



# Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police

## Partner to Provide Mentoring Resources for New Chiefs

*By Paul Maharry and Tony McClung*

The mission of a state association of chiefs of police is to serve its members by promoting law enforcement executive professional development through innovative services, training, and camaraderie. It is the intention of each state association that the services it provides will afford all its members an increased level of police professionalism and a support network to achieve their goals.

Many state associations have found it beneficial to support their members and further fulfill their mission by creating collaborative partnerships. One partnership several state associations have established is with the IACP New Police Chief Mentoring Project (hereafter referred to as the IACP Mentoring Project).<sup>1</sup> This partnership has provided the participating state associations with the opportunity to provide practical professional development to new chiefs through a formalized mentoring program.

Partnering with an international association that has a program with specific resources available throughout the United States is an invaluable opportunity for any state association. To detail further how this type of collaboration works and how it benefits state associations, the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police along with the associations in Florida and Illinois partnered with the IACP Mentoring Project. Each of these state associations has made a conscious decision to provide resources to its members, though ultimately all three seek outcomes that are specific to their individual members' needs. To this point, each has reached a different phase of the partnership.

### Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police

The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) has been a longtime partner of the IACP Mentoring Project, as it recognized early on that new-police chief mentoring was of value to its members and wanted to provide this resource to them.<sup>2</sup>

Chief Dwayne Orrick of Cordele, a member of the GACP's Executive Board, had been serving as a mentor in the IACP Mentoring Project at the national level. Recognizing the potential of this program, Chief Orrick advocated bringing a formalized program to Georgia. The GACP formed a mentoring committee to explore how best to implement and organize a statewide mentoring program.

It quickly became clear to the mentoring committee that it would benefit the association to partner with another association, one with an existing model and resources that it could adapt to its own use. GACP worked with the IACP Mentoring Project to determine how the model would work, relying on the mentoring committee to make decisions about how it wanted the program to function. This partnership established the validity and credibility of the program and indicated to the participating chiefs its effectiveness.

The GACP mentoring committee was able to use the national mentoring model as a template, but it also made important distinctions to fit the state's own needs. For instance, the national model requires that a chief have a

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<sup>1</sup> International Association of Chiefs of Police, Smaller Police Department Technical Assistance Program/New Police Chief Mentoring Project, *Police Chiefs Desk Reference: A Guide for Newly Appointed Police Leaders*, November 2004, <http://www.theiacp.org/Research/PCDR.pdf>. The second edition of the *PCDR* is scheduled for publication in 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Information about GACP's program can be found at <http://www.theiacp.org/research/mentoring/GAPCDR.pdf> or [http://www.gachiefs.com/GACPPPrograms\\_IACPMentoringProject.htm](http://www.gachiefs.com/GACPPPrograms_IACPMentoringProject.htm)

minimum of five years' experience to qualify as a mentor; the GACP modified this requirement to allow shorter-tenured chiefs to be mentors as well. Georgia has an annual turnover rate of approximately 10 percent for police chiefs; therefore, it was vital that the program be opened up to all qualified chiefs, so that there would be enough available mentors to sustain the program.

To help ensure that the less experienced mentors were qualified and prepared for their responsibilities as mentors, the IACP Mentoring Project coordinated with the GACP to provide training and orientation to the first group of eligible mentors as their program began. Eventually, the GACP decided that it would uphold the standard of qualifying all of its mentors, and the IACP Mentoring Project worked with the association to facilitate a "train the trainer" session.

With the support of the IACP Mentoring Project, the GACP mentoring committee developed an effective marketing plan to spread the word about this new resource to recruit potential mentors and new chiefs, including sending a personalized invitation to new chiefs when they joined the GACP and giving presentations at its Chief Executive Training Program.

Although the IACP Mentoring Project helped facilitate the administration of the Georgia mentoring program during the initial planning and piloting, management of the program was ultimately handed over to the GACP itself. The resources available to the GACP allowed its training director to assume oversight of the mentoring program.

Like many of the state associations that later partnered with the IACP Mentoring Project, GACP jumpstarted its progress toward establishing its own mentoring program by completing the Georgia resource chapter for the *PCDR*. This written resource continues to be available online to all members of law enforcement in the State of Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

The GACP has been a leader in establishing a mentoring program that meets its needs and over which it has claimed ownership. It receives ongoing support from the IACP Mentoring Project, which the GACP views as essential to continuing its program and serving as a bridge between other associations.

## **Final Thoughts**

As demonstrated by the experiences of Illinois, Florida and Georgia, this type of collaboration is an opportunity for state chiefs associations to fulfill their missions further by avidly participating in the process of training and preparing new chiefs. This also provides a higher standard for entry of new chiefs to the ranks of their respective organizations, while utilizing and reinvigorating the skills of more seasoned chiefs.

Any resource that enhances the ability of new chiefs to perform their job effectively is beneficial to the members of state associations. By using the tried and true resource of the IACP Mentoring Project in conjunction with the local state association, the resources made available to new chiefs are greatly enhanced. New chiefs can assume their position already well prepared and can be assured that they will make fewer missteps, as they can use practical guidance to enhance theoretical training.

It is important for associations to establish a mentoring committee when they are beginning to consider providing a mentoring program and to discuss with the IACP Mentoring Project the challenges in their state. The support of and resources available through the IACP Mentoring Project are invaluable if a state association is seriously committed to establishing this type of program. It can be extremely challenging to start a program from scratch, and each state association can modify the program to meet its own needs and available resources.

Partnerships, such as those with the IACP Mentoring Project, add value and structure to new and existing state-specific mentoring programs. This kind of collaboration can offer the advantages of providing GACP with a

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<sup>3</sup> Information regarding the Police Chiefs Desk Reference (PCDR) manual can be found at: [http://www.gachiefs.com/GACPPPrograms\\_IACPMentoringProject.htm](http://www.gachiefs.com/GACPPPrograms_IACPMentoringProject.htm)

national perspective and expanded resources as well as a road map to follow in providing the valuable service of mentoring to new chiefs, without losing the Georgia specific identity of the mentoring process.