

FY 2023-2024 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Austin Police Department

CBQ NO.: 199

REQUESTED BY: Fuentes

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REQUEST: The Kroll report recommended 2 positions for improved curriculum training, why are there 7 positions proposed? Will these positions be replacing the vacant training positions? Please confirm whether these positions were previously civilian volunteer positions.

RESPONSE:

Over the last few years, Kroll assessments and evaluations have been central to APD Training Academy strategic planning and organizational development. The Kroll Interim Report (2021) recommended:

- Restructuring to decrease reliance on sworn managers and supervisors for administrative functions, specifying the importance of curriculum development, continuity of instruction, and a recognition that sworn instructors are trained officers – not professional teachers – and professionalizing and standardizing the curriculum is crucial for workforce development.
- Implementing an automated Learning Management System (LMS) to manage every aspect of training and certification operations.
- Civilianizing the management of the Field Training Officer (FTO) program and expanding services to tap into specialized expertise, promote community-oriented policing, and ensure accountability and professionalism.

The current level of Academy staffing is not adequate to support the full implementation of Kroll's recommendations. The Kroll reports did not include a burden analysis or staffing projections. The request for seven positions was developed over an extended period and is based on Kroll reports as well as benchmarking exercises with the Baltimore and Los Angeles Police Departments (widely recognized for their organizational structures and strategic approaches to policing and curriculum development) and an internal cost benefit analysis.

The seven (7) new Training Academy positions requested will not replace vacant positions and were not previously filled by volunteers. The positions fall into three categories: curriculum and instruction, e-learning, and field training. In consideration of retention, the new positions have clear career trajectories, which will position the Academy to sustain workforce development efforts. We have included below a description of each position and the value additional civilians would bring to the Academy. Please note, the two positions referenced by the Council office are currently in place and focus on community engagement in relation to curriculum and instruction.

Position Detail

Curriculum Development & Instruction

Four (4) positions are requested to support curriculum development and instruction. These individuals will be experts in the field of education, specifically with regard to how adults learn, absorb, and retain information. Their ability to develop innovative training materials and methodologies that enhance adult learning theory will significantly improve the effectiveness of our cadet and advanced education programs.

The Training Supervisor (1) will manage a team of specialists; supervise the creation of multimedia training materials, including presentations, videos, e-learning modules, and simulations; evaluate the alignment of learning objectives, assessments (including test items, rubrics, etc.), learning activities, and instructional materials; and, monitor and evaluate the performance of trainers, providing feedback and support for continuous improvement. The supervisor will work in partnership with the Training Specialist Sr. (2) and Training Specialist (1) to:

- Assist Academy instructors with designing, developing, and delivery of training programs.
- Create courses of instruction, curricula and lesson plans for cadet training, in-service training, leadership training, response to resistance training, firearms classroom training, and specialized classroom training.
- Instruct courses and give presentations on topics relevant to education and experience.
- Design, write, and/or revise formative and summative assessments that are aligned to approved learning objectives and consistent with evidence-based best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Ensure that assessments are standardized, reflect the application of what is learned, and provide data to inform instruction.
- Conduct gap analysis of curricula and performs quality assurance tasks for various components of a curriculum.
- Provide guidance on methods and practices of teaching to Academy staff and adjunct instructors.
- Prepare reports and presentations on training program effectiveness and outcomes for departmental leadership and external stakeholders.

LMS System

One (1) position, a Training Supervisor, is requested to more efficiently implement the learning management system. Currently, one Training Specialist Sr., is responsible for entire scope of the LMS program, from scheduling, delivering, updating courses, and performance tracking to system maintenance, troubleshooting and the resolution of technical issues. Given the range of duties and risk of errors, oversights and delays, the administration of the system requires supervision and functional support. The position will:

- Oversee the day-to-day operation and administration of the Acadis LMS, ensuring system functionality, data integrity, and user access.
- Supervise civilian training personnel, provide clear direction and expectations, establish and maintain a positive work environment, provide leadership and encourage professional development.

- Create and manage user accounts, courses, and training records in the LMS. Customize the LMS interface and settings to align with the department's branding and specific training needs.
- Collaborate with system vendors and IT personnel to troubleshoot technical issues and ensure smooth system performance.
- Coordinate with subject matter experts and department personnel to develop, update, and upload training content, including courses, modules, assessments, and learning materials.
- Organize and maintain training content within the LMS, ensuring logical structure and easy access for learners.
- Monitor, publish and manage training schedules, registrations, and attendance tracking through the LMS.
- Generate regular reports on training activities, course completion rates, and compliance to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of training programs.
- Provide data-driven insights to the Training Commander for decision-making and to identify areas for improvement.
- Conduct data analysis to identify trends and patterns, and recommend strategies to enhance the overall training experience.
- Provide technical support to LMS users, including instructors, learners, and other system administrators.
- Offer guidance and training to users on system functionality, course navigation, and troubleshooting common issues.

Field Training Officer Program

Currently, the FTO program is managed by sworn personnel assigned to the Defensive Tactics Unit. Two (2) positions, a Program Manager III and a Training Specialist Sr., are requested to allow for the civilianization of management of the FTO program.

The Program Manager III will oversee systemic and routine assessments of instructional material to measure and plan continuous improvements; coordinate with Academy staff and FTO participants; ensure that participants promote innovative techniques that reflect best educational practices; and, supervise the Training Specialist Sr. The manager and the Training Specialist Sr. will work collaboratively to develop and implement evidence-based training methodologies, incorporating the latest advancements in adult learning theory and instructional design. This specialized knowledge will enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of the training experience, leading to better-prepared officers. On an ongoing basis, the positions will implement comprehensive evaluation mechanisms to assess the FTO training program's efficacy. These evaluations will focus on factors such as trainee performance, community impact, and adherence to departmental policies, facilitating data-driven improvements and addressing any shortcomings promptly.