

Potential Improvements to the Deputy Sheriff Trainee Probationary Period

A report recently issued by the Inspector General, entitled *Analysis of the Deputy Sheriff Trainee Probationary Period: Recommendations for a Meaningful Assessment of Opportunity*, identified deficiencies in the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department’s probationary evaluations of Sheriff Deputy Trainees and made four recommendations to ensure that a Deputy Sheriff Trainee’s probationary period is a meaningful part of the employee selection process.

Deputy Sheriffs play a central role in the County’s justice system. To properly prepare trainees for a law enforcement career—and to identify those unsuitable for such a career—the Sheriff’s Department must provide each Deputy Sheriff Trainee with a meaningful probationary training period and performance evaluation. This is especially critical today in light of the significant hiring efforts currently underway.

The Department has responded to the Inspector General’s report, acknowledging the existence of deficiencies and agreeing to some, but not all, of the recommendations. The recommendations made to the Sheriff were to:

1. Revise policies governing the probationary period to:
 - a. Set forth a clear definition of the term “meaningful”;
 - b. Identify specific competencies with specific and measurable benchmarks by which to evaluate Deputy Sheriff Trainees, and;
 - c. Clarify the requirements for data entry into e-LOTS so that the evaluation of Deputy Sheriff Trainees against specific topics is documented and to ensure that a complete written assessment of the Deputy Sheriff Trainee is in the e-LOTS paper file; and
2. Assign to each Deputy Sheriff Trainee for the entire probationary period a single Training Officer who would be responsible for providing a meaningful training period and evaluation for the Trainee;

MOTION

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

KNABE _____

ANTONOVICH _____

SOLIS _____

3. Release during the probationary period Deputy Sheriff Trainees who consistently do not display aptitude for the position;
4. Require that a Commander review a Deputy Sheriff Trainee's final evaluation and affirmatively approve that the Deputy Sheriff Trainee's has passed the probationary period.

The Department has concurred with and plans to implement recommendations 1(a),(b),(c). The Department has not concurred with recommendations 2, 3 and 4, citing workload, staffing levels, and other concerns. While the Board agrees that county government must always consider the cost to the public of reforms and greatly appreciates the Sheriff's efforts to work within his budget, the Board also believes that a meaningful evaluation of probationary employees is such a significant element of our public service responsibility that all options should be carefully considered.

The Board wishes to partner with the Sheriff in exploring the best options available in order to learn whether some might be aided by Board action. For instance, it is possible that supervision of probationary employees could be improved through a modest increase in probationary supervisory staff coupled with a system of centralized monitoring—if not by a commander, then perhaps by a team added for that purpose to the Professional Standards Bureau. And perhaps consider incorporating relevant portions of the policies or practices that the Sheriff currently uses in the Field Training Program (FTP) for patrol deputies. Accordingly, the Board would like to open a public dialogue on this issue and wishes to solicit the Department's assistance in this regard.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors request that the Sheriff:

1. Provide a plan that would include methods and timetables for the implementation of recommendations 1(a),(b) and (c), with which it has concurred and has the resources to implement;
2. As to recommendations 2, 3 and 4, provide potential options that could achieve the objectives of these recommendations, with associated cost estimates for each option; and
3. Provide any other recommendations or steps that would improve probationary supervision;

The Board requests the Sheriff report back within 60 days.

#

HLS:bp