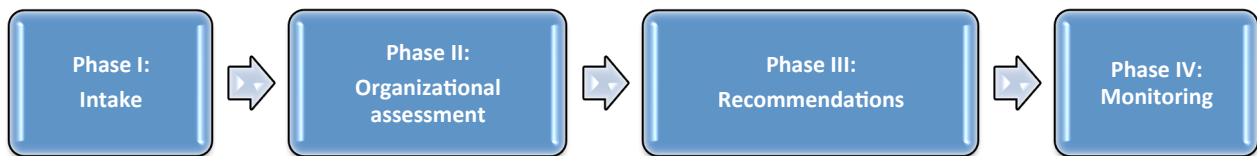


Collaborative Reform Model: An assessment of use of force policies and practices in the Spokane Police Department

Collaborative Reform Model overview

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) developed the Collaborative Reform Model of technical assistance to engage with law enforcement agencies on issues such as use of force, community trust, and police legitimacy. The model provides requesting agencies with a comprehensive organizational assessment, followed by a series of recommendations, and a period of monitoring the implementation of reforms (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Phase I: Intake

Spokane Police Department (SPD) has requested the Collaborative Reform Model of technical assistance from the COPS Office.

Goal

To improve departmental use of force processes in the SPD, taking into account national standards, best practices, existing research, and community expectations.

Objectives

1. Examine departmental use of force policies and procedures in comparison to national best practices and existing research, identify areas for improvement, and provide recommendations.
2. Analyze a sample of use of force investigation files from 2009–2013 and identify trends, strengths, and weaknesses.
3. Examine the role of the ombudsman in use of force investigations in comparison to national best practices and existing research.
4. Improve SPD organizational culture as it relates to use of force to build trust with the community.
5. Provide technical assistance as necessary.

Outcomes

1. Improved use of force policies and procedures by meeting or exceeding the standards set by national best practices.
2. Improved quality of use of force investigations by demonstrating compliance with departmental procedures and national best practices.
3. Complete understanding of how Spokane’s civilian oversight system compares to national best practices.
4. Improved community policing philosophy within SPD and improved community partner perspectives and relationships.

Phase II: Organizational assessment

In the organizational assessment phase, the assessment team employs a multi-pronged approach to learn about SPD as an organization. The team becomes experts on SPD policies, practices, and procedures as they relate to use of force and use of force investigations. The organizational assessment consists of four primary modes of inquiry: document review; interviews; data analysis; and direct observation (see Figure 2). At the same time, the assessment team will interview members of SPD and the community and consult with experts and existing research on how SPD can reform its organization with respect to use of force and use of force investigations.

Figure 2



Objective 1: Examine departmental use of force policies and procedures in comparison to national best practices and existing research, identify areas for improvement, and provide recommendations

The team will examine SPD policies and procedures related to use of force. The assessment will be limited to the examining the following:

- Use of force policy,
- Use of force training,
- Use of force reporting,
- Early warning systems,
- Use of force investigations, and
- The administrative review of use of force incidents.

The team will then compare these policies and procedures to national best practices and existing research. Any gaps identified in this examination will be noted as areas for improvement and recommendations on how SPD can meet or exceed best practices will be provided.

Document review

The following documentation will be reviewed as part of the assessment:¹

- SPD Policy Manual,
- Use of Force policy,
- Use of force (policy and in-service) training course materials,
- Early Warning System policies and procedures,
- Use of force investigations policies and procedures, and
- Administrative review policies and procedures (including disciplinary matrix).

Interviews

The team will conduct a series of interviews, to which will include the following members of SPD:

- Executive Command,
- Random selections of officers and sergeants,
- Training Center Captain,
- Crisis Intervention Team member(s),
- Police Employee Assistance Program,
- Use of Force investigator(s),
- Internal Affairs investigator(s),
- Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force/SIRR members, and
- Deadly force review board members.

Direct observation

If feasible, the team will observe a deadly force review board meeting.

Data analysis

N/aA

Objective 2: Analyze a sample of use of force investigations files from 2009--2013 and identify trends, strengths, and weaknesses.

In addition to reviewing the SPD policies and procedures on conducting a use of force investigation, CNA will also analyze in more detail a sample of Use of Force Investigative Reports from 2009--2013 (total of 433 reports).

¹ Other documentation may be requested throughout the process.

Data analysis

The use of force investigatory files will be randomly selected and include both fatal and non-fatal incidents during this four year period. In reviewing these files, CNA will identify common themes in investigatory procedures, demographic trends, and administrative review findings and compare these findings to departmental procedures and national best practices, to determine the gaps and weakness, if any, SPD should address.

Objective 3: Examine the role of the ombudsman in use of force investigations in comparison to national best practices and existing research.

The team will assess the role of the ombudsman in use of force investigations. Policies, procedures, and legal authority of the Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPO) will be examined in the context of national best practices and existing research on civilian oversight systems.

Document review

The following documentation will be reviewed as part of the assessment:²

- Spokane Municipal Code,
- OPO Policy/Procedures Manual, and
- OPO Annual reports.

Interviews

The team will conduct a series of interviews, to which will include the following individuals:

- Police Ombudsman and
- Office of the Police Ombudsman staff.

Direct observation

When possible, the team will observe city council hearings/discussions on the legal authority of the Police Ombudsman.

Data analysis

N/aA

² Other documentation may be requested throughout the process.

Objective 4: Improve SPD organizational culture as it relates to use of force to build trust with the community.

In an effort to identify the internal cultural issues that might be affecting use of force investigations, CNA will review the results from the Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool and conduct a series of interviews with both SPD officers and community members. CNA will also review the methods used by other law enforcement agencies to effectively overcome and/or prevent negative community-police relationships through organizational change.

Document review

The following documentation will be reviewed as part of the assessment:

- Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool results,
- SPD Policies and procedures related to community policing, and
- SPD Public Information and the procedures for releasing information to the public about a use of force incident.

Interviews

The team will conduct a series of interviews with the following SPD members:

- SPD Officers assigned to community policing initiatives,
- Random selection of officers and sergeants,
- Community members/leaders,
- SPD Public Information Officer(s), and
- SPD Police Guild

Direct observation

If feasible, CNA will attend a number of community advisory group meetings.

Data analysis

CNA will analyze the results from the Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool and identify recommendations for how the SPD can improve their Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool and community partner perspectives.

Objective 5: Provide technical assistance as necessary.

SPD has also requested direct technical assistance (TA) to assist help in implementing the recommendations identified in the Use of Force Committee's Report. All requested TA will be directed to for approval by the COPS Office prior to delivery.

Depending on the nature of the request, TA may include directing SPD to training resources, assisting in the development of a peer-to-peer partnership with other local law enforcement agencies, and assisting in the review of newly developed policies and procedures.

Phase III: Findings and recommendations

At the conclusion of the assessment phase, the team will develop a series of key findings and recommendations related to each of the objectives listed above. The assessment report will describe the process, findings, and recommendations, and be publically available.

Developing findings

The findings will describe an area of the department, its policies, practices, and processes that should be improved upon, based on the assessment. As needed, team members may follow up with SPD for additional information and a factual review of the finding.

Developing recommendations

The team will develop recommendations by identifying relevant standards and practices that address findings from the assessment. Resources the team will use include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Police Executive Research Forum,
- International Association of Chiefs of Police,
- Department of Justice reports,
- Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs,
- Subject matter expert review,
- Academic research reports, and
- SPD internal sources.

Collaboration conference

When findings are finalized, team members will engage with SPD in a collaboration conference, the goal of which is to ensure that recommendations are well-suited for the department. The team will present their findings and recommendations to SPD, at which time the department may provide comment and suggestions for refining the recommendations. All involved parties will agree that the goal of the conference is to ensure that the assessment recommendations address the findings and meet the study's objectives and goals.

Assessment report

The assessment report will be produced approximately eight months from the beginning of the assessment. The assessment team will produce one draft and one final report. The draft will be reviewed by internal CNA and DOJ reviewers, including editors. The review period will be open for a minimum of two weeks. At the end of the review period, the assessment team will compile comments and update the report as they deem appropriate. Once the final report is completed, the report will go to press and be publically disseminated.

Phase IV: Monitoring

The team will monitor SPD's implementation of reforms for a period of 12 months. Status reports will be produced at six and twelve 12 months and disseminated publically. During this time period, the assessment team will hold monthly conference calls with SPD to discuss the department's strategy and progress towards each recommendation and timelines for completion.

Six-month report

The team will produce a monitoring follow-up report six months after the final report. The report will detail SPD's progress on each recommendation. The assessment team will produce one draft and one final report. The draft will be reviewed by internal CNA and DOJ reviewers, including editors. The review period will be open for a minimum of two weeks. At the end of the review period, the assessment team will compile comments and update the report as they deem appropriate. Once the final report is completed, the report will go to press and be publically disseminated.

Final report

The team will produce a final monitoring report twelve 12 months after the six-month monitoring report. The report will detail SPD's progress on each recommendation. The report will also measure any related outcomes and the impact of the department's reforms. The assessment team will produce one draft and one final report. The draft will be reviewed by internal CNA and DOJ reviewers, including editors. The review period will be open for a minimum of two weeks. At the end of the review period, the assessment team will compile comments and update the report as they deem appropriate. Once the final report is completed, the report will go to press and be publically disseminated.

Project management and administration

Throughout the project period, the assessment team will regularly report to the COPS Office program manager on the technical and financial status of the project. The financial report will detail the amount of funding used during the previous month, the amount of funding left in the project account, and any approved changes to the project plan. The technical report will detail project activities, such as site visits, interviews completed, documents reviewed, and any action items that need to be addressed.

Team members

Denise Rodriguez King will serve as principal analyst and project director for CNA.

Blake McClelland will serve as the law enforcement subject matter expert.

Shahin Saloom will serve as a research analyst.

James Stewart will serve as a senior advisor.

Delilah Barton will serve as project financial manager.