

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

KAREN BASS
Mayor

P.O. Box 30158
Los Angeles, CA 90030
Telephone: (213) 486-0150
TTY: (877) 275-5273
Ref #: 1.1

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The Honorable Public Safety Committee
Los Angeles City Council
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) Program

Dear Honorable Members,

Pursuant to the adoption of the Mayor's 2022-2023 Budget on May 18, 2022, your committee requested a report on the Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) Program and County resources, how SMART officers partner with County clinicians, and whether the County has committed to providing additional resources if the City expands the SMART program.

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD or Department), Detective Support and Vice Division (DSVD) recommend the expansion to the SMART program to better provide mental health support services. Established in 1993, the SMART team was an innovative response to better serve persons suffering from mental illness, who were in crisis. Each SMART team is comprised of a police officer and a clinician from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH).

Before February 8, 2021, SMART operated as secondary responders. Patrol officers would respond to a radio call and stabilize the scene before requesting a SMART unit. The patrol officers would then transport the subject to the station while they waited for a SMART unit to respond. This past practice increased the time the subject was in police custody and was counterproductive to encouraging voluntary participation in mental health treatment.

Effective February 8, 2021, SMART adopted a co-responder model. Unlike the secondary responder model, the current co-responder model allows SMART units to respond simultaneously with patrol officers to calls where mental health crisis is suspected. The co-responder model prevents subjects from being transported multiple times before they receive treatment at a mental health facility. Additionally, the co-responder model often helps to de-escalate an incident and reduce the amount of trauma a subject may suffer.

Under the current co-responder model, SMART units are dispatched to calls for service, when at least one of the following conditions is met:

- The Subject is violent;
- The Subject is armed, and the public is at risk;
- The call is a Welfare Check;
- The Subject has possibly committed a criminal act due to mental illness;
- The Subject's behavior is high-risk (jumper, barricade, suicide by cop); or,
- Any critical incident where SMART may assist with de-escalation.

Detective Support and Vice Division (DSVD) currently deploy SMART units 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

The SMART unit consists of four watches per day as follows:

- Day Watch 0600 - 1600 hours
- Mid-Day Watch 1000 - 2000 hours
- PM Watch 1530 - 0130 hours
- Morning Watch 2030 - 0630 hours

The additional 23 officers and four supervisors requested by the LAPD will be deployed on the following watches:

- Day Watch: one field supervisor and four officers;
- Mid-Day Watch: one field supervisor and six officers;
- PM Watch: two field supervisors and nine officers; and,
- Morning Watch: four officers.

The Department's expansion has been discussed with the DMH and they have stated that they are seeking budget approval to increase their staffing by an additional seven clinicians and one supervisor. If approved, the new positions would not be created until the County's 2023-2024 budget is adopted in June of 2023.

If approved, the additional DMH personnel will be deployed on the following watches:

- Mid-Day Watch: two clinicians and one supervisor;
- PM Watch: four clinicians; and,
- One clinician will be assigned to the Case Assessment Management Program (CAMP).


Note: The Department has formally requested that DMH support 24-day coverage to match the LAPD's deployment. The DMH has stated that they are committed to our partnership and will work diligently to add an overnight shift. If they are successful in doing so, the deployment above will be amended to reflect overnight DMH support.

Currently, the Department deploys 10 to 12 SMART units per day. The proposed expansion would increase that number to a total of 21 SMART units per day. To support the increase, SMART is also requesting two additional Senior Lead Officers to assist with the heavier call loads within Operations-Valley Bureau and Operations-West Bureau. They will be assigned to day watch hours but will remain flexible to adjust their hours for special projects during the day as necessary.

Additionally, to support the proposed increase of personnel, SMART is requesting a Sergeant II position to be assigned as the Training Coordinator. The Training Coordinator will be assigned to day watch hours and will be responsible for overseeing training and employee development within the command. To handle the increased administrative workload, SMART is requesting a Senior Administrative Clerk.

In total, the expansion will equal 31 Department personnel plus the pending eight DMH personnel. The partnership with DMH and proposed expansion of personnel will maximize efforts to better serve individuals experiencing a crisis while simultaneously providing them with mental health resources.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "MICHEL R. MOORE". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "M" and "R".

MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police