive retreat allowed the chief of police to develop the top leadership of the department. A consultant helped the department create a strategic plan while teaching strategic planning skills to department members. Another consultant presented an innovative leadership simulation process that used role-playing to reinforce the importance of community partnerships and collaborative leadership. The department expanded its intranet to allow for the delivery of information, updates, and curriculum to personnel at individual worksites. Site visits were made to Baltimore and Boston to see specific community policing programs and to Los Angeles to evaluate a modification of the West Point Leadership Model.

San Jose's goals and objectives for the ACP grant were to:

- Increase the leadership capacity of middle management and line supervisors and develop a core set of attitudes for community oriented policing
- Increase the decentralization of decision-making
- Develop a comprehensive community oriented policing professional development course through site visits and research
- Using leadership simulation gaming, train 300 supervisory and command personnel in practical leadership skills related to community policing issues
- Create a shared vision for the future of community oriented policing in San Jose
- Institutionalize leadership and professional development training within the department

At the time the grant was awarded, a new chief of police was taking over the department. Chief William M. Lansdowne modified terms of the initial grant request to include direct training and development opportunities for sergeants. This allowed more sergeants to attend the state's Supervisory Leadership Institute, a highly regarded, long-term leadership development program. In keeping with the tenets of community policing, additional community members and government partners were allowed to attend. Also, the peer

mentor and facilitator program was revised to become a sergeant's mentoring program for newly promoted supervisors. In addition, the intranet was expanded to become a virtual library including such topics as personal development, problem solving, and promotion. The chief also asked for a strategic plan for community policing to be developed using internal resources.

Ultimately, the San Jose ACP project included the following:

- Training for lieutenants and captains on how to create and sustain community policing
- A professional development course for sergeants that included community policing skills
- The development and training of peer mentors who would mentor newly promoted supervisors and serve as facilitators for the professional development course
- Site visits to Baltimore and Boston and a visit to the Los Angeles Police Department to study its West Point Leadership Model
- The acquisition and use of technology to support web-based learning
- Training on leadership and community policing, including LeadSimm leadership simulation training

- Evaluation of the professional development course
- A retreat for the chief of police and top command staff to create a consistent vision for community policing

Seven significant elements of San Jose's ACP project are highlighted below. Each one offers lessons for other law enforcement agencies that seek to implement community oriented policing.

LeadSimm Training. Some of the strongest outcomes were seen with the two-day LeadSimm collaborative leadership training, in which more

than 450 department members and community/school/government partners took part. After the training, participants said they more clearly understood the need for and the value of partnerships before and during a community crisis. The training was so well received that sergeants used additional sessions to send officers from their teams. Many participants reported learning skills and concepts that have improved their handling of community problems. Other police officer participants formed ongoing relationships with community members that have aided them in addressing community concerns.

DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

San Jose, California was founded in 1777 and incorporated in 1850. It was California's first incorporated city and the first state capital. San Jose is the 11th largest city in the United States. It is in the center of Silicon Valley, has a population of more than 894,943, and covers

176 square miles. The population is 36.6 percent white, 26.6 percent Asian, 30.2 percent Hispanic, 3.3 percent black, and 3.8 percent other races.* The department has 1,359 sworn officers and 450 civilian personnel.

* U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

SAN JOSE POLICE DEPARTMENT

LOCATION: SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

CHIEF: WILLIAM LANSDOWNE

CONTACT: WWW.SJPD.ORG

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE CATEGORY: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

AMOUNT FUNDED: \$249,578

SITE VISIT: JANUARY 4, 2001

The LeadSimm training broadened the participants' perspectives. Police officers gained a better understanding of the issues facing the chief. Community members saw police officers as human beings. Officers got to know community members as individuals who were willing to give up their time to learn alongside police.

The sessions became increasingly popular for other city employees and school officials, and people outside the department eventually formed the majority of class members. Participants have developed a consistent view of collaborative leadership and its relationship to community problem solving. What began as an internal effort has grown into a powerful outreach tool.

The department produced a video of the LeadSimm experience to explain its value as a training tool for community policing and leadership development. Members of the city council plan to provide this training to their constituents.

The department's work with schools was also directly enhanced by the use of the LeadSimm process in school violence training. Responding to concerns about school violence, the department used the ACP grant to try out the LeadSimm process on the issue of catastrophic school violence. An initial simulation was followed by a live exercise at a high

school to test procedures that would be required in an "active shooter" situation. The exercises demonstrated what could be expected during an incident of targeted school violence. This process enhanced the relationship between the police department and the school district. Thanks to this exercise, one of the largest high school districts in the city trained directly with the police department and other city partners on responding to school violence.

What began as an internal effort has grown into a powerful outreach tool.

Professional Development Course. The department has developed a customized professional development course for supervisors. The course curriculum includes leadership, qualities of successful community policing programs, problem solving, team building, public speaking, and mobilizing community resources. A focus group helped identify the major components of the curriculum. This process engaged more than 30 people of all ranks within the department (both sworn and civilian), as well as members of city government and the school administration in a daylong discussion of community policing. The goal was to identify

the critical skills that a supervisor needs to be effective. Although the curriculum has been developed, the course has not yet been implemented.

Virtual Library/Learning Team. A learning team was created using the concepts promoted by Peter Senge, an expert in knowledge management and author of *The Fifth Discipline*, to conceptualize and develop an intranet-based virtual library. The team of almost 30 individuals benefited from the learning process and developed skills that will support future creative endeavors. The department now has an expanding and frequently updated virtual library on its intranet site. Use of the virtual library is growing.

When the professional development course is taught, the virtual library will present class reading materials, serve as a resource for assignments between sessions, and deliver information on current issues facing the department.

Strategic Plan. The department now has a strategic plan for community policing that will guide it for several years. This plan will assist the department as it moves from a centralized force with one station to a decentralized force with four service centers and a substation. A broad cross section of department members participated in developing the plan.

Sergeants' Mentoring Program. A mentoring program has been developed and implemented to help newly promoted sergeants develop the specific skills that are necessary for the creation and continuation of community policing. This program emphasizes the scanning, analysis, response, and assessment (SARA) model and includes scenarios to demonstrate how others have approached problem solving. Newly promoted supervisors now go through a mentoring process with an experienced supervisor to refine problem-solving skills and develop creativity.

Site Visits. Three site visits gave approximately 10 members of the San Jose Police Department the opportunity to share experiences and philosophies of community policing with other law enforcement leaders. As a result of these site visits, several specific programs have been started in San Jose, including:

- *Faith-based initiatives from Baltimore and Boston.* This program resulted in a "cops, kids, and clergy" day between top command staff, clergy, and local youths to discuss ways to create better partnerships. Several follow-up meetings were held at the community level.
- *Decentralized accountability within the patrol structure for problem solving.* The Baltimore Sector Command model was used to create

a process for some lieutenants to assume problem-solving responsibility for specific geographic districts on a 24-hour basis, where they formerly had responsibility only for a specific period of time on their workdays.

- *The West Point Leadership Model.* As modified and taught within the Los Angeles Police Department, this model has been adopted as a component of the professional development course.

Executive Retreat. The executive retreat was held offsite. Reviewing the results of focus group interviews stimulated discussion about community policing and the direction of the department. The results of those interviews (approximately 50 pages of comments and commentary from department members) continue to serve as a resource for addressing common issues within the department.

Department Observations

Challenges

The LeadSimm training was the first concrete activity of the grant. Because this was new and unique, it took some time for word to spread that

the training was valuable. Attendance was low until outside participants were invited and word of the value of the training spread.

For the past several years, the chief of police has been the strongest proponent of community policing. As a result, the grant met with resistance from individuals who felt that the training and activities were merely a fad to be tolerated.

For the duration of the grant, the department engaged in an aggressive training regimen, which created a scheduling strain. That also negatively affected attendance. A possible solution is to institutionalize this training to make it a part of the culture.

The department took longer than it intended to produce the curriculum for the professional development course, which slowed the momentum to deliver the course. The curriculum is now complete and the department will train facilitators and schedule classes.

The grant encompassed a broad range of activities, which fostered creativity. However, it was difficult for some department members to fully understand how various activities were related and difficult to see the "big picture" of the department's commitment to community policing.

Benefits

The ACP grant contributed to advancing community policing in the San Jose Police Department in the following ways:

- The process of applying for the grant focused the department's attention on assessing its needs relative to community policing and allowed the department to strategize and plan an approach to improving leadership development, an issue of ongoing concern within the department.
- The grant has re-energized the commitment of both police officers and community members to community policing. Several captains and lieutenants have had responsibility for major portions of the grant. Each applied new ideas to further refine the grant. Each time a new individual or group became engaged, that involvement added sophistication and complexity to the initial concept. More and more people became connected with community policing and understood that the grant was addressing a broad range of initiatives. Department members had new opportunities to meet people inside and outside the department and to build relationships that were directly related to advancing community policing.

- Focus groups used in the preparation of the grant generated ideas that expanded the dialogue on community policing within the department. This discussion invigorated participants and demonstrated the department's willingness to share ideas in an open environment.
- Both the grant application and implementation process and the training provided by the grant offered new opportunities for staff and improved their skills.
- The grant allowed a large number of individuals to speak on behalf of community policing, removing the burden from the chief of police as the sole promoter.
- The evaluation component caused the department to consider desired outcomes and to design elements of the grant specifically to meet those outcomes. The department began with the end goal in mind. As an example, the professional development course was originally conceptualized as an internal course. On consideration, the value of opening the course to the department's partners and members of the community became apparent. The same thinking was applied to the LeadSimm training. The department aggressively solicited outside participation.

- The professional development course curriculum can continue to be used by supervisors to advance community policing.

Over the course of the grant, from 1998 to 2001, community policing became more institutionalized as a part of the department's culture. Other city-wide initiatives have complemented the grant. The city has expanded successful neighborhood-based initiatives to additional neighborhoods. This broader effort, named the Safe Neighborhood Initiative, gives comprehensive city attention not only to crime and blight, but also to housing, economic revitalization, and neighborhood organization. Internally, the city has instituted a process to measure the quality of services called Investing in Results, which has allowed the police department to focus on how its efforts support the city's broader mission. Additionally, the department has opened two of four planned community service centers, which have given the department a valuable presence throughout the city.

Lessons Learned

When a department invests in its people in creative ways, professional growth and a subsequent positive effect on the community are the results.

The ACP grant in San Jose proved to be a catalyst for change in an organization that needed it. The following strategies for implementing community oriented policing emerged from the department's experience with the ACP grant:

- Communicate regularly and in detail about the scope and intent of activities and initiatives.
- Convene members of the department on an ongoing basis to discuss progress.
- Include community members, key school personnel, and government partners in any training or discussion about community policing. This benefits the department, the other participants see the department as a powerful partner, and relationships that can be nurtured and called upon in the future are created.
- Empower individuals to take responsibility for projects. Creative, energetic people should be encouraged to build on the ideas of other people. The outcomes will include a better project, a sense of group pride, and a renewed commitment to community policing.
- It is not enough for the chief of police to support community policing. That support must extend through the chain of command and be demonstrated daily.

Panel Commentary

The panel applauds the candor of the San Jose Police Department in acknowledging that its community policing efforts “lost momentum” and that it consequently had to design and implement a leadership development program to “reinvigorate” its philosophical commitment to community policing. Police agencies rarely self-report that critical programs are jeopardized or are in decline; yet it is universally recognized that any significant program will experience cycles of success and failure. San Jose’s experience is immediately analogous to that of every agency that has attempted an ambitious agenda for change, and their approach to the need for course correction and reinvigoration was reasoned, appropriate, effective, and a model for others.

It is not enough for the chief of police to support community policing. That support must extend through the chain of command and be demonstrated daily.

The process of grant application and analysis is itself a catalyst for organizational insight and

growth. In the case of the San Jose Police Department, the research initiatives and creative thinking of key personnel led to the validation of key challenges and the consequent identification of powerful programmatic responses to those challenges.

The retooling of the original grant by incoming Chief Lansdowne was reported with honesty and insight. It is critical that every significant program has the support and imprimatur of the executive. It is a credit to both the San Jose Police Department and the COPS Office that they allowed for opportunities to rethink and ultimately modify the original grant based on the personal vision of a new chief of police. It is worth noting that the specific modifications proposed (i.e., expansion of leadership training for first-line supervisors, the increased involvement of community and government partners, the creation of a virtual library) were creative, progressive, and conceptually powerful.

This ACP grant was clearly used to maximum effect. The San Jose Police Department made a significant contribution of its own intellectual capital and organizational talent to leverage the \$249,000 award. The LeadSimm training program could stand alone as a substantial accomplishment and, in other hands, might have consumed the total sum of the grant funds. It is remarkable that





in addition to the LeadSimm program, the San Jose Police Department undertook and implemented five ambitious programs, including a virtual library, a sergeants' mentoring program, and a strategic plan for community policing. This level of performance is exemplary and should remind other agencies of the power of a grant—regardless of the amount—when it is wedded to a clear, relevant vision and a plan for its use.

This grant is notable because of the broad manner in which it addresses leadership, with all levels of

the organization included in training. Civilian personnel from the department and community members also participate in the training, including the professional development courses.

These efforts to be innovative and provoke the organization to “shake up” its usual practices to more fully implement community policing are commendable. That boldness, however, must come with a caution: traditional organizations tend to be highly resistant to change. Under such

conditions, change must be carefully and deliberately managed. This is a consideration both for those who fund change and for those who implement it.

Throughout the process of change, it is important to develop “champions” at several levels of the organization who both support a specific community policing philosophy and value change and innovation. These champions were important to the success of San Jose's efforts.

