



The adaptation and implementation of a pilot comprehensive retirement transition program for members of law enforcement

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INTRODUCTION

There is no formal retirement transition program tailored to the needs of law enforcement. NJ law enforcement would benefit from such a program. A formal retirement transition program may improve officer quality of life by:

- **Aiming to** decrease the higher *morbidity and mortality rates* related to a law enforcement career exposing officers to high stress & vicarious trauma, often triggered at life transitions such as retirement
- Increasing the level of preparedness and comfort for this difficult life transition
- Providing a *level of protection & preventive intervention for known risk factors impacting the health and wellness* of law enforcement officers in the retirement phase of life.

The US Military has a transition assistance program for personnel post-deployment returning to civilian life. This program has proven to be effective, and its content is analogous to the needs of our public servants in law enforcement.

It can be modified to meet the needs of other similar groups and forms the basis of the project proposed here

OBJECTIVES

This DNP project modified and implemented a voluntary, comprehensive retirement transition program for law enforcement officers in the state of New Jersey within five years of their projected retirement date.

Aims:

1. To modify an existing comprehensive retirement transition program used in the US military for police officers in Ocean County, New Jersey within 5 years of their projected retirement date.
2. To implement & evaluate this comprehensive retirement transition program for law enforcement officers.
3. To make recommendations for scaling & sustainability of the project throughout the local/ county law enforcement system.

METHODS

- ❑ **Participants:** 36 members of NJ law enforcement within 5 years of retirement recruited via registration form on countywide platform, selected on first come/ first serve basis

Active Project phase occurred over a three-month period.

Implementation: Class 1: Dec 5-9, 2023; Class 2: Jan 9-13, 2023

Held Daily from 0900-1600 for five days

Curriculum

- ❑ Day 1: Psychology of policing and retirement
- ❑ Day 2: Relationships and retirement
- ❑ Day 3: Health considerations in retirement
- ❑ Day 4: Financial considerations in retirement
- ❑ Day 5: Re-employment; re-invention and re-engagement

Pre-surveys administered at the beginning of class (Retirement readiness "RR")

Post-surveys and program evaluations given at the end of class (RR & Program evaluation)

Surveys/ evaluations returned to obtain completion certificate

Evaluation

Descriptive and bivariate statistics used

- ❑ Paired t –testing used to compare changes in Retirement Readiness on pre/ post surveys (9 questions)
- ❑ Program evaluations evaluated descriptively (7 questions)

Scaling and Sustainability

Scaling:

PM to meet w Office of Attorney General to make formal recommendations:

- ❑ Statewide expansion, north, central and south

Sustainability:

Outcomes data presented to LE leadership, rec to continue program:

- ❑ Regular communication with local police chiefs
- ❑ Funding solicitation via professional associations or other county/state agencies

PROJECT TIMELINE	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
Pre-Readiness Survey	Nov 28-30		
Class One		Dec 5-9	
Class Two			Jan 9-13
Post-Readiness Survey/ Program Evaluation			Jan 13-31

RESULTS

36 participants (n=36): Class 1 (n=19) Class 2 (n=17)



PRE- AND POST-READINESS SURVEY ANALYSIS

Survey Item	n	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	t-test
Ret. as milestone	36	3.50	4.89	-8.64***
Financial readiness	34	3.06	4.56	-8.81***
Resource access	36	3.08	4.78	-9.55***
Health screening	36	2.92	4.83	-12.69***
Career options	35	2.94	4.86	-15.25***
Resume	36	2.47	4.31	-9.92***
Relationship impact	36	3.36	4.92	-11.54***
Updated will	35	2.14	2.80	-2.75**
Advanced directive	36	3.36	4.72	-6.81***

*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

Retirement readiness evaluation

- ❑ Post-test means increased for all items

Program Evaluations:

- ❑ Comments: "Best class I've ever taken", "training should be mandated", "has to be in-person"

Conclusion: Participants felt significantly more ready for retirement after taking this program. The program was highly successful, and all indicators suggest this pilot should become a sanctioned statewide training.

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