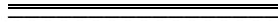


**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**



Police Service Animals for Smaller Agencies



**An Administrative Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Required for Graduation from the
Leadership Command College**



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ABSTRACT

This research will address police service animals for smaller police agencies in order to demonstrate how even the smallest police departments can obtain police service animals with little to no initial cost to the department or the city they serve. Through grant funds and by getting their communities involved for support and monetary donations, this can be a very achievable goal. This research intends to show that by getting communities involved in projects such as this, it not only brings the local police department and their communities closer together, it can also be beneficial when it comes to monetary support and ultimately strengthens the bond between the two. Research involved in this project consisted of a literature review of various books as well as internet articles, journals, personal interviews with departments who have achieved success in this type of project, written surveys, and seven years of personal experience. The findings of this research do, in fact, support the hypothesis, demonstrating how this goal is very achievable and beneficial, not only to police departments, but to the communities they serve. The findings also show that when communities are involved in such a program, their support can be overwhelming. As long as the entire program is initiated and continues to run in the correct manner, it can have an everlasting good impression on the police department and community, which ultimately supports years of successful service. In conclusion, smaller police agencies who are interested in a program such as this, however, feel that their goal is unreachable due to monetary funding, should consider reaching out to their communities. As long as the department does their homework on the type of program suitable for their community, they will, ideally, see surprising results in their favor.

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INTRODUCTION

Police service animals have been an intricate part of medium and large police agencies for many years. The value of these animals in law enforcement has proven to be unsurpassed by the lives they've saved, the narcotics, and seizures that have been made that in most cases would have otherwise been passed by. In the author's personal experience as a canine handler/trainer for seven years, there is no greater reward, and no better partner to work with like a well trained canine. Their loyalty and love for their handler is not something that is taught, and it's not something that can be taken away. Medium and larger police agencies like the Dallas Police Department, Garland Police, and others of their size spend thousands of dollars purchasing, training, and maintaining their canine programs. In fact most police departments of these sizes have budgets set up especially for their canine units. However, for the smaller police agencies budgets can be restrictive, or even nonexistent for programs such as these.

The purpose of this research is to show how smaller police agencies who wish to start a police service animal (canine) program can do so with little to no initial expense to the agency. The research intends to show how involving communities will add support to the program both on the personal level as well as the monetary level. Research intends to show that administrative support is a must in order for a program such as this to work without it, it's sure to fail. It is anticipated that this research will demonstrate how even the smallest police agencies can accomplish this goal and make this type program a productive part of any police department, while gaining support from the communities they serve.

This research will touch on training issues. Time spent on training, the

necessity for documentation of all training. Liability issues, advantages, and disadvantages. Choosing the right handler and animal with the right attitude and willingness to do the job as it should be done. There are several different applications in the use of animals in police work which will be discussed as well.

In an effort to obtain a broad base of information on this subject there will be several methods of inquiry used during the research phase. The basic research will consist of the review of books and other written materials which have been published on behaviors, aptitude, training, and sociologic acceptance between man and animals. Written surveys, personal interviews via phone or in person will be conducted, as well as personal input based on seven years of experience working with dogs. The primary question being, "Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?"

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Municipalities, County, State, and Federal Law Enforcement agencies have successfully utilized canine units in their crime fighting efforts for decades. According to O'block, Doeren, & True (1979), benefits of canine squads, state the actual use of canines for policing dates back to the early 1300s. Small police agencies suffer from the same types of criminal activity as larger agencies. Their crime fighting efforts are some times affected or hindered by their inability to afford the kind of resources utilized by larger agencies such as canines.

College campuses face many of the same criminal ills and activities as other law enforcement agencies. They also face some of the same challenges as smaller police departments when it comes to budget constraints and funding for specialized units. According to Mesloh (2003), canines and community policing an article

written for the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin states. The University of Central Florida Police Department (UCFPD) saw the need for a canine program. UCFPD discovered through their research that they could achieve their goal with little to no expense to the agency through creative fund raisers, community or student body support, and applying for Federal grants. UCFPD surveyed their student body which makes up the majority of the community. In their research they discovered that seventy percent of the students agreed that having a drug detection canine on campus deterred the use of illegal narcotics, while less than twelve percent felt that the police dog program was a waste of time and resources. Of the students surveyed sixty-seven percent of the students agreed that having canines reduced crime on campus. The research also showed that seventy-eight percent of the students surveyed would pay a \$1.00 or more per month towards funding a bomb detection canine on campus, seventy-three percent would pay a \$1.00 or more per month to fund a narcotics detection canine on campus.

The selection of the right breed of dog is very important to a new program as is the selection of the right person as the handler/trainer. Many different breeds of dogs have been experimented with for police work. According to O'block, Doeren, & True (1979), regarding the benefits of canine squads, the most popular breed used is the German shepherd for their agility, obedience, and willingness to please their handler. Doberman pinchers with good blood lines were found to be a very good choice because of their incredible intelligence level. Another breed that the author has personal experience with and is known to be a very good breed for narcotics and explosives detection is the Labrador retriever. The Labrador breed is a very mild mannered breed very intelligent, energetic, and obedient. Also it can be a very good choice for police

departments who are implementing a new canine program due to their sociological demeanor.

Selecting a handler/trainer is probably one of the most important aspects of implementing a new canine program. The right candidate can make a program like this a great success the wrong candidate can destroy the program without even trying.

Departments should take their time and evaluate and interview candidates thoroughly for a program such as this. According to O'block, Doeren, & True (1979), regarding the benefits of canine squads, there are two types of volunteers for this position consisting of, "efficient, professional officers who have a great interest in the project, and sour disillusioned officers who seek only an opportunity to wade the boredom of their regular tasks" (p. 159). In the selection of dog handlers, the second type is hopefully screened out.

According to Kovacich (1982), in a Case study of the development of a police canine unit, 141 page Thesis/dissertation. Police canines have been used extensively for decades with much success. Police canines serve as a psychological deterrent to criminal behavior. Dogs can search large areas and buildings in a relatively short period, and can afford additional protection for the police officers. Moreover, the police canine can accurately detect illegal narcotics and the presence of explosives. According to Nesloh (2002), well trained narcotics detection canines are thirty three percent more effective in the number of possible narcotics arrest then officers without narcotics trained dogs. Explosive detection trained canines proved to have a ninety five percent reliability rate compared to a fifty five percent rate of humans.

In an article written by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (1979), the benefits of a well trained canine unit are enormous and there are vast areas of use for canine teams in law enforcement. Statistical information pertaining to the effectiveness of the use of police dogs many evaluations have provided strong evidence that dogs can be of invaluable service in police work. Examples of the different situations in which dogs can be utilized include: (1) As psychological deterrent to criminal behavior; (2) The searching of buildings and open areas, employing the keen sense of smell for searching out criminals; (3) Defending their handler as well as other officers against attacks, particularly during arrests; (4) in locating lost person(s), again using their keen sense of smell which is 100,000 times stronger than man's; (5) In controlling unruly crowds and gatherings; (6) In the detection of illegal narcotics again through their keen sense of smell; (7) In detecting hidden explosives; and (8) In use of general patrol of high crime areas.

In a personal interview with Officer Greg Turner of the Balch Springs Police Department, a small department with 38 sworn officers, he stated his agency started their canine program in 2004. When they started their department had no funding for a program such as this so to get started they approached their Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association for assistance. Through their efforts the CPAA contacted area organization such as Wal-Mart, and other corporations within their City and obtained all the donated funds needed to start the program, which came to a total cost of \$5,700.00. This cost included the following: the purchase of a dog at \$2,500.00, renovations of an older squad car at cost of \$2,200.00, and their initial school and training process which was provided through the Garland Police Department instructed by lead K-9 handler

Brian Griffin at a cost of \$1,000.00. According to Officer Turner they continue to train on a weekly basis with the Garland Police Department K-9 unit, and continue to receive donations from their original sponsors for program maintenance, training aids, food, and Veterinarian needs.

Many smaller police agencies throughout their budgeting process might focus on manpower, equipment, and technology issues. Many police agencies don't look at the canine as an efficient part of their budgeting process based on expense, not realizing that these programs can be implemented with little to no expense to the department. In the case of the Seagoville Police Department their canine program was started when the Chief of Police received information regarding a grant provided by the United States Criminal Justice Department. The grant and its funding would be governed through the Governors' Offices of participating states. The grant and its funding provided smaller police agencies with the resources and capabilities of obtaining a goal they might otherwise never would have obtained.

Canine narcotics detection training was provided by Bill Grimmer a nationally known dog trainer and handler from Canada with 20 plus years of canine training experience. The training and school site was provided by the Tarrant County Community College Criminal Justice campus. Through the training Grimmer taught the participants the fundamentals of dog training starting with obedience and progressing to scent training starting off with pseudo products that produced the type of scent that the actual narcotic or cannabis would emit. Grimmer spent an entire day of the first phase explaining the importance of proper documentation of all training, and the necessity of continued training throughout the canine's entire working career.

Grimmer's philosophy and techniques in evaluating and selecting the right dog for the job, as well as his philosophies and techniques regarding starting the dogs training at a young age proved to be a great success. In the particular class that the author attended, which yielded 15 working dogs every dog and every handler from the class has experienced great success through the training and guidance provided.

The Seagoville Police Department was very much like other small agencies budgeted funds for a program such as this were very thin to nonexistent. Had it not been for granting funds for training and a great deal of administrative backing our program may have never gotten off the ground. The author states he was given one of the old patrol squads to turn into a K-9 unit, once he received the vehicle and permission from the Chief of Police he stripped out the back seat area, seat, door panels, any and all cloth and replaced everything with wood. The author built wood door panels and a wooden platform and covered all wood areas with indoor/outdoor carpeting for the dog. Then he obtained and installed a metal wire prisoner partition to separate the dog's area from the driver and passenger section of the vehicle. In all as for the vehicle preparation including the lettering for the outside he had about twenty dollars invested in the setup.

As for the acquisition of the dog the author searched the local newspaper classified ads and located a litter of Labrador retriever puppies. The Chief or Police wanted a dog with a friendly non-aggressive demeanor because the dog would not only be used as a tool for police work it would also be used as a community relations tool as well, and we could not have an aggressive dog around children. The author made an appointment to check out and test the dogs to see if any of them met the criteria for a working dog. The criteria mentioned was explained and illustrated by Mr. Bill Grimmer

through his experience as a dog handler and trainer. Through the testing process a total of eleven dogs were tested, and out of eleven dogs one met the criteria for a mild mannered high energy high drive working dog. The author met with the Chief of Police and advised him that he had located, tested and found a dog that would fit the needs and requirements for a working dog. The dog was purchased for a total of two hundred twenty five dollars. The department now had a total of two hundred forty five invested in the canine program.

Once the dog was selected and prior to making the purchase the author contacted the local veterinarian to see what his services would cost the City as far as shots, monthly check ups, and other veterinarian needs. Dr. Moore of the Seagoville Veterinarian Hospital advised that he would donate his services, medications, check ups and evaluations free of charge. Once medical services were obtained the dog and miscellaneous items such as an indoor kennel, food, food and water bowls, leash, and collar were purchased (miscellaneous items cost one hundred dollars) for a total current investment of three hundred forty five dollars.

When the dog was purchased she was seven weeks old. In order to get the entire community involved in the program the Chief of Police suggested that we hold a contest with the local elementary Schools and have the students name the dog. It was arranged through a local bank to award the winner with a \$50.00 saving bond, which was donated. Once the contest was announced at both Schools, and the local newspaper the dog was taken to each of the two elementary Schools so students could take a look at the dog that they were naming. Approximately two weeks later, all of the names submitted were collected. It took the better part of a day to filter through the almost 500 names

submitted. Once a name was selected the Chief of Police was advised of the name, and of the student who turned in the winning name. The winning name was "Tara."

Through the training provided and after months of in-home, as well as on the job training Tara became a very productive member of the Seagoville Police Department. Over the next seven years the dog would be directly responsible for or involved in over two hundred and fifty felony drug arrests, over four hundred misdemeanor drug arrest and paraphernalia citations. Over the dog's seven year working career 1996 through 2003 she was directly responsible for over fifteen thousand dollars in cash seizures, the seizure of two vehicles which the department used for other drug and crime fighting efforts. Over the course of seven years the canine program cost the City of Seagoville a little over three thousand dollars to run and maintain. This money was spent on food and at a cost of sixteen hundred and eighty dollars. Miscellaneous items like collars and leashes at a cost of approximately two hundred dollars. Maintenance such as certification trial fees each year for a total of seven hundred dollars, and training aids at approximately five hundred dollars. Proving that these programs do work and can give back more to the department and community than is invested.

Training and certifications go on for as long as the program is active. Mr. Grimmer emphasized the documentation of all training. The documentation would consist of the amount of training time, type(s) of narcotics used, difficulty of the exercises, and the evaluation of the dog during training. Documentation of training is mandatory for court proceedings, and departmental liability issues to see how both the dog and the handler are progressing, and to show to the administration that their efforts, and trust are being taken very seriously.

As for compensation to the author from the department and City for his efforts in the ongoing training and upkeep of the program the department allowed him a half hour each day overtime pay, at a rate of one and a half times his hourly rate. This calculated to approximately eighty five hundred dollars over the seven year period. According to the author there was actuality much more time spent on training and maintenance than the half hour allowance of compensation, however, it was a choice he had to make in order to have a successful program. After the author's reflection back over the years of service to the Seagoville Police Department, and the community the canine program and its small investment of less than twelve thousand dollars provided the City with a good return on their investment and a life time of community support, and memories. According to the author Tara has since retired after 7 years of faithful service, but her legacy will live on forever.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to show how smaller police agencies wishing to start a police service animal (canine) program can do so with little to no initial expense to the agency. It is anticipated that this research will show smaller agencies how this type of program can benefit both the department, and the communities they serve. This research should also show how getting the community involved in every aspect of the project can strengthen the bond between the police department and the community as a whole and enhance their willingness to assist in monetary donations, fund raisers and support of such a project.

The method of inquiry will include; (book literature, internet, and journal articles, written surveys, as well as personal interviews. The survey questionnaire was sent out to

ten Cities and Counties in the Dallas, Kaufman, and Henderson Counties of north Texas. Due to the fact that this research is focused on smaller police agencies the number of sworn officers was taken into consideration so the department size was limited to less than fifty sworn personnel. Some of the police agencies surveyed have canine unit(s) and some do not. The police agencies surveyed are as follows: Hutchins P.D., Kaufman P.D., Balch Springs P.D., Seven Points P.D., Forney P.D., Sachse P.D., Gun Barrel City P.D., Athens P.D., Crandall P.D., Ferris P.D.. The survey sent out consisted of seven questions; 1. Does your department currently have a canine program yes no?, 2. If your answer to question to question #1 was (yes) which of the following categories best describe your unit's function: Narcotics Detection Tracking & Apprehension Cross trained Patrol & Narcotics Bomb Detection? 3. If your answer to question #1 was (no), would a canine program work for your department?, if so of the four categories in question two which would best suite or benefit your department or community? 4. Would you get your community involved in a new canine program, and in what capacity? 5. If your department did not have the funds as so many smaller police agencies do not would you be willing to solicit for community fund raisers, and corporate donations? 6. If you're department has a canine unit how did you go about selecting the handler? If your department does not have a canine unit program, but you are interested in starting one up how would you go about selecting a handler? 7. How important to you believe training and documentation of training is to a canine program? Very Important Important Not Important. Out of the ten police departments surveyed all but one advised that they do see a need for some type of police canine program in their communities, most advised they could utilize either straight narcotics detection, or cross

trained patrol/narcotics.

In conjunction with the written survey a personal interview with the Balch Springs Police Department K-9 handler helped add support to this research. Some advised that they would be better suited with a narcotic trained dog, while others felt that they would be better served implementing a patrol, or cross trained canine program. All agencies except one advised that they would get their communities involved in an effort to gain support of the program, as well as monetary support. In fact the Balch Springs Police Department is a prime example of how this can be accomplished. All police departments surveyed agreed that mandated training and documentation of all training is imperative for departmental records purposes, and for court purposes. They also all agreed that finding the right officer as the handler is an even bigger challenge yet a very important requirement to a successful program.

It was found after analyzing and comparing each individual survey that ninety percent of the answers to the individual questions from each police department surveyed were very much consistent with each other. It was also learned through the personal interview of a local police agency (Balch Springs P.D.) that they achieved their goal of starting their first canine program with little to no initial expense to the police department. Having these facts of supporting information in the form of written surveys, personal one on one interview, documented articles, journals, and literature, and seven years of personal experience the hypothesis of the research question is supported.

FINDINGS

Throughout the research of publications, surveys, personal interviews, and through seven years of personal experiences it has been shown that a police service

animal program can be very beneficial to any and all police agencies and the communities they serve. It has shown that most police agencies large and small see the need for such a program and that the advantages largely outweigh the disadvantages. For example some of the advantages being that the departments obtain a very beneficial and effective tool in its crime fighting arsenal. It enables officers to better more efficiently keep a handle on drug usage, or trafficking. Some programs enhance officer safety not to mention the benefits that the department will see from the community relations and involvement.

The disadvantages and liability issues can be catastrophic if the agency does not choose the right animal for their particular project and needs, or the right person as the handler/trainer. Other disadvantages or liabilities are not having a policy that mandates and spells out the protocol for which the handler and department shall follow regarding training and training resources, complete and detailed documentation of all training, and maintenance of the program such as certifications. Other issues or causes to the downfall of programs such as these are the loss of support or interest from the police department administration, the City administration, or the community. These incidents usually occur when the program is mishandled from the very start.

This research has shown that most all smaller police agencies surveyed are willing to get their communities involved for both support, and monetary reasons. Research supported by one agency that was surveyed and interviewed who accomplished this goal by using this very same approach. The research has shown that by getting the community involved can strengthen the relationship between the police department and the community as a whole. The research has shown that these goals can be obtained by

even the smallest of police agencies if they are willing to put forth the effort and are willing to ask their communities for support and monetary donations. There are so many ways departments can raise the monetary funds for a program such as this for instance grant funds, fund raisers, corporate and individual donations, and surplus or discarded supplies from larger police agencies. The resources are out there, each individual agency just has to be committed and willing to seek them out. The research has shown that without the support of their communities, and the administration of their departments their program is sure to fail and may never even get off the ground. Over the seven years that I was assigned as the Seagoville Police Department's K-9 handler I gained an enormous amount of recognition and support not only from the department's administration, but the community as well.

Research has shown that finding the right animal and handler for the project is imperative. Without the right animal to suit the individual department's needs, and assigning the right person as the handler/trainer the project is nothing more than a waste of time, effort and valuable resources. These components are as important as the backing and support of the administration and community, as well as the documentation and training is. The impact that our program had on the community as well as the assistance that we were able to provide to small police agencies around the south east portion of Dallas County, as well as some larger agencies like the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Dallas County Sheriff's Department, Kaufman County Sheriff's Department and others proved that this was a worth while program for all agencies of all sizes.

In the realm of ongoing and continuous training it has been shown that it's a mandatory aspect of this type of program. Without continuous training and a training

schedule throughout the entire working career of the K-9 the program will lose it's efficiency, effectiveness, and credibility, and is sure to fail. Based on personal experience there are so many different aspects to K-9 training it's very hard for smaller police agencies or their handlers to create or have the resources to work their dogs through all the situations that they may encounter or be exposed to during their career.

There are many larger police agencies the Dallas Police Department, Fort Worth Police Department and now Kaufman County Sheriff's Department that currently have an established canine programs that are more than willing to assist smaller police agencies with training, training aids and surplus property. One such agency that the author has had personal experience with assisting in the area of training is the Garland Police Department. They held their training sessions on a weekly basis for experienced dogs and handlers every Tuesday to be exact; they welcomed area agencies of all sizes to join them in their training and requested nor required anything in return. They would assist in every aspect of canine training as their department offered training in many areas of canine work, from scent training such as narcotics and bomb detection, to obedience, crowd control, tracking, apprehension, and protection training.

This research has shown that there are many different uses and needs for canines in law enforcement, and that their value to law enforcement and communities they serve is proven and unsurpassed. Research has also shown that the canine's reliability is 33 to 55 percent better than that of the human when it comes to the canine's strongest attribute which is their sense of smell, which according to documentation is 100,000 times stronger than man's.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research is to show how smaller police agencies who wish to start a police service animal (canine) program can do so with little to no initial expense to the department. Through grant funds, and by getting their individual communities involved in the program, for support of the program itself, as well as on a monetary level this can be a very reachable goal. The research was intended to show that by getting their individual communities involved will strengthen the bond between their police department and the community they serve.

The research has shown throughout that the advantages do outweigh the disadvantages providing that the City as well as the department administration backs the program. The research and personal experience has shown that by reaching out to their communities can greatly reduce the expense that starting a program such as this can cost. It has been shown that departments are willing to go out for community support and donations. It has been proven that by getting their communities involved in a program such as this adds to the strength between the police department and the communities they serve.

The findings of this research did in fact support the hypothesis. Due to there being limited research articles, books, or internet information regarding this subject it was hard finding material with great insight and vast levels of research. Therefore a good deal of this research was based on seven years of personal experience, and knowing from the ground up how the Seagoville Police Department initially started their K-9 program. A substantial amount of information was obtained in the surveys of police departments of fifty or fewer sworn officers, and by personal interviews of one police department who

actually used this methodology to start and maintain their canine program.

This research is centered around the smaller police agencies, agencies with limited funding for a program such as this, yet have the same needs and desires as larger police agencies. Knowing first hand that smaller police agencies have limited to no funds budgeted for these type programs gives all the more reason to reach out to their communities for support and help. And that by getting their respective communities involved, and if its done right they'll have this support for years to come. Who benefits from this type of program? I feel that everyone involved benefits, the police agency by obtaining a very viable resource and addition to their department, as well as the communities they serve, with programs such as these just there mere presence is a deterrent to the criminal element.

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