



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

DATE: May 1, 2020

SUBJECT: Update Regarding Resolution No. 20191205-066

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on Resolution No. [20191205-066](#), which directed the City Manager to initiate a comprehensive, multipronged investigation and evaluation of the extent to which forms of bigotry and discrimination are present in protocol, practices, and behaviors of the officers of the Austin Police Department (APD).

In order to accomplish the majority of the Resolution scope of work, staff anticipates releasing a solicitation for professional services in May 2020. The Resolution also required an internal review of the Training Academy. Completion of the internal audit is estimated to be mid-July 2020 due in large part to the impact of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

APD Audit/Investigation

The City Manager's Office formed a cross-departmental working group with representatives from the City Manager's Office, Office of Police Oversight, Equity Office, Human Resources Department and the Purchasing Office to develop a scope of work for the comprehensive investigation and evaluation of APD.

The key elements in this scope include a review and analysis of APD officer communications, investigation and analysis of high-priority areas, such as use-of-force incidents and interactions between APD and members of the public. In addition, the scope requires the contractor to perform a comprehensive review and assessment of the internal audit for the Training Academy, recruitment practices, and provide recommendations for the continuing education for active sworn personnel.

In March, staff engaged the Joint Inclusion Commission and the Public Safety Commission to obtain their input on the draft scope of work and the qualifications for the purchasing solicitation. Through Purchasing's Request for Information (RFI) process, the scope of work was shared with the public for feedback beginning March 27 through April 8, 2020. While generally the timeframe for having the RFI/scope of work online for the public to view is one week, this timeframe was extended to almost two weeks. On March 27, 2020, the draft scope of work was shared with the Council Member sponsors through the RFI process. The Office of Police Oversight featured the resolution and RFI process in their April newsletter shared with 435 subscribers and various racial justice and criminal justice community organizations. The Equity Office shared the scope of work with their Equity Action Team members, which includes 369 community stakeholders. Staff anticipates advertising the solicitation in May 2020.

Training Academy Audit

The Resolution further directed the City Manager to initiate a comprehensive audit of APD's training materials administered to cadet classes, which is to be completed by June 1, 2020. Due to the scope of work and the impact of overall City response to the COVID-19 impacts, staff estimates completion of the audit and incorporation of recommended changes by mid-July. This audit will include an evaluation of protocols such as course/section content and duration of all other coursework, and related procedures required at the cadet academy. The audit process will be as transparent as possible, ensuring that the public has access to view training materials on the topics of bias, racism, and cultural competency in policing.

Training Audit Approach

After careful review and examination of the 32-week Cadet Academy course curriculum (which include, lesson plans, course slide decks, video footage, handouts, exam questions, and class observations), staff identified relevant courses consistent with Resolution direction that included core competencies related to fair and impartial policing, diversity, inclusion bias, and multiculturalism. The training audit framework is divided into the following four segments:

- Review of course material curricula that address areas related to include diversity, inclusion, bias, racial justice.
- Review of videos shown at the academy that relate to reducing racial disparities in use of force and severity of force, reducing racial disparities in discretionary searches, and increasing de-escalation.
- Review of and recommendations for the Community Engagement programming included in the academy curriculum.
- Identify areas for improvement and additional resources for the APD Training Academy.

Staffing Resources

Staff involved in developing the training audit include representatives from the City Manager's Office, Equity Office, Office of Police Oversight, as well as APD's first Organizational Development & Training Manager, Dr. Sara Villanueva, who holds a doctorate in psychology and expertise in cross-cultural perspectives. Prior to joining APD in September 2019, Dr. Villanueva served as Professor of Psychology at the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences, and the Center for Teaching Excellence Faculty Fellow on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at St. Edwards University. She will be responsible for developing and executing curriculum review strategies and assessing teaching and learning methodologies at the APD Training Academy.

The City has also engaged the assistance of an outside academic consultant, Dr. Miguel Ferguson, to work with Dr. Villanueva to perform a review of the Training Academy's course material that addresses areas such as diversity, inclusion, bias, and racial justice. Dr. Ferguson is an academic professional with years in teaching higher education, conducting and publishing research, and has a background working in diversity, equity, and inclusion. This course review will accomplish three objectives: 1) evaluate content being presented to cadets; 2) assess the quality of instruction; and 3) provide descriptive data of the faculty teaching these courses, which will be followed by subsequent recommendations to be incorporated into the Training Academy course material.

Progress

Review of Course Materials

Staff anticipates the course review to be complete by June 1, 2020 and the course review summary outlining any revisions/corrections to the course material to be completed mid-June 2020. A comprehensive review of the following core courses is currently underway:

- Professionalism & Ethics
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)
- Transgender
- Multiculturalism & Human Relations
- Racial Profiling; History of Policing
- Fair & Impartial Policing
- Deaf & Hearing Impaired
- Spanish
- Cultural Diversity

Review of Course Videos

To perform the video reviews, the Equity Office has assembled a video review panel comprised of eleven members: six community members, a representative from the Office of Police Oversight, a representative from the Equity Office, an academic professional with expertise in racial justice and equity, a Police Lieutenant who oversees Cadet training, and an APD training instructor. This panel will review the accuracy, relevance, effectiveness, and cultural sensitivities of the selected course videos. The community panel members and APD panel members are:

Community Panel Members

Rebecca Sanchez
Nakia Winfield
Andrea Black
Joe Anderson Jr.
Miriam Conner
Angelica Erazo

APD Panel Members

Lieutenant Eve Stephens
Officer/Instructor Gary Carillo

The video review panel will determine: 1) Is the video content acceptable to retain in the Training Academy curriculum? 2) When revisions/corrections are necessary, will incorporating them be straightforward, or require significant time? 3) Will content need to be eliminated from the curriculum? Staff anticipates the video reviews to be complete by July 1, 2020. The course videos to be reviewed by the panel include:

- Use of Force
- Arrest; Search & Seizure
- De-escalation Strategies
- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)
- Tactical Communications
- Arrest & Control (Tactical Week/Defense Tactics)

Additional Improvements and Resources

Consistent with the Resolution, the following initiatives contribute to addressing the issues and are incorporated as part of the overall effort.

Equity Assessment Tool. In 2018, the Equity Office began working with APD to evaluate the impact of existing City/Department policies on racial equity, with the goal of utilizing the tool to implement new policies, practices, and programs to help identify and address the inequities that impact the quality of life for low-income communities, which are disproportionately communities of color. The Equity Assessment process will lead to an evaluation of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of each Command unit. This process has been tailored to the size and challenges presented by APD, folding in a Community Review component for additional accountability. Currently, five Command units have been assessed in the first cohort. APD will continue to partner with the Equity Office to complete the remaining Command units.

History of Police and Race in America. On March 9, 2020, the Office of Police Oversight sent to the Police Chief a formal recommendation to incorporate the *History of Police and Race in America* course into the Training Academy curriculum. This course was developed in collaboration with The University of Texas School of Law and will be included in the curriculum for the next academy class. For this course, cadets engage in self-reflection on their own views of policing, learn about the broad history of police and race relations & police and race relations in Austin, and reflect on the ways that this history will play a role in their future interactions as police officers with community members.

Beyond Diversity. In March 2020, APD's Training Academy leadership team completed the *Beyond Diversity* training offered by Leadership Austin. APD staff is engaging Pacific Educational Group to strategically implement key components of this training curriculum into the Training Academy as well as providing training to current officers and APD leadership.

Training Academy SWOT Analysis. In addition to the SWOT analysis that is part of the Equity Assessment described above, APD staff conducted its own SWOT analysis in late 2019 on the work performed at the Training Academy. The results from the SWOT analysis informed the development of a 5-year Strategic Plan report, which will be completed by June 1, 2020. Staff is actively researching and identifying best practices from police departments across the US. Staff is engaging these agencies with the intent to conduct site visits to gather key information about best practices, reduced force incidents and improved communications with diverse communities. However, given the challenges surrounding COVID-19, this work is pending. Staff has also engaged police departments who attended the National Symposium on Police Training Academies to share knowledge and learn their best practices.

Community Policing Advancement in Austin. Resolution No. [20160303-013](#) authorized the negotiation and execution of a contract with Matrix Consulting Group to develop a long-term strategic community policing plan. The resulting report, [Community Policing Advancement in Austin](#), included recommendations that focused on increasing diversity and advancing community policing and engagement through recruiting, cadet training, continuing education, and retention practices. In view of the Resolution and in accordance with the Matrix report, APD conducted a review of its Community Engagement (CE) Programming in spring 2020. Revisions to the CE programming include broadening the list of community organizations and groups to more appropriately reflect courses, and placing more structure around the program to make it a more meaningful experience. The purpose for the CE programming is to provide an opportunity for Police Cadets to learn about and engage with different community organizations and advocates to further strengthen the relationship between the Austin Police Department and the larger Austin community. Revisions to the CE programming is complete and the updated CE guidelines are incorporated for future training academies.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Patricia Bourenane (Patricia.Bourenane@austintexas.gov) should you have questions or require additional information.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
CMO Executive Team
Anne Morgan, City Attorney
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