

Intelligence-Led Policing Program at the Ithaca Police Department

Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) is a cornerstone for several new crime-control initiatives at the City of Ithaca Police Department. The related programs are a direct result of an increase in illicit narcotics-related crime and violence that has been noted throughout the community. Although various elements of ILP exist, there is no formalized program or uniform methodology by which information is gathered, synthesized into intelligence, and reliably disseminated. Since ILP is recognized as one of the most important practices for crime reduction and crime prevention, it is imperative for a standardized program to be created and implemented in an expeditious manner.¹

The Department's established methods which currently exist towards ILP all operate independently of each other. These methods, inclusive of a confidential tip-line and a Special Investigation's unit, have no dependable avenue for linking data or determining nexuses between various sources of information which may be received. The confidential tip-line is monitored by multiple unit heads, however there is no coordination for that information to be developed into intelligence and appropriately shared. Additionally, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) independently gathers information through confidential informants, however, the Unit is inconsistent with the intelligence-development and dissemination aspects of the process. As stated by Intelligence-Led Policing Author, Dr. Jeremy Carter, in an interview with PoliceOne.com, "Raw information is just information and must go through an analytical process to become intelligence."² Since this is not occurring consistently, the value of the information received is significantly reduced.

Through recent discussions with command staff and City officials concerning Intelligence-Led Policing, several ideas have been identified and are currently being pursued. The request for funding to hire a full-time data analyst has been made. The immediate objective for this person would be to identify connections between criminal activity locations, crime trends, likely offenders, and victimology links. Additionally, the Department's Records Management System (RMS) has analytical capabilities which are not utilized. Plans are underway to explore its functionality and incorporate its use into the Department's ILP objectives. Since analytical software can improve crime detection by 10-50%, it is essential to leverage this technology.³

Another method by which the Ithaca Police Department will implement Intelligence-Led Policing is through a renewed emphasis towards community-oriented policing. Evidence suggests that the connections between the police department and the community have diminished, therefore a concentrated effort towards building relationships and strengthening lines of communication must occur at all levels. This initiative will be a core component of the program since the Department of Justice asserts that ILP is a collaborative approach which is dependent upon the community's cooperation.⁴ To garner this community involvement, the entire Department must be supportive of the ILP philosophy since success will be rooted in strong police-community relationships.⁵

An additional planned approach towards the ILP movement is to incorporate a standardized criminal debriefing form into the arrestee booking process. Through this form, the booking officer will be required to ask every arrestee if he or she has knowledge of any crime which has happened, or which is about to happen. Details will be elicited and subsequently delivered to the data analyst for dissemination. Pertinent location information will be mapped since a knowledge of the environments in which crimes occur is vital towards resource allocation and deployment.⁶

An essential component towards the Department's approach to ILP must include a process by which all obtained data and information is effectively synthesized into functional intelligence. This includes all information which is received through the Department's confidential tip-line, the knowledge gleaned by the Department's Special Investigative Unit, and the information contained within the proposed debriefing forms. The future data analyst will be tasked with reviewing this information daily, disseminating it to the appropriate units in a timely manner, and cataloging everything for future use and crime linkage. As indicated by Lieutenant Weiss of NYPD's Office of Crime Control Strategies, when the silos of compartmentalized information are removed, the process of information-sharing is easier and ILP strategies are maximized.⁷

To maximize the value of the data analyst, the Department's RMS analytics, tip-line information, SIU intelligence, arrestee debriefing forms, and community-policing initiatives, there must be a comprehensive process for data sharing and integration. To achieve this, weekly ILP meetings comprised of command staff and unit heads will be convened. The focus of these meetings will be to consistently discuss all elements surrounding the ILP initiatives, while creating a level of accountability for crime reduction. Like NYPD's COMPSTAT meetings, the unit heads and shift commanders must demonstrate a knowledge of the intelligence received, along with an ability to apply it and offer verifiable results towards crime reduction. The meetings will employ a positive leadership approach to identify areas of deficiency, while underscoring quality work.⁸

As stated by Motorola Solutions Expert, DJ Seales, the methodology of criminals is continually changing, therefore law enforcement's efforts to reduce crime must constantly evolve. The mindset of "that's how it has always been done" is not acceptable and intelligence must guide our collective actions.⁹ The need to leverage resources and understand both the criminal element

and the agency capabilities are critical to ILP success.¹⁰ It is expected that the strategies outlined herein will create the platform for reducing narcotics-related crime and violence in Ithaca, N.Y.

As with any new program, however, this ILP model will be subject to frequent and continual assessment for efficacy. As flaws are noted, they will be addressed and as additional methods are identified, they will be explored for future inclusion. To facilitate this, a robust system of evaluation will occur for each of the 6 outlined initiatives. Each initiative will include a specific evaluative method in order to create a broad understanding of the program's complete value.

Since the mission of the proposed data analyst will be to identify crime trends, locate activity hotspots, and detect potential victimology links, it is expected that this element will be a significant component towards the program's success. Recommendations based upon the information learned will subsequently be made and disseminated to the appropriate unit for review and investigation.¹¹ Through quantitatively measuring previous year-end crime data from all offense categories, in comparison with current year-end crime data from all offense categories with an analyst in place, an assessment can be made concerning the value of this ILP component.

Given that the analytical software contained within the Department's Records Management System can improve crime detection by 10-50%, it is essential that a baseline of crime statistics is established before the software is explored and utilized.¹² To achieve this, all annual crime statistics from the monthly Incident Based Reports (IBRs), spanning the preceding 5 years, will be compiled to establish a standard by which to evaluate future crime data. When information assembled through this software facilitates information leading to an arrest or when it reveals a nexus between crimes, suspects, or victims, it will be cataloged and annotated for evaluative purposes. Upon the completion of each calendar year, an inventory of the arrests resulting from the software analytics will be compared with established solvability factors to determine if those

cases would have been solved without the software. Additionally, the total crime statistics will be compared to the statistical mean from the prior 5 years to determine if a reduction occurred.

To properly measure the effectiveness of the criminal debriefing forms, a monthly report will be generated. The report will count arrests which occurred as a result the information received, and thus it will become a vital aspect for evaluation. A separate report will also be generated to show the frequency in which the forms provide information to advance an open investigation. At the end of the year, this data will be reviewed to broadly measure the value of this ILP component.

Frequently, information is brought forth to the Department via the confidential tip-line, however, there is no tracking method to verify that dissemination and follow-up occurs. Also, there is no system in place to convert the information into operational intelligence.¹³ Likewise, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) receives varied information on a regular basis, however, there is no consistency in tracking or ensuring that the raw information is synthesized into intelligence.¹⁴

For both initiatives, the commander of the Investigations Unit will be tasked with cataloging all tip-line material and all information received by the SIU. Monthly reports will be completed, and efficacy will be based upon the quantity of times in which the information is developed into viable intelligence, in concurrence with the number of arrests that occur through this approach.

The last initiative to be evaluated is the focused community-oriented policing initiative. The effectiveness of this component will be evaluated quantitatively through a year-end review of citizen complaints, use-of-force incidents, and letters of compliment. The numbers from all categories will be compared to the preceding years, with a focus towards a reduction in citizen complaints and use-of-force incidents, along with an expected increase in letters of compliment.

As a qualitative analysis component, a survey will be sent to a cross-section of residents to gauge

their level of satisfaction with police services. The survey will be conducted at the onset of the community-policing initiative and then on an annual basis for continual evaluation.

After obtaining comprehensive data from the first year of the Department's ILP program, an improved ability to conduct future evaluations will exist. Methods for such analysis will include the review of the statistical mean for all crime types through the ILP program, in comparison to the statistical mean of the same crime types before the program was implemented. Additionally, the range between the highest and lowest crime numbers will be examined to denote any key variances that may have occurred.¹⁵

As former New Jersey Attorney General, Anne Milgram, indicated on an October 2013 episode of TED Talks, both professional sports teams and successful corporations utilize a data-driven approach because it works.¹⁶ Likewise, law enforcement must consistently produce quality results to be effective, and fortunately Intelligence-Led Policing provides that pathway. The ILP program described herein outlines a comprehensive analytical and data-driven approach for crime reduction within the City of Ithaca. Success will be achieved not only from the specific ILP initiatives, but through the associated evaluative processes which offers a pragmatic and reliable methodology to measure the efficacy and the value of the entire program.

References:

¹ LEPSL 550 Mod 5; What Law Enforcement Leaders Should Know About Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP); Oct. 2019; <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/what-is-intelligence-led-policing/>

² Ibid

³ LEPSL 550 Mod 5; Can we predict when and where a crime will take place; Smith, Mark; BBC News, Oct. 2018; <https://www.bbc.com/news/business/-46017239>

⁴ LEPSL 550 Mod 5; Intelligence Led Policing: Changing the Face of Crime Prevention; LeCates, Rich; Police Chief Magazine; Oct. 2019; <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/changing-the-face-crime-prevention/>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ LEPSL 550 Mod 5; Baton Rouge 'ahead of the curve' in use of software to predict where crimes most likely to occur; Skene, Lea; May 2019; https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/article_1797fdde-7e47-11e9-9af1-b7b45e7afa86.html

⁷ LEPSL 550 Mod 5; Presentation 1 Part 2 Transcript- Intelligence Led Policing: New York City Case Study; Fritsvold Eric, Dr.; University of San Diego; 2019

⁸ LEPSL 550 Mod 5; Presentation 1 Part 1 Transcript- Intelligence Led Policing: New York City Case Study; Fritsvold Eric, Dr.; University of San Diego; 2019

⁹ LEPSL 550 Mod 5; Presentation 5.2. Intelligence Led Policing; Seales, DJ; Motorola Solutions Expert; Aug. 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiEFWLb8PZM>

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Police One; Rise of the Crime Analyst; Wyllie, Doug; August 2013; Policeone.com; <https://www.policeone.com/police-products/software/data-information-sharing-software/articles/rise-of-the-crime-analyst-p0PpE5Kw4Tu7AB0D/>

¹² LEPSL 550 Mod 5; Can we predict when and where a crime will take place; Smith, Mark; BBC News, Oct. 2018; <https://www.bbc.com/news/business/-46017239>

¹³ LEPSL 550 Mod 5; What Law Enforcement Leaders Should Know About Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP); Oct. 2019; <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/what-is-intelligence-led-policing/>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ LEPSL 550; Mod 6 Presentation 1 Transcript – Criminal Justice Statistics: Measures of Variability; Fritsvold, Erik Dr. University of San Diego; 2019

¹⁶ LEPSL 550; Mod 7 Presentation 1 Transcript – Why Smart Statistics are the Key to Fighting Crime; Milgram, Anne; https://www.ted.com/talks/anne_milgram_why_smart_statistics_are_the_key_to_fighting_crime?utm_source=newsletter_daily&utm_campaign=daily&utm_medium=email&utm_content=image__2014-01-28