INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

In Response to a Request for Technical Assistance

by the

St. Francis, Wisconsin, Police Department

August 16, 1973

Prepared by:

Public Administration Service
1313 East 60th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

(Per Contract J—LEAA—015—72)

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I. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

A. Consultant Assigned:

G. Stephen Lloyd
Senior Associate
Public Administration Service

B. Date Assignment Received:

June 15, 1973

C. Date of Contact with LEAA Regional Coordinator:

June 18, 1973

D. Date of On—Site Consultation:

July 2, 1973

E. Individual Interviewed:

Gerald G. Barrett
Chief of Police
St. Francis, Wisconsin

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A. Problem as per Request for Technical Assistance:

The Technical Instruction requested that a study be performed of the St. Francis Police Department's records system and report writing techniques.

B. Problem Actually Observed:

The problem observed on-site differed in no respect from the problem as defined in the Technical Instruction.

III.   FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

The St. Francis Police Department was created approximately 12 years ago in response to a need for a higher level of police service in the City of St. Francis. At that time the community was experiencing relatively rapid growth, but since then growth has leveled off. The Police Department is small, and very few of its staff are allocated to support services. Except for officers assigned to dispatch and the police desk, one sergeant assigned to follow-up investigations, and the Chief, all members of the Department are assigned to patrol. The Department will be hiring a records clerk in the near future.

The police records system has not changed appreciably since the formation of the Department. The Chief is certainly correct in his observation that the system is outdated. Without going into detail on the deficiencies of each form and procedure, the following will serve to highlight the overall deficiencies:

1. Except for the Auto Theft and Missing Persons Reports, the case reports lack sufficient detail to enable an officer to complete a thorough preliminary investigation and to inform his supervisors and the public on the details of the occurrence.

2. The indexing system uses 8-inch by 5-inch cards which are unnecessarily cumbersome and wasteful of file and office space.

3. Two basic case report numbering systems are used (one for adults and one for juveniles) where one would suffice.

4. There is no policy on purging index cards from the active files.

5. The practice of storing old records will, if allowed to continue, eventually use all the available storage space.

6. Officers usually complete case reports in the office after they have investigated the complaint. A system of completing the reports in the field would serve several purposes including ensuring more accurate reporting and allowing officers to remain in service.

Several procedures, following on the needs identified above, must be implemented in order to achieve the desired upgrading of the St. Francis Police Department's records system. One basic principle is that the number of forms should be reduced to the minimum necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Department. However, the Department does currently use an abundance of special purpose forms, e.g., special parking permission, house vacation checks, open doors, public works problems, which should be continued in the interest of adequately serving community needs.

IV.   POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

1. A complete system of forms, files, and reporting procedures could be designed expressly for the Department based upon its perceived needs.

2. The Department could adapt standard forms and filing procedures for its own use. These forms could be supplemented by special purpose forms designed to accomplish the Department's special needs.

3. Case reports could be handprinted or handwritten in the field by officers or alternately dictated using a tape recording device.

V.   RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

1. The Department should adapt for its own use the police records system described in the excellent book by Donald Hanna and John Kleberg. The title of this book is *A Police Records System for the Small Police Department,* and it is published by the Charles C. Thomas Company of Springfield, Illinois.

2. The following forms, samples of which appear in the above-mentioned volume, should be used:

   a.   Daily Police Activity Record.
   b.   Incident Involving Property.
   c.   Incident Involving Person.
   d.   Field Incident Report.
   e.   Record of Property Received.
   f.   Arrest and Booking Record.
   g.   Officer's Daily Report.
   h.   Supplementary Report.

   The Department should continue to use the current Accident Report and Uniform Traffic Citation.

3. The Department should adopt a Complaint/Dispatch Card to record all calls received regardless of whether a formal case report is used. The card should be used as the official report when a case report is not required. A sample form is included as Attachment 1. It should be noted that the Complaint/Dispatch Card contains spaces to record the times received and dispatched, using a time stamp.

4. All case reports should be completed in the field by the officer, in either handwritten or printed form. If lengthy investigations are conducted or statements taken, these should be tape-recorded and transcribed by the new typist.

5. Three primary indexes should be used:

   a.   Master Name File for names of complainants, victims, suspects, arrestees, persons involved in accidents, and license applicants.

   b.   Juvenile Name File using the Wisconsin Juvenile Law Enforcement Record Form.

   c.   Property File for description of property involved.

   With the exception of the Wisconsin Juvenile Law Enforcement Record, index files should use a standard 5-inch by 3-inch index card.

6. All case reports should be filed by complaint number starting with the number of the year in which the offense occurred, e.g., 73–00000. Reports involving juveniles can be filed separately, using the same numbering system but with a "J" prefix.

7. Arrest Reports should be filed alphabetically.

8. Complaint/Dispatch Cards should be filed by date and within the date alphabetically by name of the complainant.

9. The Department should microfilm records five years or more old.

10. A system for purging records should be developed along the following lines:

    a. Complaint/Dispatch Cards should be purged after one year. For example, Complaint/Dispatch Cards for January, 1974, should be pulled from the file in January, 1975, and destroyed.

    b. Field Incident Reports should be purged and destroyed after two years. Color-coded index cards for field incidents could be used to facilitate this purge.

    c. Index cards relating to Field Incident Reports should be purged after two years. All other index cards should be retained.

    d. The officers' Daily Activity Report should be destroyed after two years.

    e. All other reports should be microfilmed after five years.

11. The Department should continue to maintain the so-called "B of I File" containing the cumulative record of each individual arrested by the Department.

12. Fingerprints of license applicants should be filed alphabetically.

COMPLAINT/DISPATCH RECORD

Complaint Number	**Description of Complaint**	

Address | **Unit(s) Assigned**

| **Complainant Name** | **Address (if different)** | **Phone** |

How Received
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ In Person
- ☐ On View

Location

City _____

Out of Town _____

Action Taken
- ☐ Unfounded
- ☐ Cleared By Unit
- ☐ Offense Report
- ☐ Traffic Report

☐ Juvenile
☐ M ☐ F

Description of Suspect

Race	Age	Height	Weight	Hair	Eyes	Complexion

Description of Vehicle

Make	Model	Style	License Number and State

- ☐ Stolen
- ☐ Clean

Remarks:

Dispatcher:

Initials _____ Date _____

(left margin, vertical) Time Received / Time Dispatched

(right margin, vertical) Back in Service / Arrived on Scene

Notes:
1. Prepared on all police service actions.
2. Used as final report where follow-up unnecessary.
3. May be card stock, punch card size.

END