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**Police Department
Information Systems
Technology
Enhancement Project
ISTEP**

2000

Prepared for
Office of Community Oriented
Policing Services (COPS)
Program/Policy Support and
Evaluation Division
1100 Vermont Avenue, N
Washington, D.C. 20530

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Police Department

Information Systems Technology Enhancement Project

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Acknowledgments

Abt Associates, Inc. wishes to thank the five ISTEP Phase One Departments for their willing and open cooperation in the ISTEP project. The Departments were selected using several criteria, with a department wide commitment to community policing as a primary factor for inclusion. The Departments were also selected because they had significant experience with technology innovation and were in an advanced state of strategic planning to support information technology.

We requested and, with the full support of the command staff in each department, were given virtually unrestricted access to staff and records concerning the IT developments that were under way in each location. Without this generous approach to the work we were doing and the insights provided to us, the effectiveness of the inquiry and the utility of the reports contained in this document would have been significantly diminished.

Many individuals in the departments gave us their time and expertise, and it is difficult to identify particular individuals without running the risk of leaving somebody out. However, we want to express our gratitude and appreciation to several departmental personnel at the five ISTEP Phase One sites who were particularly helpful in providing information, organizing our site visits, and contributing feedback on our case studies. In particular, we wish to thank Chief Dennis Nowicki and Dr. Maureen Brown from Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina; Chief Joseph Coughwell and Captain William Reilly from Hartford, Connecticut; Deputy Chief Ron Glensor from Reno, Nevada; Assistant Chief John Welter and Sergeant Ralph Garcia from San Diego, California; and Chief Ron Burns and Rachel Boba, Ph.D. from Tempe, Arizona.

Of course, the reports presented herein are our assessment of the information provided to us, and none of the individuals named above, or any other individuals from the departments, should be considered responsible for any deficiencies that the reports are considered to contain. Further, the fact that departments cooperated unstintingly should not necessarily be interpreted as an endorsement of the content of these reports. We would like to stress that, in our opinion, these Departments were in the top tier of police agencies that have strategically planned for and implemented information technology to support community policing. Therefore, any comments contained in the reports which may portray the Departments as struggling with planning for or implementing technology should be considered valuable lessons for other agencies.

This publication reflects the state of each Department's information systems and planning process based on site visits conducted and information gathered primarily in 1998. Due to the lengthy publication process since that time, each of these agencies has made progress – some significant – in their information systems implementation.

We also wish to thank the editors at The Cygnus Corporation for their detailed review, comments, and suggestions on all of our reports.

We especially want to thank Veh Bezdikian from the COPS Office for overseeing the project and for his diligence, effort, and insight in helping to make ISTEP a project with practical applications for the field. We also thank Veh in helping to put this publication together and providing helpful suggestions for improving the reports.



Foreword

Since the inception of the COPS Office in 1994, this agency has provided upwards of one billion dollars in grants to state and local police agencies for information technology development and enhancement. The primary vehicle for this funding has been the COPS MORE (Making Officer Redeployment Effective) grant program which has had a tremendous impact at the community level. By providing agencies with the tools needed to effectively perform their jobs, the COPS MORE grant program is meeting the increasing demands placed on law enforcement as we enter the next century. The range of technology products funded cover a broad spectrum, from uniquely configured network enhancements at larger departments to simple off-the-shelf hardware and software products in some of the nation's smaller agencies. However, the underlying goal of this effort has been a universal one—to advance the practice of community policing by creating a more effective police force and improving the flow of information among police, local government service providers, and the citizens they serve.

In 1997, COPS launched the Information Systems Technology Enhancement Project (ISTEP), conducted by Abt Associates, Inc. The purpose of this project was to identify the basic principles of community policing as well as the added demands placed on departments transitioning to community policing. That information was then used to examine five police agencies that were successful in implementing and integrating the new technology. Each of those five case studies that follow contain valuable insights about the experience of law enforcement agencies involved: what worked, what didn't, and how to make the move toward updated technology a successful part of community policing.

It is our hope that this product will prove to be a valuable asset, as law enforcement agencies nationwide continue to expand their technological capacities and look to maximize the application of technology to community policing. As the former Commissioner of the Baltimore City Police Department, I was able to oversee the transition to a more technologically advanced police force and witness the tremendous benefits. Based on my experience, I would encourage all police managers to take advantage of the lessons learned at each of these departments studied and look to apply these lessons in your own internal strategic planning.

Tom Frazier, Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



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