



Transforming Lives & Communities

ACPD Highlights Partnership with Oakland's OK Program

Violence and crime disproportionately affect Black boys in Alameda County, a sobering reality mirrored in national trends. Alameda County Probation is committed to addressing this issue. Through its partnership with the OK Program, the agency aims to empower Black youth with the tools, resources, and opportunities necessary to break the cycle of inequality. Together, they proactively tackle the underlying factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Black youth in the justice system.

The OK Program is a national nonprofit that collaborates with the Oakland Police Department, Alameda County Probation Department, Acts Full Gospel Church, 100 Black Men of the Bay Area, and Oakland Unified School District. Their shared goals, outlined in the OK Program's 2023 Annual Report, include developing leadership and critical thinking skills, promoting academic excellence, reducing incarceration and homicide rates among young African American males, and improving relationships between law enforcement and African American communities.

Since 2021, Alameda County has deployed officers to work alongside Oakland Police Department officers in the program, aiming to positively impact participating youth. Alameda County Probation Officers serve as Pathway Advisors in the OK Program Model, a pilot initiative first launched at the OK Program of Oakland, the organization's headquarters.

ACPD Deputy Probation Officer Ke'ere Lockhart said, "Being a black man born and raised in Oakland, CA, working with the OK Program has been a dream come true." He continued, "When I work with these young men daily, they remind me of myself because we come from similar environments, schools, and family dynamics." He and DPO Brandon Ransburg, both Black men raised in Oakland, share a deep connection with the program's participants. They provide guidance, support, expertise, and resources to youth before entering the justice system, taking a proactive approach to reduce the pipeline to prison that school-aged youth often face.

The OK Program's Education Incentive Rewards Program, supported by Probation, recognizes and rewards academic achievement among program participants. High school graduates are eligible for special perks such as the Annual Grad Bash event, Car Giveaway, and Grad Trip. The program also includes weekly Kic'it sessions, where youth learn from Black male mentors called OK Teammates, discussing topics such as critical thinking, self-awareness, social conduct, self-control, and decision-making.

In addition to these initiatives, program participants engage in the Manhood Development Leadership Academy (MDLA) during the summer, featuring workshops on pathways, employment readiness, emotional intelligence, and interactions with law enforcement. The program's offerings continually expand through collaboration and innovation to serve the needs of Oakland's youth.

ACPD Deputy Probation Officer Ke'ere Lockhart emphasizes the role of Probation in reducing crime among Black male youth, highlighting the importance of Pathway Advisors in guiding young men toward positive post-high school options such as college, trade school, or the military. This guidance is particularly impactful as it comes from DPOs who connect with the youth they mentor on a personal level.

The OK Program recently received news attention when the Golden State Warriors donated \$75,000 to support the efforts of the program to bridge the gap between black boys and law enforcement. Please click the link to see the KTVU2 story related to the OK Program.

<https://www.ktvu.com/news/oakland-program-bridges-gap-between-black-community-and-law-enforcement>