

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**27<sup>th</sup> 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:** Teen Advisory Boards: Building Community Leaders

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION:** FEBRUARY 2007  
(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

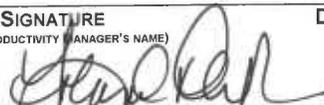
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner

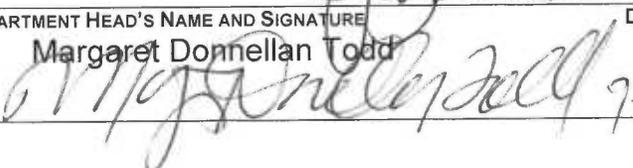
1 Collaboration, communication, problem solving and social competence are necessary  
 2 skill sets that appear repeatedly in current research on competencies for success in a  
 3 21st Century workplace and society. Yet with all of the challenges faced by teens today,  
 4 developing these skills can be daunting. Ensuring that teens are prepared for the future  
 5 through self-sustainability can prevent costly interventions down the road. In the past  
 6 few years, libraries have realized they have the power to create the kind of spaces,  
 7 services, and experiences that today's teens need in order to succeed in school and life.  
 8 Professionally trained Library staff also act as positive role models. The County of Los  
 9 Angeles Public Library has embraced this opportunity for the past several years through  
 10 engaging and innovative youth programming. Teen Advisory Boards (TABs) have been  
 11 at the forefront of this programming as a model for civic engagement with the benefit of  
 12 giving teens a voice in building and leading programs and services in their own  
 13 community libraries. Since 2007, 50 TABs and more than 1,000 teens have  
 14 implemented over 5,000 programs and provided the inspiration for youth to take on  
 15 greater leadership roles in their communities.

(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
\$	\$	\$	\$ 0	X

<b>SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b> Public Library 7400 East Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (562) 940-8400
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<b>PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME</b> Debbie Anderson, Youth Services Administrator	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (562) 940-8522
	<b>EMAIL</b> Danderson@library.lacounty.gov

<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)</small> Yolanda De Ramus 	<b>DATE</b> 7-14-14	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (562) 940-8559
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<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> Margaret Donnellan Todd 	<b>DATE</b> 7-14-14	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (562) 940-8400
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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.

**CHALLENGE**

Today's teens are part of a competitive and global world in which social and professional success requires a vast array of skills. These skills include creativity, problem solving, communication, collaboration and information and technical literacy. Helping teens develop the aforementioned skills is no easy task, particularly when resources are limited. Schools, where teens generally spend the majority of their time, have not had the funding or resources to keep up with these needed skill sets. It's also no secret that governmental agencies have lost funding, making the implementation of programs for the populations that are in critical need difficult to create and sustain. In addition, teens face a myriad of conditions such as social awkwardness, poor school performance, violence, bullying, social media overload, lack of jobs, and much more. While there are benefits to social media and it can help awkward teens connect more easily with peers, the negative aspects can be overwhelming. Because it is a distant method of communication, it creates a fertile environment for bullying, negative interactions, invasion of privacy, feelings of vulnerability and a lack of ability to feel comfortable in face to face social situations. Parents of teens are often dealing with their own difficulties such as working and caring for siblings, which limits the time they have to spend mentoring their teens into adulthood. The ideal that teens should get involved in their communities and make a difference is hard to encourage when the media is constantly featuring stories of government abuse and corruption, and when athletes and celebrities are being charged with crimes; the positive role models available to teens are few and far between. Another challenge is finding activities that fickle teens will actually participate in--trends change so fast in the teen world--what was in last week is out this week. On weekends and during school breaks, teens can sleep the day away. How do you get a teen excited enough to get out of bed before noon and head to the library? All of the above situations make the implementation of successful teen programming seem insurmountable. Although lack of resources is also a reality of the Library world, we did not let this stop us from realizing a solution to help change the lives of teens.

**SOLUTION**

"The Library gives you the freedom to connect, explore, create-- whatever your needs or dreams." The library's strategic plan recently adopted this statement of purpose and while this applies to customers of all ages, it perfectly reflects our service philosophy to adolescents. The Library has always offered a variety of recreational and cultural experiences to youth, yet we also realized that developing the skill sets of problem solving, collaboration, social competence and communication required richer, more strategic relationship building with teens. Lasting change, growth and development can only be accomplished through empowering teens themselves. This is how the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) model was born. In 2006, the Library hired its first Teen

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Services Coordinator for the Library system to begin more focused programming for teens and support for staff working with youth ages 12-17. It soon became apparent that Library staff were seeking a programming structure that required regular library attendance from teens and that teen led interactions would allow staff to build stronger relationships and guide youth to responsible decision making. Teen Librarians were asked to form Teen Advisory Boards in 2007 to encourage youth to take on meaningful roles within the TABs such as president, secretary and historian. Seven years have passed since the first TABs and they are still going strong, with 34 active TABs to date. TABs generally meet once a month to discuss and plan programs for other teens and sometimes younger children. Meetings are often brainstorming sessions, with members throwing out ideas with the Librarian present to keep the discussions focused and appropriate. Librarians assigned to work with teens undergo extensive training to ensure their expertise as practitioners who can facilitate the TAB process. Training includes sessions on teen brain and social development, milestones, and relationship building. The ins and outs of running a Teen Advisory Board are also covered at training, and as necessary, the Library's Teen Services Coordinator, travels out to libraries to conduct one to one TAB coaching with librarians who feel they could use a little more assistance in designing a customized program for their teens. Libraries are encouraged to create a TAB that is reflective of the teens in their communities rather than using a cookie cutter approach. So while some TABs are more formal with roles as described above, TABs can take many shapes and forms. The Graham Library TAB exemplified this when their members aged out of the TAB and revived the Library's Friends of the Library group. The Lawndale TAB created a successful community garden, while several TABs also hosted anti-bullying programs and etiquette classes. Libraries with TABs are asked to share best practices at quarterly meetings called YA Meet and Greet so that other libraries may benefit from their experience and so that successful programs can be easily replicated. Online technology resources and tools, such as a Teen Services Wiki, provide another forum for librarians to share best practices. All the while, the Teen Services unit at Library Headquarters provides constant support and resources, helping libraries through various issues as they arise and providing program materials for TABs to use at their programs. To provide these necessary materials and resources for the creation of Teen Advisory Boards, the Teen Services unit has assessed current practices and shifted existing resources to support known and anticipated needs. The Library Foundation has also been generous in providing funding. This high level of support has helped sustain the TAB program over the last 7 years.

**BENEFITS**

Libraries are neutral safe places that provide opportunities for adolescents to grow intellectually, emotionally and socially and to gain workplace preparedness. According to a 2013 PEW Research Center report, more than 81% of web-connected teens use some kind of social media which can cause social awkwardness and isolation. TABs are

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a socially positive experience; they allow teens to participate in civic engagement, work collaboratively to carry ideas from the planning stage to final implementation, fine tune communication skills, and engage in opportunities for creativity and problem solving. Since 2007, TABs have reached over 30,000 teens. These programs, created by teens themselves, are more than just recreational activities and have given teens the confidence to develop their voice and know that they can make a difference. The proof that TABs are effective is best illustrated by feedback from the teens themselves:

*Through the TAB, I became more confident, loud, outgoing and learned how to communicate efficiently. I saw the impact and joy that our activities brought to those who participated.* El Monte Library TAB member

*I feel the teen advisory board helped me become more social and has introduced me to new people. It also helped me see my community as something better and not a crime riddled city as movie and media would have you believe. TAB also encouraged me to better myself and my community by starting programs around my community and getting involved in volunteer work in nearby schools.* Graham Library TAB member and member of the Graham Friends of the Library

*I feel that joining the TAB has affected me positively by allowing me to participate in activities that I would have never imagined myself partaking in. In addition, this program has made me feel more open when it comes to working with others since I have to constantly work in a team whether it is with adults or my peers.* Lawndale Library TAB member

*I use to be a troublemaker. I can't even count how many times I was escorted out of the library. Everything changed when I joined the TAB. We all took what we learned together as a group and we applied it within our community. I myself found an interest in helping kids and young teens. I took this passion and went to college with it in the back of my head and am majoring in Child Development and Psychology. We all became leaders in our own lives and I would personally like to thank the TAB for that.* El Monte Library TAB member

*Through these years, I've slowly come to a huge realization--that I have the power to change the world around me. I have realized that the life I live and the things I do not only affect me, but many others around me. It has dawned on me that I have the power and leadership capabilities to change things in the world, whether it be a small change or something of astronomical proportions. This understanding has inspired me to excel in life in a way that I never thought I could before.* Agoura Hills Library TAB member

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

TEEN ADVISORY BOARDS SPECIFICALLY  
SUPPORTED THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN  
THROUGH GOAL 2: (CHILDREN AND ADULT  
WELL-BEING ) AND GOAL 3: (COMMUNITY AND  
MUNICIPAL SERVICES).

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**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.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	X

**ANNUAL= 12 MONTHS ONLY**