

# Strategies for Youth

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



**Strategies for Youth**  
CONNECTING COPS & KIDS®

[www.strategiesforyouth.org](http://www.strategiesforyouth.org)



**OUR MISSION** Strategies for Youth (SFY) is a national nonprofit policy and training organization dedicated to improving police/youth interactions building and reducing disproportionate minority contact.

“Strategy for Youth’s approach connects officers with community based organizations that serve the youth. This makes officers realize there are alternatives to arrest and there are places in even the most challenged communities that are safe havens for youth. When community leaders and police officers talk sense together with some of our city’s most vulnerable youth, the outcomes for public safety improve dramatically.”

— CHIEF CHARLIE BECK, L.A. POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## Dear Friends of Strategies for Youth:

From its inception, Strategies for Youth recognized two fundamental truths. The first is that law enforcement officers have little understanding and no training in the motivation, psychology and life circumstances of youth at greatest risk of encounters with law enforcement; instead, most policing tactics used with youth are appropriated from the adult justice system.

The second is that most youth learn how to interact with law enforcement officers from television, their peers or their parents. Youth are often clueless about the best strategies and behaviors for interacting with police and peers.

Bottom line, police and youth desperately need the tools to pull themselves out of this destructive downward spiral.

Strategies for Youth is proud to have been recognized nationally as the cutting edge developer and facilitator of these tools. When implemented, our *Policing the Teen Brain* training for law enforcement and our *Juvenile Justice Jeopardy* game for youth, have proven to be highly effective in improving understanding and interactions between law enforcement and youth. These interventions reduce the number of incidents of minority youth pushed into the juvenile justice system and incarcerated for either no offense or for non-violent offenses such as trespass, disorderly conduct or disturbing the peace.

We are working hard to answer the increasing number of requests for our services from law enforcement agencies and youth advocates from across the country.

We welcome you to join us to build Strategies for Youth for the future.

Sincerely,

*Stephen A. Landsman*

Chair, Board of Directors

**STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH** is the only national non-profit training and policy organization that exists exclusively to improve police/youth interactions and to reduce disproportionate minority contact. In 2014, the tension and mistrust between police and youth escalated due to events in Ferguson, MD, and Cleveland, OH. Ordinary encounters have become flashpoints for conflict. An undeniable conclusion drawn from the events of 2014 is that addressing police/youth interactions is a necessity. Strategies for Youth (SFY) has demonstrated, through training programs for both law enforcement officers and youth, that de-escalating these encounters is key to positive outcomes for youth and public safety.



# Policing the Teen Brain

*Policing the Teen Brain* equips patrol and school resource officers to build better relationships with youth by learning that the development of the brain during adolescence limits youth from being able to self-regulate in intense situations and predict the consequences of their actions.



The *Policing the Teen Brain* training uses an interdisciplinary approach, based on science and research, to teach officers about the major changes in brain structure and capacity youth experience during adolescence and young adulthood. The training equips officers with practical, applicable skills to promote positive interactions and reduce conflict with youth. Officers learn about brain development during adolescence and how environmental factors affect youths' perceptions of options and responses to authority figures.

Strategies for Youth recognizes that its training will only be effective if it becomes an integral part of an agency's culture. To ensure that this occurs, Strategies for Youth uses a train-the-trainer model. A select group of officers are trained to teach the *Policing the Teen Brain* curriculum to the rest of their agency. Local psychologists are also trained to present the first day's curriculum. Strategies For Youth provides coaching and local support to these trainers for future events as well as all necessary materials.

“This taught me the need to calm down, slow down, to be willing to try different approaches with teens.” — POLICE OFFICER, FRESNO, CA

“Any law enforcement officer involved in dealing with youth should take this training. In my opinion this should be a part of Indiana's law enforcement academy.” — POLICE OFFICER, INDIANA

“This has been my favorite training so far. It shows how invested VBPD is to ensure we are operating the smartest way instead of doing things because that's how it has always been.”  
— POLICE OFFICER, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

“Only in my dreams would I have thought that I would ever see this kind of dialogue with our police... learning about the teen brain and how to be sensitive to it. Amazing!”  
— EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH CENTER, LOS ANGELES, CA

Strategies for Youth provided *Policing the Teen Brain* training to the following agencies in 2014:

- Alabama SRO Association
- Fresno, CA
- Los Angeles, CA
- Sacramento, CA
- Connecticut SROs
- Tippecanoe County, IN, Law Enforcement Agencies
- Nantucket, MA
- New York State SRO Association
- Syracuse, NY School District SROs
- Virginia Beach, VA

# Juvenile Justice Jeopardy

This game teaches youth how to navigate interactions with peers and the police and learn about the short and long term consequences of arrest and court involvement on their educational and employment options.

*Juvenile Justice Jeopardy* is a game derived from the TV show. It uses interactive software to pose 26 questions to young players aged 12 to 18, about juvenile justice, and behaviors and strategies for interacting with authority figures and police. The game is fast-paced and engaging, especially when young players start to realize what they don't know and the risks they have been taking.

*Juvenile Justice Jeopardy* is customized to reflect state law and local juvenile arrest data. The game includes an exercise that teaches youth at what age they may engage in conduct, a “do’s and don’ts” list for interactions with officers, a work sheet that walks youth through the cost of going to court, and an education/earnings chart that demonstrates how earnings increase with educational attainment. In 2014, Strategies for Youth also developed new versions of the game including one to teach school districts’ codes of conduct and one focused on teaching youth about to be released from incarceration how to prepare for future interactions with police and probation officers.

To ensure sustained use of the game, Strategies for Youth trains game leaders to play the game on an ongoing basis. The game is played at community centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, YouthBuild programs, schools, detention and residential facilities, and other youth-serving organizations across the country. *Juvenile Justice Jeopardy* materials include player licenses.

In Indianapolis, Assistant Chief James Waters won the Mayor’s Citizens Award as a result of bringing *Juvenile Justice Jeopardy* to his city and actively playing it and promoting the game throughout Indianapolis. Assistant Chief Waters is the first police officer to win this award.

In 2014, *Juvenile Justice Jeopardy* was played in the following communities and counties:

- Los Angeles, CA
- Sacramento, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Miami, FL
- Indianapolis, IN
- Tippecanoe County, IN
- Boston, MA
- Dorchester, MA
- Leominster, MA
- Roxbury, MA
- St. Paul, MN
- Milwaukee, WI



“If I am raped, will it go on my record?”

— 16 YR. OLD GIRL, BOSTON, MA

“Cops can’t frisk me unless I give them my permission.” — 15 YR. OLD BOY, SACRAMENTO, CA

“Officers don’t have the right to pat down girls. That’s illegal.” — GIRLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department Chief Richard Hite playing *Juvenile Justice Jeopardy* with youth at the Ransburg YMCA in July 2014.

# In The Presence of Children

There are more than 1.7 million American children who have a parent in prison. The number of women in prison has increased by 122% between 1991 and 2007. Many of these mothers and fathers were arrested at home in front of their children during incidents of domestic violence, service of a warrant or during a raid by a SWAT team.

The trauma of witnessing the arrest of a parent can have long-lasting psychological, physical and emotional consequences. This trauma is often manifested in children's future interactions with police. When police arrest a parent and use trauma-informed responses to children who witness it, they help mitigate the pain of the incident and have a positive effect on youth's perceptions of law enforcement.

With support from the Sills Foundation, Strategies for Youth developed materials in consultation with psychiatrists, psychologists, law enforcement and others specializing in childhood trauma. These materials teach officers what behaviors to anticipate from children and youth, and how to best respond to them in a time of crisis.

At the suggestion of many officers, Strategies for Youth also developed cards for parents explaining the impact of exposure to trauma on youths' behaviors. The cards, printed in English and Spanish, emphasize the importance of responding to children's exposure, and enable officers to direct families to local support services for their children.

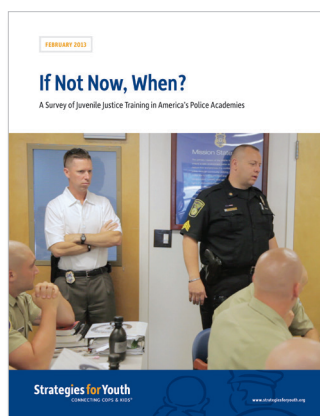
Presently, Strategies for Youth is providing technical assistance to departments adopting these materials in these agencies:

- San Francisco, CA
- Indianapolis, IN
- Cambridge, MA
- Glandorf, OH
- Philadelphia, PA
- Virginia Beach, VA
- Milwaukee, WI



## Policy & Research

Our 2013 report, *If Not Now, When? A Survey of Juvenile Justice Training in America's Police Academies*, continues to be invoked by advocates—and law enforcement executives—to promote more training for officers interacting with youth.



The report is available online at:  
[www.strategiesforyouth.org/news-events/our-publications/](http://www.strategiesforyouth.org/news-events/our-publications/)

## Speaking

In 2014, Strategies for Youth made presentations from Boston to Istanbul, Turkey to spread the word that improving police/youth interactions can be done and is essential to democratic values.

Strategies for Youth made presentations to:

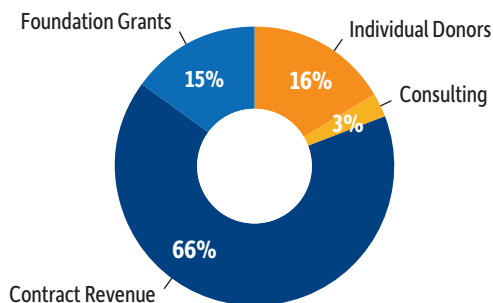
- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice
- The L.A. Gang Violence Prevention & Intervention Conference
- Massachusetts Municipal Police Training Institute
- Partnership for a Safer Cleveland
- Open Society Youth Exchange Youth & Justice Conference
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative Interagency Summit
- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services: Strengthening Connections Summit
- Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission

## Financials

Strategies for Youth has grown over the last year thanks to increased Foundation support which has expanded our *Policing the Teen Brain* trainings for officers and the *Juvenile Justice Jeopardy* game for youth across the country.

### SOURCES OF FUNDING, 2013

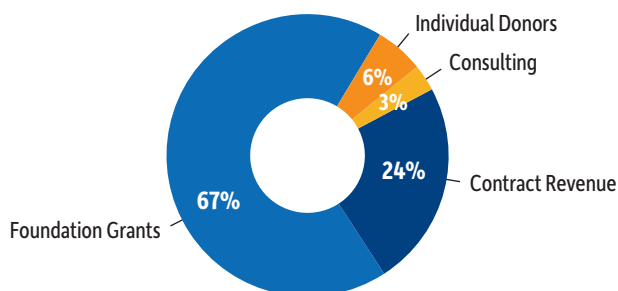
Total Income \$202,369.60



We continue to grow thanks to the increasing numbers of contracts with law enforcement and county agencies, as well as a growing number of foundations and individual donors.

### SOURCES OF FUNDING, 2014

Total Income \$684,684.94





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