

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD  
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

**22 November 2021 / le 22 Novembre 2021**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

**Executive Director, Ottawa Police Services Board / Directrice exécutive,  
Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa**

**Contact Person / Personne ressource:**

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**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LETTER OF SUPPORT: ACTIVE BYSTANDER FOR  
LAW ENFORCEMENT (ABLE) TRAINING**

**OBJET: DEMANDE DE LETTRE D'APPUI : FORMATION SUR LES TÉMOINS  
ACTIFS POUR LES AGENTS D'APPLICATION DE LA LOI**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Ottawa Police Services Board provide their support, in the form of a letter, for the Ottawa Police Service's application for Active Bystander for Law Enforcement (ABLE) training for all OPS members.**

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa donne son appui, sous forme de lettre, au Service de police d'Ottawa concernant sa demande de formation sur les témoins actifs pour tous les membres de SPO.**

**BACKGROUND**

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) is always seeking out new training to improve operations and interactions between members of the Service and the public. The OPS has identified **Active Bystander for Law Enforcement training (ABLE)** as a program that will provide education, awareness, and skills to always ensure professional interactions with our community members as well as our colleagues.

## **Active Bystander for Law Enforcement (ABLE)**

ABLE was first developed as the Ethical Policing is Courageous (EPIC) training, by the New Orleans Police Department in 2015, with support from federal, state and community partnerships (following consent decree 2012). This impactful training was adopted by Georgetown University (Washington DC), to further support the program at a national level to promote a culture of high-quality and ethical policing following three pillars: prevent harm to community, preventing member misconduct/mistakes, and supporting member wellness.

The training was further developed and renamed ABLE. The training educates, empowers, and supports members in their everyday interactions with the community and with each other. The training provides concrete and realistic skills and methods that enables members to support the three pillars of the ABLE training: Prevent harm to civilians, prevent harm to members and to promote member health and wellness.

## **DISCUSSION**

As part of the application process for ABLE training, applicant organizations are required to seek letters of support from multiple stakeholders including oversight bodies. The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of ABLE training and seek a letter of support to apply for this training.

## **OPS Commitment to ABLE**

The OPS commitment to the ABLE program will ensure that the principles and benefits of peer intervention shall be promoted through regular internal and external communications, including clear messaging from the OPS executive.

A further commitment to the ABLE training and ongoing support will ensure that the updated Respectful Workplace policy and Code of Professional Ethics shall address fear of reprisal among OPS members to ensure interveners are not punished, targeted, or otherwise ostracized. The Service will commit to supporting members and ensure an investigation into all instances of apparent retaliation and hold officers accountable for retaliation.

In support of the OPS's ongoing professional development for its members ABLE training is designed to assist members in creating a culture of active bystandership and peer intervention through policy, training, support, and accountability.

ABLE training is the next step in continuing our professional development and supporting our strategic priorities of building trust, advancing duty of care and community safety and well-being, while supporting the OPSB strategic priorities.

At its core, ABLE is an officer survival program, a community safety program, and a job satisfaction program. It represents a cultural change in policing that equips, encourages, and supports officers to intervene to prevent misconduct or error, and ensure high-

quality policing. Everyone benefits when potential misconduct is not perpetrated or when a potential mistake is not made. ABLE is a program designed to encourage and empower members to intervene, regardless of rank - and do it successfully and respectfully.

### **Meaningful Training**

This meaningful training is supported by an initial dedicated 8-hour training session, with 2-hours of annual refresher training. The ABLE training is not to be modified except in collaboration with the ABLE program, to ensure applicable Canadian content for case law and language terminology/requirements. The training covers the relevant social science, the inhibitors to active bystandership and the strategies and methods of giving and receiving an intervention. The principles of active bystandership are to be incorporated into relevant policy, training, and courses, including use of force training and scenarios.

### **Supporting Member Wellness**

ABLE training fully supports member health and wellness.

ABLE is the first step of many towards a positive modern shift in OPS Culture.

This program is currently underway in other Canadian police services:

- Delta Police, Delta BC
- Justice Institute British Columbia (JIBC) Chilliwack, BC
- Lethbridge Police Service, Lethbridge, Alberta
- North Bay Police, North Bay, Ontario

### **CONSULTATION**

The Respect Ethics Values Unit (REV), has received two letters of support from the community – one from the Community Equity Council (CEC), and one from the Jewish Federation of Ottawa. We have also requested the support of the Ottawa Police Association (OPA), and the Senior Officers Association (SOA). The Chief of Police has provided a letter of support as well.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no cost for ABLE Training. Georgetown University offers no-cost, online Train-the-Trainer sessions to support facilitators in their commitment to this training. There will be a preliminary Train-the-Trainer course, comprised of OPS members. These trainers will then train others within the Service on ABLE.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

For more information on the program please click on the hyperlink: <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/innovative-policing-program/active-bystandership-for-law-enforcement/about-us/>

## **CONCLUSION**

In support of the OPS's ongoing professional development for its members, Active Bystander for Law Enforcement (ABLE) training is designed to assist members in creating a culture of active bystandership and peer intervention through policy, training, support, and accountability.

ABLE training is the next step in continuing our professional development and supporting our strategic priorities of building trust, advancing duty of care and community safety and well-being, while supporting the OPSB strategic priorities.

At its core, ABLE is an officer survival program, a community safety program, and a job satisfaction program. It represents a cultural change in policing that equips, encourages, and supports officers to intervene to prevent misconduct or error, and ensure high-quality policing. Everyone benefits when potential misconduct is not perpetrated or when a potential mistake is not made. ABLE is a program designed to encourage and empower members to intervene, regardless of rank - and do it successfully and respectfully.