



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MAY 19, 2021

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Grant Application for a Public Safety Resilience Behavioral Health Specialist (part-time employee).

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**ISSUE:** Consideration for a new grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, in the amount of \$125,000 to hire a part-time Public Safety Resilience Behavioral Health Specialist for a period of two years.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Receive and approve the grant application; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all the necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is offering a grant opportunity through the FY 2021 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) program to hire a part time Public Safety Resilience Behavioral Health Specialist to assist the Alexandria Police Department's Resiliency & Peer Support Program. This grant funding is used to improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services for law enforcement officers through the implementation of peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention, and other promising practices from wellness programs.

**DISCUSSION:** Currently, the Alexandria Police Department is building a robust Resiliency & Peer Support Program for our employees. The Resiliency & Peer Support Program is a pro-active approach that includes educating new recruits and officers on recognizing and coping with the stress of the job. The program is utilized to assist Department employees who experience stress induced or other emotional problems. We support and encourage employees in securing quality, confidential assistance, making use of any of the services available

when they feel it could benefit them personally and/or professionally; to ensure that any post-incident effects on job performance are identified and alleviated. This is accomplished through our Peer Support Team and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). Our team consists of trained sworn, civilian, & retired sworn employees who provide confidential support to Alexandria Police Department employees. We also provide guidance and resources on wellness and encourage employees to find healthy ways to alleviate stress, to include exercise, proper nutrition, proper sleep, mindfulness, and other healthy ways.

In recognition of the need for support to emergency workers, the Virginia Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has established and maintained a process for crisis intervention and peer support services for emergency medical services personnel and public safety personnel, including statewide availability and accreditation of critical incident stress management (CISM) teams or peer support teams and personnel. The Alexandria's Police Department's participation in peer support services is led by the Resiliency and Peer Support Team Coordinators, designated by the Chief of Police, and is carried out by trained resiliency and peer support team members. Per State code, the Peer Support Team will be headed by a Virginia-licensed clinical psychologist, Virginia-licensed psychiatrist, Virginia-licensed clinical social worker, or Virginia-licensed professional counselor, who has at least five years of experience as a mental health consultant working directly with emergency medical services personnel or public safety personnel. (Code of Virginia §32.1-111.3, subdivision A.13.) The proposed part time position will fill this critical missing piece of our program.

The position we are requesting to implement into our program is a Public Safety Resilience Behavioral Health Specialist. This position will provide behavioral health promotion and clinical services to Alexandria Police Department personnel and their immediate family members under the Resiliency & Peer Support Program. Responsibilities may include provision of training and behavioral health promotion activities, provision of clinical treatment services, and consultation. This position will be responsible for provision of high quality, culturally competent behavioral health treatment and behavioral health promotion services. This position will also be responsible for the following:

1. Develops and delivers specialized training and provides behavioral health and wellness promotion services within the Police Department.
2. Assist the Resiliency & Peer Support Team in providing crisis intervention and crisis management (both for individuals and groups).
3. Consultation with Police Department supervisors regarding behavioral health issues.
4. Performs other duties within the needs of the Resiliency & Peer Support Program.

This position must hold a Master's degree in human services, counseling, social work, or a related field and 5 years of clinical experience with first responders and must be a Virginia licensed professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker or licensed psychologist  
grant will cover the salary and benefits of a part-time employee for two years.

If awarded, this grant will cover the salary and benefits for this position for two years. This time period will allow APD time to evaluate the benefits of having this position.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no required match from the City and, therefore, no additional fiscal impact from this grant. This is a two-year grant.

**STAFF:**

Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager

Michael L. Brown, Chief of Police  
Michele McCarty, Assistant Director, Police Department  
Brenda D'Sylva, Division Chief, Police Department  
Jennifer Simon, Fiscal Officer I, Police Department