



Office of the Governor, Public Safety Office Criminal Justice Division Funding Announcement: *First Responder Mental Health Program, FY2021*

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to provide services and assistance directly to peace officers and first responders to address direct and indirect trauma that occurs in the course of their normal duties either as the result of the commission of crimes by other persons or in response to an emergency.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Provide a confidential, specialized, evidence-based approach to treating and reducing stress for officers and first responders;
- Improve coping mechanism and strategies;
- Increase morale and productivity; and
- Reduce the stigma associated with seeking help by providing safe, effective and confidential services.

Available Funding

Federal funding is authorized for these projects under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) as amended and codified in 34 U.S.C. §20103. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated federal funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

Eligible Organizations

Applications may be submitted by state agencies, units of local government and educational institutions that operate law enforcement agencies employing peace officers under Article 2.12, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and/or first responders under Sec. 421.095, Texas Government Code, including municipalities, counties, independent school districts, universities, public and private colleges and universities, community colleges, and hospital districts that seek to provide direct victim services to first responders.

All applications submitted by local law enforcement agencies/offices must be submitted by a unit of government affiliated with the agency, including an authorizing resolution from that unit of government. For example, police departments must apply under their municipal government, and community supervision and corrections departments, district attorneys, and judicial districts must apply through their affiliated county government (or one of the counties, in the case of agencies that serve more than one county).

Additionally, per 28 CFR §94.112 (b), organizations applying to receive VOCA fund must 1) have a demonstrated record of effective direct services and 2) substantial financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund.

Organizations that have received a 24-month project in FY2020 may not apply for continuation or expansion funding.

Application Process

Applicants must access the Public Safety Office (PSO) eGrants grant management website at <https://eGrants.gov.texas.gov> to register and apply for funding. For more instructions and information, see *Developing a Good Project Narrative Guide*, available [here](#).

Key Dates

Action	Date
Funding Announcement Release	12/13/2019
Online System Opening Date	12/13/2019
Final Date to Submit and Certify an Application	2/27/2020 at 5:00pm CST
Project Start Date	10/01/2020

Project Period

Projects selected for funding must begin on or after 10/01/2020 and expire on or before 9/30/2021. Due to the availability of funding, CJD can no longer support 24 month project periods. Projects may not exceed a 12 month project period.

Funding Levels

Minimum: \$10,000

Maximum: No Maximum

Match Requirement: 20% of the total project

Note: Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for the amount of funding they can responsibly expend in the grant period. CJD will be tracking expenditure rates throughout the life of the grants and may take action to avoid large de-obligations at the end of grant periods.

Standards

Grantees must comply with standards applicable to this fund source cited in the State Uniform Grant Management Standards ([UGMS](#)), [Federal Uniform Grant Guidance](#), and all statutes, requirements, and guidelines applicable to this funding.

Eligible Activities and Costs

The following list of eligible activities and costs apply generally to all projects under this announcement.

Crisis Services:

- Services that respond to immediate needs (other than medical care), emotional, psychological, and physical health and safety including:
 - Crisis intervention services;
 - Hotline counseling;
 - Safety planning; and
 - Emergency legal assistance, such as for filing for restraining or protective orders, and obtaining emergency custody orders and visitation rights.

- Personal advocacy and emotional support - Personal advocacy and emotional support, including:
 - Working with a victim to assess the impact of the crime;
 - Identification of victim's needs and resources;
 - Case management;
 - Management of practical problems created by the victimization;
 - Provision of information, referrals, advocacy, and follow-up contact for continued services, as needed; and
 - Traditional, cultural, and/or alternative therapy/healing (e.g., art therapy, yoga – with appropriate training, certification, or licensure); and
 - Public awareness and education presentations (including the development of presentation materials, brochures, newspaper notices, and public service announcements) in schools, community centers, and other public forums that are designed to inform crime victims of specific rights and services and provide them with (or refer them to) services and assistance.

Peer Support Groups

- Peer-support, including activities that provide opportunities for victims to meet other victims, share experiences, and provide self-help, information, and emotional support.

Professional Therapy and Counseling

- Mental health counseling and care, including, out-patient therapy/counseling provided by a person who meets professional standards to provide these services in the jurisdiction in which the care is administered.

Program Evaluation and Assessment:

- Evaluation of victim services programs and/or assessment of organizational or system effectiveness, needs, and/or appropriate responses.

Legal Advocacy

- Facilitating participation in criminal justice and other public proceedings arising from the crime, including:
 - Advocacy on behalf of a victim;
 - Accompanying a victim to offices and court; and
 - Interpreting for a non-witness victim who is deaf or hard of hearing, or with limited English proficiency.

Program-Specific Requirements

All projects under this funding announcement must meet these requirements:

Cultural competency: Applicants must be culturally competent when providing services to victims. Victim service providers must have the ability to blend cultural knowledge and sensitivity with victim restoration skills for a more effective and culturally appropriate recovery process. Cultural competency occurs when: (1) cultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity are integrated into action and policy; (2)

the service is relevant to the needs of the community and provided by trained staff, board members, and management; and (3) an advocate or organization recognizes each client is different with different needs, feelings, ideas and barriers.

Victim services assessment survey: All recipients of funding under this announcement may be required to participate in a victim services assessment during their grant period, as directed by CJD.

Special certification and requirements: Submission of an application under the First Responder Mental Health Resiliency Program denotes certification and compliance with the following program requirements.

- Notification of Services - The grantee will produce informational materials describing the program and its confidentiality protections and distribute those materials to all employees.
- Confidentiality – (1) Information obtained in the administration of this program is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under Section 784.003, Health and Safety Code, and (2) it will not take disciplinary action or any other form of punishment, including the refusal of a promotion, to discourage or prohibit an officer's participation in the first responder mental health resiliency program offered by the agency.
- Separation of Duties - The agency will not utilize grant-funded personnel (both those funded through OOG and/or match funds) to perform activities related to fitness-for-duty examinations and/or activities involved with officer involved shooting investigations.
- Peer Support Requirements - The agency will utilize a Post Critical Incident Peer as part of their program – not all clients will feel therapy is the right choice for their particular issue. The program will utilize a Peer Support Network model to facilitate communication and continuity of care.
 - Any Post Critical Incident Peer must be certified by the established Post Critical Incident Network at the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT) at Sam Houston State University.
 - A Peer can be certified one of two ways: (1) Have Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) certification as well as Post Critical Incident Seminar (PCIS) Peer certification or (2) CISM certification and the ability to prove substantial experience providing peer support.
 - Peer supporters WILL NOT provide the level of service of a therapeutic professional. Their role will be to refer receptive officers in need of professional help to the program's counselors or to a Post Critical Incident Seminar.
- Service Provision Protocol for Critical Incidents - Prior to commencement of project activities, the agency will have in-place a service provision protocol for critical incidents (e.g. mass trauma, line of duty death, officer involved shooting) and job-related stress services.
- Required Services - The agency will provide access to all services under the program to all personnel that are peace officers and first responders. This may include line officers, command staff, administrators, dispatchers, nonsworn personnel (e.g. crime scene techs), and other nearby law enforcement personnel (e.g. sheriff).

MOUs or MAAs: Applicants must have properly executed memorandums of understanding or mutual aid agreements with outside agencies for any services the applicant cannot or will not be providing in-house. (See the International Association of Chiefs of Police template, [available here.](#))

Eligibility Requirements

1. Projects must demonstrate a record of effective services to victims of crime and support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund.
 - a. A program has demonstrated a record of effective direct services and support when, for example, it demonstrates the support and approval of its direct services by the community, its history of providing direct services in a cost-effective manner, and the breadth or depth of its financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund.
 - b. A program has substantial financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund when at least twenty-five percent of the program's funding in the year of, or the year preceding the award comes from such sources.
2. Entities receiving funds from CJD must be located in a county that has an average of 90% or above on both adult and juvenile dispositions entered into the computerized criminal history database maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as directed in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 66. The disposition completeness percentage is defined as the percentage of arrest charges a county reports to DPS for which a disposition has been subsequently reported and entered into the computerized criminal history system.
3. Beginning January 1, 2020, counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90 percent of convictions within seven business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety. By January 1, 2021, such reporting must take place within five business days.
4. Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting Part I violent crime data to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR). To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must have submitted a full twelve months of accurate data to DPS for the most recent calendar year.
5. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has established a goal set by the Texas Legislature for all local law enforcement agencies to implement and report crime statistics data by using the requirements of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) will collect required crime statistics solely through the NIBRS starting January 1, 2021. Due to the upcoming federal deadline, grantees are advised that eligibility for future grant funding may be tied to compliance with NIBRS. Financial grant assistance for transitioning to NIBRS may be available for your jurisdiction from the Public Safety Office.
6. Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency's custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in

order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States; or (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to OOG and is active until August 31, 2021 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

7. Eligible applicants must have a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number assigned to its agency (to request a DUNS number, go to <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>).
8. Eligible applicants must be registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM) database located at <https://www.sam.gov/>.

Failure to comply with program eligibility requirements may cause funds to be withheld and/or suspension or termination of grant funds.

Prohibitions

Grant funds may not be used to support the unallowable costs listed in the [Guide to Grants](#) or any of the following unallowable costs:

1. Lobbying or advocacy activities with respect to legislation or to administrative changes to regulations or administrative policy (cf. 18 U.S.C. 1913), whether conducted directly or indirectly;
2. The active investigation and prosecution of criminal activity, except for the provision of victim assistance services (e.g., emotional support, advocacy, and legal services) to crime victims, under 28 CFR §94.119, during such investigation and prosecution;
3. Any activities related to fundraising;
4. Capital improvements; property losses and expenses; real estate purchases; mortgage payments; remodeling; and construction;
5. Reimbursement of crime victims for expenses incurred as a result of a crime;
6. Salaries, benefits, fees, furniture, equipment, and other expenses of executive directors, board members, and other administrators (except as specifically allowed);
7. Counseling or treatment for substance abuse (general counseling that includes a component addressing substance abuse is eligible);
8. Victim-offender meetings that serve to replace (or as a part of) criminal justice proceedings;
9. Services to incarcerated individuals;
10. Medical training;
11. Medical care or expenses (except as specifically allowed);
12. Forensic medical evidence collection;

13. Cash payments to victims, gift cards, or fuel vouchers;
14. Creation of a voucher program where victims are directly given vouchers for such services as housing or counseling;
15. Transportation, lodging, per diem or any related costs for third-party participants to attend a training, when grant funds are used to develop and conduct training;
16. Leasing or purchasing of vehicles;
17. Transitional housing - Travel, rental assistance, security deposits, utilities, and other costs incidental to the relocation to such housing, as well as voluntary support services such as childcare and counseling;
18. Research and studies, except for project evaluations under 28 CFR § 94.121(j);
19. Activities that may compromise victim safety;
20. Entertainment, including amusement, diversion, social activities, and any associated costs (i.e. tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) unless there is a clear programmatic purpose and the costs are approved in advance by CJD;
21. Promotional items; and
22. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, state or local law or regulation.

Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by PSO staff members and/or a review group selected by the executive director. PSO will make all final funding decisions based on eligibility, reasonableness, availability of funding, cost-effectiveness, state priorities and strategies, and/or other relevant factors.

Contact Information

For more information, contact the eGrants help desk at eGrants@gov.texas.gov or (512) 463-1919.