

National Sheriffs' Institute

Program Description

Program Goal

The goal of the National Sheriffs' Institute (NSI) is to help enhance the ability of first-term sheriffs to be effective leaders.

Program Overview

The National Sheriffs' Institute is the only executive leadership program developed specifically for sheriffs. The NSI was first developed and presented in the early 1970s, with federal funding and through a partnership between the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) and the University of Southern California. Since 1993, it has been housed in the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Jails Division and cosponsored by NIC and NSA. Over the years, the program has changed significantly in response to the needs of first-term sheriffs.

All the leadership concepts are taught within the framework of the sheriff's experience, and what participants learn at the NSI should be directly applicable to challenges they face as first-term sheriffs. The program begins (Module 2) with a focus on the sheriff as leader, with the intent of demonstrating:

1. The range and complexity of the sheriff's role as a leader, and
2. Given this range and complexity, that it is critical that the sheriff be an effective leader.

This module continues with a definition of "effective leader" and strategies for developing a "followership" (the five practices of exemplary leadership). Both introduce the concept of vision (briefly defined as the sheriff's leadership direction). Module 3, then, further develops the concept of defining one's leadership direction as central to effective leadership. Concepts presented in all remaining modules are taught in the context of their relationship to effective leadership and the sheriff's ability to achieve his/her leadership direction.

At the end of each module, excluding "Welcome and Introductions," participants complete a self-assessment based on concepts presented during the module. The self-assessments form the basis for their end-of-program leadership development plan, which they present to a small group of their peers and a faculty member.

Target Audience

Up to 30 first-term sheriffs attend the NSI. They may attend almost any time during the first term, and some attend shortly before taking office. The audience is potentially widely diverse in terms of size of office, size of jurisdiction, character of jurisdiction, level of experience in law enforcement, level of experience in a sheriff's office, education, and general work background.

Experience with the NSI and the results of a 2003 needs assessment of first-term sheriffs show that most NSI participants:

- Are elected officials (very few sheriffs are appointed);
- Are from smaller communities;
- Have had some college experience;
- Have a broad range of exposure to management or leadership—from little or none to some with advanced degrees in management;
- Do not fully understand the range and complexity of the leadership responsibilities of the Office of Sheriff.

Program Agenda

[A program agenda is included in the instructor's manual.]

The program begins on Monday morning and ends the following Friday afternoon with graduation. Each day is a full classroom day. Each session begins at 7:50 am with announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance; session content begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes by 5 p.m. There is also one mandatory evening session for the participants on the NSA and the Office of Sheriff. Participants are required to attend all classroom and evening sessions listed on the agenda and participate in graduation. Faculty are required to attend all classroom sessions and graduation.

Instructional Design

Instructional design is based on the Instructional Theory into Practice (ITIP) model. There is very little straight lecture in the NSI, and faculty are expected to be excellent facilitators to guide and draw out discussion in the group. With the exception of the first and last modules, each module has the following components:

- **Anticipatory Set**

This contains introductory material to help participants understand why the topic is important to them and, for the NSI, to their success as leaders. During the anticipatory set, the instructor also reviews the performance objectives, stating them as what the participants will do during the module (not as what the instructors will cover). The anticipatory set develops participant readiness to learn.

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- **Instructional Input**
This includes content or information. It presents the concepts or skills to be learned. As a general rule, there should be no more than 30-40 minutes of instructional input without an activity that requires participants to apply concepts taught.
- **Guided Practice**
This is an activity that requires participants to apply concepts or skills taught, with guidance from the instructor. The guided practice results in a product that demonstrates learning.
- **Independent Practice**
This is an activity that requires participants to individually apply concepts or skills taught, with minimal guidance from the instructor.
- **Self-Assessment**
Participants complete a self-assessment worksheet based on concepts presented in class. The self-assessments together form their leadership development plan, which becomes a valuable tool and reference for participants when they return home.
- **Closure and Evaluation**
This concludes the module. The instructor may briefly summarize concepts taught. The instructor also asks participants for any final questions. Module evaluation forms are then handed out by NIC staff, completed by participants, and collected by NIC staff. The lead faculty member for that module reviews and summarizes the results of each module's evaluations, checking for consistency with performance objectives.

Program Materials

NIC provides instructors with all program materials, including a manual of lesson plans, a copy of the participant manual, a copy of the participant Leadership Development Plan (LDP) booklet, PowerPoints, and DVDs. NIC also provides the computer, projector, and technical support necessary throughout the class. NIC also provides all participant materials, including a manual and a separate Leadership Development Plan booklet. The manual follows the lesson plans and includes all exercises. NSA staff provide participant lists and demographic information. In addition, NSA staff conduct the pre-program contacting of sheriffs, administer any necessary pre-program assessments, and summarize that information for instructor use in class. NIC and NSA staff work together to make food/lodging/transportation arrangements for class participants, and during class, for faculty.

Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty must familiarize themselves with all lesson plans, the participant manual, and the LDP so they have a strong sense of the overall program and the relationships among the modules. In addition, faculty members are hired for their professionalism. They are expected to elevate the level of discussion, to avoid use of foul language, to keep the group focused, and to create an atmosphere that draws out excellence in the participants. The role of faculty member is not as “friend” or “buddy” but as guide. In addition, faculty who are outside consultants are not to use the NSI as a vehicle for actively recruiting business.

Faculty are required to follow the lesson plans provided. Lesson plans are written in script form. Although faculty are not required to read this verbatim, they are required to cover all the material, in the order presented, and in the time allotted (each lesson plan component is given a timeframe). NIC does welcome and strongly encourages the instructors’ comments about program content and delivery. We will seriously consider all instructors’ comments as we refine the program before the next offering. [If faculty who are not teaching a particular module have something to add during a module, they must first defer to the instructor who is up front as well as keep any comments they add to a minimum so as to keep the class on schedule.]

All faculty are required to be present during all modules, participate in class discussions, and help facilitate small group exercises. The coaching component of the NSI is significant, and all faculty must be well-versed in executive coaching as well as facilitating.

Key moments for faculty are around the Case for Change homework and follow-up. There is often confusion about this continuing exercise, so faculty need to be well-grounded in an understanding of and purpose for the assignment. In addition, participants have a difficult time shifting from the specifics of their Case for Change in Module 9 to focusing on themselves and their personal development in Module 10. Faculty need to guide participants to help them make this shift.

In rare cases, there is a class member who is disrespectful, disruptive, or inconsistent in their attendance. These issues are referred to the NIC staff, NSA staff, and mentoring sheriff to deal with.

The Role of the Mentoring Sheriff

Each NSI has a mentoring sheriff. The mentoring sheriff brings both expertise and experience to the program. Through his/her own leadership presence and demeanor, the mentoring sheriff provides motivation and reinforcement for implementing leadership concepts and upholding the dignity of the Office of Sheriff. His/her presence is essential to

1) reinforcing the value of effective leadership practices and

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2) helping participants translate leadership concepts into practical application.

As with the faculty, the mentoring sheriff is expected to elevate the level of discussion, to avoid use of foul language, to help keep the group focused, and to create an atmosphere that draws out excellence in the participants.

Specifically, the mentoring sheriff:

- Is familiar with all components of the NSI curriculum;
- Is present for all program modules;
- Observes all small group activities and assists, as needed;
- Is available to all participants during breaks and meals for individual questions and discussions;
- Helps organize and facilitate the mandatory evening session;
- Assumes full responsibility for organizing participant discussion groups at mealtimes and after class;
- Helps faculty keep the leadership development focus in class by ensuring that there is time for management and specific operational issues to be discussed outside of class;
- In rare cases, there is a class member who is disrespectful, disruptive, or inconsistent in their attendance. The mentoring sheriff takes on the role, with NIC/NSA staff of helping the class member get back on track and behave differently, or of asking that person to leave the program.
- Helps the NSA staff organize the graduation;
- Is available to consult with individual participants as they create their end-of-program leadership development plans;
- Attends the graduation and may make a presentation, if asked;
- Provides feedback to NIC staff on program content and delivery.

Module Content

[Timing: Modules 1 and 2 are combined into one morning session; all other modules, with the exception of Module 9, take up either a morning or an afternoon; Module 9 spans an entire day: an afternoon and a morning session.]

MODULE 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
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This module provides an overview of the program, agenda, and materials and includes both program staff and participant introductions.

MODULE 2: THE SHERIFF AS LEADER

This module focuses on the significance and range of the sheriff's leadership responsibilities and, therefore, the importance of becoming an effective leader. Participants are given Jim Collins' definition of "effective leader" as one who "catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision, stimulating higher performance standards." The module also presents Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership as strategies to encourage support for the leader and his vision.

Before coming to the NSI, participants complete the Leadership Practices Inventory. Program staff score the inventories and determine scoring norms for the class. During the module, participants review their scores and compare them to scoring norms. At the end of the module, participants complete a self-assessment related to effective leadership and the five practice of exemplary leadership.

Note that "vision" is mentioned in Collins' definition of "effective leader" and in the five practices of exemplary leadership. During this module, we do not define "vision" or discuss it in depth, since we do that in the next module. However, we do briefly note that vision is essentially where the sheriff wants to lead the office or the leadership direction.

There are references to Collins' definition of an effective leader and the five practices of exemplary leadership throughout the program. This module and the one following it provide the foundation for the program.

MODULE 3: DEFINING YOUR LEADERSHIP DIRECTION

This module focuses on the need for the sheriff to define his/her leadership direction. It builds on the pre-program assignment that asks participants to describe what they want their office to be by the end of their term (the "desired state"), the current strengths that support this, and the challenges that must be overcome to achieve the desired state. Essentially, the assignment asks them to begin to think about the *difference they want to make*.

It is important to note that, in the NSI, we focus on the phrase "leadership direction" instead of on "vision." We do this because there are a variety of definitions and interpretations of the term "vision," and it is not our purpose to debate its meaning or how it may be used by various leadership experts. We define "leadership direction" in this module and tell participants that, *for the purposes of this program*, we consider it synonymous with "vision."

Participants discuss the importance of setting their leadership direction and of creating a statement of leadership direction that: Is clear and easy to understand; Provides the focus for the organization's efforts; Provides the impetus for significant achievement; Is attainable within a given period of time, such as the sheriff's term of office; Can be supported by a plan for its achievement; Is compelling and inspiring.

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During the module, participants review a sample leadership-direction statement, meet in small groups to discuss their completed pre-program assignments, and draft a statement of their leadership direction. Participants receive information on “next steps” in defining leadership direction and developing a final leadership-direction statement. At the end of the module, participants complete a self-assessment based on concepts presented in class and develop a plan for improvement.

All other program topics are taught in the context of their relationship to the sheriff as an effective leader and the ability of the sheriff to achieve his leadership direction. This module and the one that precedes it provide the foundation for the program.

NOTE: The last 15 minutes of this module are set aside to explain a homework assignment. Participants are asked to complete a case for change related to their draft leadership direction. This will be the basis for their work in Module 9: Leading Change.

There is often confusion about this homework assignment, so faculty members need to be well-versed in the expectations to be able to guide participants effectively.

MODULE 4: SELF-AWARENESS

This module introduces the idea that, to be effective, a leader must understand his personality preferences and the effect of those preferences on his ability to lead. Participants complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI®) before coming to class and are given their results during class. The instrument is discussed generally and several exercises help participants understand different personality dimensions and the applicability of this understanding to solving a leadership challenge. Finally, participants complete a self-assessment worksheet to develop strategies to enhance their leadership capabilities by using their strengths and compensating for their weaknesses, as identified by the MBTI®.

MODULE 5: DEVELOPING YOUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

This module briefly acknowledges the dual role of members of the sheriff’s executive team: 1) to provide expertise and leadership in a specific functional area and 2) to work as a team to develop, implement, and support the agency’s leadership direction. The module focuses on the second role and covers factors in determining if the sheriff has the right team members and elements of effective work teams. At the end of the module, participants assess their executive teams against concepts presented in class and develop a plan for improvement.

MODULE 6: POWER, INFLUENCE, AND CONFLICT

This module explores power, influence, and conflict and their relation to the Office of Sheriff, effective leadership, and the achievement of the sheriff's leadership direction. Participants complete the *Power Base Inventory*® to assess their own preferred style of influencing others, then focus on the six power bases and how each might be used effectively: Authority, Reward, Discipline, Information, Expertise, Goodwill.

Prior to the NSI, participants will have also completed the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument. They will receive their scores and reports during this module. Participants will also explore ways to effectively use five different "modes" for addressing conflict: Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, Accommodating, and create a plan for optimizing use of power bases and conflict modes.

At the end of the module, participants complete a self-assessment based on concepts presented in class and develop a plan for improvement. They also assess the strengths and weaknesses of executive team members related to use of power and develop a plan for improvement.

MODULE 7: ETHICS

This module focuses on ethics, including the effect of unethical behavior on the sheriff's ability to lead, an overview of ethics, and ethical challenges commonly faced by sheriffs due to the political nature of the Office of Sheriff and the power and authority the sheriff holds. At the end of the module, participants complete a self-assessment based on concepts presented during class and develop a plan for improvement.

MODULE 8: THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF

This module stresses the importance of understanding the external environment to the sheriff's ability to achieve his vision. Participants explore six external conditions that influence organizations and complete an exercise that allows them to preliminarily assess their knowledge of their external environment. The module then shifts the focus to public partnerships and covers stakeholder mapping, identification of critical stakeholders, steps in establishing partnerships with critical stakeholders, the partnership between the sheriff's office and the funding authority, and the partnership between the sheriff's office and the media. Also, one or media representatives conduct a discussion on strategies for improving the relationship between sheriffs and the media. At the end of the module, participants complete a self-assessment based on concepts presented in class and develop a plan for improvement.

MODULE 9: LEADING CHANGE

[This module spans two sessions—Thursday afternoon and Friday morning.] This module focuses on the three phases and two level of leading change and gives participants some specific strategies and tools for leading change within the sheriff's office. The three phases are: Preparing for Change, Implementing Change, and Sustaining Change. The two levels are: leading the change as a project and leading people through change. Participants discuss their case for change and a related change initiative (both completed before this module begins). All exercises in the module build on the change initiative each sheriff has identified. Participants also complete an instrument on leading change—Leading Change At Every Level. Finally, participants complete a self-assessment based on concepts presented in class and develop a plan for improvement.

MODULE 10: LEADERSHIP PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In this module, each participant creates his/her own personal leadership-development plan, based on the self assessments completed during the program. Participants discuss their leadership development plan with a small group, including an instructor and several of their peers.

Faculty play a key role here: participants will have to make the shift to focus on their own PERSONAL development in this module—which is always difficult for them to do. Their personal plan needs to be about what they will do personally to become a more effective leader—what skills do they need to work on? What did they learn from their “challenges” in each module and how can they become more effective in those areas?

GRADUATION

All sheriffs who participate in and complete the NSI will graduate from the course on Friday afternoon, and receive a diploma. NIC staff, NSA staff, and Faculty each are given an opportunity to make a brief final comment of encouragement/challenge to the class.