

**Nomination Form****POST Excellence in Training Award****Application for 2015 Nominees**[POST Home](#)
[California Home](#)[Section 1 – Nominee](#)[Section 2 – Nominator](#)[Section 3 – Justification](#)[Section 4 – Documentation](#)**Section 1. Nominee Information****1. Award Category** (select one only) ☐ Individual ☐ Lifetime ☒ Organizational**2. Nominee** Custody Training and Standards Bureau**3. Title** (If applicable) De-Escalation and Verbal Resolution Training (DeVRT) course**4. Agency/Organization** (If applicable) Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**5. Mailing Address****6. Contact Numbers****Section 2. Nominator Information****7. Name** Scott Walker**8. Title** Lieutenant**9. Agency/Organization** Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**10. Mailing Address****11. Contact Numbers****12. Department Head/CEO****13. Signature****Complete all remaining sections. Attach additional pages if needed.**[Section 3 – Justification](#)[Section 4 – Documentation](#)[How to Submit](#)

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Section 1 – Nominee

Section 2 – Nominator

Section 3 – Justification

Section 4 – Documentation

Section 3. Justification for Nomination – REQUIRED

14. Describe the individual's or organization's purpose and training responsibility.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) operates the largest jail system in the world and provides incarceration services for all of Los Angeles County. Approximately 18,000 inmates are housed throughout the seven correctional facilities that incorporate the LASD Custody Services Division. Overseeing and maintaining such a sprawling and complex correctional system is an extremely daunting task for even the most experienced individuals who are charged with making the system run efficiently. Two of the more prominent issues the LASD's Custody Division has come under intense scrutiny for over the past few years is staff use of force and the handling of mentally ill inmates who, by several estimations, account for approximately 40% of use of force incidents. Of the 18,000 men and women locked up in Los Angeles County's jails, about 3,700 — or one out of every five — has been diagnosed with a mental illness.

The LASD's Custody Training and Standards Bureau (CTSB) is tasked with training a custody staff of over 3,800 personnel. Pertinent to that endeavor is designing training curriculum with the goal of providing staff with the tools to perform their duties in a professional manner along with the skills to potentially mitigate situations without resorting to using force while interacting with our diverse, and sometimes violent, inmate population.

15. Describe the nominee's overall achievement.

In response to court mandates in late 2014, CTSB began work on designing a course which emphasizes conflict resolution and de-escalation skills as well as enhancing the students' knowledge related to mental health issues within the correctional environment. In the summer of 2015, CTSB's "De-Escalation and Verbal Resolution Training" (DeVRT) was born.

The De-Escalation and Verbal Resolution Training (DeVRT) is designed specifically for law enforcement personnel working with an incarcerated population in the Los Angeles County jail system. The 32-hour course examines core concepts that emphasize effectively working with inmates with mental illnesses, disabilities, and/or in situations within the correctional environment that warrant the use of de-escalation techniques and effective communication strategies. This training is designed to address the growing needs of incarcerated individuals in the Los Angeles county jails.

At the conclusion of this innovative course personnel are able to demonstrate a mastery of the following objectives:

- An understanding of the role of mental health issues within corrections.

- An awareness of the important role that law enforcement personnel have in the care and management of mentally ill inmates.

- An understanding of LASD's policy and procedures that specifically addresses working with inmates that suffer from a mental illness and suicide.

- An understanding of the concepts of communication techniques, de-escalation strategies, signs and symptoms of mental illness, mood, psychotic, and trauma related disorders, the role of addiction and co-occurring disorders among the inmate population, the importance of medications, and understanding of suicide and suicide prevention strategies, ADA and developmental disabilities.

- An ability to apply de-escalation techniques and communication strategies in the workplace through the use of dynamic role-playing techniques in the classroom.

- An ability to recognize and manage behavioral issues that may be indicative of a risk of suicide or violence and apply de-escalation strategies and communication techniques in resolving those issues.

- An ability to make appropriate decisions regarding intervention strategies for addressing the needs of mentally ill inmates and suicidal inmates.

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Section 3. Justification for Nomination *continued*

16. Give explanations for each of the following three criteria to support your nomination.

a) Innovation

What sets this class apart from traditional law enforcement training is that it's taught using a team-teaching approach utilizing sworn personnel and licensed psychologists. CTSB law enforcement instructors are partnered with clinical psychologists who are trained in Police & Public Safety Psychology. These mental health professionals, who we obtained to work specifically on this course, work in partnership with the our law enforcement instructors during the majority of the presentations and are available throughout the entire course, including the role playing scenarios, to provide mental health instruction expertise.

What also sets the class apart is the intense role playing that takes place during the week. CTSB utilizes both live role playing and MILO Simulator scenarios to hone the students skills. During the MILO sessions, students participate in an interactive computer generated training scenario. The MILO Simulator contains several interactive situations that require the student to engage in communication strategies and de-escalation techniques, as well as decision-making strategies to resolve the issue. At the conclusion of the scenario, students complete a brief qualitative write-up about their experience with the MILO simulator. The results are subsequently evaluated for themes and trends that emerge from these responses.

During the live role-playing sessions, students participate in scenarios that closely resemble a situation that they would likely encounter within the correctional setting. The scenarios pertain to effectively interacting with individuals with and without a mental illness. Each scenario has multiple possible outcomes or root problems for the student to work through and discover. Each actor and instructor works off a script that is designed to help standardize each of the scenarios. The script consists of possible (or suggested) responses by the actor, a root problem for the student to discover through the use of effective communication, and a desired outcome. Actors say key phrases to provide students with cues that can help them to hone in on the underlying, root problem. Each scenario activity is followed by a brief debriefing with the instructors. If, during the scenario, a student is not adequately progressing through a suitable resolution, the instructor calls a "time-out" and provides the student with instruction about how to proceed with that type of a situation.

Another unique aspect of the training is the inclusion of a presentation from the National Alliance on Mental Illness. During this interactive presentation, students get to hear stories directly from persons living with a mental illness, many of whom who have been incarcerated at some point in their life, and from family members or loved ones who are living with a person dealing with a mental illness. This presentation never fails to put a personal face on the mental illness issue and give the students a new perspective when interacting with our mentally ill inmate population.

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b) Impact

As a part of the course, selective assessment protocols are integrated into the training to assess learning outcomes, namely, student learning. These assessment protocols provide instructors with insight into the training in real-time, but also generate useful information about the utility and efficacy of the training, upon completion.

The following measures are used to evaluate performance objectives for the course, student learning, and the systematic delivery of the course.

- (a) Pre-test
- (b) Post-test
- (c) Course evaluations completed by students (Daily & Summary)
- (d) Supervisor evaluation of instruction
- (e) Scenario-based testing

We are already seeing positive feedback from our custody facilities related to the training. Processes have been put in place to electronically document instances that are peacefully resolved by personnel utilizing the skills they've learned in the class. The initial numbers have been promising and are envisioned to rise as the training continues.

We are currently the only agency providing this type of training to custody personnel within our region. Based on our early results and student feedback this course, or a similar one designed to meet the needs of a specific agency, would be of great value.

c) Reputation/Recognition

Although a relatively new course, the LASD/CTSB began receiving inquiry's regarding the course from the media and other law enforcement partners even before we began teaching the class. Our staff has been sought out to provide information on course content, logistical issues, and mental health partnerships to an LASD mental health task force who is in the process of developing a crisis intervention course for our patrol personnel. The CTSB unit commander, Captain Ana Brackpool, recently received an invitation from the National Institute of Corrections to participate in a panel discussion related to the implementation and impact of our program during the American Correctional Association's annual conference in January 2016.

The feedback on the course, including that from seasoned line personnel, has been very positive. It is envisioned that the positive reputation of the class will continue to spread as the training progresses. In turn, this will benefit the LASD in regaining the trust of the community in regards to how we manage and interact with our inmate population.

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De-Escalation and Verbal Resolution Training course outline
Instructor Role Playing Scenario Evaluation form
Student Daily Class Evaluation form
Student Final Class Evaluation form

To complete your application:

- 1) Make sure you have filled in all applicable sections.
- 2) Print and sign form.
- 3) Attach all supporting documents.
- 4) Send your completed application to:



**Excellence in Training Screening Committee
c/o California POST
Executive Office
860 Stillwater Road, Suite 100
West Sacramento, CA 95605**

Application questions: 916.227.2808 — Janice Bullard