

COLLABORATIVE REFORM INITIATIVE for Technical Assistance

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) created the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance (CRI-TA) in 2011 in response to requests from the law enforcement community for a proactive, nonadversarial, and cost-effective form of technical assistance for agencies with significant law enforcement-related issues. It provides the DOJ with a middle ground between formal investigation and consent decree monitoring through the Civil Rights Division and smaller-scale resources and assistance currently provided by the department.

The purpose of CRI-TA is to improve trust between agencies and the communities they serve by providing a means to organizational transformation around specific issues. It is not a short-term solution for a serious deficiency but rather a long-term strategy that first identifies issues within an agency that may affect public trust and then offers recommendations based on a comprehensive agency assessment for how to resolve those issues and enhance the relationship between the police and the community. Agency participation in this collaborative process is voluntary; however, agencies selected to participate must demonstrate a commitment to address the recommendations and undertake significant reform efforts.

The COPS Office uses assessment and technical assistance providers to coordinate this work. Based on the involvement of subject matter experts, interviews, data and records analysis, and direct observations, as well as conducting research and analysis,

the COPS Office issues a series of findings and recommendations that are consistent with best practices in policing. The agency's progress toward addressing the recommendations is monitored over a period of 18 months to ensure the changes are sustained. Reports summarizing the status of each recommendation are publicly released, offering a level of accountability to the community. In addition, in the spirit of the collaborative nature of this work, the COPS Office provides technical assistance and other resources to the agency to help it address its specific needs.

The CRI-TA initiative helps to proactively promote organizational and cultural changes in law enforcement agencies across the United States, because the recommendations have applicability beyond the individual agencies in which these reviews are conducted. The recommendations and outcomes from these sites benefit agencies nationwide because they can adapt them to their own critical needs. Because all reports are released publicly, they serve as a road map for change for other agencies.

In 2011, the COPS Office began working with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) to provide an in-depth analysis of five years of officer-involved shootings. In October 2012, the COPS Office published a report summarizing the result of the initiative, entitled *Collaborative Reform Process: A Review of Officer Involved Shootings in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department*. The LVMPD has made considerable progress in changing its policies, tactics, and training through the COPS Office CRI-TA initiative. In 2013, the LVMPD successfully implemented over 95 percent of the recommendations identified in the report.

In 2013, the COPS Office initiated CRI-TA work in the Spokane (Washington) Police Department and the Philadelphia Police Department, and we have publicly issued their assessment reports. In 2014, the COPS Office initiated efforts in the St. Louis County (Missouri), Fayetteville (North Carolina), and Baltimore Police Departments. We have publicly released the assessment report for the St. Louis County Police Department; other CRI-TA engagements continue to progress. In 2015, CRI-TA was launched in the Salinas (California) Police Department.



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