

SPECIAL EDITION

50
YEARS 1966-2016
NCTCOG

Regional Police Academy

Founded in 1968, the Regional Police Academy (RPA) was born out of a need for member local governments to train law enforcement personnel. Having a regional academy was deemed more efficient and promoted consistent instruction across the region.

Licensed as an academy by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Education, dedication ceremonies were held on March 20, 1968, and the first class of police recruits began their 10-weeks training on March 25, 1968, in a small office on 107th Street in Arlington, at what was believed to be the first

regional academy in the country. The academy had space for three small classrooms and offices, but not much else. Today, located at Centerpoint One on Six Flags Drive in Arlington, the RPA contains well-equipped and spacious classrooms with locker facilities, a physical training room, four classrooms and one large utility room. There is also plenty of outdoor space for recruit physical training and practical exercises.

Bill Pitstick, NCTCOG's first executive director, hired James S. Kline, former coordinator of police training at the University of Kansas, to serve as the first manager of the academy. Today, Richard Zavala, manages the RPA.



First Regional Police Academy location



First Regional Police Academy Director, James Kline (right)

In both the early years and today, the academy offers two types of courses:

Basic Course in Applied Police Science, required for all aspiring police officers before becoming a licensed peace officer; and **Advanced Courses** for existing officers, to satisfy the state's requirement that each licensed peace officer take 40 hours of continuing training every two years.

Graduation ceremonies for the first Basic Course were held on May 29, 1968. More than 300 officers attended the two basic and 11 advanced courses held that first year. In 1972, the academy began offering four basic programs and 32 advanced courses. By then, 502 new officers had graduated, and 2,301 tenured officers had attended advanced programs.

Today, the academy holds at least five basic courses annually, lasting 22 weeks with an average enrollment of 30 recruits. In addition, more than 100 advanced law enforcement courses are offered each year, with more than 1,500 tenured officers attending those sessions.

Since the beginning of the academy, more than 96,573 officers and students have attended advanced training programs at the RPA, and over 8,939 new officers have completed the basic program. The academy graduated its 233rd session on December 11, 2015.

Previous graduates of the academy, who have become Chiefs of Police, include Larry Zacharias, the University of Texas at Dallas (1977); Kim Lemaux, The University of Texas at Arlington (1983); and Wade Goolsby, Waxahachie (1982). In addition, NCTCOG Police Academy Supervisor, Patricia Hollingsworth (1974) and NCTCOG Police Training Coordinator,



First RPA
graduating class,
March 20, 1968

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Editor

Ken Clarida (1974) are RPA graduates. Hollingsworth was appointed in 2007, by then-Governor Rick Perry, to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement. The Commission sets the standards that all licensed police officers in Texas must meet. In 2014, she was elected by the other appointed members of the commission to serve as the Assistant Presiding Officer for the commission.

Moving into the next 50 years, the NCTCOG-Regional Police Academy must draw from the Presidents' Task Force Report on 21st Century Policing "to help build police forces in the region to deal with the complexities of the 21st Century". Some of the emerging issues that will need to be addressed are international terrorism, evolving technologies, rising immigration, ever changing laws, and a growing mental health crisis. The Regional Police Academy stands ready to provide the necessary training courses that will work towards accomplishing the President's goals.

Criminal Justice Program

In 1968, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Justice invited NCTCOG to undertake a pilot program design for comprehensive law enforcement planning, resulting in the Criminal Justice Program being one of NCTCOG's first regional planning functions. Soon after the program's inception, Fred Keithley was hired as the Director of Criminal Justice, enjoying over 40 years at NCTCOG and retiring as Director of Community Services.

The program's primary function remains today: to identify needs and establish a framework for comprehensive justice-related planning in North Central Texas. In the beginning, HUD funding supplemented the program. However, in 1968 the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, now called the Criminal Justice Division (CJD), within the Texas Governor's Office became the primary funder via an agreement with NCTCOG to facilitate the distribution of law enforcement-related funding by identifying regional justice-related priorities, providing technical assistance and prioritizing grant applications for the Office of the Governor.

Initially, the program facilitated grant funds primarily for local law enforcement entities. Although there have been several grant-funding sources that have come and gone since the inception of the program, four core funding categories remain today:

In the 1970s, the federal **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP)** was created, broadening the scope of the program to include regional youth-related delinquency prevention initiatives.

The establishment of the federal **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)** in the 1980s brought another dimension to the program – overseeing the grant process for entities providing services for victims of domestic violence, child, abuse, sexual assault and other violent crimes.



1974 - Ken Clarida





The federal **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)** was passed in the mid-1990s, and the CJD assigned facilitation of this grant program to the COG. These funds are set aside for justice system projects providing direct services to victims as well as education and training to professionals serving these victims.

Last, the **421 State Planning Fund** is a biennial appropriation by the Texas Legislature that funds a variety of justice-related projects.

In the 1990s, at the direction of the CJD, the program began a formalized strategic planning initiative. Communities in the region were assisted with identifying justice-related needs so gaps in services, existing programs, new initiatives, and funding opportunities could be identified, addressed and resources increased.

Serving at the pleasure of the Executive Board, the first Criminal Justice Policy Development Committee was created in 1969, with NCTCOG's first President, Arlington Mayor Tom Vandergriff, serving as committee chair. Now at 50 members strong, the committee remains dedicated to developing policies and procedures contributing to Criminal Justice funds disbursement within the region in a manner that is both equitable and responsive to the region's needs.

Over the decades, the program has seen significant growth in both the number of grant applications reviewed and prioritized and in dollars allocated to our region. It's not uncommon for the program's advisory committee to score and rank over 150 applications annually. For the most recent fiscal year, total funds allocated to the region by the Criminal Justice Division surpassed \$14 million.



1974 - Patt Hollingsworth