
CHAPTER 13

CONCLUSION

In 1997, the IPA continued to redefine its role and mission in providing oversight of the civilian complaint process. The infrastructure of this office was solidified this year as it became a permanent city department. The IPA and the PSCU continue to work in a productive and professional manner with ongoing improvements at both offices. The IPA has been instrumental in helping other cities with research, training, and implementing their own programs. Experts in the field have referred to the IPA as one of the most effective police oversight programs in the country because of its ability to impact the Police Department policies.

The major emphasis for 1998 will be community outreach as a joint project by the PSCU and the IPA. In the last four years, the IPA has made numerous community presentations in an effort to inform the public about the civilian complaint process. The IPA has separate and different functions from the PSCU; however, the auditing process requires a high degree of interaction with the PSCU. After the intake of a complaint at the IPA, the complainant will then be referred to the PSCU. The complainant will interact with the PSCU primarily during the investigation of their complaint. An assumption which has been difficult to eliminate is thinking that if a complaint is filed at the IPA, that the IPA will also conduct the investigation. Therefore, complainants need to understand and feel comfortable with the different roles the IPA and the PSCU have in processing their complaint. Building this comfort level and trust requires that the PSCU also reach out and be visible in the community.

In an effort to provide better service to the community and to make the filing of a complaint more accessible, starting in 1998, the IPA and the PSCU will visit different neighborhoods through out the city of San José. The IPA has made a request to all the city council members to provide information of their respective districts where these meetings can be scheduled. Many of the council members have responded and some meetings have already been scheduled. The idea of taking the citizen complaint process to the neighborhoods was received with great enthusiasm by the PSCU.