

The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas

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Citizen's Police Academies:
Observing goals, objectives, and current trends

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to determine if Citizen Police Academies (CPA) are meeting their goals and objectives and that law enforcement agencies are continuing to institute this program.

Data for this research was gathered from archival sources, books, reports, personal observations, city statistics and reports. In addition, telephone, internet, and written surveys of Texas law enforcement was conducted along with surveys of graduates of CPA's. The findings show that law enforcement agencies have continued to institute CPA's since first introduced in Texas in 1986. The project also shows that the CPA's are meeting the goals and objectives both from the law enforcement perspective as well as from the graduates of the program. However, some coordinators of CPA's have reported that they feel that they have not met their full potential with the CPA program. It is unclear what was meant by "full potential", however, they did report positive results with the program.

The results of this study show that law enforcement agencies, especially municipal law enforcement agencies should continue citizen police academies if for no other reason than to educate their citizens about their police department, criminal justice system and the ways to reduce crime. This alone can improve relations with citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement agencies must improve upon their relationship with their citizens to dispel distrust and misconceptions brought on by such incidents as the Rodney King beating. The peace and security of communities virtually depend on their ability to forge effective partnerships with law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies must also enlist the aid of citizens in the prevention of crime and promote support of the police department. Police do not function in a vacuum (Peak and Glensor, 1999). Partnerships with citizens are important in maintaining a safe community environment. To this extent municipal law enforcement agencies have instituted citizen police academies (CPA). The concept was first introduced in Texas law enforcement agencies in 1986. Since that time, CPA's have assisted in fostering better understanding between citizens and police through education. Participants in CPA's have learned about police department operations, become more supportive of police work, and have developed an increased appreciation and awareness of the job of the police (Cohn, 1996).

This project is an investigation to examine the number of CPA's that have been instituted in Texas since 1986, by municipal police agencies. Data was obtained through mail surveys, e-mail surveys, personal observations, personal interviews and phone interviews. This project will also survey law enforcement agencies and graduates of Texas CPA's to determine if their goals and objectives have been met. Additional data from national and state survey research was also reviewed to review CPA success in meeting goals and objectives (Jordan, 2000; Hilson, 1994[b]; Bumphus, Gaines, and Blakely, 1999; Aryani, Garrett, and Alsabrook, 2000).

It is anticipated that the data collected from this project will demonstrate that municipal police agencies have continued to create CPA classes within their department. It is further anticipated that this project will determine that the goals and objectives of the CPA are being met not only

that this project will determine that the goals and objectives of the CPA are being met not only from the law enforcement agency prospective but also the citizens, The findings also concluded that municipal police departments have instituted CPA's more often than Sheriffs Departments The benefits of this project should convince any municipal police agency to conduct a citizen police academy, and for those who already conduct them, to provide additional resources to enhance their program. Additionally this project should encourage all law enforcement agencies to consider instituting CPA programs.

The majority of Texas Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies who have CPA programs have the same goals and objectives to forge effective partnerships with law enforcement. To improve their relationship with citizens to dispel distrust and misconceptions. To list the aid of citizens in the prevention of crime and promote support of the department. To become aware of the responsibilities of the department. Understand the difficulties and challenges of their police agency. To learn to cooperate in order to solve criminal justice problems. Assist the citizen's to make an informed decision about the department and it's officers. Help citizens become better prepared to cope with criminal incidents and make them report crimes and suspicious activity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Citizen's Police Academies (CPA) are a vital part of community-oriented policing. (Aryani, 2000). Many citizens simply do not know each other anymore, and this alienation and anonymity has created a social climate where crime and disorder flourish (McCoy, 2001). We should always remember that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being the only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are

incumbent on every citizen in the interest of community welfare and existence. (-Sir Robert Peel, 1829).

Citizen's Police Academies have been initiated in Texas since 1986 (Hilson, 1994[b]) and a variety of law enforcement agencies are adopting the idea of a CPA at a phenomenal rate (Bumphus, Gains & Blakely, 1999). One survey showed that thirty-one out of thirty five police agencies participated in CPA's (Watkins, 2001). Another survey of Texas Police Agencies was conducted and twenty-seven of those agencies stated that they conducted CPA's and sixty-seven percent of those agencies stated that they had been using CPA programs since 1990 (Hilson, 1994[b]). A national survey of coordinators of citizen police academies focused on coordinators' opinions about the relationship of the CPA, CPA purposes and goals, expected outcomes relative to citizens, and participant recruitment and selection. Responses came from 128 agencies, for a response rate of 86 percent. Results revealed that 109 of the participants reported having a CPA. Results also indicated that CPA's were not meeting their full potential but gave no details of what was meant by "full potential." The coordinators expressed goals, purposes, and benefits that are common in most CPA's, however, few agencies receive high priority in CPA recruitment and were not proportionately represented in the majority of CPA's. Participant recruitment and selection appeared to be slanted towards community elite's who had an interest in the departments to begin with. The overall findings of this study questioned the current status of CPA's as an element of community policing, as opposed to public relations or political relations (Jordan, 2000).

In 1995, the Dumas, Texas Police Department conducted a survey of 106 selected law enforcement agencies in Texas to study their experiences with CPA's. Fifty-eight percent of the responding agencies had CPA's in their community. All agencies reported improved relations

with citizens, because of the CPA's which lead to the realization that the benefits outweigh the costs such as manpower, materials and classroom space. Student evaluations at the beginning and end of the academy provided results for the overall experience of these agencies. In the conclusion of this report it stated that CPA's represent a vital part of community-oriented policing, that the teaching environment curtails the us-versus-them attitude and that CPA's provide a productive outlet for the mutual sharing of information and concerns. The report further stated that the CPA's bring law enforcement agencies and communities' together (Fuggett, 1995 as cited in Aryani, Garrett, and Alsabrook, 2000).

The basic purpose for the academies is to provide a mechanism for educating the public about criminal justice system and the ways to reduce crime. The overall goals are to gain support for police work, explain the operations of police agencies and encourage private citizens to undertake appropriate security measures (Sharp, 1999). Participants also gain an understanding of police procedures that is more reflective of everyday police work than what is portrayed by the media. This in turn helps reduce complaints about routine police matters (Greenburg, 1991). Also, some citizens that attend CPA's later on volunteer for different types of jobs such as greeters at mini-stations, park patrols, handicapped parking enforcement, crime watch captains, life skills training for women, child fingerprinting, tours of the police building, victim-witness advocated, and clerical duties (Sharp, 1999).

The Fort Worth Police Department in October of 1991 instituted a citizen on patrol program called Code-Blue, wherein after attending a Citizens Police Academy may volunteer for the Code-Blue. The purpose of the Code-Blue program is to have citizen's patrol their neighborhoods and report suspicious activity and crimes committed. In January of 1994 over 2,091 residence had completed the training and were patrolling their neighborhoods in over 90

subdivision (Hilson, 1994[a]). In 1997 the Pflugerville Police Department instituted a CPA and upon graduation of the CPA citizens volunteered for the Citizens On Patrol (COP) program. This program as of 2001 has over 150 graduates that participate in the COP program. The Pflugerville Police Department furnishes two city vehicles for the COP's to use in patrolling subdivision, streets, parks, hike and bike trails and business. One of the vehicles is a 1999 Chevrolet Alumni with the same decal design as their patrol cars with the wording "Citizens On Patrol". The other city vehicle is a Kawasaki four-wheeler used by the COP's to patrol the hike and bike trails and city park areas. Both vehicles have police two-way radio's in them and the COP's can check out cell phones. The COP's are also furnished with magnetic decals they can place on their personal vehicles, identifying them as COP's and they patrol in their private vehicles.

Citizens On Patrol also help direct traffic at special events, are called out to help with traffic accidents and have been called upon to assist at crime scenes to help locate evidence. Since the inception of the Pflugerville Police Departments COP program, citizens have donated over 6,600 man hours, saving the Pflugerville Police Department thousands of dollars in overtime that would have been paid to police officers. Evaluations are submitted by all class participants and these evaluations reflect that the goals and objectives of the CPA have been met (Glasgow, 2001). Graduates of the Pflugerville Police Department CPA's program have also volunteered and helped with various different programs within the department such as Blue Santa, Neighborhood Watch (Clowdus, 2000[bD], National Night Out (Clowdus, 2000[a]), Bicycle Rodeo, Victim Services (Allen, 2000) and Neighborhood Conference Committee (Reyna, 2000).

In May of 1994 a study reported sixty-five Texas law enforcement agencies were believed to be conducting CPA classes. Questionnaires were mailed to various different Texas law enforcement agencies and twenty-seven useable ones were returned. In those twenty-seven questionnaires it was recommended that all police departments should implement a CPA (Hilson, 1994). Another survey of 735 sheriff's departments and municipal police agencies around the country was conducted. This survey revealed that CPA's were being adopted at a phenomenal rate. Overall, 199 of the 438 responding agencies reported that they had a CPA. The survey also revealed that the majority of law enforcement agencies that had CPA's were municipal police agencies and that they exist in agencies of different sizes and types (Bumphus, Gaines and Blakely, 1999).

Municipal Police Department's continue to initiate citizen police academies (CPA) and report that the CPA's are meeting their goal and objectives.. Since the first CPA was started in Texas in 1986 a minimum of 116 have been created as of July 2001 (Munoz, 2001).

The number of municipal police departments that attended the Texas Citizen Police Academy State Convention in Austin, Texas in July of 2001, as compared to the number of citizens who have graduated from citizen police academies from those different municipal police departments CPA programs reflects a high percentage of citizens are volunteering after completing their CPA program. Graduates of the CPA program paid for there own expenses and therefore many citizens from around the state were unable to attend (Munoz, 2001). (see figure 1).

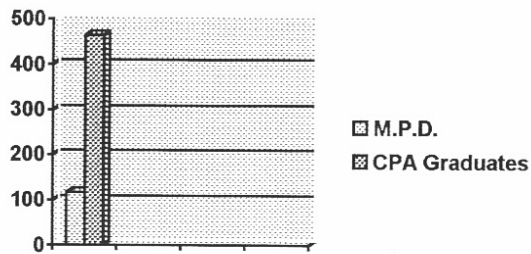


Figure 1. Municipal Police Departments and graduates attending the Texas Citizen Police Academy State Convention, July 2001.

Additional information contained in the survey of municipal police departments in Texas also revealed that CPA's had increased and were continuing to do so. Comparing the total number of Municipal Police Departments who initiated CPA programs suggests that between the years of 1996 through 2001 CPA's increased at a phenomenal rate (see figure 2). Looking at figure 1, it suggests that the numbers of CPA's are even larger as shown in figure 2.

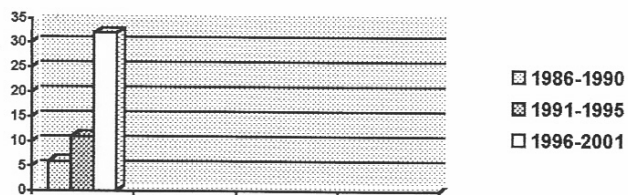


Figure 2. Year and number of Texas Municipal Police CPA inception years.

Coordinators of CPA's that were surveyed reported that the program had not reached it's full potential. Reasons varied from needing more resources to recruiting methods. However all coordinators stated that the purpose for the CPA's were being met. This survey could be very prejudiced as all of the citizen/students had volunteered after the completion of the CPA as

members of an alumni association and the majority also were involved in other programs such as citizens on patrol, volunteers in patrol, and greeters at police stations (see figure 3).

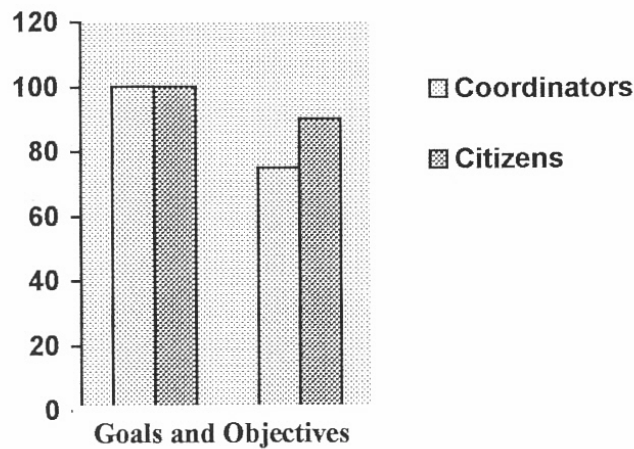


Figure 3. Goals and objectives achieved

Another part of the survey reflected that the CPA reached it's goals from the perspective of the citizens who attended. The citizens surveyed could be prejudiced toward the CPA as they had completed the program and no attendees who dropped out were surveyed (see figure 4).

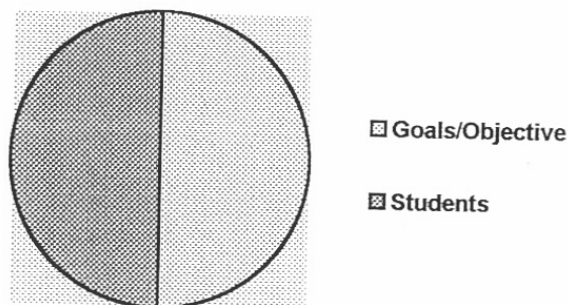


Figure 4. CPA graduates/goals and objectives achieved.

Citizen Police Academy graduates reported that the goals and objectives were met of the CPA's that they attended. Again the results could be prejudiced as most of the graduates joined

citizen police academy alumni associations and/or volunteered for other issues involving their police department (see appendices for goals and objectives).

METHODOLOGY

It is hypothesized that Citizen's Police Academies are meeting their goals and objectives and that law enforcement agencies are continuing to institute or maintain this program. To observe the goals, objectives, and current trends surveys were mailed to municipal police agencies and to graduates of their CPA programs. Other surveys were also conducted by phone, email and personal interviews. Analysis of the trends was compiled from the surveys. The surveys were used to ensure that a response was received from a broad spectrum of municipal police departments. Agencies surveyed had sworn personnel from the smallest with 8 officers to the largest with over 1,100 officers.

Surveys were distributed at the State Convention for Citizen Police Academies in Austin, Texas in July 2001, to 117 municipal police agencies and 464 citizens who have attended a CPA program. The response rate for the law enforcement agencies was 52 percent and 90 percent from citizens/students of citizen police academies. The high response rate was probably due to possible prejudices in favor of the CPA programs due to the fact that only citizens who have joined alumni associations were surveyed. Furthermore, the coordinators surveyed are the ones who conduct and/or coordinate the CPA program for their law enforcement agency.

The number of municipal police departments that attended the Texas Citizen Police Academy State Convention in Austin, Texas in July of 2001, in conjunction with the number of citizens who have graduated from citizen police academies from those different municipal police

departments CPA programs shows there is a tremendous growth in citizens who have attended and completed CPA programs.

FINDINGS

Municipal Police Department's continue to initiate citizen police academies (CPA) and report that the CPA's are meeting their goal and objectives. Since the first CPA was started in Texas in 1986 a minimum of 116 such programs have been created as of July 2001.

A survey of municipal police departments in Texas revealed that CPA's have increased and are continuing to do so. The total number of Municipal Police Departments who initiated CPA programs from 1986 through 2001 showed a significant increase. Statistics compiled, coupled with data from other municipal police agencies and graduates of CPA's show that the citizen police academy is a very effective tool even if it only meets one or more of their goals and objectives. Police Departments want to improve the relationship with their citizens to dispel distrust and misconceptions. They forge effective partnerships with law enforcement, enlist the aid of citizens in the prevention of crime and promote support of the department, becoming aware of the responsibilities of the department. They also want the citizens to understand the difficulties and challenges of their police agency. To assist the citizen's to make an informed decision about the department and it's officers. Help citizens become better prepared to cope with criminal incidents and make them report crimes and suspicious activity.

CONCLUSION

Critics of CPA's argue that the program reaches only those who are already interested in the police; however, most programs strive to recruit those who are not interested in the police and those in all socioeconomic classes, races, and religions. The law enforcement departments

try to target people already active in the community, but who may not necessarily be pro-police (Nowicki, 1994).

The research was conducted to determine if the goals and objectives of Municipal Police Agencies were being met from the perspective of the police department as well as the graduates of the program. Also, to determine if CPA's were continuing to be instituted.

Citizens want to focus on the quality of community life and the promotion of conditions supportive of human development. They know they want meaningful ways of involving themselves directly in the decisions affecting the safety of their community and they possess the resources police need to continue building a solid partnership (McCoy, 2001). Citizens who have participated in the CPA program have a sense of what they need in order to be full and equal partners in the advancement of community policing. Citizens know that without a common link or bond with their community they will remain largely fragmented, struggling to reclaim a healthy dynamic between themselves and the police. (Pranis, 1996).

Citizens want to know how they can contribute to solving crime problems. They want to be full and equal partners in the advancement of community policing and to focus on the quality of life in their community. Instituting a citizen police academy can accomplish these needs if the administration fully supports the program and if the coordinators continually evaluate their program and make the appropriate changes when needed.

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APPENDICES

CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY (CPA)
QUESTIONNAIRE
October 2001

STUDENT: _____

DEPT. ADDRESS: _____

CLASS # ATTENDED _____

WHEN WAS YOUR CPA STARTED: _____

PLEASE ANSWER THE BELOW QUESTION IF APPLICABLE

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Did you learn how you can contribute to solving crime problems? | YES | NO |
| 2. Did you receive a sense of what you need to know to become a full and equal partner in the advancement of community policing? | YES | NO |
| 3. Did you focus on the quality of community life and the promotion of conditions supportive of human development? | YES | NO |
| 4. Did you involve themselves directly in the decisions affecting the safety of their community? | YES | NO |
| 5. Were you informed that you possess the resources police need to continue building a solid partnership? | YES | NO |
| 6. Did the class open the lines of communication between the department and the community? | YES | NO |
| 7. Were the citizens given a firsthand look at the rules, regulations, and policies of the police department? | YES | NO |
| 8. Did you become aware of the responsibilities of the police, and gain understanding of the difficulties of the law enforcement profession? | YES | NO |
| 9. Did you gain the ability to make informed decisions about controversial incidents involving the public? | YES | NO |
| 10. Did you get to know the police in their community? | YES | NO |
| 11. Did you establish a personal commitment to the department? | YES | NO |
| 12. Were you a little skeptical but left with a pro-police attitude? | YES | NO |
| 13. Were some preconceived ideas or myths about police operations dispelled? | YES | NO |

Please list any other items or concerns you wish to be considered: _____

This questioner is available on the internet <http://www.cityofpflugerville.com/police/cpa> and can be emailed to rglasgow@cityofpflugerville.com or mailed to;

Sergeant Randy Glasgow
Pflugerville Police Department
1611 E. Pfennig Lane
Pflugerville, Texas 78660
512/670-5510 (Voice)
512/670-5502 (Fax)

LAW ENFORCEMENT
CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY (CPA)
QUESTIONNAIRE
October 2001

DEPARTMENT: _____

DEPT. ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

OFFICER/RANK: _____

WHEN WAS YOUR CPA STARTED: _____

HOW MANY GRADUATES HAVE YOU HAD: _____

HAVE YOU MET THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF YOUR CPA?	YES	NO
1. Did they learn how they can contribute to solving crime problems?	YES	NO
2. Did they receive a sense of what they need to know to become a full and equal partner in the advancement of community policing?	YES	NO
3. Did they focus on the quality of community life and the promotion of conditions supportive of human development?	YES	NO
4. Did they involve themselves directly in the decisions affecting the safety of their community?	YES	NO
5. Were they informed that they possess the resources police need to continue building a solid partnership?	YES	NO
6. Did the class open the lines of communication between the department and the community?	YES	NO
7. Were the citizens given a firsthand look at the rules, regulations, and policies of the police department?	YES	NO
8. Did they become aware of the responsibilities of the police, and gain understanding of the difficulties of the law enforcement profession?	YES	NO
9. Did they gain the ability to make informed decisions about controversial incidents involving the public?	YES	NO
10. Did they get to know the police in their community?	YES	NO
11. Did they establish a personal commitment to the department?	YES	NO
12. Were some of the students a little skeptical but left with a pro-police attitude?	YES	NO
13. Were some preconceived ideas or myths about police operations dispelled?	YES	NO

This questioner is available on the internet <http://www.cityofpflugerville.com/police/cpa> and can be emailed to rglasgow@cityofpflugerville.com or mailed to;

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