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Why Law Enforcement Agencies Need an Analytical Function



United States
Department of Justice

Analysis is an integral part of every major investigation an agency opens. Often, small pieces of information that may appear insignificant can be a major part of a larger picture. The analytical function organizes these critical pieces of data and creates valuable and meaningful products to assist law enforcement in solving cases and prosecuting criminals. Personnel responsible for producing intelligence are professionals, civilian or sworn, whose training includes law enforcement analytical techniques and criminal analysis. The analytical function benefits law enforcement agencies in the following ways.

1. Helps solve criminal investigations.

The analytical function develops a variety of intelligence products to assist investigators in detecting, preventing, and responding to criminal and terrorism activities. Analytical personnel initiate inquiries, conduct information searches, and act as a central point for information gathered.

2. Increases the ability to prosecute criminals.

Personnel assigned to the analytical function develop summary tables, charts, maps, and other graphics for use in a grand jury or trial. Analysts provide factual and expert testimony and organize evidence for presentation in court.

3. Supports the chief executive and the agency's mission.

By maximizing the analytical function, the chief executive can obtain important information and intelligence to possibly prevent future criminal activities. Personnel can prepare materials to assist in allocating resources; developing budget and resource requests; and preparing departmental reports, investigative briefings, and press releases.

4. Proactively informs law enforcement officers of crime trends and develops threat, vulnerability, and risk assessments.

The analytical function provides support to tactical and strategic operations. Personnel analyze crime reports, identify crime hot spots, develop crime bulletins and summaries, study serial crime data, and forecast future crime. The analytical function develops proactive intelligence products that assess the potential threats of crime groups or criminal activities and recommends methods to intervene in these threats.

5. Trains law enforcement and other intelligence personnel.

Staff develop course modules on intelligence and analytic methods and provide awareness and methodology training to agency members, executives, and managers.

6. Assists in the development of computerized databases to organize information and intelligence.

Personnel within the analytical function help in the development and maintenance of systems that collect, collate, retrieve, and disseminate information. Analytical staff participate in departmental testing and acquisition of investigative, intelligence, and analytical software.

7. Fosters meaningful relationships with other law enforcement personnel.

Analytical staff interact with other law enforcement agencies and build relationships with peers, allowing them to quickly obtain information and efficiently assist in multijurisdictional or complex cases. Through contact with national programs and professional associations, personnel are able to ascertain national issues that may affect local agencies.

8. Ensures compliance with local, state, tribal, and federal laws and regulations.

Analytical personnel provide expertise and knowledge in the development of protocols to ensure compliance with local, state, tribal, and federal laws and rules that govern intelligence sharing, privacy, and civil liberties.

9. Provides support to fusion centers.

Personnel provide support to local, state, or regional fusion centers by performing intelligence services such as crime-pattern, association, telephone-toll, and financial analyses. They create intelligence reports, briefs, threat assessments, and other intelligence products to aid in the prevention and deterrence of crime, including terrorism.



Accurate, timely, and relevant analysis is a critical component in crime prevention and crime-fighting efforts.

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