

ETHICS TRAINING FOR SENIOR LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS: A FAILED UNDERTAKING OR A NEW OPPORTUNITY

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ABSTRACT

Law enforcement officers and their leaders play a critical role in society. Given the expanding range of responsibilities within the law enforcement officers' duties, it is essential that they be men and women of strong ethical competence. How do police professionals in leadership positions serve effectively while maintaining high standards of ethics? Providing ethics training in policing education to senior leaders is critical, as they play an important role in creating the cultural environment in which subordinates perform their duties. In-service ethics training for senior leaders in law enforcement departments throughout the United States is minimal at best, and in some departments, non-existent. In the present study, interviews of law enforcement leaders and directors of training centers throughout the United States provided unique insight into the philosophy of the need for ethics training at the executive level. Law enforcement leaders suggested various methods to make it more available, more palatable, and the need to impress it as an on-going responsibility for police executives. The substantial lack of formalized ethics training, its implications on policing and leadership, as well as potential solutions are addressed in this article.

Keywords: policing in ethics training; in-service training; law enforcement leaders; ethics; police culture