

Oakland County deputies, officers to undergo mental health crisis intervention training

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Oakland County will soon become one of only three counties in the state to be trained by Tennessee-based Crisis Intervention Team, or CIT, which establishes a partnership between law enforcement and mental health professionals.

The first of two CIT training sessions for Oakland County sheriff's deputies and other local law enforcement begins on Monday, May 4 at 1690 Brown Rd., in Auburn Hills. A second training is scheduled for the week of May 18, 2015.

CIT is a nationally recognized community program that is designed to promote positive outcomes during crisis situations.

“Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority received a \$275,000 Jail Diversion grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health earlier this year with the goal of providing CIT training to Oakland County sheriff's deputies, as well as law enforcement representatives from Farmington Hills, Southfield, and West Bloomfield,” stated OCCMHA Executive Director and CEO Willie Brooks.

Deputies who participate in CIT will log 40 hours of mental health training. Classes include information about mental illness and developmental disabilities, opportunities to speak with advocates, individuals with mental illness and their families, and participation in various role-playing scenarios.

“It is well worth mentioning that each of the deputies receiving CIT training at both sessions in May is doing so on a volunteer basis,” said Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard.

Law enforcement agencies throughout the country that utilize CIT have experienced significant reductions in the number of officer and personal injuries, as well as a decrease in arrest rates, Sheriff's Office officials say.

Kalamazoo and St. Joseph are the only communities that have CIT programs in Michigan.

— Staff writer John Turk