



## The Career Pipeline Concept and the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)

Law enforcement agencies nationwide face a variety of challenges when recruiting and hiring. One of the most complicated is recruiting and retaining a workforce that is representative of the community. Recent events have highlighted tensions between police and the communities they serve. When agencies do not appropriately represent the communities they serve, it can lead to further distrust and negative perceptions of officers and can affect the overall wellbeing of communities. To meet this challenge, Sheriffs and Chiefs are exploring creative ways to attract and retain underrepresented candidates to law enforcement.

**The Mission of California POST is to continually enhance the professionalism of California law enforcement in serving its communities.**

**Established in 1959, CA POST affiliates with over 600 California law enforcement agencies, representing over 93,000 peace officers, law enforcement dispatchers, and reserve peace officers.**

**(<http://www.post.ca.gov/about-us.aspx>)**

Using Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Career Pipeline concepts, California Chiefs and Sheriffs have been at the forefront of efforts to recruit, train, and hire qualified candidates that represent gender and racial diversity represented in their community. This issue brief introduces the Career Pipeline Concept and looks at the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (CA POST) and other examples of how law enforcement agencies and schools can bridge the gap between officers and students and encourage youth to consider careers in law enforcement.

### The POST Career Pipeline Concept

The POST Career Pipeline Concept was introduced in mid-2009 with the goal of addressing recruitment challenges facing California law enforcement agencies. CA POST identified that many law enforcement agencies were experiencing high applicant failure rates, some exceeding 90%. A CA POST committee of subject matter experts (SMEs) was formed to review the high failure rates.

The CA POST committee identified poor academic performance, inadequate fitness levels, and character discrepancies in the background investigation process as areas that contribute to high failure rates. The committee determined that the most effective way to decrease failure rates was to prepare future applicants by collaborating with local school systems to develop school-based public safety career pipeline programs. These programs are designed to engage students in a structured program at a much younger age – starting in middle school, if not sooner. Program elements include requiring students to wear uniforms and adhere to a dedicated code of conduct, one that encourages character development and leadership skills. The CA POST committee reviewed literature and a number of existing school based programs that were affiliated with law enforcement agencies. Two programs in particular showed the most promise to the POST committee – the LAPD Police Academy Magnet Schools (PAMS) and their college component known as the Police Officer Preparatory Program (POPP) and the San Bernardino Public Safety Academy. Components from these two programs, along with other program enhancements, were used to develop the template for the CA POST Career Pipeline Concept.

### LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT AND PAMS:

The Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) Police Academy Magnet Schools (PAMS) program exists in public schools under a magnet school format (a school program within a school). Students are required to wear uniforms, and each PAMS program has a full-time dedicated LAPD officer assigned to work with school staff to oversee students. Approximately 1,100 students are enrolled in six LAPD PAMS programs, which includes two middle schools (grades 6-8) and four high schools (grades 9-12).

LAPD continues their pipeline program through a community college component named the Police Officer Preparatory Program (POPP) for graduating students from PAMS wishing to further pursue careers in law enforcement. This two-year community college program is hosted at the LAPD Ahmanson Recruit Training Center (ARTC), which is responsible for training new recruits and in-service officers. POPP is affiliated with the West Los Angeles Community College and offers students two Associate of Arts degrees upon completion of program requirements. Approximately 120 students currently participate in the POPP program. This represents two class levels, freshman and sophomore, who are required to wear uniforms and attend daily classes Monday through Thursday, 6:30 AM to 2:30 PM, for two years. Upon completion of their AA college program, they are eligible to take the LAPD entry exam. Their May 2016 graduating class graduated 45 students and many are currently in the law enforcement applicant process. Over the past several years, many of these POPP graduates have gone on to begin careers in LAPD and other law enforcement agencies.

### SAN BERNARDINO PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMY:

The San Bernardino career pipeline model features the San Bernardino Public Safety Academy (PSA), a charter school program that has been in operation for over 16 years, and is hosted at the retired Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino, California. The San Bernardino PSA program provides a law enforcement and firefighting focus to more than 400 students in grades 6-12. This campus uses retired peace officers and firefighters as instructors and dedicated cadet training officers (CTOs), along with the other school teachers and administrative staff.

This PSA also incorporates a character development program, called Character Counts, within the curriculum. The Character Counts program, developed by the Los Angeles-based Michael Josephson Institute of Ethics, is a nationally recognized program that has served over 7 million school children. It incorporates the Six Pillars of Character throughout the student's curriculum and daily activities. Of the students that attend this program, an estimated 70% pursue higher education and approximately 25% enlist in the military. Students in this program mirror the demographics of the communities they live in.

California POST featured both the LAPD and San Bernardino school models in their first POST Career Pipeline DVD ('Building a Career Pipeline' 2012). POST staff has made several statewide presentations on the Career Pipeline concept to many police chief organizations. For more information, see <https://www.post.ca.gov/addressing-recruitment-challenges.aspx>.

### SOLANO COUNTY CHIEFS AND SHERIFF ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMY:

In 2010, the Solano County Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association committed to working with CA POST to develop their own regional school-based career pipeline program. CA POST hosted a site visit for a group of police chiefs, which included now-retired Fairfield Police Chief Walt Tibbet and then-Suisun Police Chief Ed Dadisho, at the San Bernardino PSA. Chiefs Tibbet and Dadisho led the effort in Solano County. The successful San Bernardino PSA program visit helped to further develop the partnership between the Fairfield and Suisun Police Departments and the Fairfield-Suisun School District. Upon approval of the local school board, an empty school campus in the City of Fairfield was dedicated to host the Fairfield-Suisun Public Safety Academy. The program opened in August of 2012 with approximately 400 students, grades 5 through 8, with the understanding that a senior grade level would be added every succeeding school year, until the school reached grade 12. The school is not a charter or a magnet program but is an "alternative school of choice," as defined under California Education Code Section 58500. The school is dedicated to a public safety career pathway, but still functions under the main school board's umbrella.

The Fairfield-Suisun PSA is now in their fourth year of operation with 700 students and will be graduating their first 12th grade senior class this May of 2016. The school population mirrors the demographics of its local community, and continues to perform well academically. The Fairfield-Suisun PSA achieved a 940 Annual Performance Index (API) score, out of a possible 1,000 API, upon completion of the 2012/2013 school year – their first in operation.<sup>1</sup> The PSA was also granted accreditation through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Based on the recommendations of the CA POST template, the Fairfield-Suisun PSA's Advisory Council meets regularly to work with the school staff to determine ways the council can enhance the various school programs. Their current Advisory Council includes members from local/state law enforcement, CA POST, state corrections, local/state fire services, local chamber of commerce, faith based representatives, the two local community colleges, CA State University Sacramento, and a number of community sponsors.

1. The 2012/2013 school year was the latest scored year available at publication. For more information, see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/index.asp>.



The Fairfield-Suisun PSA website offers a variety of resources outlining the mission, goals, and expectations of students. Parents, students, and teachers can access their respective portals for handbooks, calendars, applications, course information, and staff contact information as well as link to the 'Eagle's Nest Weekly Blog' for announcements and updates at <http://www.fsusd.org/Page/67>.

Career Pipeline program models provide excellent opportunities for law enforcement agencies, in collaboration with their local school districts, to 'grow their own' qualified candidate pools to meet local recruitment challenges. These partnerships can make positive impacts in local communities. Students completing such programs appear to be better prepared for the law enforcement selection process (Cappitelli & Kyritsis, 2011).

For further information on the California POST Career Pipeline Concept, refer to their website at [www.post.ca.gov](http://www.post.ca.gov) or <https://www.post.ca.gov/addressing-recruitment-challenges.aspx>, or contact Greg Kyritsis, Senior Law Enforcement Consultant, at [greg.kyritsis@post.ca.gov](mailto:greg.kyritsis@post.ca.gov).

## References

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## About the Project

The Police Foundation, with funding from the California Endowment and with the support of the California State Sheriffs' Association and the California Police Chiefs Association, has developed this series of issue briefs to address various components of a successful Police-Youth-Family-Community Partnership. These briefs are designed for California law enforcement leaders with a tool-kit that helps advance strategies around youth engagement. Other briefs in this series cover topics including the teen brain and school-based police officers.

## About the Police Foundation

The Police Foundation is a national, non-profit, bipartisan organization that, consistent with its commitment to improve policing, has been on the cutting edge of police innovation for over 40 years. The Police Foundation's work is informed by available evidence and aims to increase public safety and strengthen communities. The professional staff at the Police Foundation works closely with law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victim advocates, and community-based organizations in order to develop research, comprehensive reports, policy briefs, model policies, and innovative programs that will continue to support the work of law enforcement personnel as it relates to increasing strong community-police partnerships.

<http://www.policefoundation.org>

## About the California Endowment

The California Endowment is a private, statewide health foundation with a mission to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. Health Happens Here is the core of our work. It challenges us to think about people's health beyond the doctor's office and beyond the good vs. bad choices people make. In reality, our health happens where we live, learn, work and play—in neighborhoods, schools, and with prevention.

<http://www.calendow.org/our-story/>

## About the California Police Chiefs Association

Established in 1966, the California Police Chiefs Association is an organization that represents municipal law enforcement agencies in California.

The State has been divided into 16 regions and the police chief representative from those areas is also a member of the Board. Each regional representative acts as the official liaison between the Association and Police Chiefs in the local area regarding issues related to the law enforcement community and the administration of municipal police agencies.

The California Police Chiefs Association is an influential participant in the State of California's legislative process. The Association stretches throughout the state and its membership is comprised of many well respected and nationally recognized Police Chiefs.

The objectives of the association are to promote and advance the science and art of police administration and crime prevention; and to develop and disseminate professional administrative practices, and to promote their use in the police profession; to foster police cooperation and the exchange of information and experience throughout the State; to bring about recruitment and training of qualified persons in the police profession; to encourage the adherence of all police officers to high professional standards of conduct in strict compliance with the Law Enforcement Officer's Code of Ethics.

The California Police Chiefs Association committees offer involvement in working with peers to assess current issues in law enforcement and develop solutions, ideas and projects in response to those issues. The California Police Chiefs Association committees are active in developing publications, sample policies and guidelines which serve to assist members in their jobs. Standing committees of the Association include: Training, Standards & Ethics, Law & Legislation, Nominations & Past Presidents, Associate Member, Small Agency, Large Agency, Technology, Communication/Membership, and Retired Members. As contemporary issues are identified, ad hoc committees are established to provide guidance to the Association and its membership.

The political environment mandates that The California Police Chiefs Association speak on behalf of police leadership and for the law enforcement community in California. The California Police Chiefs Association provides the opportunity for a voice in the legislature by influencing public safety legislation through The California Police Chiefs Association Government Relations Program.

The California Police Chiefs Association Annual Conference provides the opportunity to participate in educational session, listen to keynote speakers on issues related to the administration of law enforcement agencies and the industry, and interact and network with other municipal chiefs of police.

<http://www.californiapolicechiefs.org/introduction>

## About the California State Sheriff's Association

California State Sheriffs' Association (CSSA) is a nonprofit professional organization comprised of the 58 sheriffs along with thousands of law-abiding citizens throughout the state. The association was formed in 1894 for the purpose of giving California sheriffs a single effective voice. It was also formed for the purpose of sharing information and providing assistance to sheriffs and departmental personnel, thus enabling them to improve the delivery of law enforcement services to the citizens of this State.

Every sheriff works diligently with fellow sheriffs through CSSA to improve the profession and to elevate the law enforcement system through cooperation with other law enforcement agencies. As the sheriffs are constitutionally elected officials, the California legislature regulates their duties and responsibilities. The sheriffs serve as upholders for your public safety needs. CSSA functions as a legislative watchdog for the county sheriff and sheriff's personnel as well as for citizens on professional and law enforcement issues.

The California State Sheriff's Association's mission is to support the role of sheriff as the chief law enforcement officer in each California County and to speak as a collective voice on matters of public safety.

<https://www.calsheriffs.org/about-us.html>

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