

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted a review of the NOPD Early Warning (EW) program. An EW program enables a law enforcement agency to monitor officer performance by analyzing patterns of identified behavior. These behavior patterns may suggest the need for behavioral interventions designed to improve officer performance. The NOPD EW program is implemented by the Public Integrity Bureau (PIB) EW Unit which monitors officers using three indicators: citizen complaints, supervisor complaints, and use-of-force incidents. After PIB identifies an officer for EW intervention, the officer attends the forty-hour Professional Performance Enhancement Program (PPEP) training and then a supervisor monitors the officer for six months.

The NOPD EW program is a developing program. It has been in existence for nearly twenty years, but had disintegrated to the point where in 2010, the Department of Justice stated that the program was “outdated and exist[ed] in name only.” Since the report’s release, NOPD implemented changes including redesigning the PPEP and using a new EW database.

This review included both a process review to determine how closely NOPD followed industry standards for EW program implementation and an outcome analysis to determine if the program was effective in intervening with officers and improving performance.

The evaluation includes the following observations:

- The EW database did not contain all of the complaints recorded in the PIB handwritten complaint intake log; complaints were not entered in a timely manner, and the complaints entered were not always complete.
- NOPD did not have a policy for collecting, managing, and using data on officer performance that reflected experts’ best practices for EW programs.
- NOPD did not have a policy for determining which officers from the list generated by the database to include in the EW program intervention.
- NOPD had not developed measurable objectives or an evaluation methodology for the intervention.
- NOPD did not hold supervisors accountable for monitoring; supervisors submitted complete monitoring reports for three of ninety-one participating officers in 2012.
- Supervisors did not make a formal determination of an officer’s satisfactory completion of the EW intervention at the end of the six-month monitoring period.

Based on these observations, the OIG made the following suggestions to the NOPD:

- PIB should eliminate the handwritten intake log and use the EW database to document intake.
- NOPD should establish policies for collecting, managing, and using data on officer performance that are consistent with the findings of experts.
- NOPD should create a formal policy for determining which officers from the database-generated list to include in EW intervention.
- NOPD should create objectives specifically for the intervention and measure whether the objectives of the intervention have been met.
- NOPD should redesign the forty-hour PPEP training so that it provides individualized interventions based on each participant's needs.
- PIB should alert commanding officers when supervisors do not submit monitoring reports; commanders should hold supervisors accountable for submitting reports.
- NOPD should implement a process for determining when a participant has successfully completed the EW intervention.

The City is considering costly changes to its EW program in response to the consent decree. In 2013 the City set aside \$404,263 for planning for the purchase of a new EW database. In addition, the City estimated that the new database will cost \$15 million initially, with additional annual maintenance and support expenses of about \$2.9 million per year. NOPD also anticipated hiring a data analyst and additional staff to assist with data management, analysis, and implementation.

Inspectors' review of the NOPD EW program found a number of problems with the program: missing data, vague indicators, a one-size-fits-all curriculum, and an ineffective monitoring process. However, none of the program's shortcomings was a result of the current database; program design and management problems undermined the program's credibility and effectiveness. NOPD should use the current database to collect the additional data required by the consent decree; an evidence-based program depends on reliable, centralized data consistently collected over time and available for future statistical analysis.

The OIG has reviewed these challenges with NOPD and inspectors commend the department's commitment to improving the program. The OIG encourages NOPD command staff to use the observations in this report as they plan changes to the program.