

Table of Contents

LEAB Members

Introduction

DRE Program Update

Race Data Collection and Analysis

Law Enforcement Modernization

LEAB Members

2019

Chair

Richard Gauthier, Executive Director, Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council

Vice-Chair

Sheriff Bill Bohnyak, Orange County Sheriff, Vermont Sheriffs' Association

Members

Commissioner Michael Schirling, Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety

Colonel Matthew Birmingham, Director of the Vermont State Police

Chief Thomas Hanley, Middlebury Police Department, Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police

Gwynn Zakov, Municipal Policy Advocate, Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Bram Kranichfeld, Attorney General's Office

Executive Director, State's Attorney & Sheriff's Office

Kraig LaPorte, U. S. Attorney's Office

Matthew Valerio, Defender General's Office

Michael O'Neil, Vermont Troopers Association Representative

Constable Nelson Tift, Vice-President, Vermont Constable Association

George Merkel, Vermont Police Association Representative

Introduction

In 2004, the General Assembly created the Law Enforcement Advisory Board (LEAB) of the Department of Public Safety with the authorizing language contained in 24 VSA 1939. The purpose of the Board is to advise the Commissioner and the General Assembly on issues involving the cooperation and coordination of all agencies that exercise law enforcement authority. Membership of the Board is set by statute.

In 2019, the LEAB addressed the following:

- Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Program Update
- Race Data Collection and Analysis
- Law Enforcement Modernization

As always, LEAB members are available to testify on any issue contained in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheriff William Bohnyak

Orange County Sheriff's Department

Chair, LEAB

Drug Recognition Expert Program

In 2019, Lt. John Flanigan of the VT State Police announced that he would be retiring effective April, 2019. Lt. Flanigan had been the State Coordinator for the DRE Program, and upon news of his retirement, the LEAB supported turning the management of the DRE program over to the VT Criminal Justice Training Council. The Council, already coordinating training programs for impaired operation via a grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP), was the preferred 'home' of the program because the DPS Commissioner believed that the Council represented the broadest cross-section of law enforcement and was already engaged in impaired operation training and building a sub-committee to address highway safety. The Council agreed and accepted the responsibility.

In late 2019, the process to move the program to the Council was completed. Due to funding, the Council was only able to contract with a DRE state coordinator rather than hire an individual, though it was vitally important to find an individual with the appropriate skill set and dedication to manage the program, to maintain the high level of quality for which the VT program is known nationally. When the Request for Proposal was made public, John Flanigan was the successful bidder and began his duties in late 2019.

Race Data Collection and Analysis

The General Assembly tasked the Criminal Justice Training Council with identifying a vendor that would collect race data stop information submitted by VT law enforcement agencies. The Council selected the Crime Research Group (CRG), headed by Karen Genette, to collect submissions from agencies and post the results. The process advanced haltingly in the beginning due to the different ways agencies collected and submitted data and the necessity for CRG to 'clean' the data (remove identifying information) before it could be used. As the process matured and agencies became more familiar with how to submit and the duty to do so, though simply submitting data didn't necessarily allow for it to be analyzed, and hiring an outside consultant was very, almost prohibitively, expensive.

CRG continued to work on the issue of analysis, and in 2019, Ms. Genette met with the LEAB to update the Board on a new program that will collect the demographics of individuals stopped by law enforcement officers as well as a number of other data points to identify trends and correlations under a 2018 Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) grant.

This grant also gives CRG the ability to analyze drug and drug-related crimes, domestic violence, DUIs, weapons and property-related crimes, and crimes involving the elderly and vulnerable. A search function developed by CRG will help identify correlations and trends in criminal conduct.

CRG will be able to release these reports in the near future.

Law Enforcement Modernization

Commissioner Schirling highlighted five areas of focus to modernize the way law enforcement services work in VT:

- IT Systems Modernization
- Communications Modernization
- Fair and Impartial Policing
- Training Modernization
- Focus on efficiency, simplification, and overall government modernization as it relates to public safety services provided to Vermonters.

In 2020, Commissioner Schirling will engage with public safety stakeholders to develop processes to achieve these goals.