



# **Law Enforcement Training Academies**

October 2, 2012

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# Overview



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- VA Law Enforcement Training
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# Study Authorization



- The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) sent a letter to the Crime Commission requesting a study on criminal justice training academies.
- This study focuses only on law enforcement officer academy training.

# Methodology



- In order to examine the issue, staff completed the following activities:
  - Overview of DCJS' Phase I Findings;
  - Literature review;
  - Meetings with key stakeholders;
  - Informal work group; and,
  - Surveys:
    - Law enforcement academy directors;
    - Regional academy member agencies; and,
    - 50 state survey of law enforcement academy models.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- DCJS, under the direction of the Criminal Justice Services Board (CJSB), is the policy-making body for carrying out the duties and powers relative to criminal justice standards and training.
- DCJS establishes policy, as well as compulsory minimum entry-level, in-service and advanced training standards for criminal justice officers, including:
  - Law enforcement officers;
  - Correctional officers;
  - Jailors;
  - Court security/civil process officers; and,
  - Dispatchers.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- In Virginia, there are two types of law enforcement academies:
  1. Regional criminal justice academies:
    - These academies train recruits/officers for a specific geographic region of the State.
  2. Independent training academies:
    - "... a state or local criminal justice agency which is not affiliated with a regional training academy and who serves as their own independent academy for training their own, and/or other authorized personnel..."

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- DCJS was asked to prepare a fiscal review of regional law enforcement training academies pursuant to the 2011 Appropriations Act (Chapter 890, Item 384, B1.f).
- DCJS came up with a number of findings, including:
  - Regional academies are funded through various sources.
  - The primary source of funding comes from fees paid for officer training by the member criminal justice agencies.
    - Member agencies contribute between 50% to 80% of the academies' annual revenues.
    - Training fees charged by academies to its member agencies range from \$300 to \$600 per recruit, with higher fees for recruits from outside agencies or in pre-employment programs.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- Findings (continued):
  - State funding represents anywhere between 7% to 28% of the total revenue for each academy.
  - The balance of the funding comes from other sources, such as grants, tuition and fees for special training programs, pre-employment recruits, interest on accounts, and in-kind contributions from member agencies.
  - Each regional academy has a unique financial situation and composition, which makes comparison difficult.



# DCJS' Phase I Findings



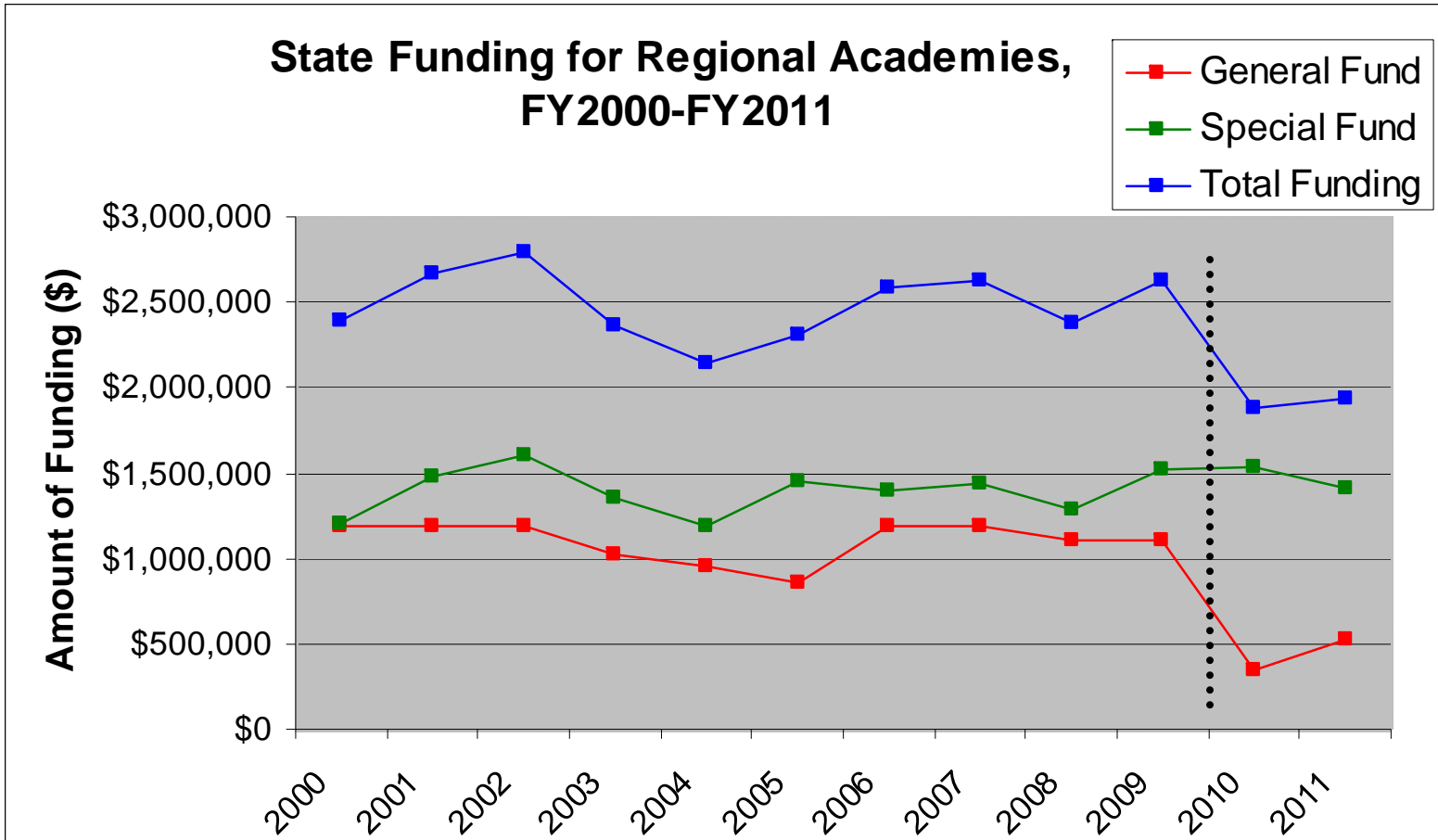
- Findings (continued):
  - There are two main factors affecting regional academy funding/revenues:
    - Reduction of state funding; and,
    - Loss of member agencies.
  - State funding, in both general and special funds, has declined since FY2000, from \$2.38 million to \$1.93 million in FY2011.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- In addition to general funds, regional academies are also supported by special funding via the “Regional Academy Training Fund.”
  - Funds stem from a fee attached to convictions for misdemeanors, felonies and traffic cases at general and circuit courts across the State.
  - This funding has remained fairly consistent since 2000.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- Loss of member agencies has a significant effect on the viability of regional training academies.
  - Regional academy loses financial and in-kind support services.
  - Trend is for large member agencies to withdraw and create their own independent academies.
    - These agencies are typically large financial and in-kind contributors to the regional academies, and their departure has more of an impact.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- The funding shortage and withdraw of member agencies has led regional academies to:
  - Negotiate withdrawal fees from agencies that leave the academy;
  - Increase member agency training fees;
  - Maximize in-kind contributions from member agencies;
  - Offer training to non-member agencies; and/or,
  - Utilize existing/limited reserves.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- The DCJS report concludes that even with the decline in state funding and the loss of revenue from academy membership changes, most academies are still meeting their training mission.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- However, DCJS warns that if member agencies continue to leave the regional academies, there may be too much additional pressure on the remaining member agencies to provide the revenue to maintain the academy as a viable training entity, especially if state funds continue to shrink.

# DCJS' Phase I Findings



- As such, DCJS asked the Crime Commission to provide an overview of law enforcement academy training in Virginia, as well as other potential law enforcement academy models, to help determine whether Virginia's current model is the best approach.



# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- There are 19,753 certified law enforcement officers in Virginia.
  - (As of August 30, 2012).
- There are 378 local, state, campus, and private law enforcement agencies served by DCJS.
- DCJS is also responsible for the oversight of all certified training *academies* in Virginia.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- There are 38 certified criminal justice training academies in Virginia.
  - 19 independent local or state training academies;
  - 10 regional criminal justice training academies;
  - 7 Sheriff's Office training academies (not primary law enforcement);
  - 1 Department of Corrections academy; and,
  - DCJS.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- All local political subdivisions whose personnel are subjected to this mandated training must be assigned to a designated regional training academy or be served by an independent training academy.
- All Virginia law enforcement officers will receive their training at either a regional or an independent training academy.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Staff disseminated surveys to all 10 regional criminal justice academy directors.
  - 100% response rate (10 of 10).
- Regional academies were established between 1965 to 1997.
- Regional academies serve anywhere from 12 to 65 member agencies.
  - 1 academy serves non-member/contractual agencies as well.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



Source: Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2011

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Staff also disseminated surveys to all 19 independent academies
  - 95% response rate (18 of 19).
- Independent academies were established between 1953 to 2011.
- Academies are based at agencies that have anywhere from 39 to 2,000 officers.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- There are 19 independent criminal justice academies in Virginia that serve primary law enforcement agencies:
  - 7 City Police Departments;
  - 5 County Police Departments;
  - 4 State Policing Agencies;
  - 1 County Sheriff's Office;
  - 1 Campus Police Department; and,
  - Virginia State Police.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- The 19 independent academies are:
  - Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel
  - Chesapeake
  - Chesterfield County
  - Division of Capitol Police
  - Fairfax County
  - Hampton
  - Hanover County
  - Henrico County
  - Newport News
  - Norfolk
  - Prince William County
  - Richmond
  - Roanoke County
  - Roanoke
  - VA Alcohol Beverage Control
  - Virginia Beach
  - VA Commonwealth University
  - VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
  - Virginia State Police



# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Academies can be commuter-based, residential, or both:
  - Regional Academies:
    - 60% (6 of 10) are commuter-based;
    - 40% (4 of 10) are both or have dorms available if needed.
  - Independent Academies:
    - 83% (15 of 18) are commuter-based;
    - 17% (3 of 18) are residential.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Most academies have additional satellite locations for training:
  - Regional Academies:
    - 70% (7 of 10) have satellite facilities.
  - Independent Academies:
    - 72% (13 of 18) have satellite facilities.
- The majority of training provided at satellite facilities is for in-service and advanced/specialized training.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Academies can be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA):
  - 10% (1 of 10) of regional academies are CALEA accredited;
  - 39% (7 of 18) of independent academies are CALEA accredited.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Staff disseminated surveys to all regional academy member agencies and the survey response rate was 57% (69 of 122 agencies).
  - 44 of 85 Sheriff's Offices with primary law enforcement duties; and,
  - 24 of 36 City and County Police Departments; and,
  - The Virginia State Police
- Staff received 68 additional surveys from other agencies, including:
  - Town Police Departments (n=35);
  - College/University Police Departments (n=24); and,
  - State and private agencies (n=9).
- Total responding agencies, N= 137

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- All local or political subdivisions may be permitted to:
  - Change to a different regional academy;
  - Change from an independent to a regional academy; or,
  - Change from a regional to an independent academy.
- Regional academies may also be permitted to merge with one another.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Member agencies were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with their respective regional academy using the following scale:

1= completely dissatisfied      4= somewhat satisfied  
2= mostly dissatisfied          5= mostly satisfied  
3= somewhat dissatisfied      6= completely satisfied

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Overall, regional academy members indicated they were satisfied with the training provided by regional academies:
  - Overall quality of training (Avg. 5.23)
  - Overall costs/expenses (Avg. 5.44)
  - Academy leadership (Avg. 5.27)
  - Number of basic training academy classes offered per year (Avg. 5.33)

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- Number of in-service courses offered per year (Avg. 4.84)
- Variety of courses offered (Avg. 4.67)
- Instructor competency (Avg. 5.43)
- Overall training facilities (Avg. 5.30)
- Firearms training (Avg. 5.27)
- Driver (EVO) training (Avg. 5.22)
- Defensive tactics training (Avg. 5.25)
- Equipment (Avg. 5.22).



# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- There are provisions on the creation of new academies under 6VAC20-20-61.
- In order to create a certified academy, a state or local unit of government must demonstrate:
  - Inability to obtain adequate training from existing academies or sufficient hardship rendering the use of other existing academies as impractical;
  - Sufficient number of officers to warrant the establishment of a full-time training function for a minimum of 5 years.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- In 2000, a moratorium was created on the establishment of new academies under the Appropriations Act, Item 465, B1.b. to: “...not approve or provide funding for the establishment of any new criminal justice academy...”
- Yet, subsequent Appropriations Acts have also been used to *allow* for the establishment of 4 new independent academies in 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2011.

# VA Law Enforcement Academies



- DCJS may suspend or revoke the certification of any training academy upon written notice pursuant to 6VAC20-20-61(G).
  - No academies have been suspended or decertified in the past two years.
- Monthly audits by DCJS field representatives began almost 2 years ago.

# VA Law Enforcement Training



- Under Va. Code § 15.2-1706, all law enforcement officers as defined in Va. Code § 9.1-101... must be certified by successfully completing training at an approved criminal justice training academy in order to remain eligible for appointment or employment.

# VA Law Enforcement Training



- The compulsory minimum training standards for law enforcement officers in Virginia include:
  - 480 hours of basic training hours;
  - 100 hours of field training;
  - 40 hours of in-service training every two years;
  - and,
  - Annual firearms qualifications.

# Basic Law Enforcement Training



- All academies significantly exceed the 480 hour compulsory minimum training standard required for basic training.

<b>Basic Training Overview</b>	<b>Regional Academies</b>	<b>Independent Academies</b>
<b>Range of Basic Training Hours</b>	<b>680 - 949</b>	<b>624 - 1,690</b>
<b>Average Basic Training Hours</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>1,016</b>
<b>Median Basic Training Hours</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>960</b>
<b>Range of Basic Academy Length</b>	<b>4.5 - 6 months</b>	<b>5 - 8.5 months</b>
<b>Average Length of Basic Academy</b>	<b>4.5 months</b>	<b>6 months</b>

Source: Virginia State Crime Commission, Regional and Independent Academy Directors Survey.

# Basic Law Enforcement Training



- Per DCJS standards, there are nine performance outcomes for law enforcement officers:
  - Professionalism;
  - Legal Issues;
  - Communications;
  - Investigations;
  - Patrol;
  - Defensive Tactics/Use of Force;
  - Weapons Use;
  - Driver Training; and,
  - Physical Issues (optional).

# Basic Law Enforcement Training



- In general, regional and independent academies have similar median hours per category:

Category	Regional Academies- Median Hours	Independent Academies- Median Hours
Professionalism	11	12
Legal Issues	109	82
Communication	28	30
Patrol	199	200
Investigations	40	80
Defensive Tactics/Use of Force	95	80
Weapons Use	53	95
Driver Training	48	52
Physical Training	60.5	71
Other	48	108

Source: Virginia State Crime Commission, Regional and Independent Academy Directors Survey.



# Basic Law Enforcement Training



- Pre-Employment Programs allow a recruit to independently complete basic law enforcement training at a regional academy and then be hired by a law enforcement agency at a later date.
- 70% (7 of 10) of regional academies offer such a program.
  - These programs were established in the mid-1990s to as recently as 2010.
- 52 member agencies and 4 independent academy agencies indicated that they have hired graduates from such pre-employment programs.

# Basic Law Enforcement Training



- Some academies have agreements with a college or university to allow recruits to receive academic credit for completing their basic training program.
- This allows qualified recruits to simultaneously complete credit towards an undergraduate degree, as well as law enforcement certification.
  - 70% (7 of 10) of regional academies have such agreements.
  - 56% (10 of 18) of independent academies have such agreements.

# Basic Law Enforcement Training



- Retention rates across basic law enforcement academy classes vary widely for both regional and independent academies.

Retention Rate for Past 5 Academy Classes	Regional Academies (n=10)	Independent Academies (n=16)
Range of Recruits per Academy Class	<b>8 to 86 recruits</b>	<b>6 to 101 recruits</b>
Range of Retention Rates	<b>67%-100%</b>	<b>33%-100%</b>
Average Retention Rate	<b>91%</b>	<b>79%</b>
Median Retention Rate	<b>93%</b>	<b>80%</b>

Source: Virginia State Crime Commission, Regional and Independent Academy Directors Survey.

# Basic Law Enforcement Training



- Since 2003, all law enforcement officers are also required to successfully complete a statewide certification exam, developed and administered by DCJS pursuant to Va. Code § 15.2-1706.
- This comprehensive exam provides testing on all eight required categories of minimum basic/entry-level training.
- The certification exam should be modified accordingly whenever training standards change.

# Field Training



- Field training certifies that an officer has demonstrated competency in all performance objectives pursuant to Va. Code § 9.1-102 and 6VAC20-20-40.
  - There are nearly 100 performance objectives.
- Every law enforcement officer is required to complete 100 hours of field training.

# Field Training



- Regional academies do not provide any field training to law enforcement officers.
- All independent training academy agencies and member agencies of regional academies require field training for law enforcement officers.
  - Most agencies significantly exceed the 100 hour compulsory minimum training standard required for field training.

# In-Service Training



- All regional and independent training academies provide in-service training for law enforcement officers.
- Every law enforcement officer is required to complete:
  - 40 hours of in-service training every 2 years:
    - 34 hours of career development training;
    - 4 hours of legal training; and,
    - 2 hours of cultural diversity training.
  - Annual Firearms Qualifications
    - To include policy review of weapons safety, nomenclature, maintenance and use of force.

# In-Service Training



- There are many different types of in-service courses offered at academies across Virginia.
- Some academies offer on-line courses as well:
  - 90% (9 of 10) of regional academies offer on-line courses;
  - 61% (11 of 18) of independent academies offer on-line courses.
- Academies and agencies indicated that they would like to see in-service requirements for defensive tactics and driving.



# Decertification of Officers



- There are provisions for decertifying law enforcement officers through the Criminal Justice Services Board under Va. Code § 15.2-1707:
  - Convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to a felony or any offense that would be a felony if committed in Virginia;
  - Failed to comply with or maintain compliance with mandated training requirements; or,
  - Refused to submit to a drug screening or has produced a positive result on a drug screening reported to the employing agency.
- Over the past two years, four law enforcement officers have been decertified.

# Academy Instructors



- Compulsory minimum standards for instructors are set forth pursuant to 6VAC20-80-20.
- Individuals responsible for instructing mandated training must possess one of the following certifications:
  - General Instructor Certification;
  - Firearms Instructor Certification;
  - Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification;
  - Driver Training Instructor Certification; and/or,
  - Speed Measurement Instructor Certification.

# Academy Instructors



- Instructors must also meet minimum education and experience requirements.
  - DCJS requires a high school diploma or GED and 2 years of experience.
    - Some agencies require an additional year of experience.
- Instructors must be recertified every 3 years.

# Academy Instructors



- Across Virginia law enforcement agencies, as of August 30, 2012, there were:
  - 8,313 certified general instructors;
  - 2,703 certified firearms instructors;
  - 1,227 certified defensive tactics instructors;
  - 804 certified driver training instructors; and,
  - 431 certified speed measurement instructors.

# Academy Instructors



- Regional academies rely on academy staff, as well as instructors from their member agencies.
  - 80% (8 of 10) require member agencies to provide instructors or officers to assist with other instructional activities.
- Independent academies rely on academy staff, as well as other officers employed by the agency.
  - Rely primarily on officers with other primary assignments within the agency.

# Academy Instructors



- Academies also rely upon civilians and volunteers to assist with specialized instruction or instructional support.
- Nearly all academies provide syllabi or lesson plans to instructors for *each* class or course.
  - 100% (10 of 10) of regional academies;
  - 89% (16 of 18) of independent academies.

# Academy Instructors



- All academies evaluate the performance of instructors.
- There are several methods of evaluation, including:
  - Student Evaluations;
  - Supervisor Evaluations;
  - Peer Evaluations;
  - Academy Director/Staff Evaluations;
  - DCJS Field Representatives; and/or,
  - Classroom Cameras.

# Academy Instructors



- Instructor certification can be revoked if the individual:
  - Falsifies any report, form or roster;
  - Demonstrates instructional incompetence; and/or;
  - Misuses his authority.
- Over the past two years, four instructors have been decertified.
  - Individual cannot reapply for certification for a period of 3 years.



# Resource Sharing



- Many academies permit recruits from other agencies to attend their basic academy training.
  - 100% (10 of 10) of regional academies indicated that they do or would under special circumstances.
  - 63% (10 of 16) of independent academies indicated that they do or would under special circumstances.
- Most academies permit officers from other agencies to attend their in-service training.
  - 100% (10 of 10) of regional academies indicated that they do or would under special circumstances.
  - 89% (16 of 18) of independent academies indicated that they do or would under special circumstances.

# Resource Sharing



- Many academies and some member agencies are willing to share their instructors with other academies.
  - 60% (6 of 10) of regional academies will send their instructors to other academies or would under special circumstances.
  - 78% (14 of 18) of independent academies will send their instructors to other independent or regional academies.
  - 16% (22 of 134) of regional academy member agencies will send instructors to other academies besides their regional academy.

# Resource Sharing



- Regional academy member agencies will typically provide some type of “in-kind” contribution to their regional academy:
  - 80% (107 of 134) provide instructional support;
  - 25% (34 of 134) provide facilities for classroom training;
  - 17% (23 of 134) provide a firearms range;
  - 12% (16 of 134) provide equipment, technology, vehicle or other type of donation;
  - 4% (5 of 134) provide a driver training facility; and,
  - 2% (3 of 134) provide facility cleaning/grounds maintenance/landscaping.

# Liability Concerns



- Failure to train:
- Only a few academies reported that they had been asked to testify in the past 5 years on training an officer received from their academy.
  - 20% (2 of 10) regional academies.
  - 33% (6 of 18) of independent academies.
- Only 2 academies indicated that they were named as a defendant in a civil lawsuit resulting from an alleged training inadequacy.
  - Only one lost or settled such litigation.

# Liability Concerns



- Few regional academy member agencies reported that they had been asked to testify in the past 5 years on the training an officer received from their academy.
  - 12% (16 of 135) regional academies.
- Only 11 member agencies indicated that they were named as a defendant in a civil lawsuit resulting from an alleged training inadequacy.
  - Four of these agencies lost or settled such litigation.

# Record Keeping



- The Library of Virginia has established a records retention and disposition schedule for criminal justice training academy records.
  - Class records and student records must be retained for 50 years.
  - Lesson plans must be retained for 25 years.
  - Instructors' personnel records, testing and performance records, and training aids for courses must be retained for 5 years.
  - Standard Operating Policies and Procedures must be retained 3 years after the end of the last certification year.

# Record Keeping



- T-REX is an automated records system utilized by DCJS to track criminal justice employees in Virginia.
  - Tracks hiring, training, certifications, and personnel information;
  - Determines 599 funding eligibilities for police departments; and,
  - Tracks officer populations for Regional Academy fund allocation.
- Agencies may also use the ACE system to integrate the completion of training hours into a state database.
  - ACE-TRACK includes a test bank of questions and objectives for local use.
- These systems are not interactive.
- Many agencies expressed concern related to the current software and management of law enforcement training records.

# VA Academy Models



- The regional academy model has a number of potential advantages:
  - Shared cost to member agencies;
  - Ability to pool resources;
  - Beneficial to smaller agencies;
  - Fosters cooperation, networking, partnerships and cross-training between member agencies;
  - Less cost to member agency's locality; and/or,
  - Exposure to various ways of conducting police operations, training and management.



# VA Academy Models



- The independent academy model also has potential advantages:
  - Autonomy;
  - Specialized training tailored to the community they serve;
  - Better control of the quality, type and scheduling of classes;
  - One vision; one administration to “answer to”; and,
  - Less political barriers.

# VA Academy Models



- The regional academy model has potential disadvantages:
  - Lack of specificity or customization in training;
  - Travel time concerns for member agencies;
  - Risk of member agencies leaving;
  - Reduced financial support from State; and/or,
  - Potentially higher level of political conflict.
    - Disagreements among member agencies as to the management and operations of the academy.

# VA Academy Models



- The independent academy model also has potential disadvantages:
  - Lack of exposure to other agencies;
  - Unintended isolation;
  - Less resource sharing availability; and/or,
  - Costs are not shared; rather, absorbed wholly by agency/locality.

# VA Academy Models



- Overall, there are advantages and disadvantages of Virginia's current law enforcement academy models.
- It may be beneficial to examine how other states are delivering law enforcement academy training.

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- Surveys were sent to all other states' Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Directors in order to capture a summary of their overall law enforcement academy training model.
- 65% (32 of 49) of states completed the survey.

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- These States served anywhere from:
  - 1,300 to 166,000 law enforcement officers.
    - *Virginia has 19,753 officers.*
  - 45 to 2,406 law enforcement agencies.
    - *Virginia has 378 agencies.*
  - 1 to 75 law enforcement academies.
    - *Virginia has 38 academies.*

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- Compulsory minimum training standards required by statute varied across states:
  - Basic/Entry-level training:
    - Range= 400 to 818 hours.
    - Average= 605 hours.
      - *Virginia's requirement is 480 hours.*
  - Field Training:
    - 67% (21 of 32) of states did not have a statutory requirement for field training.
    - Range= 0 to 480 hours.
      - *Virginia's requirement is 100 hours.*
  - In-service training requirements varied widely.
    - 0- 40 hours per year.
      - *Virginia's requirement is 40 hours per 2 years.*

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- 83% (25 of 30) have a centralized electronic database for maintaining law enforcement training records.
  - 88% (22 of 25) provide an itemized list of courses that individual officers complete.
  - 32% (8 of 25) afford officers the ability to have electronic access to view their personal training records.



# 50 State POST Director Survey



- Every state has its own unique “model” for delivering mandated law enforcement training.
- States can utilize one or more of the following models.:
  - Centralized academy model;
  - Independent academy model;
  - Regional academy model;
  - Higher education/pre-employment models;
  - Private model.

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- Centralized academy model:
  - All or nearly all law enforcement officers will receive training at one centralized academy or at one of its satellites.
    - Maine, South Carolina, Oregon, Vermont, Wyoming, and South Dakota appear to have one centralized academy where all law enforcement officers must go to complete training (residential).
    - Washington and West Virginia have one centralized academy for law enforcement officers except for State Troopers, which have their own.
    - North Carolina, Connecticut, and Iowa have a centralized academy with additional satellites across the State.

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- As an example, North Carolina indicates that they have one state training academy; however, their curriculum is actually delivered at 2 state training academy campuses *and* 58 community colleges and 20 law enforcement agencies.

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- Independent academy model:
  - Typically in conjunction with other model types.
- Regional academy model:
  - Arkansas relies solely on a regional academy model.
  - Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, and Tennessee utilize the regional academy model in conjunction with other models.

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- Academic/pre-employment models:
  - Many states will have academies operated by a college or university to allow individuals to complete both law enforcement training, as well as academic credit.
    - California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin.
  - Such training is carried out at all types of higher education institutions.

# 50 State POST Director Survey



- Private model:
  - Very few states have private entities carrying out mandated training.
    - Missouri has 2 private academies governed by a board of law enforcement professionals.
    - Georgia has 2 academies that are run by Law Enforcement Associations.
      - One academy provides in-service training only.

# Summary



- There are two basic types of law enforcement academy models in Virginia: regional criminal justice academies and independent academies.
- Regional criminal justice training academies are fiscally vulnerable.
  - Concerns continue to be raised about the financial instability of regional criminal justice academies due to decreased state funding, changes in membership, and creation of new independent academies.

# Summary



- Despite a moratorium on the creation of new academies in 2000 (effective through June 30, 2014), independent academies continue to be established.
- Regional academy members appear to be “mostly satisfied” with law enforcement training provided by regional academies.



# Summary



- All academies significantly exceed the 480 hour compulsory minimum training standard required for law enforcement basic training.
- Retention rates across basic law enforcement academy classes vary widely for both regional and independent academies.
- The record keeping of decertifications (academies, officers, instructors) by DCJS started 2 years ago.

# Summary



- All academies evaluate the performance of instructors.
  - There are some concerns about the consistency in the delivery of law enforcement training.
- Many academies will share training resources with other academies.
- Very few academies and agencies have been involved in litigation resulting from alleged training inadequacies.

# Summary



- The current record keeping system for law enforcement training records is cumbersome and antiquated.
- There are advantages and disadvantages for both regional and independent training academies.
- There are various types of law enforcement academy models seen across the United States.
  - Each state is unique.
  - Virginia does, however, have more independent academies than other states.

# Acknowledgements



- Independent and Regional Criminal Justice Academy Directors
- Informal work group members
- International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement (IADLEST)
  - Participating POST Directors
- Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police
- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
- Virginia law enforcement agencies
- Virginia Sheriffs' Association
- Virginia State Police

# Policy Considerations



- Option 1:
  - Provisions should be developed to create a mechanism that will allow expedient changes to the Virginia Administrative Code (VAC) regarding criminal justice officer training regulations.
    - VAC dictates compulsory minimum training standards for basic and in-service training, as well as performance objectives, which are used to develop lesson plans and the state certification exam.
    - The date of the existing law enforcement state certification exam cannot be determined.
    - Consider requesting the Office of the Attorney General to provide materials for in-service legal updates to all academies, law enforcement agencies and DCJS.

# Policy Considerations



- Option 1 (continued):
  - Changes to compulsory minimum training standards for basic and in-service training, as well as performance objectives could go through the existing Curriculum Review Committee, Committee on Training (COT) and the CJSB.

# Policy Considerations



- Option 2:
  - DCJS should continue its efforts in implementing a state-wide, centralized, web-based system for maintaining criminal justice officer training records.
    - Other states' approaches to centralized record keeping should be examined.

# Policy Considerations



- Option 3:
  - Due to moratorium concerns, the Criminal Justice Services Board should review their standards for academy membership changes.
    - Specific focus should include, as one of the listed criteria, the potential hardships for the existing academy if a member agency leaves a regional academy.



# Policy Considerations



- Option 4:
  - Consider expanding the criteria for decertification under Va. Code § 15.2-1707.
    - Currently, includes felony convictions, training non-compliance and drug screen refusals and failures.
  - Options could include adding certain misdemeanors and acts of moral turpitude.

# Policy Considerations



- Option 5:
  - Law enforcement agencies should be statutorily required to promptly report to DCJS any officer found in violation of the enumerated violations under Va. Code § 15.2-1707.
    - Virginia law currently requires the clerk of any court in which a conviction of a felony is made, who has knowledge that a law enforcement officer or jail officer has been convicted, to report these findings promptly to the employing agency.

# Policy Considerations



- Option 6:
  - Consider other options for increasing funding to regional criminal justice academies.
    - Possible option: Consider increasing the fixed fee for court costs apportioned to regional criminal justice training academies per Va. Code § 16.1-69.48:1, as well as §§ 17.1-275.1-4 and 17.1-275.7-9.

# Policy Considerations



- Option 7:
  - DCJS and academy directors should consider expanding the utilization of pre-employment programs, especially in collaboration or conjunction with institutions of higher education.

# Policy Considerations



- Option 8:
  - If Virginia wishes to change its current training system, a detailed cost-benefit analysis of its training academies should be conducted, which could provide a useful view of the economics of Virginia’s system at the state-wide level.
    - Any change or alternative should consider five criteria, including, “long term stability of membership, compact geographical arrangement of member agencies, more uniform distribution of officers served, minimal disruption of existing academy operations and ease of administration” (JLARC, 1999).



## **Discussion**

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