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The **Criminal Justice Institute** provides management, forensic science, and computer-related education and training, as well as research services and technical assistance to Arkansas' law enforcement and criminal justice community.

This quarterly newsletter is designed to provide timely information to improve the management, leadership, and performance skills of law enforcement supervisors.

*Your comments and suggestions
are solicited and welcomed.*

**Please make copies of
this publication and dis-
tribute them to others in
your agency.**

An Analysis of Ethics Instruction for Arkansas Law Enforcement... The Final Results

Introduction

In the last issue of the *CJI Management Quarterly*, we revealed that the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) recently distributed a survey to law enforcement agencies across the state to assess whether law enforcement administrators feel they are providing sufficient levels of ethics instruction and training to their employees. Administrators were also asked to share their recommendation on the optimal number of hours for ethics instruction and to indicate whether they desired this instruction to be voluntary or mandated by state statute.

Survey participants were selected by utilizing a database which includes the mailing address of every Arkansas law enforcement agency known to CJI. There were a total of 344 separate agencies contacted by this method, and it yielded a 57 percent return rate. The survey results reveal three factors of interest that will be explored in this issue of the *CJI Management Quarterly*, including:

- **The current level of satisfaction expressed by agency administrators in regard to the quantity of ethics instruction offered at present**
- **The administrators' recommendations for delivering more hours of ethics instruction on a yearly basis**
- **The administrators' feelings on whether ethics instruction should be mandatory or voluntary for Arkansas law enforcement agencies**

(Note: Before reading the results, keep in mind that this study was designed to address qualitative aspects of the satisfaction with present ethics instruction and training. It does not attempt to address the cause of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with present levels of delivery.)

Present State of Ethics Instruction

Survey responses in this study confirmed that ethics instruction is important to Arkansas law enforcement executives. Sixty-five percent of the survey respondents "strongly agreed" and an additional 34 percent "agreed" that ethics instruction is an important element of their agency administration, bringing the total agreement to 99 percent.

Since ethics instruction was deemed important, law enforcement administrators were asked to respond to the statement, *Personnel routinely receive ethics instruction*. **Chart One** (shown on page 2) illustrates that the majority of respondents were not totally dissatisfied with the present delivery of ethics instruction. Sixty-five percent "agreed" and "strongly agreed" that their personnel routinely are taught ethics, while 35 percent did not agree with the statement.

To further examine the current level of satisfaction with ethics instruction, the study asked for a response to the statement, *Personnel within my agency do not receive a sufficient amount of ethics instruction on a yearly basis.* **Chart Two** (shown right) reflects that while administrators may not be dissatisfied with the present delivery of ethics instruction, 64 percent “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that their personnel do not receive sufficient amounts of instruction. Thirty-six percent of the executives either “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” that there was not a sufficient amount of ongoing ethics instruction.

Recommendations on Number of Hours of Ethics Instruction

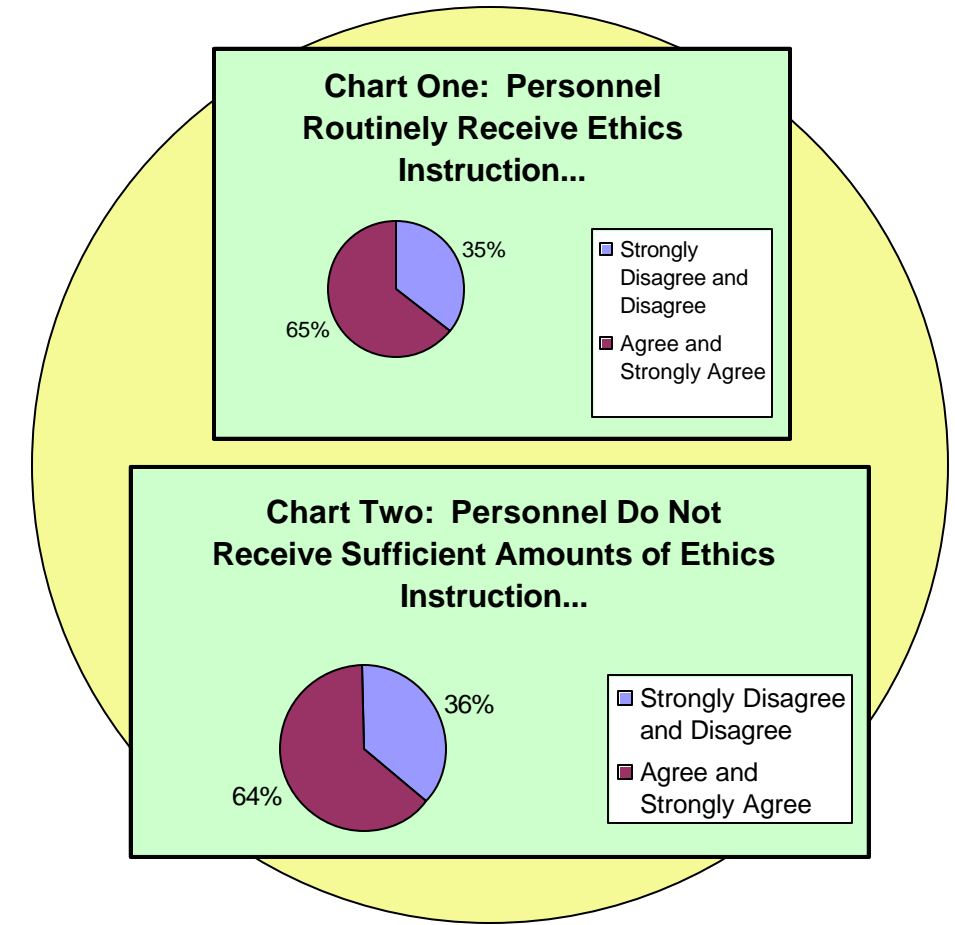
Next, law enforcement administrators were asked how many hours of ethics instruction are presently being provided to their personnel within a calendar year. They were also asked to comment on the optimal number of hours of ethics instruction that they would like to provide to their personnel on a yearly basis.

Chart Three (shown on page 3) illustrates the contrasts between what is currently offered and the desired number of hours of ethics instruction and training. The chart indicates that the majority of the agency administrators are currently providing eight hours or less of ethics instruction to their personnel. Statistically, 81 percent of the respondents acknowledged this fact with only 19 percent of the replies indicating that the agencies provided 16+ hours of ethics training.

Only 10 percent of the agency administrators reported satisfaction with less than eight hours of ethics instruction. An overwhelming 90 percent indicated that they desire more ethics instruction for their personnel. Fifty-nine percent desired eight or 16 hours, while an additional 31 percent desired 24 or more hours of ethics instruction yearly.

Mandatory vs. Voluntary Ethics Instruction

As shown earlier, law enforcement administrators have indicated that ethics in-



struction is important to the administration of their organizations. Furthermore, there is evidence that many desire increased amounts of ethics instruction. The next portion of the CJI survey asked respondents whether or not they supported ethics instruction on a mandatory or voluntary basis.

Of the eight law enforcement agencies under state jurisdiction that mailed responses, seven of the eight advocated mandatory requirements for ethics instruction. Each agency represents a significant number of law enforcement officers. This grouping of agencies was comprised of entities such as the Arkansas State Police, the Arkansas Highway Police, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and various state universities and colleges.

For the purpose of this study, the remaining two classifications of law enforcement officers—municipal and county—were broken down into jurisdictional sizes to illustrate a trend. **Chart Four** (shown

on page 3) illustrates that county law enforcement executives are evenly divided on this issue. Counties with small populations (less than 10,000) are in favor of mandatory requirements, as are the larger populated counties (25,000 and greater). The counties with mid-range populations favor voluntary requirements for ethics instruction by a 2 to 1 margin.

Chart Five (shown on page 3) presents similar findings in respect to municipal law enforcement agencies, although there is a slightly larger number of respondents within this classification who desire mandatory requirements as opposed to voluntary compliance.

Taken as a whole, survey returns indicate that there is a slight majority of Arkansas law enforcement executives in favor of mandatory requirements for ethics instruction. Fifty-six percent of the executives are in favor of state statutes imposing mandatory standards, while 44 per-

cent of the respondents are in favor of agencies receiving ethics instruction on a voluntary basis.

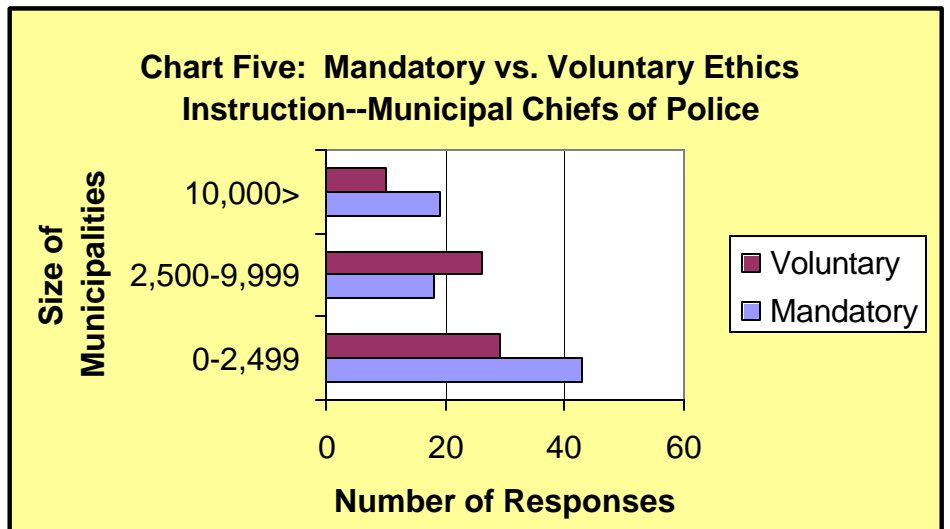
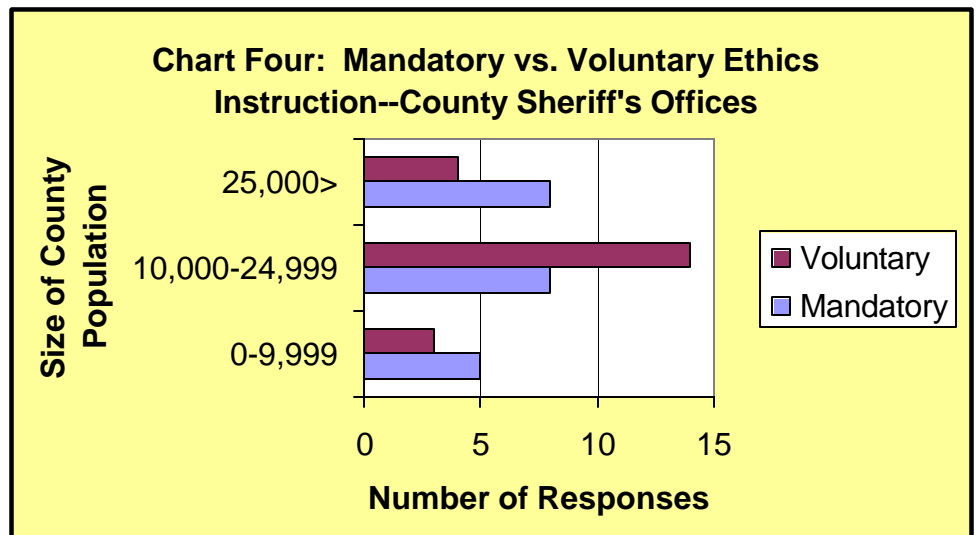
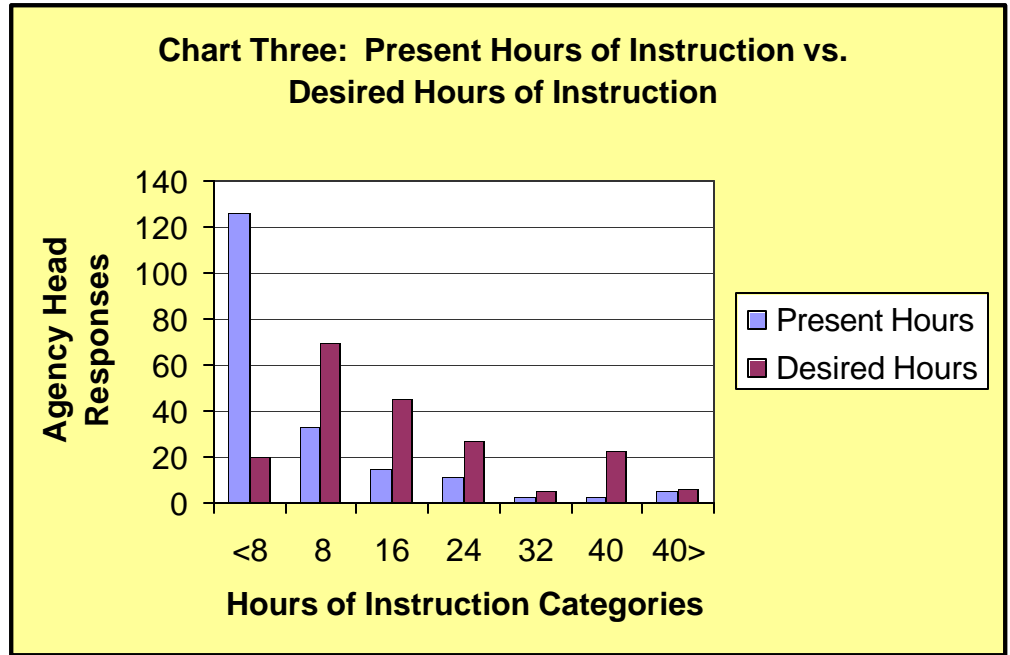
Conclusions

The ethics instruction provided to new recruits as they enter the field of law enforcement in Arkansas is not as dismal as several pieces of literature review suggest. Though they offer instruction in varying degrees, Arkansas' training academies deliver more hours of ethics instruction than the national average. The personal interviews of academy personnel indicate that ethics instruction should not end there; it must be carried forward by each individual law enforcement agency on a routine basis.

Although agency administrators are not totally dissatisfied with the present state of ethics instruction, they did indicate that their personnel do not receive sufficient amounts of ethics instruction in any given year. While they are satisfied with the quality of the instruction available, they would be more satisfied if there were a greater quantity of it. Approximately 80 percent responded that their personnel currently receive eight or less hours of such instruction. A large number of executives desire eight or 16 hours of ethics instruction, and there is an impressive representation desiring 24+ hours. Ethics instruction, as an ongoing in-service curriculum, would be welcomed.

While many agree that more hours of ethics instruction is desired, the mechanism whereby to achieve standardization is more closely divided. Survey responses indicated that there is not an overwhelming majority willing to institute mandatory requirements for ethics instruction, especially those mandated by state statute with accompanying penalties for failing to comply. Fifty-six percent of the survey returns advocated a mandatory imposition, however this response is not consistent across the board.

Future studies could be initiated to research why certain agencies are reluctant to advocate mandatory regulation. Large and small jurisdictions advocated



mandatory requirements more often than mid-size agencies, which tended to advocate voluntary compliance, perhaps from having limited training budgets and limited personnel. As is commonplace in public service, the imposition of statutory regulations oftentimes creates unfunded mandates that are difficult for agencies to meet. Agency heads desire the training opportunities, but they may be fearful of the consequences of not being able to fully participate.

Recommendations

Information provided by this study indicates that Arkansas law enforcement executives favor more hours of ethics instruction for their personnel, and it is recommended that an effort be made to determine the number of hours of instruction deemed adequate to instill acceptable ethical behavior. An effective method of making this determination would be the use of a focus group comprised of a representative sampling of Arkansas agency administrators. The focus group could be charged with setting the desirable number

of hours and the essential core curriculum components.

The final recommendation of this study would be for Arkansas law enforcement executives to address the issue of mandatory versus voluntary compliance when instituting the agreed upon number of hours of ethics instruction. With no set mechanism in place, agencies would be in the same position as they presently are—there would be no continuity of effort from one agency to the next.

Mandatory compliance would necessitate the enacting of state statutes by the Arkansas General Assembly. An acceptable bill would have to be drafted, and willing legislators would have to introduce the measure in session. To ensure passage of the bill, law enforcement executives would need to enlist the help of lobbying groups such as the Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police and the Arkansas Sheriffs' Association. As mentioned before, creation of legislation requiring education and training could create unfunded mandates that would draw opposition, especially from entities such as municipal gov-

ernments or county quorum courts that are responsible for providing funding.

Voluntary compliance, to be effective, would have to follow agreed upon guidelines. If no statute dictates procedures, other inducements to comply would have to be designed. A focus group comprised of law enforcement executives could use models used by the Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training as guides. For example, law enforcement officers could receive varying levels of certification based upon the number of hours of ethics instruction obtained by them. This recognition could provide the necessary incentive to encourage officers to obtain desired levels of ethics instruction.

The Criminal Justice Institute values the rapport and the support exhibited by its law enforcement partners. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in this endeavor.

A complete list of references for this article can be obtained by contacting Mike Mashburn at the Criminal Justice Institute, University of Arkansas System.