

Project Name: Policing the Teen Brain in Contra Costa County

Funding Amount Requested: Scalable from \$590,000 to \$1,180,000

Total Cost of Project: Scalable from \$590,000 to \$1,180,000

Department	PTB Program	Program Cost	OT/Backfill Costs
Probation	Train the trainer, 4-days	\$75,000	\$75,000
Sheriff's Office	Train the trainer, 4-days	\$75,000	\$75,000
(22) County-wide agencies with law enforcement duties ¹	Standard, 2-days	\$20,000/Dept.	\$20,000/Dept.
TOTAL COST:		\$590,000	\$590,000

This project is scalable from \$590,000 to \$1,180,000. Policing the Teen Brain™ program fees total \$590,000. The remaining \$590,000 is estimated backfill overtime costs for agencies to participate in the training. Fully or partially funding the overtime costs will allow agencies the economic flexibility to send a full cadre of students to the training.

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Description of Project:

This project seeks funding to deliver Policing the Teen Brain™ (PTB) training sessions among all departments and offices with law enforcement duties in the County. PTB is a training program conducted by Strategies for Youth (SFY), a Cambridge, MA based organization. The program, based on research in adolescent development and psychology, was designed to supplement standard law enforcement training and increase officers' understanding of young people. Training sessions highlight the differences between youth and adult cognitions, including that youth cognitions are more likely to be "hot" and that they have the tendency to assert their autonomy. Role-play exercises with youth from local communities allow young people to share their perceptions of officers' responses and reinforce the differences between youth and adult perceptions and behaviors to social and

¹ Please see Appendix A for a list of all county-wide departments and offices with law enforcement duties.

contextual cues. PTB participants are taught skills and techniques to respond to young people in a manner that recognizes but redirects behavior that is typical of a young person as well as strategies to de-escalate emotionally heated or aggressive encounters to minimize violence and ultimately, reduce arrests. In addition, participants are taught to identify compromised youth behavior that might indicate mental health problems, substance use, trauma, or some combination. Lastly, portions of the training focus on factors that commonly affect youth and their behavior, such as neighborhood demographics and cultural messaging. This important aspect of the training program speaks to the potential for mitigating any racial disparities in the arrests of young people.

SFY offers a standard 2-day program that includes an assessment to customize the training to meet the needs of the local community as well as a policy review with an eye toward how the language of each policy reflects a trauma-informed, youth development approach. This two day program has been estimated to cost \$20,000 per community agency for the training of 35-40 participants. The additional \$20,000 per community agency is estimated to cover overtime and backfill costs.

SFY also offers a 4-day train the trainer program conducted by a SFY psychologist and patrol officer where local officers learn how to train their peers. This training includes identification and training of local psychologists and community-based youth-serving organizations to provide future trainings and to serve as a resource to the agency as well as coaching to assist in the implementation of 2-day trainings. This 4-day train the trainer program is estimated to cost \$75,000 per community agency for the training of up to 25 participants. The additional \$75,000 per community agency is estimated to cover overtime and backfill costs.

Given the size of the Probation Department and the Sheriff's Office, the train the trainer program was deemed to be the most efficient for long term sustainability.

Project Justification:

Despite consistent neurobiological evidence that the adolescent and young adult brain differs from the adult brain, law enforcement officers rarely receive adequate training in effective communication and interaction strategies with youth. Given that young people are often fearful and defensive when confronted by law enforcement, equipping officers with practical and applicable strategies and skills that promote positive interactions, increase trust, and reduce conflict between officers and young people in the community as well as reduce arrests is a salient goal.

Further, this particular program, PTB, has been found to be highly effective in a broad range of settings (please see Appendix B & C). PTB training in neuro-developmentally sensitive

techniques has been shown to markedly decrease youth arrests and improve police-youth interactions in diverse communities. In light of the growing diversity of Contra Costa County as well as concerns surrounding racial disparities in the juvenile justice system, this program provides an opportunity to build trust with a broad range of young people and relationships that might divert a young person from arrest. Most importantly, the prevention of youth arrest has important lasting implications for the youth, the youth's family and community as it prevents formal youth involvement in the justice system. This is a particularly meaningful goal as youth arrest is associated with future criminal behavior.

In addition, while there are a broad range of justice related programs that serve young people in the community, few aim to prevent arrest. The PTB program is targeted at the stage of primary prevention, where the greatest opportunities to redirect behaviors exist, compared to the secondary stage of prevention that would follow arrest. Thus, the primary prevention aspect of the PTB program holds a significant opportunity to not only touch many more young lives in the community but to have a positive and meaningful impact on those young lives. Further, by incorporating local non-governmental organizations serving youth, local psychologists and youth from the County, this collaborative approach will encourage community ownership of a county-wide training program.

And, finally, given that studies show that maturity level doesn't peak until the early-mid 20s, this program will benefit not only juveniles but young adults in the community.

Justification for why the Project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds and is a public benefit:

Most police academies devote less than 1% of training to interactions with young people (approximately 3 hours). Further, to date, the Commission on Peace Officer Standards & Training (POST) does not offer any supplemental training on the neuroscience of young people and the developmental differences between young people and adults. Given that the arrest and incarceration of juveniles fails to decrease recidivism, utilizing taxpayer funds to finance an evidence-based program that supports public safety and improves community relations with law enforcement is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars that will benefit all communities in the County.

If you are a public entity, is the project on your Capital Improvement Program? (Please provide documentation or explain why not).

No. This project is not a capital improvement project.

Explanation of how the federal funds will be spent (for example, on equipment, construction, labor, etc.):

The funds for this program will be spent directly on the trainings offered by PTB for all county-wide law enforcement agencies willing to participate. The training costs include SFY's fees as well as the backfill overtime costs for agencies to sustain operational staffing levels while officers attend the training courses. Not all officer positions require backfill and these rates are projected estimates.

Cities in which the project is located and will be performed:

Please see Appendix A, attached, for the list of county-wide police departments and other agencies with law enforcement duties that have been invited to participate in this training.

Upload letter of support or resolution of support from local elected leaders of your government entity (or entities) in your region:

(Forthcoming with final package.)

Upload other helpful documents (e.g., press articles about the project, documentation that the project is listed on community development plans or regional plans, etc.)

Appendix A: Contra Costa County Departments and Offices with Law Enforcement Duties

Appendix B: Bostic, J.Q., Thureau, L, Potter, M., Drury, S.S. (2014) *Policing the Teen Brain*. Journal American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 53(2):127-129.

Appendix C: Aalsma, M.C., Schwartz, K., Tu, W. (2018) *Improving police officer and justice personnel attitudes and de-escalation skills: A pilot study of Policing the Teen Brain*, Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 57:7, 415-430.