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Quality and Productivity Commission
27th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
“Saluting County Excellence”

2013 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: SCHOOL THREAT ASSESMENT RESPONSE TEAM

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: OCTOBER 2009
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2012)

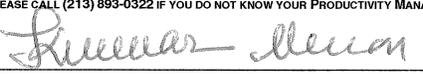
PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner

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Premeditated school shootings have occurred throughout the nation. The tragedies have resulted in serious injuries and loss of life with associated acute and long-term emotional harm to survivors, educational institutions, and communities. In response to these events, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health’s Emergency Outreach Bureau established the School Threat Assessment Response Team (START) in 2009, dedicated exclusively to the prevention of campus violence. It was the first program in the country to establish a law enforcement-education-mental health collaborative dedicated to the prevention of targeted school violence. Results include: a) enhanced situational awareness among law enforcement, schools, mental health providers and other community based organizations in Los Angeles County; b) the implementation of a School Threat Assessment tool used to screen over 5,000 students of concern; c) preventive intervention in over 50 cases where there was an imminent threat of violence.

(1) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) TOTAL ESTIMATED/ACTUAL BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT YES
SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Department of Mental Health 550 S. Vermont, 10 th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90020			TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 738-3412	
PROGRAM MANAGER’S NAME Miriam A. Brown, LCSW			TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 738-3412 EMAIL MBROWN@DMH.LACOUNTY.GOV	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME)</small> 		DATE 6/27/13	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 738-4258 EMAIL kmenon@dmh.lacounty.gov	
DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE 		DATE 6/27/13	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 738-4601	
Marvin J. Southard, DSW				

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FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project, written in plain language. Include a discussion of the technology and linkage to the County Strategic Plan. The description should identify Performance Measures.

THE CHALLENGE

Premeditated school shootings have occurred throughout the nation. The tragedies have resulted in serious injuries and loss of life with associated acute and long-term emotional harm to survivors, educational institutions, and communities. In a May 2002 report by the United States Secret Service and the United States Department of Education, the majority of the school shooters profiled exhibited a pattern of maladjustment and behaviors of concern that predated the student's final act of violence. A significant challenge is the lack of staff resources to manage the increasing number of referrals concerning students who have made or who pose a threat. Highly resistant students and their parents complicate the referral and linkage process to mental health providers. Los Angeles County has a high potential for campus violence given the number, size and scope of its many schools and colleges. However, Los Angeles County lacked a collaborative program that brought together mental health, law enforcement and education systems to take coordinated steps that can significantly reduce the potential for such school violence.

SOLUTION

In response to these events and subsequent findings, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's Emergency Outreach Bureau established the School Threat Assessment Response Team (START) in 2009, dedicated exclusively to the prevention of campus violence and the need to have students of all ages attend school in a safe, constructive, welcoming environment. The program goals are:

- ◆ develop relevant partnerships to mitigate/eliminate threats;
- ◆ assist students of concern in their efforts to complete their education without incident; and
- ◆ address students and adults at risk for committing targeted school violence;

Partnerships with law enforcement agencies and educational institutions are central to START. The program has developed teams composed of a law enforcement officer and one or two DMH clinicians who partner with all levels of educational institutions (K-12 through higher education), school based mental health programs, substance abuse programs and other social service providers in the community to prevent school violence.

An integral part of the START Program is the development of school-based crisis management teams which help identify students at risk. The concept of Crisis Management Teams (CMT) is a centralized multidisciplinary approach to looking at any student of concern. These concerns or issues may be brought by students, faculty, parents, administrators or ancillary staff to the Team's attention. Each student, issue or situation is thoroughly assessed and recommendations and intervention strategies are put in place. Information available on social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Tumbler, Instagram, etc.) are also used with consent from students, parents and others, to monitor and assess

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situations that has potential for leading to up to campus violence. The CMT provides a single, comprehensive means to assist any student of concern, not just those at risk for school violence, thus providing an opportunity for prevention and early intervention for any student at risk on the school campus.

Another component of START is its threat assessment. With the main focus on preventing campus violence, the strategy taken is to identify students who are at risk early and get them the assistance they need. The program has used a School Threat Assessment Tool to screen over 5,000 students so far. Once the identification is complete a very thorough risk assessment is conducted which not only assesses the immediate risk for school violence, but assess and articulate any other issues the student is having. Once these issues are identified they are addressed with linkage to the appropriate agency and continued monitoring is put in place. START services are delivered wherever the services are most effectively provided including at the student's home, school, and/or other community settings. The students are linked with other services that are not traditionally defined as mental health. Additionally, START has a strong anti-bullying program that involves children, parents, professionals and the community at large.

START has created a network of implementation partners, including K-12 schools, institutions of higher learning, training and treatment programs that address co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse, suicide prevention and treatment programs, trauma focused treatment programs, Parent Teacher Associations, Peer counseling and training and support anti-bullying programs, anti-stigma programs, job readiness training programs as well as any other program needed to improve student's ability to succeed. START provides services in all the Service Areas of the County of Los Angeles. Emphasis is placed on areas and school districts that have no formalized school violence programs or crisis management teams. These districts tend to be in underserved areas such as Acton, Paramount, and the smaller school districts. Private and charter schools are also included in all areas of Los Angeles County.

In summary, START collaborates with educational institutions, law enforcement and other agencies to address Targeted School Violence through Training and Consultation, Early Screening and Identification, Assessment and Intervention, and Case Management and Monitoring.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

START began in 2009 and was the first program in the country to establish a law enforcement-education-mental health collaborative dedicated to the prevention of targeted school violence. Benefits include:

- ◆ Enhanced situational awareness among law enforcement, schools, mental health providers and other community based organizations in Los Angeles County.
- ◆ Implemented a School Threat Assessment tool and has screened over 5,000 students. It has intervened in over 50 cases where there was an imminent threat of violence and prevented that violence from occurring. START

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- continues to monitor over 75 students of concern.
- ◆ START addresses the concern about school safety and campus violence by emphasizing and operationalizing a proactive versus reactive approach through Training and Consultation, Early Screening and Identification, Assessment and Intervention, and Case Management and Monitoring.
 - ◆ Most recently, START issued a reminder to our community partners about the need for vigilance given the relationship between targeted school violence, the prevalence of imitators after recent events like Aurora, Colorado and Newtown, Connecticut as well as the high incidence time of April.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS):

The START program supports *Los Angeles County Strategic Plan Goal 3: Integrated Services Delivery*. The program has maximized the opportunities to measurably improve the safety and wellbeing of students and the campus community by leveraging resources through continuous collaboration with multiple local agencies, including law enforcement, schools, community based organizations and others.

Cost Avoidance, Cost Savings, and Revenue Generated (Estimated Benefit): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation.

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>