

**BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE  
NATIONAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE**

**Assignment No. 098**

**Assessment of the Training Needs of the  
Atlanta Police Department  
Criminal Investigations Division  
Special Enforcement Section  
Narcotics Unit: PHASE II**

**Assessment of Additional Training and Changes in  
Related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

**October 2008**

**Consultant**

**Transformational Strategies and Solutions, Inc.**

*This report was prepared under the auspices of the Bureau of Justice National Training and Technical Assistance Project at American University, Washington, D.C. This project is supported by Grant No. 2005-DD-BX-K053, awarded to the University by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

*Assessment of the Training Needs of the Atlanta Police Department Criminal Investigations Division Special Enforcement Section Narcotics Unit. Phase II: Assessment of Additional Training and Changes in Related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) National Training and Technical Assistance Project. No. 098). American University. October 2008.*

## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. Summary of Interviews</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A. Interviews with Officers</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>B. Interviews with Sergeants</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>III. Analysis of the Documentation</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A. Review of Additional Training</b>	<b>10</b>
Table 1: P.O.S.T. Training Records for March 21, 2008- June 25, 2008	<b>10</b>
Table 2: Other Training Not Documented in P.O.S.T. Records	<b>11</b>
Table 3: Content Review of the Training Curricula - Summary	<b>15</b>
<b>B. Training Plan</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>C. Review of Changes in SOP's</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>D. Review of Staff Evaluations</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>E. Review of Disciplinary Records Related to Members of the Narcotics Unit in terms of their job performance</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>IV. Findings and Recommendations</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>A. Principal Findings</b>	<b>21</b>
1. Challenges in Management of Training Records	<b>21</b>
2. Closure of the Training Gaps	<b>22</b>
3. Impact of the Training	<b>22</b>
4. Scope of the S.O.P's	<b>22</b>
<b>B. Recommendations</b>	
1. Strengthening the Training Plan	<b>23</b>
2. Strengthening the Training Records management System	<b>23</b>
3. Strengthening the S.O.P's	<b>23</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the second phase of technical assistance provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) National Training and Technical Assistance Project at American University (AU) to the Atlanta Police Department (APD) in response to a request from Major Siobhan O'Brien of the (APD) for an assessment of the APD's training efforts for the newly formed Narcotics Unit following a critical incident which occurred within the Unit. Transformational Strategies and Solutions, Inc., (TSS) of Seminole, Florida, has been designated by AU to serve as consultant to provide this technical assistance. TSS, under the leadership of Carol Rasor, Lead Investigator, has had extensive experience in developing plans and conducting needs assessments regarding training needs of law enforcement agencies.

The technical assistance is being provided in three stages over the course of a six month period: (1) assessment of the Initial Implementation Stage of the training program; (2) follow up on additional training received by members of the Narcotics Unit as well as any changes in Standard Operating Procedures and related information relevant to training needs; and (3) an assessment of the Outcome Stage, addressing the effectiveness and impact of the training in promoting the Unit's successful performance. Each of these stages examines key issues in the training needs assessment process. A draft report of the first phase of technical assistance was submitted to the APD in May 2008. This report reflects the findings of the second phase of technical assistance.

A second site visit was made on June 26 and June 27, 2008 to address the Intermediate Stage of the training needs assessment. The key issues addressed focused on (a) any additional training provided to the members of the Narcotics Unit to supplement the training reviewed during the initial site visit; (b) the effectiveness of the training that had been conducted in accomplishing the Narcotics Unit's goals with efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism, (c) identification of any gaps in training; and (d) recommendations for enhancement of the standard operating procedures. In addition, included in the recommendations section of this report are suggestions for

strengthening the training plan and for strengthening the training records management system.

The methodology for conducting this second phase of the assessment entailed: staff interviews; review of additional training materials; review of APD's training plan; review of any changes in S.O.P.'s; analysis of performance evaluations; and review of disciplinary records. The key findings, more fully discussed in the following sections of this report, are briefly presented below:

- Overwhelmingly, both the investigators and sergeants believed that the training was very beneficial to enhancing their job performance.
- The recommendations to close any gaps in training focused on courses in money laundering and using databases for information.
- Investigators and sergeants also recommended more frequent, intense, engaging and realistic tactical training.
- The majority of investigators experienced frequent and timely feedback from their supervisors to enhance their job performance.
- Sergeants believed their ability to coach staff would increase as they acquired more on-the-job experience.
- A broad range of responses were presented as to which training courses would be conducive to on-line training.
- Members of the Narcotics Unit made recommendations to revise the language in several S.O.P.'s to create more specificity to procedures pertaining to the Narcotic's Unit.
- Performance evaluations for investigators and sergeants supported the finding that the training enhanced job performance.
- Disciplinary records also supported the interview comments that training enhanced job performance.
- Acquiring more detailed documentation for training records is a continuing challenge for APD's training staff which needs to be addressed. This is a great

challenge due to the difficulty APD has experienced in the acquisition of the training records for training provided by other agencies.

Significant efforts have been made by APD to restructure and revitalize the Narcotics Unit. A continued focus on training and training records management will enable APD to reach their goals.

## I. INTRODUCTION

On June 26, 2008, TSS met with Major O'Brien and Lt. Mathis of APD at the Training Center. The purpose of this meeting was twofold: to discuss the findings of the first phase of technical assistance documented in the Implementation Stage Report and to conduct the second phase of review focusing on additional training provided to members of the Narcotics Unit and changes in SOPs that had been developed relevant to training issues.

Major O'Brien indicated that, while the report of the first phase of technical assistance was accurate, she expressed concern about the Department's ability to implement two of the report recommendations: (1) to acquire lesson plans from **external organizations/agencies** and (2) to maintain the recommended documentation required for internal records management which were recommended in the report. These issues will be discussed in the Findings and Recommendations Section of this report.

TSS conducted the second site visit on June 26 and 27, 2008. The key issues to be addressed in the Intermediate Stage of the training needs assessment focused on (a) any additional training provided to the members of the Narcotics Unit to supplement the training reviewed during the initial site visit, (b) the effectiveness of the implemented training in accomplishing the Narcotics Unit's goals with efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism, (c) identification of any gaps in training; and (d) recommendations for enhancement of the standard operating procedures. Interviewees were also asked their opinions on the potential utility of developing an on-line training component for at least some of the training provided.

## II. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

This section provides a summary of the follow-up interviews conducted by TSS with a random sample of investigators and all sergeants from the Narcotics Unit. TSS conducted individual interviews with staff members to extract information pertaining to the effectiveness of the training for job performance and any other information that was not available in the documentation provided by APD. The interviews examine the perspectives of the investigators and sergeants pertaining to the training.

### A. Interviews with Officers

Individual follow-up interviews were conducted with all sergeants and a random sample of investigators in the Narcotics Unit. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to ascertain the perspective of the members of the Narcotics Unit as to whether they believed the training has impacted their job performance. Additionally, these interviews gave the consultants an opportunity to solicit information in regards to gaps in training, feedback/coaching from supervisors, transfer of traditional course delivery to on-line delivery and what each member would include and prioritize in a training plan if they were the Commander of the Narcotics Unit. The information extracted from these interviews will be considered when sculpturing the Training Plan for the Atlanta Police Department. The Training Plan will be completed after the final site visit. Listed below are the questions asked during the interviews and a summary of the responses.

**Question #1** - *Has the training you received enhanced your job performance? Provide a specific example of how the training was either beneficial or not beneficial.*

**Response Summary** – Overwhelmingly, the investigators believed that the training was very beneficial to enhance their job performance. Examples reported of how the training was beneficial included increased performance in the following areas: writing search warrants and reports; street drug buys with confidential informants; developing confidence in conducting building entries; directing subordinates; and raid planning.

Respondents agreed that the F.B.I. Officer Survival Course provided the best training for the tactical, “hands-on” part of their jobs by providing skill building in live fire, simunitions, shooting from a vehicle and tactical situations. The G.B.I Undercover School provided skill building with moving surveillance. The D.E.A. School provided excellent knowledge in case law and criminal procedures pertaining to undercover operations.

***Question #2*** - *Are there any gaps in training – training courses you believe would be beneficial, yet have not received the training?*

**Response Summary** – The following summarizes the comments of the interviewees:

- Several investigators recommended that a course in money laundering would be beneficial for their job duties.
- One investigator suggested a training course on using various databases such as the city and other agencies’ systems for information.
- A strong recurring recommendation by all investigators interviewed is the need for more frequent tactical training. Investigators suggested tactical training to occur every month for 8 hours.
- Investigators also suggested tactical training that would allow members to rotate stack positions on the entry team and the perimeter.
- Investigators suggested that if the unit could not train that frequently, the unit should create a designated entry team utilizing the same personnel on a consistent basis.

In sum, greater frequency in tactical training, coupled with a course in money laundering would close the gap in training.

An ancillary issue also emerged from the interviews pertaining to the need for better equipment to include: long guns, diverse vehicles, tasers, and flashbangs. Investigators pointed out that the raid van has no air conditioning or seatbelts.

***Question #3*** - *Do you receive feedback or coaching from your supervisor that enhances your job performance?*

**Response Summary** – The majority of investigators stated that they receive frequent and timely feedback delivered in a supportive manner from their supervisors. Some investigators indicated that they did not experience coaching from their supervisors because the supervisors are also new to the unit and learning the job.

**Question #4** - *What courses do you believe could be offered on-line in lieu of traditional training methods?*

**Response Summary** – Some of the investigators recommended that the D.E.A. School could be delivered on-line because the curriculum is delivered in the classroom and is not “hands-on” or includes physical scenario training. Other recommendations included APD’s New Investigator’s Course and any curriculum related to criminal procedures and case law. Some investigators indicated that they prefer traditional delivery of the training and did not like or have experience with on-line training.

**Question #5** - *If you were the Commander of the Narcotics Unit, what would you include in a training plan? Any priorities?*

**Response Summary** – Overwhelmingly, investigators would prioritize all tactical training and increase the frequency of the tactical training. Members recommended having a shoot-house in which the investigators could experience more diversity in the training scenarios. Cross-training of teams for both skill building and team building would be emphasized. Other priority topics of training would include: criminal procedure and undercover buys. Ethics training would also be beneficial to the staff assigned to the Narcotics Unit due to the situations they experience.

Overwhelmingly recommended by the investigators was the procurement of better equipment. For example, staff pointed out that they serve more search warrants than the Red Dog Unit and the Fugitive Unit; yet these two units are issued long guns, whereas, the Narcotics Unit is not issued long guns. An additional recommendation by the investigators was to have S.O.P.’s be unit specific for easier comprehension.

**Question #6** - *Do you have any other comments you would like to share?*

**Response Summary** – Staff reiterated the need for more frequent tactical training, better equipment and the allocation of overtime.

## **B. Interviews with Sergeants**

**Question #1** - *Has the training you received enhanced your job performance? Provide a specific example of how the training was either beneficial or not beneficial.*

**Response Summary** – The sergeants were in agreement that the training has significantly impacted the performance of the unit. The F.B.I. Officer Survival and the G.B.I. Undercover Courses resulted in increasing the confidence levels of the sergeants, and from the sergeants’ perspectives also positively impacted the investigators. The sergeants believed that these two courses had a great impact because they were “hands-on” with scenarios, live-fire, simunitions, shooting from a vehicle and tactical training using a shoot-house to replicate real life situations.

Another positive benefit of the training has been enhanced warrant writing that has resulted in creating a better relationship with the judges. The sergeants also indicated that report writing and records management by staff has improved. The sergeants agreed that the training was necessary and beneficial, especially for a unit with new investigators.

**Question #2** - *Are there any gaps in training – training courses you believe would be beneficial, yet have not received the training?*

**Response Summary** – One sergeant indicated that the training sufficiently covered the needs of the Narcotics Unit and that there were no gaps in training. The other sergeants made the recommendation that while tactical training was provided to all members of the Narcotics Unit, the tactical training needs to be more frequent, intense, engaging and reflective of real life situations. The Narcotics Unit needs an environment for training, such as a shoot-house to practice tactics with more diverse, yet realistic scenarios. Several of the sergeants recommended physical fitness training for staff. The job duties of the position of a narcotics investigator and sergeant are very physically demanding, and at times, require staff to use their optimum level of physical fitness.

The sergeants also recommended a greater and timelier notification of new case law that may affect their investigations and tactics. The sergeants recommended the

creation of a field manual for the Narcotics Unit. S.O.P.'s need to be more specific to the unit and consider different circumstances. For example, the S.O.P recommends 7 to 9 members for a stack team when conducting an entry. Yet, with smaller areas, the use of fewer members may be more practical, safer and adventitious to the situation. The use of fewer members, under certain circumstances should be included to avoid any perception of policy violations.

**Question #3** - *Do you receive feedback or coaching from your supervisor that enhances your job performance?*

**Response Summary** – The sergeants were in agreement that they receive feedback that is beneficial to the performance of the unit. One sergeant noted that he also receives feedback from his investigators and welcomes their perspective. The sergeants indicated that both the lieutenant and sergeants were new to the Narcotics Unit. Formal training has been provided to both of them; however, on-the-job training and experience are invaluable. The sergeants believe that with time and experience, their level of coaching staff would increase.

**Question #4** - *What courses do you believe could be offered on-line in lieu of traditional training methods?*

**Response Summary** – One of the sergeants preferred live (traditional) training to on-line training. The other sergeants recommended courses to be converted to on-line training to include: ethics, law updates, criminal procedures, bus interdiction, and parcel investigations. One sergeant recommended that 50% of APD's in-house training could be converted to on-line training.

**Question #5** - *If you were the Commander of the Narcotics Unit, what would you include in a training plan? Any priorities?*

**Response Summary** – All sergeants recommended continuous and consistent training for the Narcotics Unit. Sergeants recommended the F.B.I. Officer Survival and G.B.I. Undercover courses as priorities for a training plan. Additional topics for inclusion in the training plan were: criminal procedure; firearms and tactical training; affidavits and report writing; cultivating confidential informants; team building; communication;

building and maintaining investigative files; and physical fitness. Also recommended was to have the investigators experience working different shifts for more diverse experience, and to have family-oriented, off-duty activities for the unit to increase cohesion.

**Question #6** - *Do you have any other comments you would like to share?*

**Response Summary** – Overwhelmingly, the sergeants wanted the administration to continue to be committed to training for members of the Narcotics Unit. New members to the Narcotics Unit should be afforded the opportunity to attend the training the current members have experienced. The sergeants indicated that some of the investigators did not want to be assigned to the Narcotics Unit. Therefore, a focus on team-building is necessary for the cohesion of the unit.

The communication flow of information from Uniform Patrol to the Narcotics Unit needs to be enhanced. Overtime pay is needed to enable staff to complete a case that may last more than 8 hours. If overtime pay cannot be provided to the unit, sergeants recommended working 4/10 hour days. Additionally, the issue of better equipment emerged and staff would like to see this issue addressed.

### III. ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENTATION

#### A. Review of Additional Training

TSS requested APD to also provide any additional documentation pertaining to training and documentation of the Narcotics Unit’s discipline and performance evaluations.

Members of the Narcotics Unit attended additional training that was conducted after the consultant’s initial site visit and through June 25, 2008 that was not included in the report of the first phase of the training assessment. Table 1 displays the training courses that were documented in the P.O.S.T records and are pertinent to the job duties of the Narcotics Unit.

**Table 1: P.O.S.T. Training Records for March 21, 2008 – June 25, 2008**

Course Name	Course Hours	Investigators	Sergeants	Lieutenant
Basic Investigator	80	1		
Officer Survival	40	2		
Interviews & Interrogations	24	1		
Marijuana Investigations	8	1		
Media Relations	16	1		
Firearms Requalification & Deadly Force	16	4	1	
Annual In-Service	8	10	5	1

During the timeframe of March 21, 2008 to June 25, 2008, twenty-seven members of the Narcotics Unit attended narcotics related training. When analyzing the number of training hours received during the above timeframe by the entire Narcotics Unit, the total training hours computes to 376. “Firearms Requalification & Deadly Force”, along with the “Annual In-service” are agency-wide mandatory courses. These courses have a nexus to narcotics investigations, but will not be analyzed in this report because the

courses are designed for agency-wide participation. **External agencies** provided the training courses listed below. APD made an effort to acquire lesson plans from these agencies; however, the agencies did not provide them:

- Basic Investigator’s Course – D.E.A.
- Officer Survival – F.B.I.
- Marijuana Investigations – HIDTA.
- Media Relations (16 hours course) – HIDTA.

Lt. William Trivelpiece, Commander of APD’s Narcotics Unit provided a memorandum that listed six additional courses attended by members of the Narcotics Unit. These courses were attended by staff after the first site visit, and occurred during the months of March, April and May. In reviewing the P.O.S.T. records, these courses did not appear in the investigators’ or sergeants’ records.

**Table 2: Other Training Not Documented in P.O.S.T. Records**

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Course Hours</b>	<b>Investigator</b>	<b>Sergeant</b>	<b>Lieutenant</b>	<b>Dates Attended</b>
Tactical Firearms	4	5	2	1	March
Forced Entry Training	8	14	2		April
Tactical Firearms	2	7	1		May
Entry Training	8	29	4		May
Media Relations	8	1			May

When analyzing the number of training hours received during March through May by the entire Narcotics Unit, the total training hours computes to 448. Lesson plans were also not provided for these courses.

APD staff provided the final examination for APD’s Basic Investigator’s Course which consisted of 54 multiple questions and provide the 3 practical exercises for the

“High Risk Warrant” course. During the first site visit, APD provided documentation through the P.O.S.T. records or memorandum that members of the Narcotics Unit had attended the courses listed below. APD staff was able to provide lesson plans for these courses during the second site visit:

- *Analytical Investigative Techniques* – provided by the Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force Training (MCTFT)
- *Supervising Counterdrug Operations* – (MCTFT)
- *Storage Unit Interdiction* – provided by the High Intensity Drug Task Area (HIDTA)
- *Commercial Bus Interdiction* – HIDTA

A brief overview of the content of each course will be presented to illustrate the knowledge and skills offered to participants from the training course.

### **Course #1 - Analytical Investigative Techniques**

Overview: This course was presented by the Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force Training. The curriculum provided a table of contents, course description and course objectives. This course provides students with investigative analysis techniques for application in narcotics investigations. Students utilize laptops to enable analysis and summary of case data to be presented in a concise and graphical format. Students have individual practical exercises and also work in teams to analyze five narcotic case studies and present their findings to the class. Students learn how to use the program RFFlow to create organizational charts, flowcharts, spreadsheets and linking techniques. Telecommunication analysis is also presented.

Comment: This curriculum is an excellent course for analysts or investigators who conduct strategic, long-term investigations.

### **Course #2 – Supervising Counterdrug Operations**

Overview: This course is presented by MCTFT and provides an overview of proactive counterdrug operations. Students are introduced to the need to formulate policy and procedures for a narcotics unit. Students are also introduced to the importance of fiscal accountability, risk assessment and mitigation, memorandums of understanding, monitoring and controlling confidential informants, recognizing psychological warning signs for narcotics investigators, requirements for organizing a task force, and raid pre-briefing and execution.

Comment: This course is appropriate for a new supervisor assigned to a narcotics unit or as a refresher course.

### **Course #3 – Storage Unit Interdiction**

Overview: This course presents an overview of the reasons and goals of performing storage unit interdiction. Students learn the legal aspects and case law pertaining to storage unit interdiction; indicators of possible criminal activity; and conducting the investigation and creating partnerships with storage unit managers, employees or security officers.

Comment: This is a basic course which is beneficial for all narcotics investigators.

### **Course #4 – Commercial Bus Interdiction**

Overview: This course also presents an overview of the reasons and goals of performing commercial bus interdiction, concealment issues, investigative methods and techniques and terminal surveillance.

Comment: This is a basic course appropriate for all narcotics investigators.

Listed in Table 3 is a summary of the content review of the training curricula for these courses.

**Table 3: Content Review of the Training Curricula - Summary**

<b>Description of Components</b>	Analytical Investigation Techniques	Supervising Counterdrug Operations	Storage Unit Interdiction	Commercial Bus Interdiction
<b>Lesson Plan Cover Sheet</b>	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Lesson Plan</b>	Content only	Content only	Content only	Content only
<b>Syllabus</b>	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Duration</b>	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Terminal Performance Objectives</b>	Included	Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Enabling Objectives</b>	Included	Included	Not Included	Included
<b>Name of Instructor</b>	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Instructor/Course Evaluation</b>	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Student Evaluation</b>	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Student Handouts</b>	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Appendix – Description of Scenarios, Case Studies, etc.</b>	Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
<b>Topics Overview</b>	Investigative analysis techniques using RFFlow program for analysis, summary and presentation of narcotics cases	Broad overview of the responsibilities of managing narcotics operations, narcotics investigators, informants and a narcotics task force for counter drug operations.	Broad overview of the reasons for conducting storage unit interdiction, legal aspects, indicators of possible criminal activity, case law, and creating partnerships with storage unit businesses.	Broad overview of the reasons for conducting commercial bus interdiction, case law, concealment issues, terminal surveillance and investigative methods and techniques.
<b>Comments</b>	Course is an excellent foundation for strategic long-term investigations.	Course is very appropriate for new supervisors or as a refresher course.	Course provides a basic understanding of indicators, case law and investigative techniques.	Course provides a basic understanding of case law, concealment issues, and terminal surveillance.

## **B. Training Plan**

Major O'Brien informed TSS that Lt. Trivelpiece had constructed a training plan. Lt. Trivelpiece provided to TSS the training plan for 2007 – 2008 that he had created. The training plan was documented on one page and provided a brief overview of training components for the unit. The document provided the following information:

### **“Training 2007 – 2008**

- Training will consist of either entire unit or two teams at a time.
- Annual Requirements
- APD Narcotics Undercover Training
- 200 hours
- Basic Investigator Course, Advanced Narcotics Training, Advanced Specialized Narcotics Training” (Trivelpiece, 2008)

## **C. Review changes in S.O.P.'s**

During this site visit, APD staff provided two additional S.O.P.'s that are pertinent to the Narcotics Unit. The staff also provided a memorandum that was distributed to APD's Narcotic Unit's staff on March 18, 2008 indicating several minor changes to existing S.O.P.'s. The following two S.O.P's were reviewed and the policies pertaining to the Narcotics Unit were found to be parallel, and not in contradiction to the received training:

- **Dress Code – S.O.P. 2130** (revision date 7/1/06)
- **General Procedures – S.O.P. 3080** (revision date 10/1/5)

The memorandum indicated that Lt. Trivelpiece, in conjunction with members of the Narcotics Unit, requested minor changes to five existing S.O.P.'s. Lt. Trivelpiece had previously discussed some of these minor changes during the first site visit, and it is clear

that the changes were adopted and committed to policy. These changes were beneficial to clarify procedures and did not contradict the received training. The changes in S.O.P.'s are as follows:

- **Search and Seizure – S.O.P. 3020, Section 4.2.6** – “Language was changed to require employees to obtain a warrant prior to receiving a signature from a Lieutenant. The S.O.P. maintains the requirement that the signature is obtained prior to serving the search warrant. This change is a result of the practical difficulties involved in obtaining a signature prior to obtaining an electronic warrant.”

- **Confidential Fund – S.O.P. 5150, Section 4.1.3(3)** – “Language was added to clarify when food and refreshments may be purchased for a confidential source.”

- **Confidential Sources – S.O.P. 5160**

- **Section 4.4.6** – “Now requires a Confidential Source (CS) to initial each line item on Confidential Sources Agreement (Form APD 342).”
- **Section 4.7.2** – “Added language requiring the Controlling Officer to pay CS or witness payment to CS.”
- **Section 4.8.1** – “Require semi-annual briefings be conducted during months of June and December.”
- **Section 4.10.3** – “Now requires that deactivation for cause of a confidential source be permanent.”

- **Undercover Operations – S.O.P. 5110**

- **Section 4.8.1** – Language added “that includes a reference to APD S.O.P. 2024, Random Drug Screening, in the exception to the prohibition of the use of intoxicants in undercover operations.”
- **Section 4.8.3** – Language added “that requires the written approval of a supervisor prior to using intoxicants in an undercover operation. These changes were already presented to Chief Pennington for signature in early February.”

- **Special Enforcement Section – S.O.P. 5030, Section 3.1.2** – “Amended to remove language that placed the Narcotics Unit in control of the Canine Unit.”

#### **D. Review of Staff Evaluations**

Annual evaluations were reviewed to ascertain if the training had a positive and supportive effect on the performance of the officers and sergeants. The performance evaluations due for investigators and sergeants were reviewed to also identify any potential deficiencies or gaps in training.

Officers were evaluated in the following five critical job element categories:

- Issued/Assign City Equipment
- Adherence to All Department Policies and Procedures
- Tactical Plan
- Completed Case File
- Overall Rating

Sergeants were evaluated in the following five critical job element categories:

- Adherence to Department Policies and Procedures
- Administration of Performance Evaluation
- Administrative Duties
- Operational Procedures
- Overall Rating

The rating scales for the investigators' and sergeants' performance were identical and consisted of the following categories:

- Outstanding – No more than 1 instance of failing to meet standards.
- Highly Effective – No more than 2 instances of failing to meet standards.
- Effective – No more than 3 instances of failing to meet standards.
- Needs Improvement – No more than 4-5 instances of failing to meet standards.
- Unacceptable – More than 5 instances of failing to meet standards.

Thirty of the investigators were due for their annual evaluation and all thirty received the overall rating of Highly Effective. All five sergeants were due for their

annual evaluation. Four of the sergeants received the overall rating of Highly Effective, while one sergeant received the overall rating of Outstanding. Based upon these 35 annual performance ratings, it appears that the training has been beneficial in supporting the investigators and sergeants in their job duties. No gaps or recommendations for training were identified through the review of the annual performance evaluations.

**E. Review of any disciplinary records related to members in the Narcotic's Unit in terms of their job performance:**

APD's Office of Professional Standards has the responsibility of investigating complaints against an officer that violates the law or department policy, and includes actions that occur while on-duty and off-duty. The complaint can be generated externally by a citizen or internally by any member of APD. The complaint is thoroughly investigated and receives a disposition. Dispositions include the following four categories:

- *Unfounded*: The allegation has no merit, is false and not factual.
- *Exonerated*: The incident occurred, but the actions taken by the officer were justified, lawful and did not violate department policy under the existing conditions of the incident.
- *Not Sustained*: There is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation.
- *Sustained*: The allegation is supported by sufficient evidence of wrongdoing by the officer.

A sustained complaint may result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, additional training, counseling, written reprimand, suspension or termination.

APD's Office of Professional Standards provided the disciplinary complaint history for the Narcotics Unit. The records covered nearly a one year period, commencing on May 29, 2007 and ending on June 25, 2008. None of the supervisors of the Narcotics Unit had complaint referrals. Eight officers had complaints referred to the Office of Professional Standards for alleged department violations. Of the eight officers,

only one had three complaint referrals, while the remaining officers only had one complaint referral, resulting in a total of 10 alleged department violations. The disposition of the violations is as follows: four open complaint referrals; two exonerated complaint referrals; three not sustained complaint referrals; and one sustained complaint referral for failure to appear in court. The nature of the sustained complaint reflects an issue relating to personal discipline, rather than knowledge, skills and abilities.

When examining the findings of APD's Office of Professional Standards in terms of policy violations, none of the officers were identified to require additional training in narcotics. A tentative finding can be made that the training satisfactorily met the required knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform the duties and responsibilities for the positions of narcotics officer and supervisor. None of the officers or supervisors assigned to the Narcotics Unit were found to have violated any policies and procedures pertaining to narcotics related investigations.

## **IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Principal Findings**

The principal findings resulting from this second phase of technical assistance are based on the additional information that was obtained during the second site visit. These findings address challenges similar to those identified during the first site visit. These principal findings reflect four areas of investigation: challenges in management of training records; closure of the training gaps; impact of the training; and scope of the S.O.P.'s.

#### **1. Challenges in Management of Training Records**

During this site visit, an interview was conducted with Major O'Brien and Lt. Mathis of APD's Training Staff. The discussion focused on reviewing the report produced from the first site visit reflecting the Initial Implementation Stage of the training needs assessment. Overall, Major O'Brien indicated that the report was accurate and detailed. However, Major O'Brien expressed concern with the department's ability to implement two areas of recommended improvement: (1) to obtain curricula delivered by other agencies and; (2) to maintain very detailed training records. In the following paragraphs, APD staff explained why these two recommendations would be challenging to implement.

Major O'Brien and Lt. Mathis indicated that they have diligently contacted D.E.A., F.B.I. and HIDTA requesting these agencies to provide course curricula that were delivered to members of APD's Narcotics Unit. Major O'Brien stated she has exhausted all avenues to obtain the curricula from courses delivered by D.E.A., F.B.I., and HITDA. Major O'Brien expressed a degree of frustration in that her efforts did not produce the lesson plans from these "outside agencies" for analysis in the training needs assessment. Major O'Brien advised that obtaining any training documentation related to

APD's "internal or academy" training has not been a problem; however, trying to obtain training documentation from "outside agencies" has been challenging. Major O'Brien's experience with requesting training documentation from some of the "outside agencies" has resulted, at times, with no response from the "outside agencies" to requests to provide the requested training documentation.

The second challenge for APD's Training Staff - to maintain detailed training records -- is linked to the first challenge. APD is a large agency with the training of the department members occurring both externally and internally on a daily basis. Major O'Brien in reviewing the report indicated that obtaining curricula for every training session is a challenge. As previously discussed by Major O'Brien, obtaining the curricula from the "outside agencies" may be impossible based upon her prior experiences. Major O'Brien stated that the lesson plans created externally and internally may not be as detailed as were the components that were analyzed in this technical assistance training needs assessment. Collecting the detailed components (e.g., see Table 3) that are examined in terms of the curricula in this training needs assessment is a monumental task for the training staff because not all instructors include these components in their lesson plans.

## **2. Closure of the Training Gaps**

As noted in the previous report, APD has made substantial efforts in restructuring and revitalizing the Narcotics Unit to renew the community's confidence and trust. A significant amount of training during a short time frame was delivered to members of the Narcotics Unit. This effort by the department needs to be noted and commended. TSS conducted interviews with staff, reviewed the curricula of the courses and examined the department's S.O.P.'s. The only topic recommended by staff for inclusion in the training was money laundering. Members did state that the frequency of tactical training could be enhanced and all investigators should participate in the same training courses for consistency. Members suggested having 8 hours of tactical training each month and having all teams attend the training.

### **3. Impact of the Training**

The interviewed sergeants and investigators stated that the training they received was very beneficial to their job performance. This perspective is also supported by the Narcotics Unit's performance evaluations that revealed of the investigators due for a performance review, all 30 received a rating of Highly Effective. Four of the sergeants received a rating of Highly Effective and one sergeant received the rating of Outstanding. The disciplinary records also support this perspective. Only one member of the Narcotics Unit received sustained discipline for failure to appear for court and the situation did not appear to be related to the APD's training program.

### **4. Scope of the S.O.P.'s**

Staff from the Narcotics Unit recognized that several of the agency's S.O.P.'s required greater specificity. Changes to clarify language in the S.O.P.'s pertaining to narcotics investigations were recommended and adopted.

## **B. Recommendations**

### **1. Strengthening the Training Plan**

To strengthen the current approach to training, it is recommended that the Training Plan submitted to TSS by APD staff be more detailed and provide consistent training for all members. APD has made great strides in training its members of the Narcotics Unit; however, not all members have attended the training courses. This is apparent when examining the P.O.S.T. records that were presented in Table 3 of the previous report and Table 1 in this report. While it is recognized that some members may have job functions that require additional specialized training such as long-term strategic investigations, many of the selected courses for participation by the Narcotics Unit are appropriate for all of the Unit's members. Because the entire Narcotics Unit staff is composed of new personnel, management has an added challenge to locate courses,

register a large number of staff members for a particular course and manage staffing levels. In the future, consistency of training should be attainable because staff rotation from and to the Narcotics Unit should not be as frequent.

Training also needs to be frequent for certain topics to ensure confidence building for high liability situations. Tactical training should be “hands-on” with diverse and challenging scenarios. Frequent quality training can enable staff to master required skills, and as a result, enhance job performance.

## **2. Strengthening the Training Records Management System**

The maintenance of the training records is a challenge for APD due to the volume of training provided to APD by the numerous “outside agencies.” Major O’Brien agreed that optimally the training records should contain the components that this training needs assessment examined in each course. However, the attainment of this information is very difficult for the training staff to capture, especially after a member has attended “outside agency” training and not every instructor provides all of the information in the lesson plan.

One recommended approach to address this difficulty is to decentralize the responsibility of collecting the course information to the first line supervisor (sergeant) in each unit in the department. The volume of information that is required for each course to create a strong training records management system would be substantially less, as the supervisors only have the responsibility of their assigned subordinates. A chain-of-command approach would be followed so that lieutenants would be responsible for the sergeants’ records, etc.

The sergeant would review the learning objectives prior to the subordinate’s attendance to ensure that the training is appropriate for the job position. The sergeant would be responsible for attaining a copy of the curriculum and ensuring that the major components such as: instructor’s name, duration of the training, learning objectives, and date of the training are forward to the Training Unit. Internal training information would include the above components, and also course and instructor evaluations, addendums

such as scenarios and the student examination, if applicable. The Training Unit would serve as a central repository for the course information and entering the course into the member's P.O.S.T. record.

### **3. Strengthening the S.O.P.'s**

Staff from the Narcotics Unit need to continue reviewing the agency's S.O.P.'s for application to their work environment and job duties. It is recommended that the S.O.P.'s be unit specific, written concisely, and providing clear and direct guidance to the members of the particular unit.

After the final site visit, scheduled for August 27 and 28, 2008, a final report with a recommended training plan for APD will be prepared and submitted to BJA for transmittal to the Atlanta Police Department.