

City of Takoma Park Police Department Joins National *ABLE Project*

[November 30, 2020] – The City of Takoma Park Police Department has been accepted into the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) Project, Georgetown University Law Center’s national training and support initiative for U.S. law enforcement agencies committed to building a culture of peer intervention that prevents harm.

By demonstrating agency commitment to transformational reform with support from local community groups and elected leaders, the City of Takoma Park Police Department joins a select group of more than 60 other law enforcement agencies and statewide and regional training academies chosen to participate in the ABLE Project’s national rollout. To date, hundreds of agencies across the country have expressed interest in participating.

Backed by prominent civil rights and law enforcement leaders, the evidence-based, field-tested ABLE Project was developed by Georgetown Law’s Innovative Policing Program in collaboration with global law firm Sheppard Mullin LLP to provide practical active bystandership strategies and tactics to law enforcement officers to prevent misconduct, reduce officer mistakes, and promote health and wellness.

ABLE gives officers the tools they need to overcome the innate and powerful inhibitors all individuals face when called upon to intervene in actions taken by their peers.

We are very excited to have our staff participate in the ABLE training,” said Chief Antonio DeVaul. “We always seek out training that will increase trust and transparency within our community.”

“As we work to reimagine public safety and seek to rectify injustices in our institutions, we must also ensure individuals have the ability and skills to take action against bias and violence,” said Takoma Park’s Mayor Kate Stewart. “Our participation in the ABLE Project is an important step to ensure accountability and continue the culture change in our police department needed to serve every member of our community.”

Those backing the City of Takoma Park Police Department's application to join the program included the NAACP Montgomery Chapter and the Washington Adventist Church.

Professor Christy Lopez, co-director of Georgetown Law's Innovative Policing Program, which runs ABLE, explained: "The ABLE Project seeks to ensure every police officer in the United States has the opportunity to receive meaningful, effective active bystandership training, and to help agencies transform their approach to policing by building a culture that supports and sustains successful peer intervention to prevent harm."

Chair of the ABLE Project Board of Advisors, Sheppard Mullin partner Jonathan Aronie, added: "Intervening in another's action is harder than it looks after the fact, but it's a skill we all can learn. And, frankly, it's a skill we all need – police and non-police. ABLE teaches that skill."

The ABLE Project is guided by a Board of Advisors comprised of civil rights, social justice, and law enforcement leaders, including Vanita Gupta, the president of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; Commissioner Michael Harrison of the Baltimore Police Department; Commissioner Danielle Outlaw of the Philadelphia Police Department; Dr. Ervin Staub, professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the founder of the Psychology of Peace and Justice Program; and an impressive collection of other police leaders, rank and file officers, and social justice leaders.

- See the complete list of the **ABLE Project Board of Advisors**.
- For more information about the ABLE Project, visit the program's **website**.
- See a list of the **ABLE Standards** to which every participating agency must adhere.
- **These articles** share more information about active bystandership generally, and the ABLE Project in particular.

The ABLE Project Train-The-Trainer event begins later this month. By the end of December, the City of Takoma Park Police Department instructors will be certified as ABLE trainers; and over the coming months, all of the Department's officers will receive 8 hours of evidence-based active bystandership education designed not only to prevent harm, but to change the culture of policing. Look for our progress in this critical area that will be on the web page soon.

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For more information regarding the City of Takoma Park Police Department, contact Catherine Plevy, Public Information Officer.

For more information on the ABLE Project, contact Liza, ABLE Program Manager, at lba17@georgetown.edu.