

2010 LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATION OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIRECTORS  
(LEOPRD) ANNUAL MEETING  
April 14, 2010 – Philadelphia PA

The fourth annual meeting of the Law Enforcement Organization of Planning and Research Directors (LEOPRD) was brought to order by LEOPRD President Julio Schrodel, M.P.A., Cape Coral Police Department. Attendees included 12 law enforcement planning practitioners, three researchers, three representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice and four staff members from the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). Presentations and discussion focused on “hot topics” for planning and research directors, planning and research best practices, and LEOPRD future initiatives.

The key theme was how to create and maintain a viable planning and research initiative in times of increasing budget problems. Most planning and research directors have direct contact and discussions with the chief executive -- who provides direction for the functions and products of the unit. Frequently, however, it seems that planning and research units become “catch-alls” for a variety of tasks. Consequently, the rest of the agency does not always recognize the value of planning and research.

The consensus among the meeting participants is that the highest value of the planning and research function is reached when the unit is able to:

- Consistently discover and report on the best and most efficient practices in policing;
- Chart and monitor the course of action on projects;
- Prepare the background for new ideas and initiatives for the agency; and
- Ensure that the operations of the unit are aligned with the agency’s overall mission.

When these elements cannot be consistently accomplished and the value of the planning and research operations cannot be continually demonstrated, the unit’s identity suffers and its sustainability is questioned.

This identity crisis, it was agreed, can lead to an underutilization of planning and research. A recent PERF survey revealed that many of the 200 largest police agencies have no research and planning operation and, of those that do, one-third have no policies governing the planning and research function. Consequently, participants concluded that planning and research directors need to develop methods to promote an emphasis on high quality products, more professional services, and heightened awareness of the potential of the planning and research function.

Another topic covered during the meeting was strategic planning. One agency that began a strategic planning overhaul in 2003 focused on several core concepts that led to a successful strategic planning process:

- The chief executive became a champion and staunch advocate and fostered internal and external participation, consent and support.
- The chief executive clearly defined success and failure.
- Deputy chiefs, directors and commanders were charged with oversight of the strategies, with accounting for and allocating resources, and addressing issues and obstacles.
- Lieutenants and other managers became strategy leaders who implemented and completed the planned strategies.

Much discussion took place about “model law enforcement planning and research components.” A preliminary model developed by Will Davis of the Scottsdale, AZ Police Department, Gary Cordner of

Kutztown University and Bruce Taylor of PERF, uses a matrix approach to classify five components of planning and research – administration, operations, research and analysis, planning and strategy, and budget and finance. The model presents a systematic framework that seeks to identify the range of planning and research functions. Participants found the model a useful tool to begin discussions on how a “successful” planning and research function should operate and be organized and structured. Issues that were raised included how to define a “successful” planning and research operation, how standards might be developed and refined, how applicable a model might be to departments of varying size and complexity, and how to continue the discussion and development process.

“Hot issues” that surfaced during the open discussion period included how planning and research might be brought to bear to create a “new and improved” second generation CompStat model; how to generate community awareness and support for law enforcement planning and research; and the opportunities presented for the planning and research function by Predictive Analytics. Participants were very interested in the potential for methodologies that may reliably predict such diverse variables as the impact of specific operations, of conditions of disorder and environmental characteristics on the ability of the police to control and prevent crime and violence.

Participants heard presentations on the nexus between LEOPRD and the International Association of Law Enforcement Planners (IALEP) by Ken Hailey, Saint Louis Metropolitan Police Department; on the Electronic Monitoring System used in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department presented by Ken Miller of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department; and on Strategic Planning for Police Facilities by Paul Paskoff, also of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department.

The final presentation of the day was titled, “Exploring the Application of Private Sector Best Practices” by Brenda Bond of Suffolk University. This presentation served as a summary and conclusion to the conference. A critical part of the business model used by corporations and business is the integration of research and planning as a core process. Dr. Bond’s research demonstrates that strong leadership and trained managers are of paramount importance in driving successful planning and research operations. Key success factors for planning and research include a strong commitment to human and financial resources, the development of a strategic roadmap, and on-going connection to a professional community. Leadership is a key component identified in Dr. Bond’s work, but leadership entails more than just the chief executive. Directors, supervisors, or team members engaged in the process of research and planning are intrinsically situated to be leaders in making their agencies more progressive and cutting edge in the providing of public safety.

Next Steps:

- Over the next several months LEOPRD will continue to consider refinements of the Davis-Cordner-Taylor model for planning and research components.
- The membership will look for methods to increase and enhance communications among law enforcement planning and research directors.
- LEOPRD will seek opportunities to more fully engage law enforcement chief executives to ensure that planning and research units continuously improve and evolve to provide high value and a significant return on investment to law enforcement agencies and the people they serve.

Summary by Craig Fraser, Director of Management Services, the Police Executive Research Forum and Jeff Egge, Fellow, the Police Executive Research Forum (and Supervisor, Crime Analysis Unit, Minneapolis Police Department.)