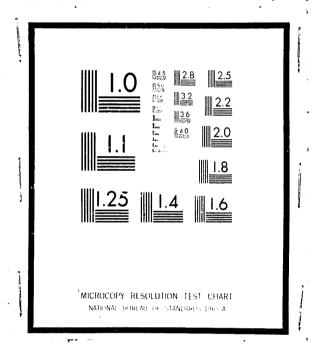
## NCJRS

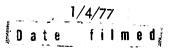
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531



## LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (LEAA) POLICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

SUBJECT:

Analysis of the Records System of the Lake -

County, Illinois, Sheriff's Department

REPORT NUMBER:

76-113/071

FOR:

Lake County, Iilinois Population

92,421

Police Strength (Sworn)
(Civilian)

80 109

Total

189

Square Mile Area

457

CONTRACTOR:

Public Administration Service

1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.

Washington, D. C. 20036

CONSULTANT:

Charles O. Hale

CONTRACT NUMBER:

J-LEAA-002-76

DATE:

August 11, 1976

ANT TOTAL

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#### SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Technical assistance was requested by the Lake County, Illinois, Sheriff's Department in analyzing existing reporting practices and records-keeping procedures and recommending improvements.

Due to the limited time available for the study, the analysis was confined largely to procedures relating to offense, arrest, and traffic accident reporting and the processing and storage of these reports. Excluded from the study were reporting procedures relating to warrants, civil process, and jail operations. In addition, no attempt was made to analyze the critical paper-flow relating to the routine administration of the department.

This report takes cognizance of the fact that the Lake County Department of Management Services is currently developing a plan for a comprehensive automated criminal justice information system that will ultimately include the Sherrif's Department and other county criminal justice agencies. One phase of their plan - an automated warrants system - is currently operational. Other phases, including automated criminal justice information and information reporting, are scheduled to become operational throughout the remainder of 1976 and 1977. Accordingly, some of the problems identified in this report may well be resolved in the process of converting the records system from a manual to an automated operation. The recommendations contained in this report therefore, are intended to be consistent and compatible with the eventual automation of the records system.

On-site review of the records-keeping practices of the department was conducted on July 16, 20 and 21, 1976.

During this time, the report forms, reporting practices, processing methods, and filing systems of the department were reviewed. A number of members of the Sheriff's Department were interviewed:

Sheriff E. J. La Magdeleine Chief Deputy Robert Corder Captain H. R. Neubauer Lieutenant James H. Donaldson Lieutenant James Repp Sergant A. McGaughey Corporal Terrence Coshurose Deputy Jerry Smith Mr. Charles Godshaw Mr. Leonard Duco

In addition, Mr. Richard Hilton and Mr. Ray Amadei, of the Lake County Department of Management Services were interviewed to obtain background information on the proposed computerized criminal justice information system.

At the conclusion of the on-site work, key problem areas were identified and preliminary recommendations were discussed with Sheriff La Magdeleine, Chief Deputy Corder, and Mr. Duco.

#### SECTION II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Lake County Sheriff's Department reports that no study has ever been conducted of its records system. As a result, some methods currently being used are outmoded. In addition, the central records section has suffered from high personnel turnover and a lack of skilled, competent personnel to administer the records-keeping system. While the department has embarked upon a number of ambitious programs to upgrade and steamline its line operations, relatively little attention has been given to improving the records system. Consequently, a number of deficiencies were discovered that deserve immediate attention.

#### These include:

- o Inadequate Staffing
- o A lack of personnel knowledgeable in police record procedures
- o Insufficient working space and general overcrowding
- o A lack of centralized control
- o Duplication of files
- o Illogical arrangement of files
- o Difficulty in retrieving essential information

Some of these problems can be eliminated rather easily through the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. Others, as indicated earlier, will probably be resolved through the process of converting to an automated system. Still others, however, will require that someone thoroughly knowledgeable in police records system be assigned to head the records section and be given the authority to make those changes which are essential to the efficient and productive processing and maintenance of records. This capability is currently lacking in the Department.

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#### SECTION III. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

This section describes the current reporting practices and recordskeeping procedures of the Lake County Sheriff's Department and identifies several problem areas. Subsequent sections propose recommendations for improvement.

#### Information Receipt

Incoming requests for police services and information regarding criminal activity are received by dispatchers in the communications center. Information will normally be received either by telephone or by radio from another police jurisdiction or from a patrol unit in the field.

Depending upon the nature of the incident, one of several colorcoded dispatch cards are completed by the dispatcher:

White - miscellaneous service Yellow - traffic accident

Pink - medical emergency

These cards are not numbered but are filed at the end of each shift in chronological order. If no report is initiated by the officer responding to the call, the disposition of the incident is shown on the card. If a case is originated, an offense report number is shown on the dispatch card.

Dispatch cards contain much valuable information on police incidents which do not result in formal offense reports, but much of this information is never tabulated. Instead, only the sum total of "service calls" is tabulated each month and forwarded to central records for inclusion in the monthly uniform crime reports. Such essential statistical data, such as average response time, average time to complete incidents, time of day, day of week, and geographic area, are not tabulated, even though the information is recorded on the dispatch card. In addition, since dispatch cards are not numbered, there is no way to guard against their being lost or misplaced.

Dispatchers also record data on vehicle tow requests, warrant and license checks, and miscellaneous services. In addition, dispatchers prepare daily summary sheets on which are recorded pertinent information on incidents that will be passed on to oncoming patrol shifts for briefing purposes. Such information would include stolen autos, wanted persons, special patrol requests, and the like.

When an offense report is originated by a patrol officer in the field, a dispatcher advises the officer by radio of the time of receipt and

offense report number. The top portion of the offense report (See Figure 1) is the completed by the dispatcher. Completed offense reports are batched at the end of each shift and are forwarded to the patrol shift supervisor to be matched up with tape casettes which contain the narrative portion of the report.

#### Field Reporting

All patrol personnel in the Department are equipped with miniature casette tape recorders. When offense reports are initiated, the patrol officer receives the time and report number from the dispatcher and then records the narrative of the report on tape.

These tapes are collected at the end of each shift and are taken by the shift commander to the central Sheriff's facility. (Note: Patrol officers operate out of a sub-station in Libertyville some 10 miles from the headquarters of the Sheriff's Department in Waukegan). Tape casettes are then matched up with the appropriate offense reports and are forwarded to a typist who transcribes the narrative portion of the report from the tapes. At the same time, 3"x5" name index cards are prepared on persons whose names appear in the reports.

Two typists are assigned to transcribe reports from the tapes. These typists work from 6:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. This results in a serious backlog of cases, particularly over the week-end. A spot check revealed a delay of between 24 to 48 hours from the time a report is taken in the field and the time it is typed.

Traffic accident reports are not subject to the same process as described above. Instead, they are written on a standard form by the investigating officer, as are arrest reports and traffic citations.

#### Report Processing

#### Offense Reports

Offense reports are recorded on a five-part form set, as shown in Figure 1. After being typed, one copy (blue) is pulled off and given to investigators to use as a working copy. The remainders are forwarded to central records, along with the name index cards.

In central records, the following distribution of the offense report copies is made:

White (original) - scored for UCR and filed by offense classification

Yellow - filed by offense report number

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Figure 1

#### OFFENSE REPORT

DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES

OFFENSE REPORT		AN, ILLINOIS	No.
TIME: DATE:	e go de la	POLICE OFFICER	L
FFENSE AS REPORTED	NARIAN	ON VIEW ARREST	
FTER INVESTIGATION CHANGED TO:			
LACE OF OCCURRENCE		INVESTIGATED BY	
		OFFICERS ASSIGNED	
NAME: ADDRESS:		PERSON OR PERSONS ARRI	ESTED
CITY AND STATE:			
8 ( PHONE: DETAILS OF REPORT			
PETALES OF THE OTHER			
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EROADCAST BY

O't pe Further Information or Investigations on Follow-up Report Sneets in Quintuolicate) SIGNED

TIME

SHERIFF OR COMMANDING OFFICER

Form #3H-302-5

Pink - filed chronogically by date

Blue - retained by investigators

Green - returned to Sheriff's sub-station in Libertyville for their working file.

Name index cards are filed in alphabetical order in a master name index file.

#### Supplemental Reports

Supplemental reports are used to record information on a case subsequent to the completion of the original report. Usually, supplemental reports are prepared by investigators, who also use casette recorders to record the details of the investigation. Supplemental reports are processed and distributed in the same manner as original offense reports.

#### **Arrest Reports**

Arrests are recorded on arrest tickets, similar to traffic citations. Separate arrest tickets are used for traffic and non-traffic arrests. Copies of non-traffic arrest tickets are distributed as follows:

White (original) - jailer

Pink - arresting officer

White (copy) - jailer

Green - arresting officer

Beige - arrestee

An offense report is prepared on each non-traffic arrest. In addition, on all arrests, pertinent information is recorded on an arrest information form at time of booking. Also, several fingerprint cards are prepared, along with miscellaneous forms relating to jail administration.

An "L-number" is assigned for each person arrested. At the time of booking, it is necessary to check with central records to determine if a person has a prior L-number. If so, the original L-number is assigned. If no previous arrests are discovered, a new L-number is assigned.

Name index cards are prepared for all prisoners at time of booking. These are filed alphabetically for all persons currently in custody. When a person is released from custody, the name card is transferred to a dead file where it is placed in alphabetical order.

Each day, arrest information forms, state arrest reports, and fingerprint cards are delivered to central records. A clerk then types in the information regarding the arrest on the face of the arrest card from the information shown on the arrest information form.

The original copy of the arrest card is retained by the Department and is filed numerically by L-number. (Note: The reverse side of the face sheet of the arrest card is the fingerprint record). One copy of the arrest card is forwarded to the State's Attorney and one copy goes to the Court Clerk. Another copy is forwarded to the State Bureau of Identification, along with one fingerprint card.

Three name index cards are also prepared on arrests. Two of these are filed in central records: one in a master name file and one in an L-number file. The third card is forwarded to investigators where it is filed along with a copy of the photograph taken at time of arrest.

Fingerprint cards are filed by L-number rather than by fingerprint classification. L-number folders also contain a negative of the booking photograph and copies of rap sheets when they are received from the State Bureau of Identification.

At the present time, the central records section also keeps a copy of all booking sheets which are filed by L-number. These are in the process of being transferred to the investigation section where they will be grouped by offense classification, thus removing this responsibility from central records.

#### Traffic Accident Reports

. . .

Traffic accident reports are completed by patrol officers in the field and a copy given to the driver(s) involved. One copy is forwarded to central records. Name index cards are prepared on all parties involved. These cards are filed in alphabetical order in a file adjacent to the records information counter for easy access. A second card file on traffic accidents is maintained by date of accident.

Accident reports are serially numbered, but are not filed by number. Instead, they are filed initially by date for the current 30-day period. After 30 days has elasped, reports are removed and filed by township. No cumulative statistics are kept of traffic accidents by date, time, location, or cause of accident.

#### Other Reports and Files

#### Stolen Property File

The Department does not maintain a stolen property file. Certain identifiable property items (such as automobile, television sets, etc.) which are reported stolen are entered into a state federal information system.

#### Uniform Crime Reporting

Each month the Department is required to compile statistics on crime, arrests, and related incidents and report this information to the Crime Studies Section of the Illinois Division of Identification, Department of Law Enforcement. The current directive require reports to be filed within 10 days after the end of each reporting period. At the time the present study was conducted, the Lake County Sheriff's Department had not yet completed the April, 1976, report. This is due largely to a shortage of personnel and the press of other business.

The Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting System provides for agencies to use one of two methods for reporting crime statistics:

- 1. By computer print-outs, punch cards, or magnetic type; or,
- 2. Standard manually-processed reporting forms.

Departments using manually-processed reports are allowed to choose between two optional reporting formats: Set I and Set 2. Set I utilizes the tally concept of counting offenses by categories which are pre-printed on forms supplied by the State Bureau of Investigation. Set I also provides for recording disposition data, such as unfounded or cleared by arrest. Data are also collected on persons arrested. A separate form is used for detailed analysis of property offenses, such as theft, burglary, and robbery.

The Set 2 approach is case oriented and provides for much more detailed information than does Set 1. For example, rather than tallying all offenses as with Set 1, under Set 2 all offenses are listed individually by case number.

Set 1 forms were designed for use by larger agencies which maintain an internal record system capable of capturing required offense data. Set 2 forms were designed for smaller agencies which (a) do not have a large volume of cases; and (b) desire much more detailed case management information. Due to the differences in reporting procedures, Set 2 forms require much longer to complete than Set 1 forms.

#### Crime Analysis

The Department does not have a crime analysis capability. Other than monthly uniform crime reports which are currently several months behind, the Department does not compile statistical summaries of arrests, offenders, and related information. Computer print-outs of monthly uniform crime reports are received in central records but are not used to evaluate Department performance nor to plan programs or crime prevention strategies. The Department has a crime prevention unit but is apparently does not rely upon offense analysis to plan and coordinate specific crime prevention programs.

#### SECTION IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Undoubtedly, the implementation of an automated information system will be of significant benefit to the Lake County Sheriff's Department and will serve to alleviate, if not solve altogether, some of the problems observed in the present records system. Notwithstanding this fact, however, a number of changes can be effected prior to the time the new system becomes fully operational which will considerably improve the efficiency of the records system.

#### Personnel

The Department's records unit suffers from a lack of trained, competent personnel. Indeed, the exact number of personnel assigned to the records unit is hard to pinpoint due to a fragmentation of duties and responsibilities. No one seems to be clearly in charge and the person who is supposedly responsible for supervising records personnel does not have a solid background in records system operations. Due apparently to low salaries, turn-over in the records unit has been high and efficiency and productivity have suffered as a result. Persons assigned to the records unit seem to have a quite narrow understanding of their respective jobs and do not seem to appreciate the importance of the records system as it applies to the overall operation of the Department. Consequently, functions are performed without anyone quite understanding why they are performed, or how they relate to the total operations.

#### Organization

There is a lack of organization with respect to records-keeping functions. There seems to be an absence of central authority and leadership, and the entire operation is somewhat fragmented and decentralized.

#### Operating Space

The operating space devoted to the records operation is woefully in-adequate. Even if more personnel were assigned to the records unit, there would be no place for them to work. This is apparently the reason that the two typists who transcribe offense reports are located in the offices of the investigative section and are physically isolated from the remainder of the records personnel. This further aggravates the problem of control and supervision.

The problem of inadequate space may be at least partially alleviated by eliminating some unnecessary files, converting other files to more modern file cabinets, and rearranging the desks and office equipment. Further improvements might be gained by assigning one or more clerks to a second

shift. This would also help to expedite the processing of reports and reduce delays and backlogs.

#### Report Forms

The offense report currently used by the Department (Figure 1) is of limited value since nearly all information relating to an offense is contained in the narrative portion. As a result, records personnel must read each report thoroughly to extract UCR data, dates, places, names, and other information necessary for cross-indexing. This is a time-consuming process that could be substantially reduced if a new form were designed to reduce the amount of detail provided in the narrative section of the report. It is understood that a new reporting format will be developed as part of the process of converting to an automated information system.

It is also suggested that a form be developed to record all miscellaneous service activities, not otherwise recorded on offense arrest, or traffic accident reports. Service activities account for a large share of the field officers' workload and often involve incidents which are of a continuing interest to the Department. A revised version of the complaint card now in use could provide a wealth of statistical information which is not now retained by the Department in any useful form.

#### Field Reporting

The practice of tape-recording all offense reports is a matter of convenience from the point of view of the patrol officer, but creates substantial delays in the processing and distribution of reports. If a new report form is adapted as suggested above, it is probable that there will no longer be a need to tape record reports. Instead, reports could be completed, neatly and legibly, in long-hand by patrol officers. This would also allow field supervisors to check all reports for accuracy and completeness. This is an important control function which is not possible under the present system.

Providing reports are completed legibly and neatly, there is no reason why they should be typed. A multiple-copy form set could be completed by the officers and copies distributed, as necessary, immediately after review and approval by the shift supervisor. In this way, the delay experienced between the initiation and the processing of a report could be reduced from several days to a few hours.

#### Central Control

It is clear that central records does not exercise tight enough control over police reports. It was discovered that gaps often exist in the sequence of offense report numbers. Since there is no central log

of offense report numbers, there is no way to determine whether these gaps represent missing reports or whether they are merely the result of misnumbering.

In one instance, however, (the case involved being the fatal shooting of a deputy sheriff) the entire case report, consisting of a hundred or more pages of investigation, was withheld from central records by investigators. The reason given was that the information was sensitive and the department did not wish it to be released to the press. While there may be justification for keeping such information confidential, there is no reason for not forwarding all reports to central records. Releasing information to the news media and the general public (except in the case of traffic accident reports and other routine matters) should not be the responsibility of records personnel in any case. Rather, the Department should designate some member of the staff to assume the responsibility of releasing information to the news media.

#### Report Processing

The files presently maintained by the Department are needlessly duplicative. Two files for offense reports should be sufficient. The original copy of all offense and/or activity reports should be filed numerically. A name index file should be maintained for cross-reference purposes.

The present offense classification file should be rearranged to correspond with the state uniform crime report classification system, and should be transferred to the investigations section, since it is largely an investigative tool. All other offense report files should be eliminated.

Additionally, a single name index file should be established, combining the name index card file now being maintained separately for offenses, arrests, and traffic accidents.

Name index cards should be filed alphabetically and should be prepared in such a manner as to allow for continuous updating, as shown in Figure 2. The name index card should contain sufficient cross-reference information to allow for easy location of any reports connected with an individual.

A single numbering system should be used for all reports, except arrests. This would include offense reports, traffic accident reports, and miscellaneous incident reports. A copy of all traffic accident reports should be filed by date for the current 30-day period, as is presently the case. After 30 days has expired, copies of traffic accident reports should be filed by accident location, rather than by township. By so doing, a more effective appraisal of traffic problems could be performed.

#### Figure 2

### Name Index Card "3x5"

Brown, Wilmer J.	L - 52116
1043 Euclid Place Libertyville, Illinois 60062	
(312) 496-5282	
7-1-67 arrested Waukegan PD DWI 2-14-72 victim burglary Lake Co. SO 5-25-75 involved traffic accident Lake Co. SO	L - 56116 124789 193782

#### Uniform Crime Reporting

The scoring and posting of uniform crime report data is an important function and should not be neglected. This should normally be a full-time operation if done properly. The use of the Set 2 form, as discussed previously, does not seem to be in the best interests of the Department. While Set 2 provides for a more comprehensive set of data than Set 1, it also requires more time to prepare, and the information is of little value to the Department. It is suggested that the Department experiment with Set 1 forms for a 30-day period to determine the relative value and time required of the two forms.

#### SECTION V. RECOMMENDATIONS

An automated criminal justice information system will significantly improve the quality of the records system of the Lake County Sheriff's Department, but other improvements are needed as well.

First, the records section needs to be organizationally developed to a greater degree than is presently the case. In particular, a single person must be placed in charge and given the authority to develop the records system along more modern and efficient lines. This person should have knowledge and experience in the operation of police records systems and should be given the necessary authority to make decisions which can lead to the improvement of the records system. This person should also be directly involved in the planning and development of the proposed automated information system.

No less than four clerks, in addition to the records supervisor, should be assigned to the records unit. One of these clerks should be assigned full-time to the preparation of monthly uniform crime reports and related statistical data.

Second, the offense report form used by the Department should be replaced with one or more report forms designed to capture more detailed information, but necessitating a minimum of routine detail. Under ordinary circumstances, reports should not need to be typed, but rather should be prepared neatly and legibly by the officer in the field, using multiple-copy form sets to facilitate prompt distribution and processing.

A new form should be instituted to replace the complaint form now prepared by the dispatcher. A suggested form for this purpose is shown in Figure 3. This form would be used to record all original complaint information and, in some cases, would be the sole record of a complaint. Accordingly, the form should be pre-numbered and forwarded to central records for processing, just as with all other reports. The complaint record should be a multiple-copy form set, with one copy going to the investigation section and one going back to the sub-station at Libertyville. The original would be processed by central records in the same fashion as other reports. This would ensure that the Department is able to capture and retain much more detailed information on non-criminal "service" type activities than is presently the case.

Third, several of the files presently maintained by the Department should either be eliminated or consolidated. The following files should be maintained by the Department.

Name Index File - Name cards reported on all offense, arrest, traffic accident, and miscellaneous incident reports.

Daily Reports - All reports (excluding arrest files) filed in numerical sequence. This would include offense reports, traffic accident reports, and miscellaneous incident reports,

#### PROPOSED COMPLAINT CARD

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OFFENSE CODE		OFFENSE					NO.	/	,					1					0
OCATION		I					BEAT OF OCCURANCE							1	RECEIVED	ASSIGNED			REASS:GNED
OMPLAINANT'S NAME						COMPL PHONE NO.							1	RECE	ASSIC	10-23	19-24	REAS	
XOMPLAINANT'S ADD	DRESS		<del></del>	A		*****	APT, N	0.	T	HOM	E	ю 1	JS.	1					
REMARKS:			·	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·										7					
		•	,						<del></del>			<del></del>		7					
NO PAPER .	[] SEE CO	MPL [	1 DO NOT SE	E COMP	L UNFOU	NDED	□ G.	0. /	<del></del>		EVE	RSE	USE	0					
DFFICER ASSIGNED	*		OFFICER AS	SISTING		DIS	тнст		BEAT	<u> </u>	1	ECI	ION	7					
BEAT	OFFICER	NO.	BEAT		OFFICER NO.	1	AY OF		M 2					,					
RECEIVED BY:			1		•	HOW CALL RECEIV			EIVED DESK			1	(						
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under a single numbering sequence.

Arrest Files - Filed by L-number, to include arrest report face sheet, rap sheets, disposition data, and other relevant data.

Traffic Accident Reports - A copy filed initially by date and then transferred to a location file.

#### Additional Consideration

It was also discovered that there seems to be a breakdown in the reporting of crime cleared through the process of investigations. In 1975, for example, the Department recorded an overall clearance rate for property offenses of only 4.0 per cent. This figure should normally be in the area of 18-20 per cent. It would appear that crimes cleared through supplemental investigation, either by arrest or some other means, are not being reflected in the monthly uniform crime reports.

Investigators should ensure that all cases in which a change in status occurs (i.e., from "open" to "close") by whatever means, are recorded on a supplemental report. Records personnel, in turn, should carefully review all supplemental case reports to pick-up additional case status information.

It is also recommended that the Department begin to collect more detailed activity statistics. Merely reporting the number of arrests and offenses recorded each month is not sufficient to thoroughly evaluate the level or quality of law enforcement service, nor does it permit an accurate assessment of manpower requirements.

Activity statistics, showing the day, date, time, and location of all police incidents should be recorded and compiled regularly. Similarly, response time for various types of calls (i.e., emergency versus non-emergency) along with the total amount of time consumed for such calls should be gathered and analyzed.

In addition, the Department should develop a crime analysis capability which would permit it to more effectively analyze crime trends and patterns and develop appropriate responses to them. For the purpose of crime analysis, the time and location of specific types of crimes is especially important. This information would also be of great value to crime prevention personnel who must develop preventive tactics based upon a careful analysis of actual crime problems. Such analysis is not possible with the type of information now being collected by the Department.

# END