



Colfax County Sheriff's Office Joins National ABLÉ Project

July 23, 2021 – Colfax County Sheriff's Office 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 a firm commitment to transformational reform with support from local community groups and elected leaders, Colfax County Sheriff's Office joins a select group of more than 115 other law enforcement agencies and statewide and regional training academies from across the country and in Canada.

Backed by prominent civil rights and law enforcement leaders, the evidence-based, field-tested ABLÉ 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 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.

Sheriff Leonard M. Baca said seeking inclusion to join the ABLÉ Project reflected important priorities for the Colfax County Sheriff's Office.

“ Colfax County Sheriff's Office is a leader in high standards, professionalism, service and community involvement” said County Manager Mary Lou Kern. “ We have a premier office lead by Sheriff Leonard M. Baca, a twenty-two year law enforcement veteran.”

Those backing the Colfax County Sheriff's Office application to join the program included Raton Crime Stoppers, The Light House Church Raton, and Colfax County Manager Mary Lou Kern , who wrote letters of support.

“ Colfax County Sheriff's Office has been an exemplary office with the highest standards and professionalism” wrote Pastor Monty McGowen.

Professor Christy Lopez, co-director of Georgetown Law's Innovative Policing Program, which runs ABLÉ, explained: “The ABLÉ 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 ABL 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. ABL teaches that skill.”

The ABL Project is guided by a Board of Advisors comprised of civil rights, social justice, and law enforcement leaders, including 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.

- See the complete list of the [ABLE Project Board of Advisors](#).
- For more information about the ABL 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 ABL Project in particular.

ABLE Project Train-The-Trainer events take place every month. By the end of July, Colfax County Sheriff’s Office instructors will be certified as ABL trainers; and over the coming months, all of the Office’s deputies will receive 8 hours of evidence-based active bystandership education designed not only to prevent harm, but to change the culture of policing. Please follow our progress in this critical area at http://www.co.colfax.nm.us/government/sheriff_s_department.php

###

For more information regarding the Colfax County Sheriff’s Office, contact Detective Nolberto Dominguez.

For more information on the ABL Project, contact Liza, ABL Program Associate, at LBA17@georgetown.edu or Lisa, ABL Project Director, at Lisa.Kurtz@georgetown.edu.