

## INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

October 8, 2024  
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**BPC# 24-200**

**TO:** The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

**FROM:** Inspector General, Police Commission

**SUBJECT:** REVIEW OF THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT'S FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

REVIEW and APPROVE the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG's) Review of the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD or Department) Field Training Program (FTP).

### **DISCUSSION**

In 2022, the Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC or Commission) directed the OIG to review the Department's FTP -- a 24-week program designed to bridge the gap between a police recruit's training in the academy and the real-world demands of a patrol officer.

This FTP review evaluated: (1) the current technology used in the FTP, (2) overall performance and productivity, (3) probationary officers' perspectives on Field Training Officer (FTO) training, and (4) the criteria and process for FTO selection and hiring. The OIG's methodology encompassed site visits, observations of certification and update courses for FTOs, analysis of probationary officer documents and FTO selection records, reviews of complaints and lawsuits related to the FTP, and a survey administered to probationary officers who recently completed the FTP.

The OIG's review resulted in multiple findings and related recommendations, including:

- Banning Department practices that might be construed as hazing or disparate treatment towards probationary officers;
- Developing a centralized and computerized tracking system to manage all FTP documentation, data collection, and analysis; and,
- Enhancing the process for obtaining feedback from probationary officers regarding their experience in the FTP overall and with their specific FTOs.

I am available to provide any further information the Commission may require.

 For

FLORENCE YU  
Acting Inspector General  
Police Commission

Attachment

**LOS ANGELES POLICE COMMISSION**

**REVIEW OF THE LOS ANGELES POLICE  
DEPARTMENT'S FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM**



Conducted by the  
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Florence Yu  
Acting Inspector General

October 8, 2024

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Appendix – Los Angeles Police Department’s Response to the Office of the Inspector General’s Review of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Field Training Program

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted a comprehensive review of the Department's Field Training Program (FTP) aimed at evaluating four key areas: (1) the current technology used in the FTP, (2) overall performance and productivity, (3) probationary officers' perspectives on Field Training Officer (FTO) training, and (4) the criteria and process for FTO selection and hiring. The OIG's methodology encompassed site visits to four geographic Areas within the Department's Bureaus, observations of certification and update courses for FTOs, analysis of probationary officer and FTO selection records, reviews of complaints and lawsuits related to FTP, and a survey administered to probationary officers who recently completed Field Training.

The OIG found the following: In terms of technology, documents associated with the FTP are paper-based, and the Department does not have a centralized system to analyze trends and issues in the FTP Department-wide. Consequently, the Department lacks the data needed to assess both trends that may warrant consideration, such as different approaches to the way probationary officers are assessed across areas, and issues with specific individuals, such as real-time alerts regarding performance issues.

When considering the performance and productivity of FTP overall, several existing resources appear to be underutilized, such as feedback forms that probationary officers are expected to complete about their experience in the FTP. With respect to probationary officer perception of FTO training quality, the OIG found that probationary officers who responded to an OIG-administered survey expressed an overwhelmingly positive view of their experience with FTOs across a broad range of areas. Nevertheless, there were some notable concerns echoed by multiple probationary officers, particularly regarding the perceived negative attitudes some FTOs have toward the FTO role, and potential instances of hazing. The survey results also indicated that probationary officers are often instructed to "forget everything you learned in the Academy"—a sentiment that undermines the valuable experience gained in the Academy and is counterproductive to the Department's effort to use the phases in the probationary period in a complementary manner.

For the part of the review where the OIG examined the FTO selection criteria and process, the OIG found there is limited documentation detailing the qualifications of officers who are selected for an FTO position. Furthermore, the interview process is cumbersome and time-consuming. The OIG also found that some individuals selected as FTOs are not paired with probationary officers and ineffective FTOs are rarely downgraded.

This report concludes with a series of recommendations for improving the FTP.

## II. BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Board of Police Commissioners (Commission) directed the OIG to review the Los Angeles Police Department's (Department or LAPD) FTP. The FTP is a 24-week program designed to bridge the gap between a police recruit's training and experience in the academic environment of the LAPD's Police Academy and the real-world demands of a patrol officer. The FTP is pivotal in shaping a new officer's career path as well as their professionalism, ethics, and dedication to community service. While the FTP plays a crucial role in the LAPD's operations and upholding public trust, it is only a part of the comprehensive training given to incoming officers. The entire training process comprises three phases: a 24-week Recruit Academy Training Period (Phase I), a 24-week Structured Field Training Program Period (Phase II),<sup>1</sup> and a concluding 28-week Final Probationary Period (Phase III). This report centers on Phase II, but a brief overview of all phases is included for context.

Phase I, also known as the "Academy," represents the foundational training for police recruits following their rigorous application, testing, and background checks. While attending the Academy, recruits lack arrest powers or peace officer authority. The training encompasses a total of 912 hours, with 664 hours of curriculum set by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). The remaining 248 hours focus on LAPD-specific training. The Academy includes instruction in law, Department policy, human relations, emergency vehicle driving, tactics, use of force, firearms, and physical training. Most of this instruction is classroom-based, delivered at three Academy locations: Elysian Park (the main training facility near Downtown Los Angeles), the Ahmanson Recruit Training Center in Westchester, and the Edward M. Davis Training Facility in Granada Hills. Phase I culminates in a formal graduation.

Post-graduation, new officers, now designated by the rank of Police Officer I (PO I) or the title of "probationary officer," move to one of the Department's 21 Geographical Areas for Phase II – the field training segment. This stage is essential as it is unrealistic to expect probationary officers to immediately demonstrate the expertise of more experienced officers. Thus, these 24 weeks post-Academy are dedicated to patrol operations training under the mentorship of experienced and specially-selected FTOs. During this phase, the performance of probationary officers is closely observed and assessed.<sup>2</sup>

For this phase, probationary officers are assigned a designated FTO for each of three 8-week cycles. The process of selecting FTOs, who hold the rank of Police Officer III (PO III), is detailed later in this report. Their role is fundamental, providing new officers their first genuine introduction to on-the-ground police duties outside of the Academy and a classroom environment.

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<sup>1</sup> While the official title of this period of probation is the Structured Field Training Program Period, it is typically referred to as the Field Training Program or FTP. Therefore, these names are used to refer to the program throughout this report.

<sup>2</sup> The FTP typically spans 24 weeks, but it may be extended for a minimum of four weeks and a maximum of 8 weeks if a probationary officer's performance is not at an overall satisfactory level at the end of the FTP.

Upon completing the FTP, officers advance to the Final Probationary Period (FPP), which is less structured than the first two phases. As probationary officers transition from their Phase I Academy training to Phase II, the focus shifts towards standard patrol responsibilities. During the transition to Phase III, the emphasis shifts to reinforcing the lessons from Phases I and II for the new officers, continuing to refine their comprehension, communication skills, and approach to the job, and increasing their confidence. During the FPP, officers stay in the same Geographical Area as their field training, pairing either with an FTO or a PO II. Although evaluations of these new officers continue, they match those of regular (non-probationary) officers. Notably, the Department has the right to terminate probationary officers more easily prior to the conclusion of this last stage, given their limited civil service protections.

The OIG conducted a comprehensive review of the Department's FTP (Phase II) to better understand the program, assess its effectiveness, and identify potential areas for improvement. The specifics of this review are elaborated on in the sections below.

### **A. Field Training Program Overview**

As noted above, the FTP is a 24-week program designed to support new officers in their transition from the Academy's structured classroom environment to fieldwork as patrol officers. While the Academy offers a protected and regimented setting, the FTP immerses officers into real-world scenarios. Here, they serve as peace officers for the first time, interacting with the public and confronting genuine threats. For instance, the act of handcuffing a potentially hostile or violent individual during the FTP is vastly different and arguably more challenging than practicing the same skill in a controlled setting with Academy peers and instructors. Beyond honing the skills of probationary officers, the FTP serves the public by ensuring they encounter officers with substantive on-the-ground experience. Internally, the program bolsters organizational trust. LAPD personnel are assured that officers, post-probation, have been field-tested, enhancing the credibility of those new officers in the eyes of their peers and fostering collaboration among the force.

However, the FTP's goal of bridging and augmenting the knowledge acquired at the Academy sometimes clashes with certain prevailing perspectives among FTOs. The OIG identified a tendency, at times, for the FTP to be seen as separate from, rather than an extension of, the Academy experience. A common refrain from FTOs to new officers is, "Forget everything you learned in the academy." This sentiment, while not unique to LAPD (as highlighted in a recent report by the Police Executive Research Forum),<sup>3</sup> raises several concerns. First, the significant resources allocated to the Academy should directly benefit the probationary officers' growth. Second, if FTOs diverge from Academy teachings, it can result in confusing and conflicting directives for probationary officers. Third, after investing considerable effort and time in the Academy, being asked to disregard that learning can be disheartening for new officers. Finally, for effective training, FTOs should acknowledge and build upon the foundational knowledge and skills that recruits acquire at the Academy.

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<sup>3</sup> Transforming Police and Recruit Training. Police Executive Research Forum. Page 27.  
<https://www.policeforum.org/assets/TransformingRecruitTraining.pdf>.

The FTP is administered and overseen by the Department's Training Division, situated within the Training Bureau.<sup>4</sup> Training Division had 186 authorized positions in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.<sup>5</sup> Led by a Captain III, Training Division houses the administrative wing of the FTP, including the Field Training Officers Unit (FTOU). The FTOU's primary responsibilities are to assist Areas when probationary officers receive unsatisfactory ratings and to teach both the mandatory 40-hour FTO Course and 24-hour FTO Update Course to incoming and current FTOs, respectively.

Historically, the FTOU conducted administrative inspections at Areas, testing, among other objectives, whether FTOs were being properly rotated according to established practice and whether various documents associated with the FTP had the appropriate signatures. However, according to the Department, the FTOU has been unable to conduct such inspections since 2019 due to reduced staffing.<sup>6</sup> Training Bureau indicated that these periodic FTOU inspections had resulted in improvements to the accuracy and completeness of the required documentation. In one instance, the FTOU's findings led to the establishment of the Weekly Probationary Officer Checklist, which is still used today to confirm that all required FTP documents are completed weekly.

At the Area level, the FTP involves the participation of various personnel, including the FTO, field sergeant, watch commander, probationary coordinator, Area training coordinator, and the patrol commanding officer. While the probationary officer generally has the most direct and frequent interaction with the FTO, the others perform substantial work administering the program. This includes providing guidance to probationary officers and FTOs, as well as overseeing their work. The responsibilities of the Area-level FTP staff are clearly outlined in the Field Training Manual. For instance, field sergeants, functioning as field supervisors, complete the Supervisor's Weekly Report (SWR) to document probationary officers' performance, progress, and training on a weekly basis.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, when FTOs are unavailable, sergeants are permitted to work with probationary officers for a short duration.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, the Area commanding officer determines the selection of applicants for FTO positions and makes the final decision regarding whether a probationary officer should receive a satisfactory rating or an unsatisfactory rating.

Issues arising in the FTP are typically escalated from the Area level to Training Division. These reports often consist of situational or anecdotal information and do not involve the collection of substantial data for Department-wide trend analysis. Areas may independently reach out to Training Division on a case-by-case basis, usually regarding policy questions in the Field

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<sup>4</sup> Training Bureau is led by a Deputy Chief. Training Bureau coordinates and oversees the Department's primary training functions. In addition to Training Division, Training Bureau includes Recruitment and Employment Division, Police Training and Education, POST Liaison Unit, Career Development Unit, Officer Representation Section, and the Employee Assistance Unit.

<sup>5</sup> For additional context, Training Division had an authorized strength of 254 positions ten years ago, in FY 2014-15.

<sup>6</sup> The average annual staffing for FTOU between Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2018 was around 5 full-time employees (FTE). Between FYs 2019-2023, the average FTOU staffing level was approximately 3 FTE.

<sup>7</sup> Field Training Manual. Duties and Responsibilities of the Field Supervisor. Page 29.

<sup>8</sup> Field Training Manual. Period of Training. Page 17.

Training Manual. There are specific instances where Areas are required to report to Training Division, but these instances are relatively limited in scope. For example, whenever a probationary officer receives an unsatisfactory rating, the Area must inform the FTOU and follow specific additional steps based on the number of unsatisfactory ratings received.

## **B. Probationary Officer Training**

Upon graduation from the Academy, new police officers advance to the FTP. This program includes extensive documentation of each probationary officer's performance. The first week of the program serves primarily as an orientation without any formal ratings. During each working day, FTOs must fill out a Daily Observation Report (DOR), capturing two incidents or tasks that the probationary officer handled. Probationary officers are also evaluated on a weekly basis using the Probationary Police Officer Weekly Evaluation Report (PPOWER). In the PPOWER, probationary officers are evaluated across 30 distinct subcategories, with daily performance during the week forming the basis for assessment. Ratings range from "Below Standard" to "Above Standard." In lieu of rating within that range, probationary officers may instead receive a rating of "Not Observed" or "Not Responding to Training." By week's end, the FTO delivers an overall performance rating, categorizing the probationary officer as either "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory." To successfully graduate from the FTP, officers must receive satisfactory ratings across all PPOWER subcategories and demonstrate proficiency in 17 specific training areas detailed in the Structured Learning Content Checklist.

While the standard FTP duration is 24 weeks, this can be extended—by a minimum of four weeks to a maximum of eight—should a probationary officer not meet satisfactory performance criteria by the program's conclusion. Within this period, probationary officers are paired with a designated FTO for 8-week cycles. In instances where the primary FTO is unavailable, due to reasons like vacation or illness, a substitute FTO might temporarily step in. Nonetheless, the primary FTO remains accountable for all performance-related documentation concerning the probationary officer.

Continued unsatisfactory performance by probationary officers can have significant consequences. Probationary officers are typically provided opportunities to improve their performance with remedial training. However, if a probationary officer fails to improve after remedial training, the commanding officer can use their discretion to issue a Final Notice to Improve. This notice serves as a warning, emphasizing that persistent subpar performance might culminate in dismissal. A probationary officer who receives three unsatisfactory ratings may face termination, but this depends on whether the commanding officer recommends termination and the subsequent approval by their chain of command, including the Chief of Police. Should the commanding officer move forward with terminating a probationary officer, they must do so no later than the thirty-second week of Field Training.



### **C. Field Training Officers**

FTOs are PO IIIs who have been chosen through a selection process at the Area level. Candidates can either transfer laterally from an existing PO III assignment or be upgraded from a PO II position.<sup>9</sup> All sworn personnel who desire to be an FTO must have three years of service, with two years in a patrol and/or traffic assignment.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, FTO candidates must have experience or the demonstrated ability to instruct others as part of the selection criteria.<sup>11</sup>

When an FTO position becomes available, vacancies are announced by the hiring Area. Although FTO positions are specific to each Area, any eligible PO II or PO III across the Department may apply, regardless of their current assignment. Candidates are selected by the Area commanding officer based on their training, experience, and the results of an oral interview. An applicant may be disqualified from selection as an FTO if they have sustained complaints indicating significant violations of Department policy in their disciplinary history.<sup>12</sup>

FTOs may be removed, or “downgraded,” from their PO III FTO position under certain circumstances, such as acts or practices that would have disqualified them from initial selection as an FTO or being the subject of sustained complaints. The downgrade process entails the Area commanding officer initiating a transfer request to the Department’s Personnel Division, which includes the Employee Relations Group (ERG). ERG provides a recommendation regarding the transfer’s approval, after which the request proceeds through the chain of command for final approval. However, the officer has the right to challenge such a downgrade at an administrative hearing. As will be discussed in more detail later in this report, these downgrades are rare.

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<sup>9</sup> The career progression within the LAPD begins with the entry-level position of Police Officer I, assigned to all new recruits at the Academy. Upon completing their probation, officers automatically advance to the PO II paygrade—note that this is a paygrade, not a rank. Some may further progress to PO III based on additional qualifications or duties. Following this, career advancement opportunities include promotions to Police Detective or Police Sergeant. Subsequent promotions follow a structured path up to Police Lieutenant, Captain, Commander, Deputy Chief, and Chief of Police. The term “promotion” is specifically used to describe the advancement from one Civil Service classification to another, such as moving from Police Officer to Detective or Sergeant, based on an eligible list formulated by the Personnel Department through a Civil Service examination. An “assignment to a higher pay grade” involves taking on a role with greater responsibilities or more expertise, without a change in Civil Service classification. Examples include advancing from a Police Officer II to a Police Officer III in roles such as an FTO or moving from Detective I to Detective II. These assignments are generally the result of internal selection procedures within the Police Department.

<sup>10</sup> Field Training Manual. Eligibility Requirements. Page 9.

<sup>11</sup> Field Training Officers must be skilled, knowledgeable, and able to provide training to probationary officers in the areas of: observing and evaluating performance, providing training and feedback, preparing documentation as specified in the Field Training Manual, oral communications, interpersonal relations, written communications, coaching and evaluating, Department policies, programs, procedures, and technical skills, police and civil rights, integrity issues, analysis, and sensitivity to cultural and community diversity.

<sup>12</sup> The Department Manual states that Area Commanding Officers must, “Review all sustained and pending complaints to ascertain if they contain elements of excessive force, false arrest or charge, improper search/seizure, sexual harassment, discrimination, or dishonesty.” It also states, “Commanding officers must document their consideration of any sustained complaint, adverse judicial finding, or discipline against a selected candidate[.]”

## **D. Statewide Field Training Requirements**

The Department's FTP adheres to the regulations set by California POST.<sup>13</sup> These regulations mandate that the Department meet certain baseline training standards. While the Department can choose to exceed these standards, it cannot fall below them. For instance, while POST mandates a minimum FTP duration of 10 weeks for law enforcement agencies statewide, the LAPD has established an extended 24-week program. POST also requires FTPs to have a Field Training Manual, and it requires that the manual include specific elements. The LAPD's FTP complies with these mandates. Additionally, those chosen as FTOs must undergo a POST-certified FTO Course prior to being assigned to work with probationary officers. To retain their FTO certification, they are required to enroll in an FTO Update Course every three years. At the Department, these courses are taught by FTOU personnel with the assistance of other Training Division staff and guest speakers from other parts of the Department. A significant aspect of these courses is POST's emphasis on documenting and rating probationary officers. This encompasses the FTO's obligation to provide a daily narrative account of the probationary officer's performance.

## **E. FTP Documentation**

The FTP necessitates comprehensive documentation to align with both statewide requirements and the Department's internal policies. Outlined below are key forms and documents integral to the program, many of which are cited within this report. These documents can be classified into two primary categories: those related to the evaluation of probationary officers, completed by FTOs, and those pertaining to the FTO selection process.

### *Probationary Officer Forms*

- **PPOWER** – This form is completed weekly by a probationary officer's assigned FTO, evaluating the probationary officer on 30 subcategories with the following ratings: Below Standard, Improvement Required, Standard, Above Standard, Not Observed, Not Responding to Training. The FTO must finalize and sign this form by the last day of the rating period (end of the week). This form is also reviewed and signed by the field sergeant, watch commander, Area commanding officer, and probationary coordinator. The probationary officer reviews and signs this form within seven days of the rating period.
- **DOR** – FTOs make a minimum of two daily entries in this form throughout the FTP to describe the probationary officer's work-related performance. These entries are used to complete the PPOWER. Each entry includes details on the following: incident/task, intervention, training, remediation, and response. If a deficiency occurs, the FTO describes it along with the remedial training provided.
- **Probationary Integrity Checklist (PIC)** – This form is used to verify that probationary officers are assigned to FTOs for eight weeks during the FTP before being rotated. It also ensures probationary officers are assigned to basic cars rather than desk duty.

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<sup>13</sup> Field Training Program Guide: Transition to Becoming an Effective Patrol Officer. Vol. 1. 3-1.

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- SWR – This form is completed weekly by the field sergeant overseeing FTOs. It describes the probationary officer's overall performance for the week and informs the Area commanding officer about any issues or concerns related to performance. The form includes a section for describing remedial training during weeks of deficient performance. Also, the supervisor checks off either "Training Concerns" or "No Training Concerns." The SWR is reviewed and signed by the probationary officer, field sergeant, and Area commanding officer.
- Weekly Probationary Officer Checklist (WPOC) – This form serves as a comprehensive checklist of all elements of the Phase II documents that FTOs, field supervisors, and probationary coordinators must complete in a week. It includes questions about completed DORs, whether these reports were provided to the probationary officer for review, the inclusion of entries for all days, notations when the probationary officer was absent, correct minutes of remediation reported on PPOWER, and completion of other forms like the SWR and PIC.
- Structured Learning Content Checklist – This form lists 17 tasks (e.g., report writing, patrol procedures, tactical communications) in which probationary officers are expected to achieve competency by the end of the FTP. The form is intended to help ensure a comprehensive probationary officer experience. Each task is divided into subparts (e.g., patrol procedures include "determining if a parked vehicle has been recently operated" and "lawful pedestrian stop"). The FTO and probationary officer indicate completion of each subpart, provide additional detail on the training, and sign off on each task upon completion.

*FTO Forms*

- FTO Selection Matrix – This form includes the names of officers who have submitted requests to become an FTO within a specific Area and for a particular transfer availability. It contains essential details such as the officer's name, final interview rating, serial number, demographic information (i.e., race and sex), bilingual ability, current assignment, and initial hire date. The Area maintains this form as part of the selection package.
- FTO Selection Rationale – This form is a memorandum from the Area commanding officer responsible for making the FTO selection. It documents various required selection factors, including sustained complaint and disciplinary history, background and experience, and the commanding officer's assertion that the officer is qualified to perform as an FTO.

### **III. OIG REVIEW OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. Objectives**

The OIG's review encompassed four key areas of the FTP:

- (1) Performance and productivity of the FTP overall
- (2) FTO selection criteria and hiring
- (3) Current state of technology used in the FTP
- (4) Probationary officers' perspectives of FTO training

These objectives were identified during the review's planning phase when the OIG carried out preliminary research on the FTP. Consequently, the recommendations at the end of this report are aligned with these key areas.

#### **B. Methodology**

##### *Initial Research Phase*

The OIG's preliminary research for this project involved reviewing the Department's Field Training Manual, analyzing applicable POST regulations, studying pertinent Department policies and procedures, identifying and requesting relevant information and data from the Department, including from the FTOU, and reviewing prior audits and reviews of the FTP.

##### *Direct Observation of FTO Training*

In this stage, the OIG focused on understanding the training extended to both prospective and current FTOs by the Training Division. Those selected for FTO roles must complete a 40-hour FTO Course mandated by POST prior to engaging with probationary officers. To maintain their FTO certification, they also must complete an FTO Update Course every three years. This update course is a total of 24 hours of instruction. The OIG observed these courses in their entirety in May and July of 2022.

##### *Site Visits*

Between June and July 2022, representatives from the OIG made visits to four Areas, representing the Department's four geographical Bureaus. These visits encompassed:

- Central Area in Operations-Central Bureau,
- Southeast Area in Operations-South Bureau,
- Devonshire Area in Operations-Valley Bureau, and
- Pacific Area in Operations-West Bureau.

The main objectives of these site visits were to:

1. Gain insights into the organization and utilization of documents pertaining to both Probationary Officer Books and FTO selection, in order to assist the OIG in formulating a detailed document request for the Department.
2. Examine Probationary Officer Books from a random sample, focusing on probationary officers who underwent probation in these Areas.
3. Scrutinize FTO selection packages from the latest selection process within these Areas.
4. Engage in candid dialogues with personnel across these Areas concerning the FTP to glean their perspectives, challenges, and concerns related to the program.

### *Document Review*

In order to review relevant documents and identify potential trends or issues, the OIG obtained a random sample of probationary officers from the available probationary officer documentation.<sup>14</sup> Using the Department's Deployment Roster (Roster) dated May 8, 2022, the OIG identified officers who had finished Phase II but remained in Phase III up to the Roster's release date. The OIG also included officers who were promoted to PO II status between 2021 and the Roster's publication date. This selection criterion yielded a group of 455 officers. For our analysis, we calculated a sample size of 54, based on a 95 percent one-tail confidence level, an anticipated error rate of 6 percent, and a 5 percent plus-precision threshold. To finalize the sample selection, we randomized the list of 455 officers, choosing the first 54. The Roster provided details including each officer's name, serial number, gender, race, and current Area of assignment.

Documents related to a probationary officer, often kept in what is referred to as a Probationary Officer Book, are stored at the Area where the officer completed probation. Given the Department's common practice of transferring officers to a different Area upon promotion to PO II, it became a challenge for the OIG to locate all pertinent documentation. For our sample of officers who advanced to the rank of PO II between 2021 and the Roster's publication date, the OIG was able to determine their present assignment but not the Area where they underwent probation. Consequently, we referenced earlier Rosters to ascertain their probationary assignments. With this, we had a comprehensive list detailing where each of the 54 selected officers' Phase II documents were located.

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<sup>14</sup> There is no centralized database or tracking system for the FTP. Each probationary officer's paper-based documents are kept at the Area where they completed probation for at least two years after probation or separation from the Department. Copies of these documents are also sent to the City Clerk for inclusion in the individual's personnel file. Data from these documents is not gathered and analyzed collectively with information from other probationary officer documents. Reviews of officer files during or after probation mainly focus on specific personnel matters rather than assessing a group of officers for comparison purposes. As a result, the Department lacks a comprehensive view of trends in probationary officer experiences across the entire Department, such as differences in training approaches between Areas and the effectiveness of FTOs.

Our random selection of 54 probationary officers represented 20 out of the Department's 21 geographic Areas.<sup>15</sup> Breaking it down by where the officers undertook probation: 19 were in Operations-Valley Bureau, 15 were in Operations-West Bureau, 12 were in Operations-Central Bureau, and eight were in Operations-South Bureau.

Of the sample, 38 officers were males (70.4 percent), and 16 were females (29.6 percent). Table 1 provides a gender distribution for the broader group of 455 probationary officers from which we drew our sample as well as the overall population of sworn Department personnel. The gender split in our sample aligns closely with that of the larger group of probationary officers. However, it is noteworthy that the percentage of females in our sample is higher, and the percentage of males is lower, compared to the Department-wide data. This discrepancy may be due to the Department's strides in female recruitment.

<b>Table 1. Gender Breakdown</b>						
	<u>Probationary Officer Sample</u>		<u>Probationary Officer Population</u>		<u>Department</u>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	38	70.4%	346	76.0%	7,397	81.3%
Female	16	29.6%	109	24.0%	1,703	18.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The ethnic composition of the probationary officer sample included 30 Hispanic individuals (55.6 percent), 10 white individuals (18.5 percent), eight Asian individuals (14.8 percent), and six black individuals (11.1 percent). The demographics of this sample closely mirror the broader probationary officer population. However, there is a marginal overrepresentation of white and Asian officers and a slight underrepresentation of black officers in the sample.

<b>Table 2. Ethnic Breakdown</b>						
	<u>Probationary Officer Sample</u>		<u>Probationary Officer Population</u>		<u>Department</u>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Hispanic	30	55.6%	257	56.5%	4,878	53.6%
White	10	18.5%	72	15.8%	2,368	26.0%
Asian	8	14.8%	49	10.8%	966	10.6%
Black	6	11.1%	70	15.4%	821	9.0%
Amer. Ind	0	0.0%	3	0.7%	33	0.4%
Other	0	0.0%	4	0.9%	36	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,102</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

In addition to inspecting the documentation for the 54 probationary officers, the OIG examined documentation from the most recent FTO selections across the Department. This involved reviewing documents for 72 FTOs selected from 20 of the Department's 21 Areas.<sup>16</sup> The selections took place from May to August 2022. The OIG reviewed the Selection Matrix completed in each Area and the justification given for each final FTO candidate selection.

<sup>15</sup> Probationary officers at Hollenbeck did not appear in the random sample.

<sup>16</sup> West Valley Division did not choose an FTO during this sampling timeframe.

Table 3 provides a gender breakdown of the chosen FTOs. Out of the 72 selected in this period, 58 were male, and 14 were female, which is consistent with the gender distribution of sworn personnel across the Department.<sup>17</sup>

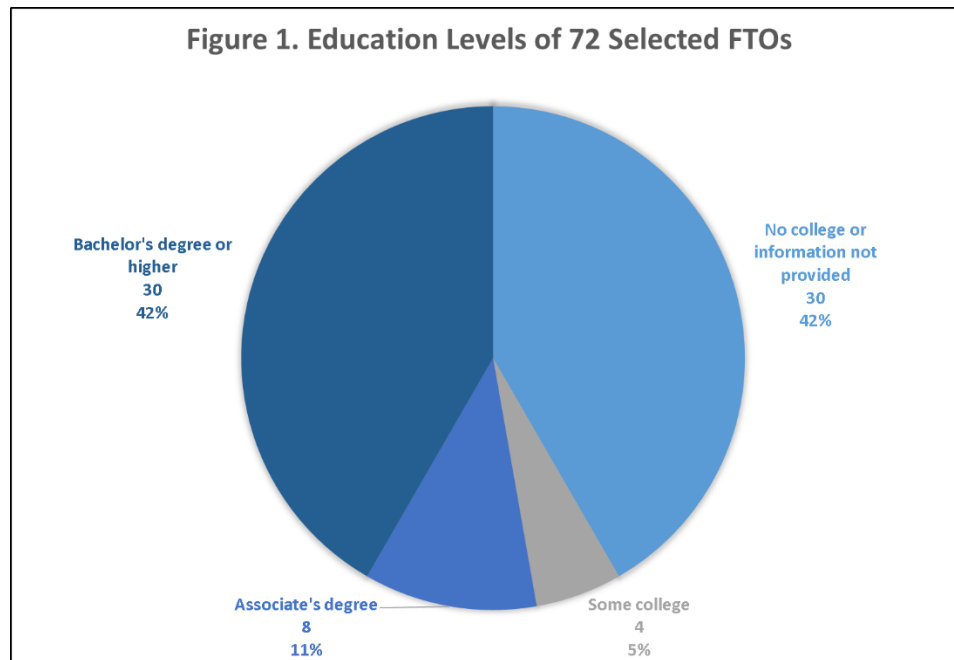
<b>Table 3. Gender Breakdown</b>						
	<u>FTO Selection Sample</u>		<u>FTO Applicant Sample</u>		<u>Department</u>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	58	80.6%	539	85.8%	7,397	81.3%
Female	14	19.4%	89	14.2%	1,703	18.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4 presents the ethnic distribution of the 72 selected FTOs, the FTO applicants, and the Department-wide sworn personnel. The OIG observed that the representation of Hispanic and Asian FTOs in the sample closely mirrors the Department's overall demographics. However, there is a notable overrepresentation of white FTOs and an underrepresentation of black FTOs when compared to their respective ratios among the Department's sworn personnel. An examination of the FTO applicant pool indicates a diversity level that aligns with the Department's overall composition.

<b>Table 4. Ethnic Breakdown</b>						
	<u>FTO Selection Sample</u>		<u>FTO Applicant Sample</u>		<u>Department</u>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Hispanic	38	52.8%	372	59.2%	4,878	53.6%
White	23	31.9%	163	26.0%	2,368	26.0%
Asian	7	9.7%	49	7.8%	966	10.6%
Black	2	2.8%	33	5.3%	821	9.0%
Amer. Indian	2	2.8%	3	0.5%	33	0.4%
Other	0	0.0%	8	1.3%	36	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,102</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The average tenure of the selected FTOs was 12 years, with 35 out of the 72 FTOs indicating bilingual proficiency. Figure 1 below details the educational background of these 72 FTOs. Just over half of them held either an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree. The rest had attended some college but did not obtain a degree.

<sup>17</sup> Demographic information is not available for FTOs overall because while the Department does record such information for each Department employee, a complete up-to-date list of FTOs is not available. However, the OIG analyzed the demographic information of the 72 individuals in the FTO Selection Sample.



### *Review of Applicable Complaints and Lawsuits*

The OIG also sought to understand the volume and nature of complaints and lawsuits associated with FTOs. With the assistance of the Department's Risk Management and Legal Affairs Division (RMLAD), the OIG obtained documents pertaining to lawsuits filed against the Department by current or former probationary officers involving individuals who were working in an FTO capacity. Additionally, the OIG obtained official complaints lodged by probationary officers and investigated by the Department from 2016 to mid-2022.<sup>18</sup>

### *Probationary Officer Survey*

Considering that feedback about the FTP from probationary officers is limited, the OIG concluded that conducting a survey of probationary officers was an important opportunity to gain an understanding of FTO performance and program effectiveness from their perspective.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> In June 2022, RMLAD conducted a search for complaints filed by probationary officers between 2012 and 2022. Due to limited data from 2012 to 2015, our review focused on the period from 2016 to June 2022. We identified a total of 36 complaints, of which 27 were filed by probationary officers in Phase II or III, rather than recruits in the Academy. Upon reviewing these complaints, we found that 5 were directly related to FTO conduct during Phase II. Most complaints involved FTOs who allegedly made inappropriate remarks or engaged in mistreatment leading to a complainant's resignation. The outcomes of these complaints are detailed on page 25 of this report. Insights from these complaints informed other aspects of our project, such as the survey questions. However, due to the small number of complaints and our belief that probationary officers may be reluctant to file them, the OIG did not emphasize this in our report or derive significant findings directly from these reviews.

<sup>19</sup> The Field Training Manual specifies that the Area training coordinators are required to collect "confidential and anonymous" feedback from probationary officers about their FTOs by having them fill out an FTO Evaluation Form



Additionally, the OIG believed a survey could validate, question, and provide additional context to the issues identified in other parts of the project. The survey questions were informed by current feedback forms used by probationary officers, Department policy, meetings with Department personnel, site visits, and the FTO course curriculum.

The OIG chose not to survey FTOs, since insights from them were gathered through other stages of the review, such as attendance at FTO training and performance of site visits. Additionally, probationary officers are the recipients and primary beneficiaries of the training, making it essential for the OIG to understand their experience in the program.

Survey Sample: The OIG conducted the survey at the conclusion of three Police Science and Leadership (PSL)<sup>20</sup> classes held on January 19, 2023, March 9, 2023, and March 16, 2023. The survey garnered a total of 134 respondents. The OIG chose to administer the survey during PSL classes because these classes comprised individuals who were nearing completion of Phase III of the probationary period, making them well-suited to provide feedback based on their recent field training experience. Additionally, conducting the survey in a classroom setting, as opposed to sending it via email, for instance, was expected to yield a higher response rate, thus ensuring data that was more representative of the views of probationary officers.

Survey Tool: The survey instrument was administered digitally through Microsoft Forms. The OIG provided Quick Response (QR) codes to probationary officers at PSL, which they opened using their smartphones. This directed them to the survey.

Question Format: The survey was designed to be anonymous and confidential, ensuring that no identifying information about the probationary officers was collected. Following the introduction of the survey and distribution of QR codes at PSL, OIG staff promptly exited the room. This approach was intended to give probationary officers full autonomy to complete the survey without any undue pressure or expectation caused by the presence of OIG staff. The survey encompassed three types of questions: yes or no questions, rating questions where respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with specific statements on a scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, and open-ended questions where respondents were encouraged to provide narrative responses.

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at the end of each 8-week period during the FTP. Additionally, once a probationary officer begins the FPP, a separate Field Training Program Critique Form is expected to be completed to assess their overall experience. While the FTO Evaluation Form does not include identifying information of the probationary officer, the Critique Form requires the probationary officer's signature. Completed forms are supposed to be sent to the FTOU via mail. However, the FTOU informed the OIG that the FTO Evaluation Form and the Critique Form are rarely received. Furthermore, during FTO School observations, both the PO IIIs who were about to be certified as FTOs and the attending FTOs in the renewal course expressed surprise that these documents even existed.

<sup>20</sup> The LAPD's PSL Program is a week-long, in-service training requirement for officers. The training is designed to reinforce key policing concepts officers, such as procedural justice and implicit bias. PSL was initially intended for multiple levels of officers, but is currently provided to officers solely at the conclusion of their probationary period.

The survey content covered the following topics:

- FTP Program Effectiveness – Evaluating the performance of the FTP in alignment with the Department's standards as outlined in the Field Training Manual, encompassing aspects like organization, training benchmarks, and fidelity to the FTP's mission.
- Academy to Field Transition – Assessing how effectively field training serves as a bridge from Academy training to fieldwork.
- Traditions or Potential Hazing Rituals – Investigating the extent to which probationary officers are directed by FTOs to engage in practices that could be perceived as being "rites of passage" or hazing rituals, and the probationary officers' sentiments about such expectations or activities.
- Resource Familiarity – Gauging probationary officers' awareness of available FTP resources, including in-house counseling services, avenues for challenging an FTO rating, and mechanisms to provide feedback on the FTP.
- FTO Performance Metrics – Gathering insights from probationary officers on matters such as feedback quality, treatment by FTOs, rating documentation approach, FTOs' attitude towards their role, and the overall quality of training provided.

#### **IV. FINDINGS**

The following are the OIG's findings related to the approaches outlined in the Methodology Section, including the document sample, the complaint and lawsuit review, and the survey. The findings have implications for probationary officers, FTOs, and the FTP generally.

##### **A. Probationary Officer-Related Findings**

###### *Frequency of Unsatisfactory Ratings*

The OIG examined the incidence of unsatisfactory ratings across the 54 probationary officers in our sample. A total of 14 officers received one or more unsatisfactory ratings. The highest proportion was found in Operations-West Bureau, with 33 percent (5 out of 15) of its probationary officers receiving one or more unsatisfactory ratings. This was followed by Operations-Valley Bureau with 26.3 percent (5 out of 19), Operations-South Bureau with 25 percent (2 out of 8), and Operations-Central Bureau at 16.7 percent (2 out of 12).

The OIG also analyzed the frequency of unsatisfactory ratings within the PPOWERS (weekly assessments) across each Bureau. In Operations-Valley Bureau, probationary officers received unsatisfactory ratings in 3.9 percent of their weekly assessments. In Operations-West Bureau, it was 2.9 percent; in Operations-South Bureau, 2.7 percent; and in Operations-Central Bureau, 0.7 percent. The low occurrence of unsatisfactory ratings in the weekly assessments overall mirrors the OIG's observations in other evaluations. Notably, while the overall frequency was low, the distribution of these ratings varied considerably among the Bureaus. This disparity raises questions regarding uniformity in the use of unsatisfactory ratings across different Bureaus and whether their restrained usage aligns with the objectives of the FTP.

### *PPOWER Signatures*

Given the importance of the weekly evaluations, the OIG examined the extent to which PPOWERS included all the required signatures. As noted above, each PPOWER should be signed off by six individuals: the FTO, the field sergeant, the watch commander, the probationary coordinator, the Area commanding officer, and the probationary officer being evaluated. Our analysis revealed minimal instances of missing signatures. Out of 7,452 required signatures for the entire sample, only 15 were identified as missing, indicating a compliance rate of 99.8 percent.

With respect to each individual probationary officer, the OIG found that 49 out of the 54 Probationary Officer Books (90.8 percent) included all required signatures. However, five books in the sample (9.2 percent) had one or more missing signatures in their PPOWERS. All five books with missing signatures were from Operations-Valley Bureau.

### *Lack of Probationary Officer Responses to Adverse Ratings*

By signing the PPOWER, probationary officers acknowledge and accept their FTO's assessment of their overall weekly performance. If they disagree, they must check a box on their PPOWER form and submit a supplemental Employee's Report, Form 15.07, outlining the reasons for their disagreement. According to the Department Manual, probationary officers have 30 calendar days in which to file a written response to any adverse comment.<sup>21</sup> Notably, in the entire sample of PPOWERS reviewed (approximately 1,200), this box was not selected in a single instance, and the OIG was not able to locate any supplemental Employee's Reports.

The absence of written responses to PPOWERS is concerning. It is unlikely that every probationary officer believed their evaluation was fair in every instance. The OIG believes that probationary officers should be actively encouraged to dispute ratings they perceive as unjust or unfounded. A robust officer evaluation system should not only welcome such feedback but actively promote it.

### *Notification of Unsatisfactory Ratings*

The OIG evaluated whether the FTOU was properly notified of unsatisfactory ratings as required by Department policy. Out of the sample, 14 probationary officers (or 25.6 percent) received one or more unsatisfactory ratings, accumulating a total of 34 adverse ratings. Five of these 14 officers were given a single unsatisfactory rating, while the remaining nine received multiple unsatisfactory ratings.

Department policy dictates that upon a probationary officer's first unsatisfactory rating, the probationary coordinator should inform the FTOU within five calendar days. However, the Department could not confirm to the OIG whether the FTOU was informed about any of the

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<sup>21</sup> Field Training Manual. Probationary Police Officer Weekly Evaluation Report. Page 44.

instances where only a single unsatisfactory rating was given. The Department explained this gap by stating that officers with a single unsatisfactory rating have this rating stored in a temporary file, which is discarded if no subsequent unsatisfactory ratings are issued. This process is designed as a precaution in the event an officer receives additional unsatisfactory ratings, necessitating a more intensive FTOU intervention in the remediation process.

According to Department policy, upon a probationary officer's second unsatisfactory rating, the coordinator must inform the FTOU within three days and arrange an interview between the FTOU and the officer. Moreover, the Area can seek formal remediation assistance from Training Division. Training Division conveyed to the OIG that of the nine officers who had two or more unsatisfactory ratings in our sample, the FTOU was not informed about four of them but was aware of the other five. Only two of these nine officers underwent remediation facilitated by Training Division.

Subsequent unsatisfactory ratings also necessitate the FTOU's ongoing engagement. For instance, after an officer's third unsatisfactory rating, the coordinator is given three days to notify the FTOU. If, after remediation following the third adverse rating, the subject officer does not show improvement, the Area commanding officer might issue a Final Notice to Correct. This document serves as an official alert, warning the officer that persisting subpar performance might result in termination. Additionally, the Area may request formal remediation from Training Division staff.

FTOU's involvement is expected to continue for additional unsatisfactory ratings. For instance, if a probationary officer fails to improve even after remediation following a third unsatisfactory rating, the Area commanding officer may issue a Final Notice to Improve. This formal communication serves as a warning to the probationary officer, indicating that continued unsatisfactory performance may lead to termination.

### *Remediation*

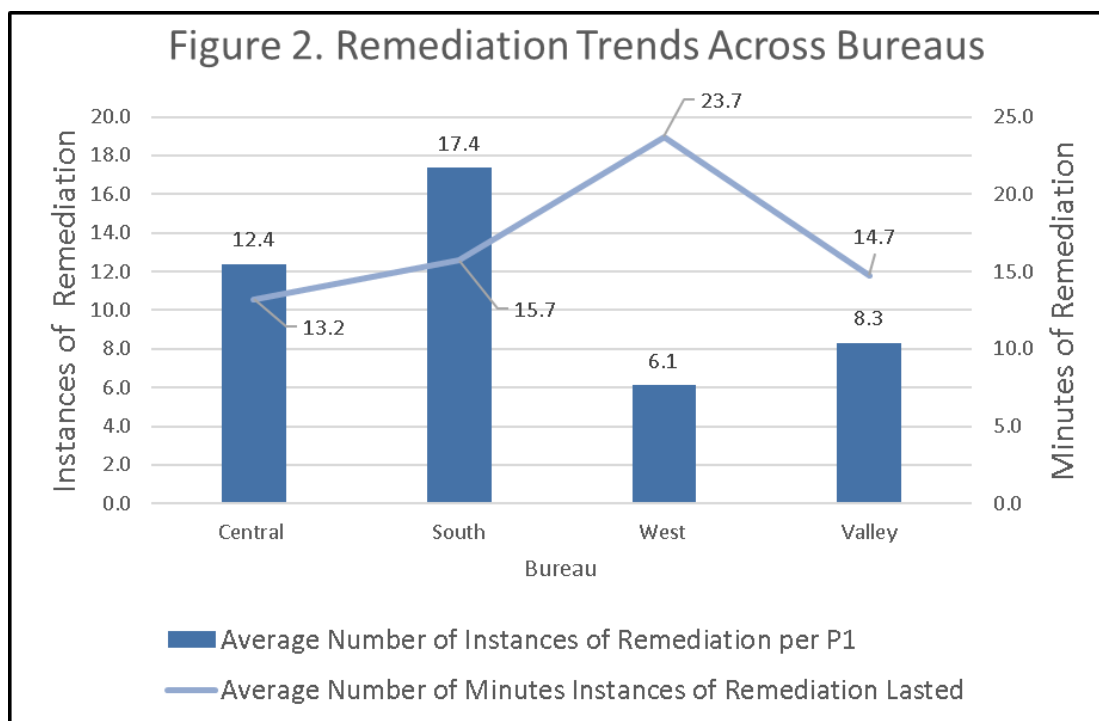
At the Basic FTO School, instructors define remediation as revisiting or correcting previously taught materials or procedures, whereas training introduces new content to a probationary officer. For every incident recorded on DORs, FTOs are tasked with: discerning whether it was training or remediation, and then elaborating on the nature of the interaction. FTOs have a wide variety of techniques to offer either remediation or training, which can range from role-playing exercises or distributing written resources to selecting additional calls for service to hone specific skills a probationary officer needs to enhance. Every instance of remediation must be accompanied by a notation of its duration in minutes. Each PPOWER has a designated "Minutes of Remediation" section designed to aggregate the total remediation time as reported in that week's DORs. Conversely, FTOs are not required to log training time. The rationale behind this is the Department's expectation that the bulk of FTOs' time is allocated for training. However, a separate record of remediation is essential, as extensive periods may indicate challenges in probationary officers' assimilation and application of the information they are learning in real-world scenarios.

On average, probationary officers in the sample received 160.2 minutes of remediation during their Phase II training. However, this average varies widely across Bureaus: 272.5 minutes for Operations-South Bureau, 164 minutes for Operations-Central Bureau, 143.3 minutes for Operations-West Bureau, and 122.6 minutes for Operations-Valley Bureau. Furthermore, the OIG identified significant variation at the Area level as well. For instance, probationary officers in Central Area and Newton Area on average received zero minutes and one minute of remediation, respectively. In contrast, in Pacific Area and Northeast Area, probationary officers received 437.5 minutes and 425 minutes of remediation on average, respectively.

Consistent with the OIG's expectation that individuals who receive unsatisfactory ratings should, and do, receive more remediation, we found that the average amount of remediation for probationary officers who received one or more unsatisfactory ratings was 3.5x higher than the average for probationary officers who did not receive any unsatisfactory ratings. The OIG found that all recipients of unsatisfactory ratings received some minutes of remediation. However, a total of 12 probationary officers (23 percent) in the sample reportedly received zero minutes of remediation.

In Figure 2, the OIG analyzed the frequency of remediation. On average, probationary officers underwent remediation 9.9 times during Phase II. Among the Bureaus, Operations-South Bureau had the highest average with 17.4 instances, followed by Operations-Central Bureau at 12.4, Operations-Valley Bureau at 8.3, and Operations-West Bureau at 6.1. Those probationary officers who had one or more unsatisfactory ratings underwent remediation an average of 19.5 times, whereas officers without any unsatisfactory ratings were remediated about 6.7 times. The OIG further assessed the average duration of these remediation sessions. Across the entire sample, remediation sessions averaged 16.2 minutes. Breaking it down by Bureau: Operations-West Bureau had an average of 23.7 minutes, Operations-South Bureau 15.7 minutes, Operations-Valley Bureau 14.7 minutes, and Operations-Central Bureau 13.2 minutes. Interestingly, while Operations-South Bureau had more frequent remediation sessions than the other geographic bureaus, these sessions were not the lengthiest in duration. On the other hand, Operations-West Bureau, despite having fewer remediation instances than the other bureaus, had longer sessions in comparison.

At the Area level, Pacific Area and Northeast Area dedicated the most remediation minutes on average to their probationary officers. However, the duration of the sessions varied significantly between these areas. For instance, in Northeast, the average remediation duration was 11.8 minutes, while in Pacific it was considerably longer at 24.3 minutes. This variance underscores the differing remediation practices found across different areas.



## B. FTO-Related Findings

### *FTO Selection*

The FTO position carries the rank and paygrade of PO III. Candidates can either transfer laterally from an existing PO III assignment or be upgraded from a PO II position. While a PO III position entails a paygrade advancement and comes with additional pay, it does not follow the formal civil service promotion process. Instead, the position of PO III is regarded as a paygrade advancement, and officers transitioning from a PO III assignment to a PO II assignment would experience a reduction in pay.

Department policy and the Field Training Manual state that all sworn personnel who desire to be an FTO must have three years of service, with two years in a patrol and/or traffic assignment. Additionally, the Field Training Manual requires that FTO candidates have experience in instructing others, or the demonstrated ability to do so, as part of the selection criteria:<sup>22</sup>

FTOs must be skilled, knowledgeable, and able to provide training to probationary officers in the areas of:

- Observing and evaluating performance
- Providing training and feedback
- Preparing documentation as specified in the Field Training Manual

<sup>22</sup> Field Training Manual. Selection Process. Page 10.

- Oral communications
- Interpersonal relations
- Written communications
- Coaching and evaluating
- Department policies, programs, procedures, and technical skills
- Police and civil rights integrity issues
- Analysis
- Sensitivity to cultural and community diversity

The OIG found that despite the Field Training Manual explicitly stating that FTOs must be able to provide probationary officers training in several topics, the commanding officers' rationales do not adequately reflect the consideration of this ability. In fact, most of the selection letters reviewed by the OIG included nearly identical canned language that did not identify the selected officers' ability to train probationary officers.

When an FTO position becomes available, vacancies are announced by the hiring Area. Each FTO applicant must submit a Transfer Applicant Data Sheet and two recently completed employee evaluations (referred to by the Department as Standards Based Assessment forms). Although FTO positions are specific to each Area, any eligible PO II or PO III across the Department may apply, regardless of their current assignment. An interview panel (of at least two supervisors) conducts a structured and scored interview, derived from factors required for FTO selection.<sup>23</sup> Candidates are selected by the Area commanding officer based on their training, experience, and the results of the oral interview.

An applicant may be disqualified from selection as an FTO if they have sustained allegations indicating significant violations of Department policy in their disciplinary history. The Department Manual states that Area commanding officers must "[r]eview all sustained and pending complaints to ascertain if they contain elements of excessive force, false arrest or charge, improper search/seizure, sexual harassment, discrimination, or dishonesty."<sup>24</sup> It also states, "Commanding officers must document their consideration of any sustained complaint, adverse judicial finding, or discipline against a selected candidate[.]" During its review, the OIG found only one instance of a newly appointed FTO that had a sustained complaint within one of the aforementioned categories in their disciplinary history. This FTO had a sustained allegation of Unauthorized Force that occurred approximately six years prior to their selection. The commanding officer in this case did not document their consideration of the sustained complaint or justify the selection.

The FTO selection process was found to basically follow the Department's policies regarding Paygrade Advancement.<sup>25</sup> A substantial amount of time was found to be spent on the interview process, with city policy requiring at least two supervisory ranked employees conducting the interviews. With the large number of applicants in some Areas (for example, 67 in Mission

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<sup>23</sup> LAPD Employee Selection Guidelines, Section VII A.

<sup>24</sup> Department Manual Volume III, Section 763.90, Field Training Officer Selection.

<sup>25</sup> Los Angeles Police Department Employee Selection Guidelines, dated January 9, 2013.

Area, vying for 10 vacancies), at least two supervisors (in some cases, lieutenants) could be occupied for up to a week. The lifespan of a selection list is limited to 60 days; however, with Bureau approval, an eligibility list can be extended up to one year. Department policy states that “every effort” should be made to use at least one of the previous interview panel members, but it is not an absolute requirement.

In reviewing the 72 FTO selections made, a total of 611 candidates went through the interview process. FTO candidates receive a rating based on their interview score totals, categorized as Outstanding, Excellent, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. Among the 72 selections reviewed, the majority achieved an Outstanding rating. The only exception was West Los Angeles Area, which opted to select two FTOs with an Excellent rating. Notably, both selections were already serving in West Los Angeles Area assignments at the time of their selection.

### *FTO Downgrades*

FTOs may be “downgraded” from their PO III rank and FTO position to PO II under certain circumstances. Department policy allows officers assigned as FTOs to be downgraded for acts or practices that would have disqualified them from selection as an FTO. The downgrade process entails the Area commanding officer initiating a transfer request to the Department’s Personnel Division, which includes ERG. ERG provides a recommendation regarding the transfer’s approval, after which the request proceeds through the chain of command until a final decision is made by the Director of the Office of Support Services. It is important to note that the officer has the right to an administrative appeal.

The OIG found that misconduct resulting in FTO downgrades is a rare event. Between January 2022 and April 2023, the OIG found only three such instances.<sup>26</sup> The three downgrades were for:

- Making inappropriate racial comments to probationary officers.
- Being arrested while off-duty.
- Instructing a probationary officer to turn off their Body Worn Video during a call for service, which was reported by the probationary officer.

Downgrades like the ones specified above occur independent from the Department’s disciplinary system. However, actions associated with a downgrade may result in other formal Department discipline. In the case of three instances above, there were formal complaints issued against all three officers. The individual alleged to have made inappropriate racial remarks was sent to a Board of Rights hearing to determine whether further discipline should occur, but the Department was unable to impose a penalty because he retired prior to the Board of Rights hearing. The other two individuals are awaiting Board of Rights hearings slated for later in 2024.

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<sup>26</sup> A fourth downgrade was underway during the review period but was only finalized in July 2023. This downgrade occurred because the FTO knowingly provided a probationary officer with false information for a police report related to a battery investigation. This former FTO is scheduled for a Board of Rights hearing later in 2024.



### *FTO Rotations*

The Field Training Manual states that watch commanders are obligated to ensure that “each probationary officer in the [Structured Field Training Program Period] works with one primary FTO who is POST certified for eight weeks and rotates to another POST-certified FTO for eight weeks.”<sup>27</sup> Probationary officers are then assigned a third primary POST-certified FTO for their final eight weeks, resulting in three primary FTOs for the 24 weeks of their Phase II training. The Field Training Manual explains the purpose of these rotations, stating in pertinent part, “The assignment of a different FTO will expose the probationary officer to a variation of training styles and experiences. Probationary officers who are having difficulty in the program will sometimes improve their performance significantly after such a change.”<sup>28</sup> One instructor at the 40-hour FTO Course observed by the OIG explained that this rotation process enables probationary officers to be exposed to FTOs with different specialties.

The OIG sought to determine the extent to which these rotations occurred. To do this, the OIG reviewed Probationary Integrity Checklists (PICs). The OIG was only able to obtain checklists for 49 of the 54 probationary officers included in our sample.<sup>29</sup> In its review of these checklists, the OIG noted frequent examples of assigned FTOs being absent for several days at a time due to illnesses or vacation. Generally, in these instances, the OIG found that another FTO would step in to cover the vacancy. For purposes of the OIG's analysis, if the FTO listed as the primary FTO on the checklist was working with the probationary officer for at least a majority of the days during that 8-week period, we considered it to be a full 8-week pairing.

The OIG found that only 27 out of 49 probationary officers (55.1 percent) underwent three complete 8-week rotations with three distinct FTOs. In contrast, 19 of the 49 cases (38.8 percent) involved two full 8-week pairings between an FTO and a probationary officer. An example of a scenario under this category would be a probationary officer paired with an FTO for 8 weeks, shifted to a second FTO for another 8 weeks, followed by a 4-week rotation with a third FTO before transitioning to a fourth and final FTO for the remaining 4 weeks. In the remaining 3 out of 49 cases (6.1 percent), probationary officers experienced only one full 8-week pairing. It's noteworthy that every probationary officer was paired with an FTO for at least one 8-week rotation.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Field Training Manual. Duties and Responsibilities of the Watch Commander. Page 34.

<sup>28</sup> Field Training Manual. Program Elements. Page 14.

<sup>29</sup> FTO interval data was not available for any of the five PO Is in the West Valley Area due to the absence of the provided PICs.

<sup>30</sup> In addition to examining the trends at the probationary officer level, as described above, the OIG also analyzed rotations on an 8-week basis. Specifically, there were 147 8-week periods analyzed for 49 probationary officers. Out of these 147 periods, 122 of them consisted of the appropriate 8-week rotations, amounting to 82.9 percent compliance. The remaining 17.1 percent of periods involved two or more FTOs during an 8-week period, suggesting some deviations from the standard rotation schedule.

The OIG was also interested in evaluating the Department's efforts to pair FTOs and probationary officers on a day-to-day basis (as opposed to pairings with non-FTOs). Department policy allows probationary officers to work with other senior officers, such as Senior Lead Officers (SLOs), who are also PO IIIs, and sergeants, for two or fewer days in a deployment period.<sup>31</sup> The OIG's investigation revealed that probationary officers being assigned to work with non-FTOs was a rare occurrence. The majority of probationary officers assigned to non-FTOs were paired with sergeants. Notably, not all sergeants have undergone FTO training. On average, probationary officers were assigned to a non-FTO only once during their 24-week Phase II period, indicating that field training provided by non-FTOs is minimal and limited.

### *FTOs Performing Other Duties*

The OIG identified multiple cases where officers labeled as FTOs (and receiving PO III level pay because of their FTO status) were not performing FTO responsibilities. During a visit to Central Area, the OIG noticed officers designated as FTOs who were not partnered with probationary officers. Central Area had seven officers designated as FTOs assigned to foot beats, even though probationary officers typically do not work such assignments during Phase II. Additionally, the OIG found situations where FTOs were not carrying out FTO responsibilities due to unique circumstances, such as being on limited duty following a work-related injury or being temporarily assigned to a detective role.

### *FTO Training for Non-FTOs*

Currently, it is common practice for PO IIIs assigned to the Department's Office of Operations to attend basic FTO training and maintain recurrent FTO training. However, the OIG noted that a large number of these PO IIIs do not actually provide training to probationary officers and do not have significant contact with them. Among these PO IIIs are SLOs, Community Relations Officers (CROs), and those in various other station assignments. While there is a potential for these positions to have some limited contact with probationary officers, it is generally for orientation purposes related to their respective programs. In our review of probationary officer daily assignments, we observed that these PO IIIs were seldom assigned to perform as permanent FTOs.

Additionally, the Department's hiring requirements for these non-FTO PO III positions differ significantly from those for FTO assignments. Thus, even if any of these PO IIIs desired to move into an FTO role, they would need to apply and go through the entire FTO selection process—regardless of whether they were current with all FTO training requirements. The OIG also learned that approximately one-third of participants in a recent FTO school indicated that they do not serve as FTOs. Furthermore, the Community Safety Partnership Bureau has a substantial number of PO III assignments, all of which are required to maintain FTO training despite not being directly involved in FTO duties or having permanent FTO responsibilities.

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<sup>31</sup> Field Training Manual. Structured Field Training Program Period. Page 17.

### **C. Lack of a Centralized Tracking System**

The OIG observed a consistent lack of a centralized tracking system across the Department's various FTO-related initiatives and processes. Currently, each probationary officer's records, which are paper-based, are maintained at the Area where their probation was completed. These documents are retained for a minimum of two years after the officer's probationary term or after their departure from the Department. Additionally, document copies are forwarded to the City Clerk to be added to the individual's personnel file. However, data from these records is not aggregated or analyzed in conjunction with data from other probationary officers. Evaluations of these officers' files, whether during or after probation, tend to zero in on specific personnel issues rather than facilitating a comparative assessment of a cohort of officers. Consequently, the Department may miss out on opportunities to gain a holistic perspective on evolving patterns in probationary officer experiences that encompasses variations in training methodologies among Areas and the efficacy of FTOs.

The Department has long recognized the imperative need for an integrated system to gather, archive, and analyze FTP-related data. This gap was highlighted in a 2021 Field Training Program Assessment by the Department's Police Training and Education Division. The report underscored, for instance, the Department's inability to distinguish between PO IIIs designated to specialized units and those assigned as FTOs. According to the Department's FTP Assessment: "The current system involves the probationary coordinator at every division contact the FTOU at Training Division to advise of currently assigned FTOs. FTOU maintains an excel [sic] spreadsheet with all Divisional [PO IIIs] and those working as an FTO. This number is closer to 520-550 officers. The FTOU keeps track of that respective [PO IIIs] or FTO and if they attended the Department's 40-hour [FTO] course and also tracks when an FTO has attended the mandatory 24-hour update school to maintain department compliance. FTOs are also required to attend the Mental Health Intervention Training (MHIT) within the first six months of their assignment, but these numbers are kept by the Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) in a different division. Frequently, the numbers between FTOU, the Divisions, and MEU do not all match, and then when reports or compliance questions are brought up by Command Staff or the Inspector General, the whole process of number checking starts all over again. These above tasks are very labor intensive and inefficient to identify people in critical positions."

The OIG reviewed thousands of typed and handwritten paper documents for this project. If the data from those documents were uploaded to a computer system, it could be analyzed in real-time and with greater efficiency, and it would encapsulate a greater volume of information (such as Department-wide information instead of the kind of sample the OIG used to identify trends and issues). Via e-mail, the OIG asked Training Division for a written response on the primary benefits of such a system. Training Division stated the following: "A computerized system for capturing FTP data have, but are not limited, to the following benefits:

- Real-time monitoring and analysis of PO1 performance and timely identification of underperforming officers by the Department;
- Real-time metrics on the overall health of FTP to identify any adverse patterns or trends;
- Identify and replicate best practices to improve the overall quality of the FTP;

- Identification of training and risk management issues that could be mitigated in either the Academy or other In-Service training courses;
- Tracking of the assignment of field training officers;
- Ensure compliance with both Department and POST rules and regulations; and,
- Improve the overall efficiency of the reporting process to increase time spent in the field providing training.”

During this review, the OIG learned that the Department entered into a contract with information technology firm Aeon Nexus on July 1, 2019 (C-133408) for the establishment of human resource data systems, which, once completed, would track recruits from the Academy through the end of their probationary period. The element of the contract devoted to the Field Training Module is known as Customer Relationship Management (CRM). The initial intent was to link CRM to a human resources module, which was also being overhauled by Aeon Nexus, and would enable most personnel information to be accessible in one place.

However, despite incurring contract expenses of \$629,730 (almost reaching the full contract amount of \$630,130) from the Department's General Fund budget, the system was not launched by the contract's expiration on June 30, 2022. Additionally, this expense does not account for indirect costs related to overseeing the Department's role, such as the administrative efforts of staff members. In a written response to the OIG, the Department cited several challenges with the contract, including “staffing deficits, insufficient full-time support, and unforeseen issues prior to the contract's initiation.” For instance, a pivotal Department employee who was in charge of the project retired prior to its completion. Additionally, per information received by the OIG, the Department failed to allocate qualified personnel with the requisite technical expertise to maintain the project's supervision.

Further complicating the effort was a change in Microsoft's licensing structure during the contract's duration. The updated license costs were potentially going to increase the project's ongoing expenses beyond the Department's allocated budget. The Department considered separating the CRM from the HR module, allowing the Department to buy fewer licenses by limiting them to FTP-related personnel. However, Aeon Nexus flagged this as a labor-intensive endeavor, negating the potential of future integration between CRM and the HR module.

As the contract's end loomed, Aeon Nexus needed assurance from the Department about securing additional funds for a contract extension to tackle the licensing dilemma and other issues. Ultimately, in June 2022, the Department decided against renewing its contract with Aeon Nexus. Since then, efforts have been made to assess whether the work by Aeon Nexus on the CRM can be salvaged or repurposed through another service provider. The Department is contemplating adopting a different FTP software solution.

#### **D. Complaints and Lawsuits Analysis**

The OIG identified a total of seven lawsuits, including four closed cases, that involved probationary officers or officers assigned as FTOs. However, upon further review, the majority of these cases were determined not to relate to Phase II field training. The central issues involved off-duty arrests, injuries, or events that occurred during Phases I or III, which were

outside the purview of this report. The remaining three closed lawsuits dated back more than 10 years, and complete documentation for them was no longer available.

Among the personnel complaints that were identified by the OIG with the assistance from RMLAD, five complaints did relate to Phase II FTO events, of which four were deemed Unfounded by the Department. One allegation was deemed Sustained, which involved an FTO making an inappropriate remark to a PO I, and led to a one-day suspension for the FTO. Despite the suspension, the FTO was allowed to retain their FTO status.

## **E. Probationary Officer Survey Results**

### *General Program Effectiveness*

For nine of the survey questions that related to general program effectiveness, respondents were asked to read the statements and indicate if they strongly agree, somewhat agree, feel neutral, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. These Likert scale questions enabled the OIG to calculate sentiment scores, which is a technique that assigns numbers or values to the response options. For example, a “strongly agree” response equated to a value of 5, while a “strongly disagree” response equated to a value of 1. The value associated with each response for a given question was then averaged to determine an overall sentiment that a question solicited. This technique also helped differentiate the level of agreement or disagreement between the various questions.

Table 5 outlines how sentiment score ranges equate to the overall sentiment expressed in the response. For example, a score of 4.15 means that respondents, on average, somewhat agree with a statement.

<b>Table 5. Sentiment Ranges for Likert Scale Questions</b>		
<i>Sentiment</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Range</i>
Strongly Agree	5	4.21-5.0
Somewhat Agree	4	3.41-4.20
Neutral	3	2.61-3.40
Somewhat Disagree	2	1.81-2.60
Strongly Disagree	1	1.00-1.80

Survey results regarding the overall FTP indicated that a vast majority of probationary officers believe the program successfully meets many of its objectives. On average, respondents “somewhat agree” with the given statements, as reflected by a 3.96 Average Overall Sentiment Score. The statement “better prepared me to be a patrol officer” received the highest sentiment score of 4.36, indicating a strong level of agreement. This was closely followed by “does not tolerate discrimination” with a score of 4.31. Conversely, the statement “holds FTOs accountable who are not performing well” had the lowest sentiment score at 3.08.

<b>Table 6. The Field Training Program overall...</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Sentiment Score</b>
1. Is organized.	3.87
2. Is professional.	4.07
3. Is well-run.	3.76
<b>Mission</b>	
4. Better prepared me to be a patrol officer.	4.36
5. Teaches up-to-date versions of the Department's policies.	4.20
6. Consisted of DORs and PPOWERS that reflected a fair and accurate representation of my performance.	4.01
7. Prioritizes the learning principle of "failing forward"--The idea that it is acceptable to make mistakes so long if you learn from them.	4.02
<b>Conduct</b>	
8. Does not tolerate discrimination.	4.31
9. Holds FTOs accountable who are not performing well.	3.08
<b>Average Overall Sentiment Score</b>	<b>3.96</b>

Respondents tended to agree that the FTP is achieving elements of its core mission. As mentioned above, the statement with the strongest level agreement in this segment of the survey was “The Field Training Program overall better prepared me to be a patrol officer,” which broke down as follows: 49.3 percent strongly agreed, 40.3 percent somewhat agreed, 3.0 percent somewhat disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Respondents also strongly agreed that the Department “teaches up-to date versions of the Department’s policies.” For this statement, 45.9 percent strongly agreed, 36.8 percent somewhat agreed, 9.0 percent felt neutral, and 8.3 percent either somewhat or strongly disagreed.

The FTP heavily emphasizes the concept of “failing forward.” This is the idea that it is acceptable for probationary officers to make mistakes so long as you learn from them. In addition to being mentioned in the Field Training Manual,<sup>32</sup> the failing forward concept was mentioned multiple times in the 40-hour FTO Course attended by the OIG. As shown in Figure 3, when asked whether the FTP prioritizes the failing forward principle, 45.5 percent of respondents strongly agreed, 27.3 percent somewhat agreed, 15.2 percent were neutral, 7.6 percent somewhat disagreed, and 4.5 percent strongly disagreed.

<sup>32</sup> Field Training Manual. The Process of Teaching/Testing/Evaluation and Remedial Training. Page 24.

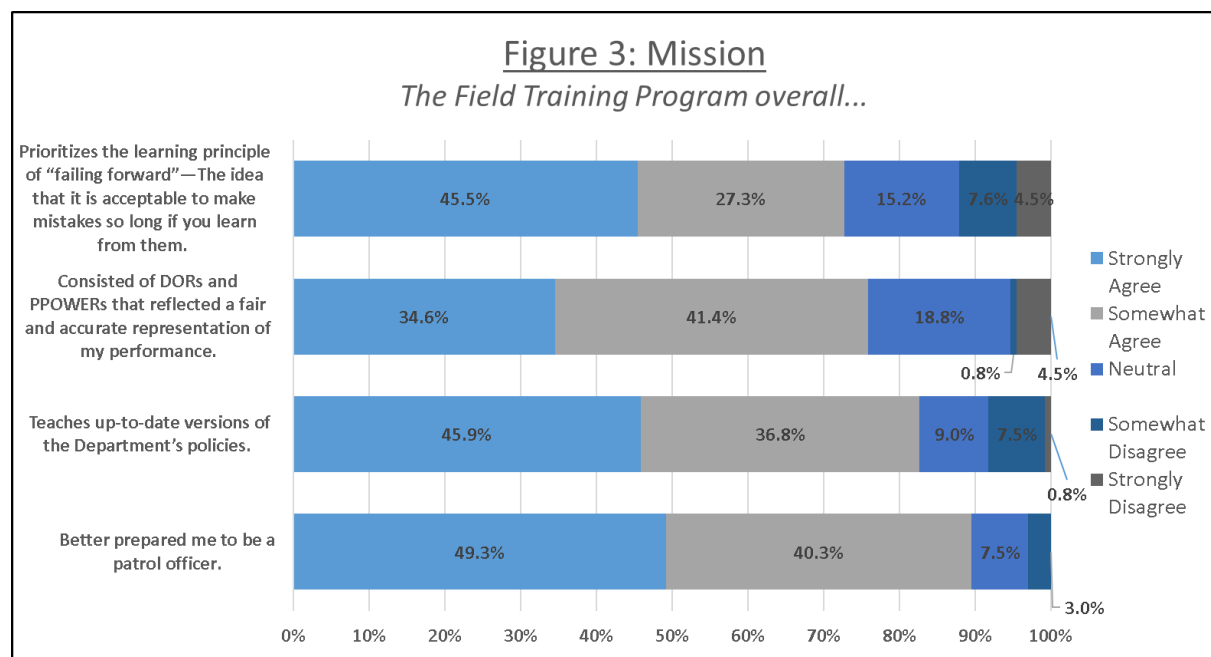


Figure 4 illustrates that respondents generally perceive the FTP as efficiently managed, professional, and organized. However, the level of agreement for these aspects is marginally less than the agreement for the mission-related questions highlighted in Figure 3. Specifically, the average sentiment score for responses in Figure 4 stands at 3.9, while Figure 3 shows a slightly higher score of 4.15.

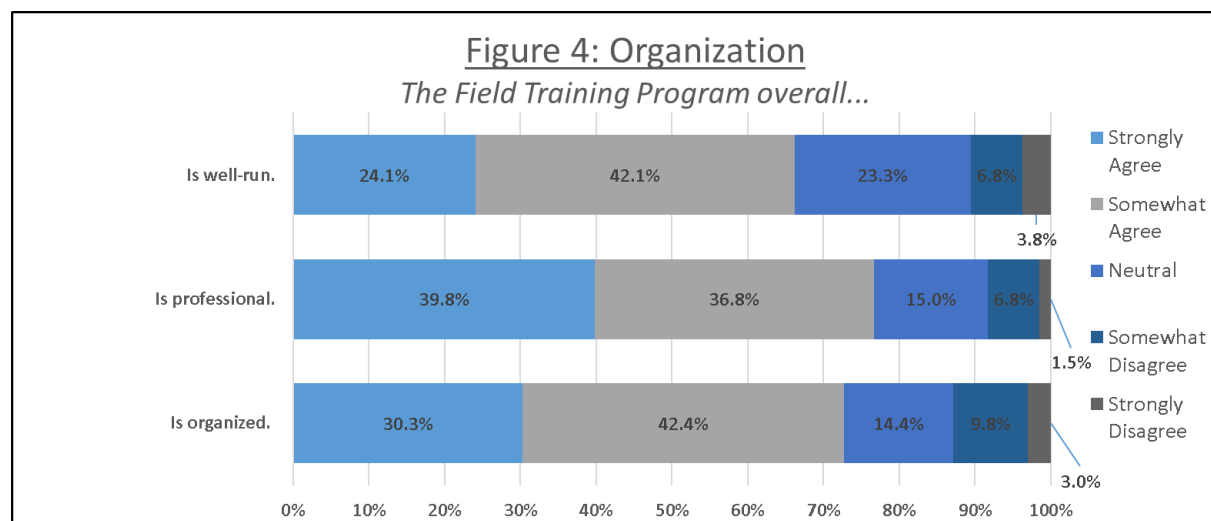
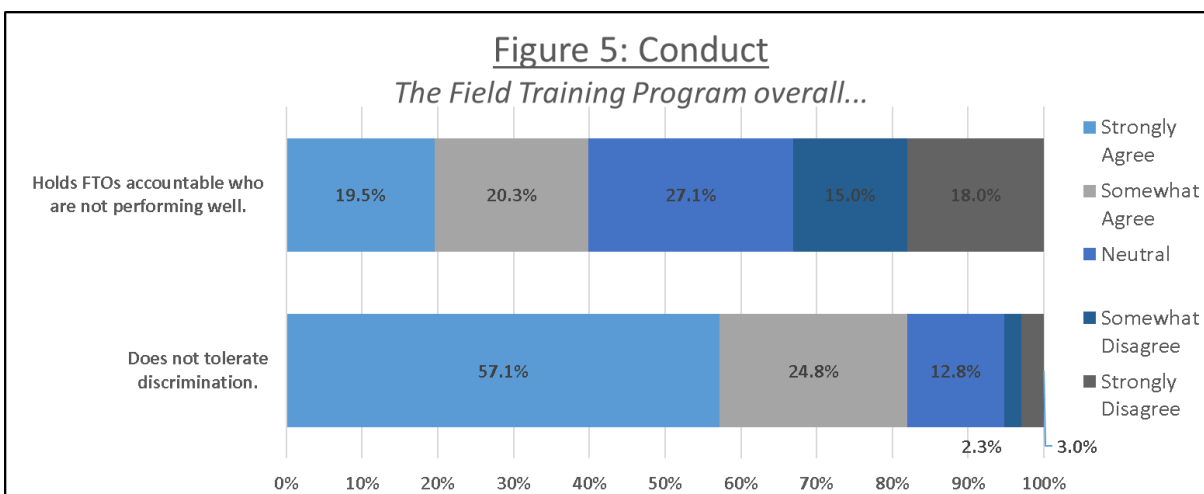


Figure 5 highlights responses to questions related to how the FTP handles conduct of FTOs. The survey asked respondents to what extent they agreed with the following statement: "The Field Training Program overall holds FTOs accountable who are not performing well."<sup>33</sup> Unlike other

<sup>33</sup> The OIG noted comments made at both the 40-hour FTO Course and the 24-hour FTO Update Course related to the difficulty Training Division faces in holding poor-performing FTOs accountable. Specifically, at the 40-hour

questions in this section, the most common response to this statement was “neutral” at 27.1 percent, while 19.5 percent strongly agreed, 20.3 percent somewhat agreed, 15 percent somewhat disagreed, and 18 percent strongly disagreed. The sentiment score of 3.08 for this question equates to a “neutral” view among respondents. In sharp contrast, respondents “strongly agreed” that the FTP “does not tolerate discrimination,” as evidenced by the 4.31 sentiment score.



### *Transition Between Academy and Field*

Survey findings suggest a potential disconnect between the training provided at the Academy and the guidance received during field training, at least from the perspective of probationary officers. A total of 74 respondents, or 55.2 percent, reported being advised by one or more FTOs to “forget everything you learned in the Academy” (or being given similar advice). Moreover, when asked if they felt that one or more FTOs believed the knowledge and skills gained at the Academy were insufficient, 63.4 percent or 85 respondents, responded affirmatively.

On the other hand, some FTOs seem to express a desire to be more familiar with the Academy’s curriculum. In response to the question, “Did one or more FTOs express unfamiliarity with the content taught in the Academy?”, 59 respondents (44.0 percent) answered “Yes,” while 75 respondents (56.0 percent) replied “No.” This sentiment of unfamiliarity with the Academy’s content was echoed both by students and instructors in the FTO courses that the OIG attended. While FTOs have access to other Department personnel training materials, such as directives and special orders, there seems to be no structured system in place for FTOs to stay informed about the latest Academy curriculum.

### *Traditions*

The survey results indicate that certain practices imposed on probationary officers may not necessarily further their training or enhance their ability to serve the public. In fact, some of these practices might hinder their performance and could be seen as hazing, which is prohibited

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FTO Course, one instructor noted that FTOU has no influence in the disciplinary process of “problem FTOs.” Another senior Department official who spoke at the 24-hour FTO Update Course stated that poor-performing FTOs should be downgraded, but that the process is “not easy to do.”



by the Department.<sup>34</sup> The OIG sought to better understand the prevalence and impact of these traditions on probationary officers.

Of the 134 respondents, 103 reported being directed by FTOs to observe traditions specifically because they were probationary officers. Out of this group, when questioned about the “overall positive impact” these traditions had on their probationary experience, 53 responded affirmatively, while 50 did not feel the same. Further, when the 103 were questioned on whether these traditions amounted to hazing, 16 believed they did, while 87 disagreed.

A follow-up open-ended question asked, “What, if any, ‘traditions’ were you strongly encouraged to follow during Phase II specific to the fact that you were a probationary officer at the time?” Of the 112 officers who responded, 96 listed specific traditions, whereas 16 indicated “N/A” or “None.” Some respondents identified virtues they were encouraged to embody, such as humility, preparation, and respect. However, many listed tangible actions, with frequent mentions of traditions like shaving their head, wearing a “Class A,” long-sleeved uniform throughout probation, and refraining from speaking unless addressed by a senior officer. Of particular concern to the OIG was this restriction on speaking. Limiting a probationary officer’s ability to communicate might inhibit them from posing instructional questions or engaging constructively with their FTO. It could even conflict with their duty to intercede, or it could pose safety risks, as officers might withhold vital observations or concerns that their FTO overlooked.

In addition to the traditions highlighted above, one respondent listed several other traditions: being prohibited from wearing a jacket regardless of the weather, not being allowed to use their vehicle’s heating or air conditioning, being excluded from station events, not wearing sunglasses, refraining from talking to other probationary officers, and being barred from using the Department’s gym facilities until their probation ended.

Respondent’s opinions of the traditions varied widely. With respect to maintaining a shaved head, one respondent said, “I didn’t enjoy that at all.” Another respondent said the traditions included, “allow[ing] anyone to disrespect you and treat you like a child.” Alternatively, others spoke favorably about following traditions. One respondent stated, “All those traditions are fair, coming from a military background it is easy and humbling to go through those traditions.” Another stated, “I think this [practice of incorporating traditions] is necessary to maintain discipline.”

While the probationary officers’ views of these traditions were mixed, a sizeable contingent of those who responded to the survey believed that they experienced hazing. As demonstrated by discussion observed by the OIG at FTO School, some FTOs believe that these practices are appropriate even though FTOU instructors warn those actions can be construed as hazing and may violate Department policy. Given these findings, the Department should immediately address this issue.

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<sup>34</sup> Department Manual Volume 1 Section 275, “The Los Angeles Police Department recruits and selects only the most qualified applicants. Appointment to this Department is based on qualifications not requiring ‘rites of passage,’ such as hazing or initiation. Since hazing is harassment by way of initiation, it is misconduct which violates Department policy and will not be tolerated. Hazing includes any activity related to initiation which causes, or is likely to cause physical harm, personal degradation, ridicule, criticism, or mental anguish.”

### *Feedback Forms*

The survey responses appear to support the conclusion that the Department is not adequately obtaining feedback on the FTP from participants.<sup>35</sup> In response to the question, “Are you aware there is an anonymous and confidential form you can submit to the Field Training Officer’s Unit that provides feedback about the FTOs that were assigned to you?” only 35 percent of respondents said “Yes,” and 65 percent of respondents said “No.”

### *Employee’s Report*

Similarly, the Employee’s Report appears to be unutilized even though 62.7 percent of respondents indicated that “Yes” they are aware of the Employee’s Report that allows them to respond to an evaluation they feel is unfair, while the remaining 37.3 percent indicated “No” they are not aware. As noted previously, the OIG reviewed approximately 1,200 weekly assessment forms and found that no probationary officers provided responses to adverse findings on their reports.

### *Reporting Misconduct*

Most surveyed probationary officers claimed to be comfortable with reporting misconduct. Of those surveyed, 130 officers stated they did not witness any incident where an FTO violated a citizen’s basic rights or displayed racial bias. When asked if they would have felt comfortable using the available reporting options to report such an incident had it occurred, 112 officers (83.6 percent) responded affirmatively, while 18 officers (16.4 percent) said “No.” While an overwhelming majority of the officers responded affirmatively, in the opinion of the OIG, the fact that it was not a unanimously affirmative response raises concern. This aggregated response indicates that the Department should take further steps to ensure that all officers, irrespective of rank or position, are both comfortable with and understanding of their obligation to report misconduct, as mandated by Department policy.

### *Probationary Officer Perception of FTO Performance*

In the section of the survey focusing on the probationary officer’s perspective of FTO performance, respondents were prompted to answer 25 questions using a Likert scale. They could indicate whether they strongly agree, somewhat agree, feel neutral, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement. As with the initial general program effectiveness questions, these Likert scale questions allowed the OIG to determine sentiment scores. Table 7 on the following page provides a breakdown of how these sentiment score ranges correspond to the overall sentiment conveyed in the responses.

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<sup>35</sup> The OIG was first alerted to this possibility during the initial research phase when the OIG met with staff from FTOU and were told that probationary officers rarely send in confidential and anonymous FTO evaluations meant to provide feedback on their FTOs, even though a form and process for completion is clearly laid out in the Field Training Manual. Furthermore, as the OIG observed at the 24-hour FTO update course, FTOs expressed that they do not get sufficient feedback on their performance, with one FTO asking, “How do we know if we are doing a good job if we don’t get evals [evaluations]?”

<b>Table 7. FTOs that were assigned to me...</b>	
<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Sentiment Score</b>
1. Provided detailed feedback on my performance.	4.29
2. Provided fair feedback on my performance.	4.34
3. Recognized when I did something well.	4.01
<b>Treatment of Probationary Officers and Others</b>	
4. Treated me with dignity and respect.	3.99
5. Treated the public with dignity and respect.	4.46
6. Voiced respect for Command Staff.	3.59
<b>Documentation</b>	
7. Accurately captured incidents in Daily Observation Reports as they occurred.	4.24
8. Explained documentation (PPOWERS, DORs, Probationary Integrity Checklist, Weekly Supervisor's Report, etc.) when I had questions.	4.22
9. Explained to me about why I received a 1,2, or NRT for a PPOWER subcategory.	4.15
<b>Attitude Toward the Job</b>	
10. Made me feel positive about being an officer.	3.94
11. Welcomed my questions without judging or criticizing me.	4.06
12. Appeared passionate about working with new officers like me.	3.60
13. Encouraged me to take initiative.	4.61
14. Motivated me to be the best officer I can be.	4.30
15. Demonstrated through their words and/or actions that they are pleased to be FTOs.	3.70
<b>Training Quality</b>	
16. Provided helpful training on topics that were new to me.	4.42
17. Provided helpful remediation when I struggled with a concept.	4.13
18. Distinguished the difference between remediation and training.	4.13
19. Showed reverence for and a commitment to Department policies.	4.53
20. Were good teachers.	4.20
21. Are role models I look up to.	3.99
22. Tried to bridge the generational differences between us, such as different communication styles.	3.64
23. Were different in terms of the quality of training provided. For instance, one FTO was much more effective than the others.	4.47
24. Were all about equally skilled at training me to be an effective patrol officer.	3.86
25. Made clear their expectations about what constitutes a Weekly Satisfactory Rating compared to a Weekly Unsatisfactory Rating.	4.13
<b>Average Overall Sentiment Score</b>	<b>4.12</b>

The three statements with the highest sentiment scores were the following:

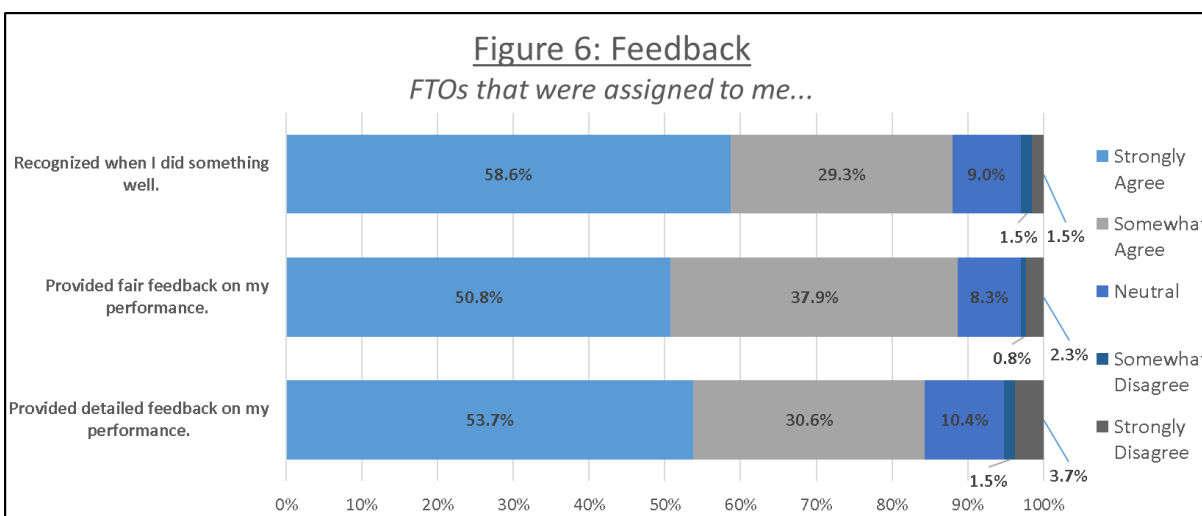
1. Encouraged me to take initiative. (Sentiment Score 4.61)
2. Showed reverence for and a commitment to Department policies. (Sentiment Score 4.53)
3. Were different in terms of the quality of training provided. For instance, one FTO was much more effective than the others. (Sentiment Score 4.47)

The three statements with the lowest sentiment scores (although respondents still somewhat agreed overall) were the following:

1. Tried to bridge the generational differences between us, such as different communication styles. (Sentiment Score 3.64)
2. Appeared passionate about working with new officers like me. (Sentiment Score 3.60)
3. Voiced respect for Command Staff. (Sentiment Score 3.59)

### *Feedback*

Figure 6 provides detail on the feedback-related statements. In each of the three statements, more than half of the respondents strongly agreed. One probationary officer stated, “I don’t think FTOs should have to dig to find something wrong with what a probationary [officer] did if they did everything well for the day. I also think the FTOs should give more credit to probationers when they perform well.”

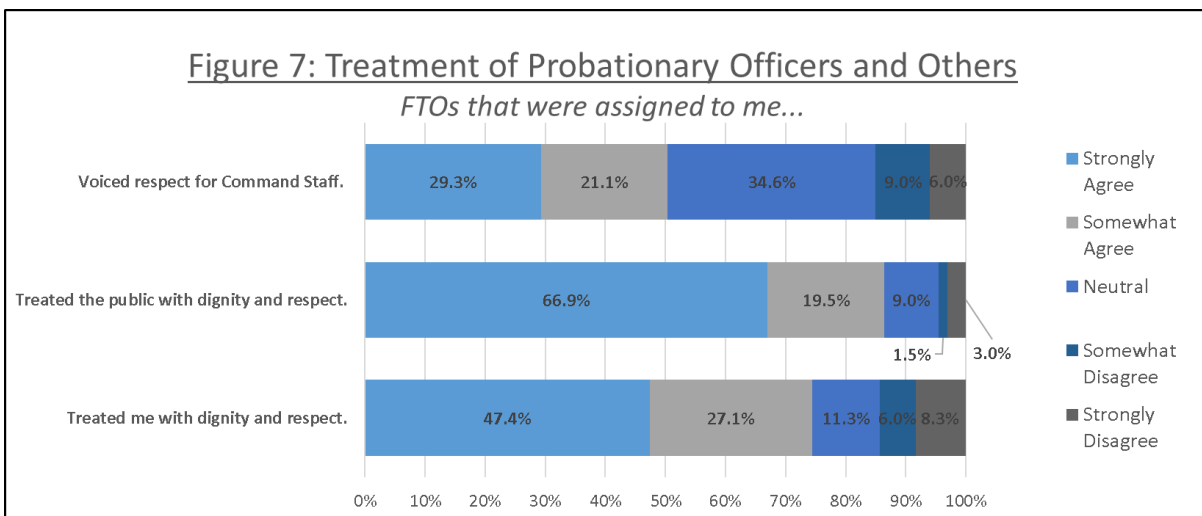


### *Treatment of Probationary Officers and Others*

Figure 7 below provides detail on probationary officers’ perspectives on how the FTOs treat them, the public, and the way they speak about command staff. There is a noticeable disparity between probationary officers’ perceptions of how FTOs treat the public versus how they treat the probationary officers themselves. For instance, 66.9 percent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “FTOs assigned to me treated the public with dignity and respect.” However, only 47.4 percent strongly agreed that “FTOs assigned to me treated me with dignity and respect.” These findings align with qualitative data obtained from the survey.

When questioned about specific instances of ineffective or unhelpful training/remediation from FTOs, one respondent mentioned an FTO “who would openly chastise and belittle you in the presence of the public or other first responders.” Another remarked on certain FTOs taking pride in loudly criticizing mistakes, going as far as suggesting quitting. None of the open-ended survey responses cited any incidents of the public being treated without dignity or respect.

Among the 25 statements presented to respondents, the statement “Voiced respect for command staff” received the lowest sentiment score. While the average sentiment was aligned with “somewhat agree,” the fact that this sentiment, at 3.59, was the lowest among the 25 questions asked indicates a potential opportunity for improvements in this area.

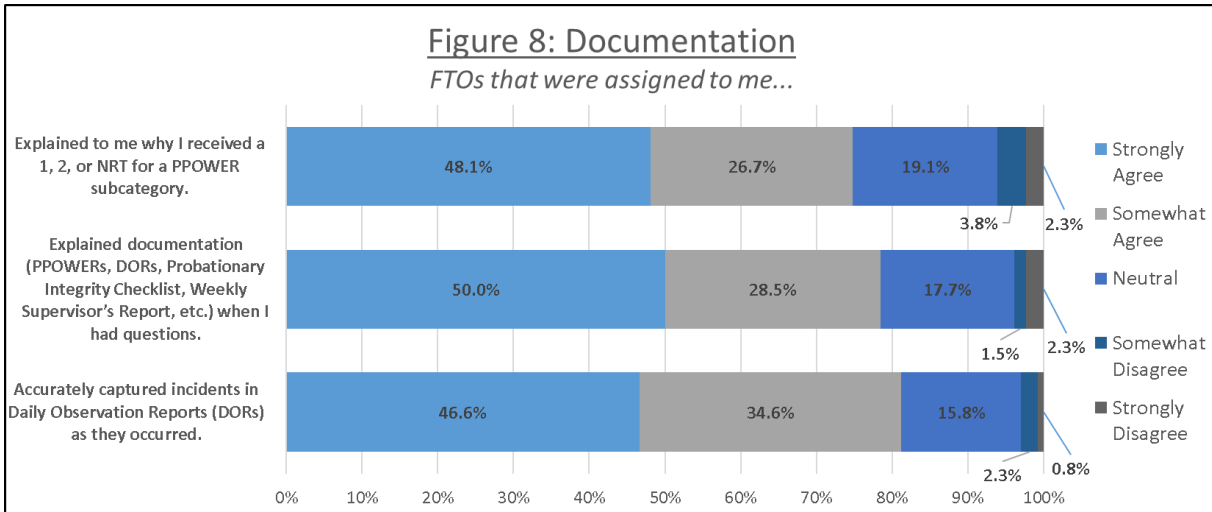


In the open-ended section of the survey, respondents were provided the following prompt: “FTOs are advised to train probationary officers in a fair, firm, friendly, and professional manner and to not engage in demeaning or ridiculing behavior. Explain whether or not you feel that your FTOs succeeded in adhering to this training standard.” The OIG analyzed the qualitative responses and categorized them into different findings, noting that 58.0 percent of respondents indicated that their FTOs succeed in adhering to the indicated standard. One respondent said, “They succeeded. My FTO’s [sic] made me feel like just any other partner.” Another said, “My FTO’s [sic] were fair, firm, friendly, and professional at all times.” Conversely, 13.4 percent indicated that their FTOs did not adhere to the standard indicated. One respondent stated they, “Strongly disagree, lots of FTO’s [sic] have a tradition to yell at you for your mistakes and take pride in making you feel like shit and quit.” Another described their experience with an “FTO who would actively degrade me in the car and talk bad about me behind my back but close enough in proximity where I was able to hear.” An equivalent percentage as the prior category (13.4 percent) indicated that the standard was *partially* adhered to. For example, one respondent said, “Most of my FTOs were fair. Some were not and were impatient and demeaning.” Another respondent simply stated, “Some follow this and some do not.”

### Documentation

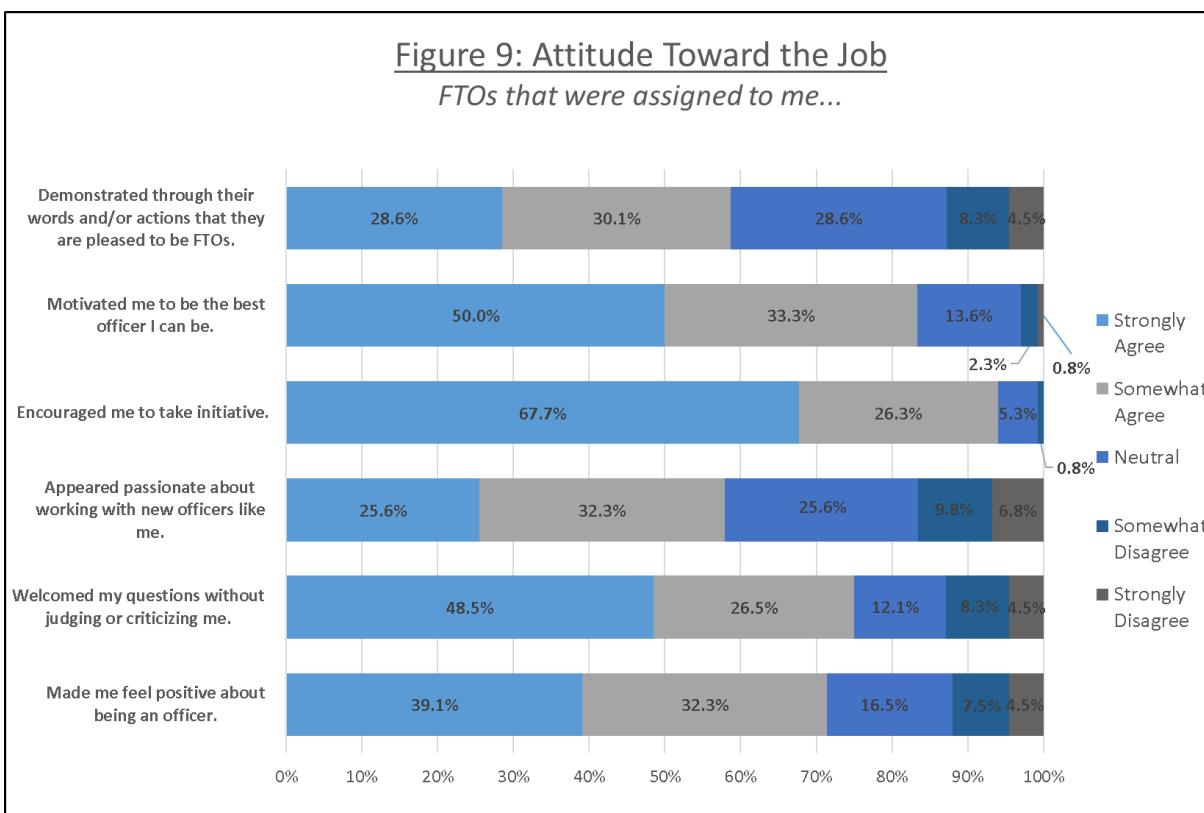
Given the extensive nature of the documentation in the FTP and the significant time required for its completion, coupled with its role in evaluating probationary officers, the OIG explored how thoroughly this documentation, as well as its associated ratings and related incidents, were explained to probationary officers. As seen in the initial two statements of Figure 8, approximately 75 to 80 percent of respondents either “Somewhat agreed” or “Strongly agreed” that they had a clear understanding of the ratings and documentation process. The 40-hour FTO

Course places a significant emphasis on documentation, particularly regarding the DOR. The survey findings revealed that 81.2 percent of respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that the “DORs accurately captured incidents...as they occurred.”



### *Attitude Toward the Job*

Figure 9 illustrates that the overall sentiment among respondents regarding the FTOs' attitudes was positive. However, there were distinct variations in the level of agreement with this sentiment. For instance, the statement, “Encouraged me to take initiative” garnered the highest sentiment score among the “Attitude for the Job” categories, as well as across all 25 questions, scoring 4.61. Of the respondents, 67.7 percent strongly agreed with the statement, 26.3 percent somewhat agreed, 5.3 percent remained neutral, and less than 1 percent replied, “Somewhat Disagree”. Conversely, when presented with the statement, “FTOs that were assigned to me appeared passionate about working with new officers like me,” the feedback was more varied. Specifically, 25.6 percent strongly agreed, 32.3 percent somewhat agreed, 25.6 percent were neutral, while the remaining 16.6 percent disagreed. This resulted in a sentiment score of 3.60, the lowest for the “Attitude Towards the Job” category and second lowest among the entire set of 25 questions. This disparity suggests that probationary officers might encounter a broad range of enthusiasm levels among their designated FTOs. As one respondent explained, “Certain FTO’s [sic] made me not want to go back to work. Others made me excited to suit up and head out to the field.”



In response to a survey question that asked for general feedback on the FTP, one respondent stated, “I enjoyed my experience and believe that my FTOs helped educated [sic] me and push me to be the best I could be at the time.” Another stated, “Some FTOs at this point should not be FTOs due to the fact they do not enjoy teaching.” One respondent recommended, “There should be a way to report or figure out which FTO [sic] are only doing it for the pay bump and which ones truly want to work with the probationary officers.”

### *Training Quality*

Respondents generally held a positive outlook on the overall quality of training they were receiving in the FTP. However, there was some variation in the degree of agreement. As shown in Figure 10, one of the statements with the second-highest sentiment score of the 25 questions was: “Showed reverence for and a commitment to Department policies.” For this statement, 66.2 percent of respondents strongly agreed and 27.1 percent somewhat agreed. The statement, “Tried to bridge generational differences between us, such as different communication styles” received the third lowest sentiment score. A total of 26.1 percent of participants strongly agreed, 29.1 percent somewhat agreed, 32.8 percent felt neutral, and the rest either somewhat or strongly disagreed.



The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they felt expectations were made clear about unsatisfactory ratings; and 45.9 percent strongly agreed that they were, 32.3 percent somewhat agreed, 12.8 percent were neutral, and the remaining 9 percent somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed that those expectations were made clear.

The survey also asked, “What is your understanding about the type of performance that would result in a Weekly Unsatisfactory Rating on a PPOWER?” There was clear uniformity in the 117 responses to this survey question. Most commonly, respondents stated they believed an unsatisfactory rating could occur due to an officer safety issue, or due to repeated failure to learn



a concept or skill. In four of the responses, however, probationary officers suggested the FTO take a more reactionary approach. One respondent explained, "Whatever the FTO wants...will happen. If the FTO wants to unsat [Unsatisfactory] you[,] he can do whatever he wants. I'm at my FTOs [sic] mercy no matter if I did good or bad." Another stated, "It was up to the FTO [to] decide if it's unsat or not. Sometimes it depend [sic] on their mood."

The survey also asked, "Do you think the FTOs you were assigned appear to have the same or different view of what kind of performance would result in a Weekly Unsatisfactory Rating?" Per the respondents, 33 percent indicated their FTOs had the same view, 31.6 percent indicated their FTOs had different views from each other, and the remaining 35 percent were unsure or provided an answer that the OIG could not classify. (For example, some respondents simply answered "Yes" or "No" to this question, without further explanation.)

Figure 10 also includes statements that relate to training and remediation. For instance, in response to the statement, "FTOs that were assigned to me provided helpful training on topics that were new to me," 58.6 percent strongly agreed and 29.3 percent somewhat agreed (with the other percentages being much smaller). The survey also asked respondents, "What, if any, instances did you receive training/remediation from your FTO that was particularly effective or helpful?" Respondents commonly referenced handcuffing, searches, and talking through concepts or issues. As explained by one respondent, "One of my FTO [sic] would do scenarios with me to understand a concept." Another stated, "My FTO showed me and clearly explained to me on how to search 4 people when there is [sic] only two officers and a way we can keep everyone lined up to prevent an incident." Another respondent said, "I had trouble handcuffing, so my FTO took the time to show me how to handcuff and how to be more proficient." A small number of respondents (7 of 115) stated they received no training and/or no remediation, with one respondent stating that during a full 8-week rotation with an FTO, "we would spend 10 hours at the station doing nothing."

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## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its findings in this report, the OIG recommends that the Board of Police Commissioners direct the Chief of Police to implement the recommendations outlined below.

Before finalizing this report, the Department was provided with a draft copy and given the opportunity to offer comments and feedback on the report and recommendations. The Department submitted a separate response to each recommendation (*see* Appendix). Therefore, following each OIG recommendation listed below, the Department's response is included verbatim from their correspondence with the OIG. This is then followed by the OIG's counter response.

- 1.1 Explicitly ban in Department policy traditions and "rites of passage" that might be construed as hazing or disparate treatment towards probationary officers. The banned practices should include, but not be limited to, mandating that probationary officers shave their heads; wearing "Class A" long-sleeved uniforms and ties regardless of weather conditions; forbidding attire suitable for the weather like sunglasses, raincoats, or winter jackets; prohibiting the use of vehicle climate controls; and insisting that probationary officers remain silent unless they are addressed.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 1.1:** Hazing and initiation activities, along with "rites of passage," are explicitly banned per Volume 1, Section 275 of the Department Manual, which states that "Personnel who become aware of hazing/initiation activity by Department personnel shall take immediate action to stop the activity and report the incident." Hazing activities, which are viewed as a form of harassment and are considered misconduct that violates current Department policy, are not tolerated.

Also, Department Manual Volume 3, Section 614.10, and Section 615 covers basic and optional uniform requirements for officers eligible for field duty. In addition, as stated in Volume 3, Section 605, regarding officers' personal appearances, "each Commanding Officer is responsible for ensuring that sworn employees within their command comply with the Department's personal appearance standards."

While in the Police Academy, Drill Instructors and Recruit Basic Course Instructors discuss these topics with recruit officers. During the first week of instruction, the recruits sign and acknowledge that they received the following:

- City of Los Angeles, Executive Directive No. PE-1 (Revised), Equal Employment Opportunity, Non-Discrimination and Reasonable Accommodations; and,
- City of Los Angeles, Zero Tolerance for Hazing of Fellow Employees (Posted Notice).

On day four of the Academy, the Human Relations Unit provides the following training to recruit officers:

- City of Los Angeles, Hazing Complaint Procedures;
- City of Los Angeles, Executive Directive No. 8, Zero Tolerance for Hazing of Fellow Employees;
- City of Los Angeles, Workplace Equity Policy; and, Department Manual Section 1/275, Hazing and Initiation Activities

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG acknowledges that hazing and initiation practices are prohibited by current Department policy, as well as by City policy, Mayoral directives, and state and federal law. However, the Department's policy does not specifically address the practices identified in our survey results, as outlined on page 30 of this report and in OIG Recommendation 1.1 above. The OIG continues to recommend that the Department update its hazing policy to explicitly prohibit these practices and provide specific examples of what constitutes hazing. This guidance will help all Department employees better understand the boundaries of hazing, eliminating the need for subjective interpretation. The OIG recommends that the Commission direct the Department to work with the OIG to strengthen its hazing policy, including by incorporating specific examples of prohibited practices. The final policy will then be presented to the Commission for review and approval.

In response to the Department's comments regarding uniform requirements and officers' personal appearance, the OIG emphasizes that any real or perceived pressure from FTOs, senior officers, or supervisors to require probationary officers to forgo weather-appropriate clothing, such as raincoats or winter jackets, shave their heads, or be forced to wear "Class A" long-sleeved uniforms regardless of weather conditions, goes beyond personal appearance and uniform standards. While the OIG agrees that commanding officers should be vigilant in monitoring such practices, these practices should be treated as potential hazing and harassment policy violations that warrant appropriate investigation and, if necessary, disciplinary action.

- 1.2** Identify and update all pertinent Department training content and related resources to reflect the policy update described in **Recommendation 1.1**. This includes, but is not limited to, the Field Training Manual, FTO Basic and Update Schools, Academy training, command officer training, and supervisor school for both sworn and civilian staff.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 1.2:** See response to Recommendation 1.1.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG appreciates the Department's efforts to educate and inform recruits about prohibited hazing and initiation practices, along with related Department and City policies. However, the OIG believes there is

1.0

still a need to enhance the training content. As outlined on page 30 of this report, some FTOs observed at FTO School expressed support for probationary officers participating in practices that could be perceived as hazing. To address this, the Department would benefit from more robust reinforcement of these principles and policies, including explicitly banning the practices noted in Recommendation 1.1. These updated policies and guidelines should be incorporated into the various training formats and forums, including but not limited to FTO School, to ensure all officers' comprehensive understanding and compliance.

- 2.1** Implement a centralized and computerized tracking system to manage all FTP documentation, data collection, and analysis. This system should include records related to probationary officer assessments (with a feature to highlight those receiving unsatisfactory ratings and needing remediation), FTO selection and performance evaluations, FTO training credentials, and FTO deselections.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 2.1:** Currently, documentation regarding probationary officer assessments, along with Field Training Officer (FTO) selection and de-selection is addressed by the Office of Operations (OO); particularly the patrol division of assignment. When it is identified that a probationary officer has multiple unsatisfactory ratings and/or needs remedial training, the Field Training Officer Unit (FTOU), Training Division (TD), oversees the process and coordinates with the OO on the required training and documentation.

Regarding implementing a centralized and computerized tracking system. Previously, TD participated in a program, in conjunction with Information Technology Bureau (ITB), to implement a computerized system to organize, track, and record data related to the FTO program. The system proved to be too expensive, with many flaws. Therefore, ITB canceled the contract with the vendor (this was addressed in a previous OIG audit/report.)

The Department agrees with the OIG's recommendation. The Department has met with approximately 11 vendors to discuss their solutions for digital management of the Field Training Officer Program under a Department-wide Learning Management System (LMS) umbrella. The search for a holistic LMS has led to three separate companies being considered for final review. The Department is currently collaborating with these companies, ITB, the City Attorney's Office, and Fiscal Group to achieve a long-term LMS solution while navigating the City of Los Angeles contract processes.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG is encouraged by the Department's commitment to procuring and implementing a centralized, computerized tracking system to organize, track, and record data related to the FTP. To support this effort, including seeking BOPC assistance when appropriate and ensuring critical transparency, the OIG recommends that the BOPC direct the Chief of Police to provide status updates to the BOPC every six months until the system is fully

implemented. While the OIG acknowledges that probationary officers are assigned to OO, overseen by OO and their respective patrol divisions, and that day-to-day management falls under these entities, the broader issue remains: there needs to be stronger and more consistent communication and coordination between OO, the patrol divisions, FTOU, and TD to ensure proper alignment of training and documentation processes. A centralized database will be crucial in supporting this communication and coordination, ensuring that all relevant entities have access to accurate, up-to-date information, ultimately enhancing the overall management and oversight of the FTO program.

- 2.2** Compile a current comprehensive list of all active and inactive FTOs across the Department, including officers in other senior-level equivalent positions who are FTO trained and certified, and submit it with the OIG as soon as it's completed. This list should categorize officers based on their FTO certification status, identifying those already working with PO Is, those scheduled to do so soon, and those not currently assigned to PO Is.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 2.2:** As stated in Recommendation 2.1, the Department agrees with the OIG's recommendation to adopt a computer program to assist in tracking the development of FTO and probationary officers.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG recognizes that a computerized system would facilitate the Department's ability to generate this type of list more efficiently than doing so manually. However, given the uncertainty and anticipated lengthy timeline for finalizing the procurement process; selecting a vendor; designing, testing, and implementing the new system; as well as training staff on its use; the OIG strongly recommends that the Department compile this list and provide it to the OIG as soon as practicable, rather than waiting for the new system to go live.

- 2.3** Evaluate the competence and effectiveness of all active FTOs working with or soon to be working with probationary officers. For those falling short of FTP standards, either downgrade them or mandate remedial training. This assessment should not only consider formal complaints or disciplinary actions but also areas of underperformance and issues related to productivity.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 2.3:** An FTO's authority and ability to train probationary officers is determined by the OO during the interview and selection process. The FTO must complete mandatory Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) course prior to instructing probationary officers and attend an FTO update course every three years. An FTO's daily performance in the field is monitored at the divisional level. If a pattern of concern is detected by the division of assignment, or through probationary officer documents sent to the FTOU, notifications are made to the appropriate Department entities.

The FTOs receive a Standards Based Assessments (SBA) every year, are supervised by Sergeants in the field, and are monitored by Watch Commanders at the station. The Department already has a robust system in place for the supervision and monitoring of FTOs.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG acknowledges that several accountability measures are in place to promote and assess the competence and effectiveness of FTOs, including POST-mandated courses, annual SBAs, and oversight at the divisional level. However, given the crucial role FTOs play in shaping new officers during a formative period in their careers, reinforcing academy training, and serving as role models for probationary officers, the OIG believes that more focused and frequent reviews of FTO performance and effectiveness are necessary. This recommendation is supported by the OIG's findings that indicate a lack of sufficient discipline or remediation efforts to address FTO misconduct, underperformance, or non-performance. This recommendation is further supported by the OIG's findings that probationary officers are not consistently providing direct and critical feedback on their FTOs' performance. Therefore, relying on annual SBAs, probationary officer documents that are not regularly used to provide feedback on FTO performance, and oversight by already busy sergeants and watch commanders does not provide the level of evaluation needed to ensure that FTOs are effectively training and mentoring probationary officers.

- 2.4** Prepare a report analyzing the need for and optimal number of alternate FTOs to serve as replacements when primary FTOs are absent for any duration, and submit it to the OIG upon completion. The analysis should consider all active and inactive FTOs, including those who are trained and certified but not currently supervising probationary officers, and should also examine how often FTOs who are supervising PO Is utilize any form of leave and for how long. The analysis should ensure that probationary officers' training and Phase II of the FTP are not compromised in any way.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 2.4:** No database exists that describes the optimal number of alternate FTOs. When a probationary officer's assigned FTO is unavailable, the probationary officer will work with an alternate FTO who is available on the same watch as the probationary officer. Without an alternate FTO, the probationary officer is assigned to work with a supervisor who has completed the FTO course. This ensures that the evaluation of the probationary officer is not compromised and that the progress of Phase II probationary officers continues without interruption.

Divisional Watch Commanders, Sergeants, and Training Coordinators are aware of the requirements that Phase II probationary officers work with a certified FTO and will adjust the assignments of FTOs to ensure compliance.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG acknowledges the Department's largely successful efforts and planning to ensure that certified FTOs are assigned to work with probationary officers, as our findings indicate this occurs nearly all the time.

As noted on page 23, it is rare for probationary officers to be paired with a non-FTO. However, this recommendation specifically requests that the Department conduct an analysis to determine the optimal number of certified FTOs needed within OO overall and at each division as a baseline for its staffing and deployment decisions. This will help ensure, among other things, that probationary officers are assigned FTOs for full 8-week rotations. While the OIG understands that a centralized database would streamline and enhance the efficiency of such an analysis, we do not believe it is essential for the Department to wait for this centralized database. The Department routinely assesses its staffing resources to establish appropriate levels for staffing and deployment, including within OO and at the divisional level. Therefore, the OIG continues to recommend that the Department carry out this analysis and report its findings to the OIG and the BOPC.

- 3.1** Circulate a notice from Training Bureau to all probationary officers, FTOU personnel, and FTOs emphasizing that the Department:
- a. Highly values the insights, perspectives, and overall experiences of probationary officers concerning their FTOs and the broader FTP.
  - b. Encourages probationary officers to submit an Employee's Report if they believe any assessment is unfair or inaccurate, while also ensuring they are protected from retaliation.
  - c. Strictly prohibits FTOs from advising a probationary officer to "forget everything you learned in the Academy" (and from making any similar statements).
  - d. Embraces the integral function of Behavioral Science Services (BSS) in assisting and being a resource for probationary officers, whether addressing performance concerns or navigating the transition from the Academy to working in the field.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 3.1:** The above issues are addressed with recruits in their last weeks of Academy training and within blocks of instruction mentioned in Recommendation 1.1. At no time are unprofessional statements, such as the one cited in Recommendation 3.1 subsection c, allowed. Additionally, recruit officers are exposed to, and offered, BSS counseling for performance-related retesting.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG acknowledges the Department's multi-faceted efforts to address the issues highlighted in the recommendation and to promote professionalism, integrity, and adherence to the principles taught in the Academy and throughout the FTP. While the OIG remains neutral on the specific method of communication, our survey results clearly show that statements like "forget what you learned in the academy" do occur, which undermines the Department's training efforts. Therefore, the OIG continues to believe that issuing a notice reinforcing the Department's values, principles, and relevant policies and procedures related to FTOs and the FTP would be a valuable resource for all personnel involved in and interacting with the FTP.

- 3.2** Direct FTOU personnel, with the support and guidance of Audit Division, to regularly audit and evaluate feedback from probationary officers regarding their FTOs. If these audits or reviews indicate shortfalls in regular feedback from the probationary officers, the FTOU shall devise and implement methods to encourage and enhance their participation in providing input about their FTP experiences.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 3.2:** Field Training Officer critique forms are currently filled out at the divisional level and are reviewed by the Probationary Officer Coordinator at each division. Additionally, evaluations regarding probationary officer experience with FTOs are discussed and reviewed with officers nearing the end of their probationary period and during the Police Sciences and Leadership (PSL) training course.

During the PSL course, input and critiques regarding probationary officers' overall experience with the Field Training Program (FTP) are evaluated through open discussion. The FTOU then uses this information to share best practices, improve instruction, and adjust the FTO Course and FTO Update Course curriculum.

To enhance and track this process, the Department recommends that a QR code be provided to all probationary officers, allowing them to complete a survey evaluating each FTO they have partnered with. Alternatively, as suggested previously, a database could track and review the job performance of both FTOs and probationary officers.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG appreciates the Department's commitment to collecting feedback on the FTP and individual FTOs. However, as noted on page 31 of the report, 65% of survey respondents (probationary officers) indicated they were unaware of the existence of a confidential and anonymous feedback form for providing feedback on the FTOs assigned to them. Additionally, while the OIG acknowledges that open discussions regarding the FTP occur during PSL, the formal collection of this feedback does not appear to be integrated into PSL, as highlighted in the Department's response to Recommendation 6.1 below. Moreover, it is unclear what specific actions, if any, are taken based on this feedback.

The OIG concurs with the Department's position that digital feedback methods, such as a survey linked to a QR code, as suggested by the Department, would improve the feedback process. However, the OIG strongly recommends that these enhancements in feedback collection be supported by audits conducted by FTOU and supported and guided by Audit Division to ensure accountability and effectiveness.



- 4.1** Incorporate a formal policy update section within the FTO Basic and Update Schools that provides a comprehensive overview of changes to Department policy within the last three years. This section's contents shall be updated every six months.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 4.1:** As stated in the response to Recommendation 1.2, presently, both the FTO Course and FTO Update courses are up to date regarding the instruction and adaptation of curriculum and are modified as necessary if any changes in Department policy apply to the instructional goal and performance objectives of the course.

In addition, the Department's current LMS system allows for policy updates to be disseminated to all personnel. The implementation of a new system may allow the ability to send certain information to specific recipients.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG is satisfied with the Department's response and believes Recommendation 4.1 is no longer needed.

- 5.1** Review and evaluate the existing FTO selection process and report back to the Commission regarding potential improvements. Before presenting its conclusions to the Commission, the Department shall share the results with, and seek input from, the OIG, and integrate the OIG's feedback. Essential areas of focus in this review should include: the clarity of Department guidelines prioritizing the selection of FTOs known for their proficiency in training; a revisit of the qualifications needed to serve as an FTO; enhancing efficiencies throughout the selection process.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 5.1:** The current process for FTO selection is robust and is described at length in the Department Manual Volume 3, Section 763.85. The Manual states in part, to become an FTO, an officer must be an active Police Officer II or Police Officer III (PO III) who has submitted the proper application and been added to the PO III eligibility list. To be added to the PO III Eligibility List, an officer must complete a minimum of three years, or 39 deployment periods, of service with the Department and have performed two years, or 26 deployment periods, in an eligible geographic field assignment (i.e., patrol), and/or traffic assignment, and/or transit assignment with eligible patrol experience. After eligibility qualifications are met, FTOs are selected using the Department's oral interview process, and Divisional Training Coordinators monitor the FTOs' performance after selection and assignment.

After reviewing the current practice for the FTO selection, the Department disagrees with Recommendation 5.1 as the selection, qualifications, and maintenance of the skill set of the FTO are thoroughly addressed in the Department Manual and are supported by the Department- provided training. As stated in the Volume 3, Section 763.85 of the Department Manual:

It remains the responsibility of each FTO to maintain proficiency in the performance as an FTO including the requirements established for

eligibility and in the Field Training Manual. The FTO must also remain in compliance with current requirements, including the successful completion of the Peace Officer Standards and Training mandated FTO Course and any required FTO recertification course(s). It is incumbent upon commanding officers to continually monitor the performance of their command's FTOs and their compliance with FTO training standards.

The Department must ensure that FTOs receive adequate training, including training to be an instructor, and training in Department policies and procedures to enable them to carry out their duties. Training requirements are detailed in the Department's Field Training Manual.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG acknowledges that the current process for FTO selection is robust and thoroughly outlined in the Department Manual. The OIG amends its Recommendation 5.1 to state that the BOPC should direct the Chief of Police to provide a verbal presentation to the BOPC on the FTO selection process, including discussions on what professional attributes, experience, and other criteria should be used to define and assess an ideal FTO, recruitment, retention, training, and accountability and review processes for FTOs. This would offer commissioners and the public greater transparency into these processes, enabling them to ask questions and suggest potential improvements. The OIG believes that there is always room to enhance these processes, such as those outlined in the discussion of FTO selection in this report, and this presents an important opportunity for the Department to consider improvements to a critical program.

**Amended 5.1** Provide a verbal presentation to the BOPC on the FTO selection process, including discussions on what professional attributes, experience, and other criteria should be used to define and assess an ideal FTO, recruitment, retention, training, and accountability and review processes for FTOs.

- 6.1** Work with the OIG to conduct surveys of probationary officers every six months, including those who have recently completed Phase II of the FTP, to assess, among other things, whether the above recommendations are achieving their intended impact, measure any improvement in probationary officers' perceptions of FTOs and their treatment over time, and evaluate changes in their overall perception of the FTP.

**Department's Response to Recommendation 6.1:** During the PSL Course, the OIG assists in presenting a portion of the course and participates in a discussion with probationary officers. In addition, as stated in Recommendation 3.2, probationary officers discuss what areas can be improved upon and evaluate the FTP during this course. This course focuses on those probationary officers finishing Phase III of their probation, approximately six deployment periods after Phase II is complete, by discussing and evaluating the FTP. No FTO feedback regarding the FTP is formally collected. Still, during this course, the FTOU

discusses and gathers information regarding ways to improve FTO training techniques and performance.

The Department recommends that a QR code be dispersed from the FTOU to all probationary officers, allowing them to complete a survey evaluating their perceptions of their FTOs. This survey could be sent every six months, as recommended by the OIG, and any changes in the overall perception of the FTP and FTOs could be evaluated.

**OIG's Counter Response:** The OIG is encouraged that the Department recognizes the value and importance of surveying probationary officers. While a digital survey with a QR code that can be provided to probationary officers at any point during Phase I, II, or III of their training is a promising approach, the OIG looks forward to collaborating with the Department and other partners to implement this recommendation. The key objective is to fairly, accurately, conveniently, and anonymously collect probationary officers' feedback about their FTOs and the FTP overall and incorporate it, where appropriate, into the FTP to ensure it meets the high standards and expectations of the Department, the BOPC, and the public.

## **VI. APPENDIX**

The Department's complete response may be found attached.

**APPENDIX: Los Angeles Police Department's Response to the Office of the Inspector General's Review of the Los Angeles Police Department's Field Training Program**

## INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

September 19, 2024  
1.12

**TO:** Inspector General

**FROM:** Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW OF FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM

In response to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Report – Review of the Los Angeles Police Department Field Training Program, the Department has reviewed each recommendation for possible implementation. A detailed response has been provided.

**Recommendation 1.1:**

*Explicitly ban in Department policy traditions and “rites of passage” that might be construed as hazing or disparate treatment towards probationary officers. The banned practices should include, but not be limited to, mandating that probationary officers shave their heads; wearing “Class A” long-sleeved uniforms and ties regardless of weather conditions; forbidding attire suitable for the weather like sunglasses, raincoats, or winter jackets; prohibiting the use of vehicle climate controls; and insisting that probationary officers remain silent unless they are addressed.*

**Response:**

Hazing and initiation activities, along with “rites of passage,” are explicitly banned per Volume 1, Section 275 of the Department Manual, which states that “Personnel who become aware of hazing/initiation activity by Department personnel shall take immediate action to stop the activity and report the incident.” Hazing activities, which are viewed as a form of harassment and are considered misconduct that violates current Department policy, are not tolerated.

Also, Department Manual Volume 3, Section 614.10, and Section 615 covers basic and optional uniform requirements for officers eligible for field duty. In addition, as stated in Volume 3, Section 605, regarding officers’ personal appearances, “each Commanding Officer is responsible for ensuring that sworn employees within their command comply with the Department’s personal appearance standards.”

While in the Police Academy, Drill Instructors and Recruit Basic Course Instructors discuss these topics with recruit officers. During the first week of instruction, the recruits sign and acknowledge that they received the following:

- City of Los Angeles, Executive Directive No. PE-1 (Revised), Equal Employment Opportunity, Non-Discrimination and Reasonable Accommodations; and,
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On day four of the Academy, the Human Relations Unit provides the following training to recruit officers:

- City of Los Angeles, Hazing Complaint Procedures;
- City of Los Angeles, Executive Directive No. 8, Zero Tolerance for Hazing of Fellow Employees;
- City of Los Angeles, Workplace Equity Policy; and,
- Department Manual Section 1/275, Hazing and Initiation Activities.

**Recommendation 1.2:**

*Identify and update all pertinent Department training content and related resources to reflect the policy update described in Recommendation 1.1. This includes, but is not limited to, the Field Training Manual, FTO Basic and FTO Update Schools, Academy training, command officer training, and supervisor school for both sworn and civilian staff.*

**Response:**

See response to Recommendation 1.1.

**Recommendation 2.1:**

*Implement a centralized and computerized tracking system to manage all FTP documentation, data collection, and analysis. This system should include records related to probationary officer assessments (with a feature to highlight those receiving unsatisfactory ratings and needing remediation), FTO selection and performance evaluations, FTO training credentials, and FTO deselections.*

**Response:**

Currently, documentation regarding probationary officer assessments, along with Field Training Officer (FTO) selection and de-selection is addressed by the Office of Operations (OO); particularly the patrol division of assignment. When it is identified that a probationary officer has multiple unsatisfactory ratings and/or needs remedial training, the Field Training Officer Unit (FTOU), Training Division (TD), oversees the process and coordinates with the OO on the required training and documentation.

Regarding implementing a centralized and computerized tracking system. Previously, TD participated in a program, in conjunction with Information Technology Bureau (ITB), to implement a computerized system to organize, track, and record data related to the FTO

program. The system proved to be too expensive, with many flaws. Therefore, ITB canceled the contract with the vendor (this was addressed in a previous OIG audit/report.)

The Department agrees with the OIG's recommendation. The Department has met with approximately 11 vendors to discuss their solutions for digital management of the Field Training Officer Program under a Department-wide Learning Management System (LMS) umbrella. The search for a holistic LMS has led to three separate companies being considered for final review. The Department is currently collaborating with these companies, ITB, the City Attorney's Office, and Fiscal Group to achieve a long-term LMS solution while navigating the City of Los Angeles contract processes.

**Recommendation 2.2:**

*Compile a current comprehensive list of all active and inactive FTOs across the Department, including officers in other senior-level equivalent positions who are FTO trained and certified, and submit it with the OIG as soon as it's completed. This list should categorize officers based on their FTO certification status, identifying those already working with PO Is, those scheduled to do so soon, and those not currently assigned a PO I.*

**Response:**

As stated in Recommendation 2.1, the Department agrees with the OIG's recommendation to adopt a computer program to assist in tracking the development of FTO and probationary officers.

**Recommendation 2.3:**

*Evaluate the competence and effectiveness of all active FTOs working with or soon to be working with PO Is. For those falling short of FTP standards, either deselect them or mandate remedial training. This assessment should not only consider formal complaints or disciplinary actions but also areas of underperformance and issues related to productivity.*

**Response:**

An FTO's authority and ability to train probationary officers is determined by the OO during the interview and selection process. The FTO must complete mandatory Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) course prior to instructing probationary officers and attend an FTO update course every three years. An FTO's daily performance in the field is monitored at the divisional level. If a pattern of concern is detected by the division of assignment, or through probationary officer documents sent to the FTOU, notifications are made to the appropriate Department entities.

The FTOs receive a Standards Based Assessments (SBA) every year, are supervised by Sergeants in the field, and are monitored by Watch Commanders at the station. The Department already has a robust system in place for the supervision and monitoring of FTOs.

**Recommendation 2.4**

*Prepare a report analyzing the need for and optimal number of alternate FTOs to serve as replacements when primary FTOs are absent for any duration and submit it to the OIG upon completion. The analysis should consider all active and inactive FTOs, including those who are*

*trained and certified but not currently supervising probationary officers, and should also examine how often FTOs who are supervising POs utilize any form of leave and for how long? The analysis should ensure that probationary officers' training and Phase II of the FTP are not compromised in any way.*

**Response:**

No database exists that describes the optimal number of alternate FTOs. When a probationary officer's assigned FTO is unavailable, the probationary officer will work with an alternate FTO who is available on the same watch as the probationary officer. Without an alternate FTO, the probationary officer is assigned to work with a supervisor who has completed the FTO course. This ensures that the evaluation of the probationary officer is not compromised and that the progress of Phase II probationary officers continues without interruption.

Divisional Watch Commanders, Sergeants, and Training Coordinators are aware of the requirements that Phase II probationary officers work with a certified FTO and will adjust the assignments of FTOs to ensure compliance.

**Recommendation 3.1**

*Circulate a notice from Training Bureau to all probationary officers, FTOU personnel, and FTOs emphasizing that the Department:*

- a. Highly values the insights, perspectives, and overall experiences of probationary officers concerning their FTOs and the broader FTP.*
- b. Encourages probationary officers to submit an Employee's Report if they believe any assessment is unfair or inaccurate, while also ensuring they are protected from retaliation.*
- c. Strictly prohibits FTOs from advising a probationary officer to "forget everything you learned in the Academy" (and from making any similar statements).*
- d. Embraces the integral function of Behavioral Science Services (BSS) in assisting and being a resource for probationary officers, whether addressing performance concerns or navigating the transition from the Academy to working in the field.*

**Response:**

The above issues are addressed with recruits in their last weeks of Academy training and within blocks of instruction mentioned in Recommendation 1.1. At no time are unprofessional statements, such as the one cited in Recommendation 3.1 subsection c, allowed. Additionally, recruit officers are exposed to, and offered, BSS counseling for performance-related retesting.

**Recommendation 3.2**

*Direct FTOU personnel, with the support and guidance of Audit Division, to regularly audit and evaluate feedback from probationary officers regarding their FTOs. If these audits or reviews indicate shortfalls in regular feedback from the probationary officers, the FTOU shall devise and implement methods to encourage and enhance their participation in providing input about their FTP experiences.*

**Response:**

Field Training Officer critique forms are currently filled out at the divisional level and are reviewed by the Probationary Officer Coordinator at each division. Additionally, evaluations



regarding probationary officer experience with FTOs are discussed and reviewed with officers nearing the end of their probationary period and during the Police Sciences and Leadership (PSL) training course.

During the PSL course, input and critiques regarding probationary officers' overall experience with the Field Training Program (FTP) are evaluated through open discussion. The FTOU then uses this information to share best practices, improve instruction, and adjust the FTO Course and FTO Update Course curriculum.

To enhance and track this process, the Department recommends that a QR code be provided to all probationary officers, allowing them to complete a survey evaluating each FTO they have partnered with. Alternatively, as suggested previously, a database could track and review the job performance of both FTOs and probationary officers.

**Recommendation 4.1**

*Incorporate a formal policy update section within the FTO Basic and Update Schools that provides a comprehensive overview of changes to Department policy within the last three years. This section's contents shall be updated every six months.*

**Response:**

As stated in the response to Recommendation 1.2, presently, both the FTO Course and FTO Update courses are up to date regarding the instruction and adaptation of curriculum and are modified as necessary if any changes in Department policy apply to the instructional goal and performance objectives of the course.

In addition, the Department's current LMS system allows for policy updates to be disseminated to all personnel. The implementation of a new system may allow the ability to send certain information to specific recipients.

**Recommendation 5.1**

*Review and evaluate the existing FTO selection process and report back to the Commission regarding potential improvements. Before presenting its conclusions to the Commission, the Department shall share the results with, and seek input from, the OIG, and integrate the OIG's feedback. Essential areas of focus in this review should include: the clarity of Department guidelines prioritizing the selection of FTOs known for their proficiency in training; a revisit of the qualifications needed to serve as an FTO; enhancing efficiencies throughout the selection process.*

**Response:**

The current process for FTO selection is robust and is described at length in the Department Manual Volume 3, Section 763.85. The Manual states in part, to become an FTO, an officer must be an active Police Officer II or Police Officer III (PO III) who has submitted the proper application and been added to the PO III eligibility list. To be added to the PO III Eligibility List, an officer must complete a minimum of three years, or 39 deployment periods, of service with the Department and have performed two years, or 26 deployment periods, in an eligible geographic field assignment (i.e., patrol), and/or traffic assignment, and/or transit assignment

with eligible patrol experience. After eligibility qualifications are met, FTOs are selected using the Department's oral interview process, and Divisional Training Coordinators monitor the FTOs' performance after selection and assignment.

After reviewing the current practice for the FTO selection, the Department disagrees with Recommendation 5.1 as the selection, qualifications, and maintenance of the skill set of the FTO are thoroughly addressed in the Department Manual and are supported by the Department-provided training. As stated in the Volume 3, Section 763.85 of the Department Manual:

It remains the responsibility of each FTO to maintain proficiency in the performance as an FTO including the requirements established for eligibility and in the Field Training Manual. The FTO must also remain in compliance with current requirements, including the successful completion of the Peace Officer Standards and Training mandated FTO Course and any required FTO recertification course(s). It is incumbent upon commanding officers to continually monitor the performance of their command's FTOs and their compliance with FTO training standards.

The Department must ensure that FTOs receive adequate training, including training to be an instructor, and training in Department policies and procedures to enable them to carry out their duties. Training requirements are detailed in the Department's Field Training Manual.

**Recommendation 6.1:**

*Work with the OIG to conduct surveys of probationary officers every six months, including those who have recently completed Phase II of the FTP, to assess, among other things, whether the above recommendations are achieving their intended impact, measure any improvement in probationary officer's perceptions of FTOs and their treatment over time, and evaluate changes in their overall perception of the FTP.*

**Response:**

During the PSL Course, the OIG assists in presenting a portion of the course and participates in a discussion with probationary officers. In addition, as stated in Recommendation 3.2, probationary officers discuss what areas can be improved upon and evaluate the FTP during this course. This course focuses on those probationary officers finishing Phase III of their probation, approximately six deployment periods after Phase II is complete, by discussing and evaluating the FTP. No FTO feedback regarding the FTP is formally collected. Still, during this course, the FTOU discusses and gathers information regarding ways to improve FTO training techniques and performance.

The Department recommends that a QR code be dispersed from the FTOU to all probationary officers, allowing them to complete a survey evaluating their perceptions of their FTOs. This survey could be sent every six months, as recommended by the OIG, and any changes in the overall perception of the FTP and FTOs could be evaluated.

**Conclusion:**

While the Department recognizes that there are areas within the FTO program that can be improved upon, the purview of the FTOU is to train and update FTOs throughout the entire Department. Per the Department Manual Volume 3, Section 763.85: it is the responsibility of the “commanding officers to continually monitor the performance of their command's FTOs and their compliance with FTO training standards.”

It has become evident that a computerized database would assist the Department in accurately tracking and monitoring the FTO program and FTOs. Having such a program would benefit the Department and assist the FTOU and divisional commanding officers in monitoring the overall health of the FTO program, allowing for a quick diagnosis of corrective measures to improve performances from FTOs and probationary officers per the recommendations made by the OIG.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Deputy Chief Marc Reina, Commanding Officer, Training Bureau, at (213) 486-7090.

Respectfully,



DOMINIC H. CHOI  
Chief of Police

Attachment