



STATE OF VERMONT
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Fiscal Committee members
From: Sorsha Anderson, Staff Associate
Date: August 19, 2021
Subject: Grant Request – JFO #3061

Enclosed please find one (1) item, which the Joint Fiscal Office has received from the Administration.

JFO #3061 – \$49,774 to the VT Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Funds will be used to develop and expand the state-wide support network for first responders. The network will work with trained counselors to focus on first responder physical and mental health. *[Received August 13, 2021]*

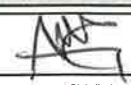
Please review the enclosed materials and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Sorsha Anderson: sanderson@leg.state.vt.us) if you have questions or would like this item held for legislative review. Unless we hear from you to the contrary by September 2, 2021, we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of this request.

State of Vermont
 Department of Finance & Management
 109 State Street, Pavilion Building
 Montpelier, VT 05620-0401

[phone] 802-828-2376
 [fax] 802-828-2428

Agency of Administration

**STATE OF VERMONT
 FINANCE & MANAGEMENT GRANT REVIEW FORM**

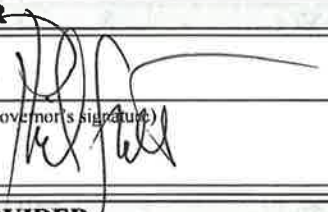
Grant Summary:		The Lamoille County Sheriff's Office has received funding from the US DOJ to develop and expand a peer mentorship/support network focused on wellness (physical and mental) for first responders. This grant is a subaward with DAIL and will enable the support network to work with trained counselors through Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing.			
Date:		7/20/2021			
Department:		DAIL / Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation			
Legal Title of Grant:		Developing and Expanding the Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Network and Mentorship Program			
Federal Catalog #:		16.710			
Grant/Donor Name and Address:		US Dept. of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing, 145 N Street NE, Washington, D.C., 20530			
Grant Period:	From:	10/1/2020	To:	9/30/2022	
Grant/Donation					
	SFY 1	SFY 2	SFY 3	Total	Comments
Grant Amount:	\$0	\$37,331	\$12,443	\$12,443	49,774 4
Position Information:		# Positions	Explanation/Comments		
		0	No positions required.		
Additional Comments:		While the grant was awarded in FY21, the time needed to develop a subrecipient agreement between the Sheriff's office and DAIL			
Department of Finance & Management				(Initial)	
Secretary of Administration		Susanne R. Young <small>Digitally signed by Susanne R. Young Date: 2021.07.30 14:39:50 -0400</small>		(Initial)	
Sent To Joint Fiscal Office				Date	



STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

BASIC GRANT INFORMATION				
1. Agency:	Human Services			
2. Department:	DAIL			
3. Program:	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Employee Assistance Program			
4. Legal Title of Grant:	Developing and Expanding the Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Network and Mentorship Program			
5. Federal Catalog #:	16.710			
6. Grant/Donor Name and Address:	U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 145 N Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20530			
7. Grant Period:	From:	10/1/2020	To:	9/30/2022
8. Purpose of Grant:	To develop and expand a comprehensive peer support network for Vermont first responders			
9. Impact on existing program if grant is not Accepted:	None			
10. BUDGET INFORMATION				
	SFY 1	SFY 2	SFY 3	Comments
Expenditures:	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	
Personal Services	\$0	\$37,331	\$12,443	
Operating Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total	\$0	\$37,331	\$12,443	
Revenues:				
State Funds:				
Cash	\$0	\$0	\$0	
In-Kind	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Federal Funds:				
(Direct Costs)	\$0	\$37,331	\$12,443	100% Federal
(Statewide Indirect)	\$0	\$0	\$0	
(Departmental Indirect)	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Other Funds:				
Grant (source)	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total	\$0	\$37,331	\$12,443	
Appropriation No:	Amount:		\$	
	3460015000		\$37,331	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
		Total	\$37,331	


STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

PERSONAL SERVICE INFORMATION		
11. Will monies from this grant be used to fund one or more Personal Service Contracts? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If "Yes", appointing authority must initial here to indicate intent to follow current competitive bidding process/policy. Appointing Authority Name: Monica White Interim Commissioner DAIL Agreed by: _____ (initial)		
12. Limited Service Position Information:	# Positions	Title
Total Positions		
12a. Equipment and space for these positions:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is presently available. <input type="checkbox"/> Can be obtained with available funds.
13. AUTHORIZATION AGENCY/DEPARTMENT		
I/we certify that no funds beyond basic application preparation and filing costs have been expended or committed in anticipation of Joint Fiscal Committee approval of this grant, unless previous notification was made on Form AA-1PN (if applicable):	Signature: E-SIGNED by Monica White on 2021-05-26 19:56:50 EDT	
	Date: _____	
	Signature: E-SIGNED by Jenney Samuelson on 2021-05-28 16:16:29 EDT	
	Date: _____	
14. SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved:	(Secretary or designee signature) Susanne R. Young <small>Digitally signed by Susanne R. Young Date: 2021.07.30 14:40:46 -0400</small>	Date: _____
15. ACTION BY GOVERNOR		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted	 (Governor's signature)	Date: 8/12/21
<input type="checkbox"/> Rejected		
16. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED		
Required GRANT Documentation		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Dept. project approval (if applicable) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of Award <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant Agreement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Donation (if any) <input type="checkbox"/> Grant (Project) Timeline (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Extension (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Form AA-1PN attached (if applicable)	
End Form AA-1		
(*) The term "grant" refers to any grant, gift, loan, or any sum of money or thing of value to be accepted by any agency, department, commission, board, or other part of state government (see 32 V.S.A. §5).		

E-SIGNED by Tracy O'Connell
on 2021-05-27 08:21:57 EDT

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Joint Fiscal Committee

FROM: Monica White, Interim Commissioner DAIL 

DATE: May 14, 2021

SUBJECT: AA-1 Request for Developing and Expanding the Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Mentor and Support Network

This is a request from the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) to the Joint Fiscal Committee to approve acceptance of the Developing and Expanding the Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Mentor and Support Network grant funds as a subrecipient of the Lamoille County Sheriff's award from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Community Oriented Police Services (COPS).

Background

In September 2020 the Lamoille County Sheriff's Office was awarded grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Community Policing Services (COPS) provided through a federal appropriation by the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA). The grant was awarded through a proposal submitted by the Lamoille County Sheriff's Office that was created through collaboration with the State of Vermont's Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and four other first responder departments in the State of Vermont. The proposal outlines the creation and expansion of a statewide peer support network for first responders that provides skills training and resource building to build awareness and resiliency throughout first responder departments in Vermont.

It is widely recognized that first responders face a higher degree of mental and physical risks in their professions than those experienced by the general public. The demanding nature of their jobs and the stressors that they are exposed to mean that they experience anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at disproportionately higher rates. Furthermore, these stressors may be exacerbated by poor health and lifestyle choices, such as lack of sufficient exercise, sleep, and nutrition. Therefore, a consistent approach to mental and physical wellness is needed that addresses each of these risk factors, and employs a measure of accountability and individual support to achieve these goals.

Peer support and mentorship programs have proven to be highly successful in promoting departmental wellness objectives, and even in preventing physical and mental injuries from occurring in the first place. As such, the Developing and Expanding the Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Mentor and Support Network proposes to develop a statewide coalition of agencies (comprised of police, fire, sheriff, and emergency response) that recruit and train peer mentors within participating departments. Trained peer mentors would provide an anchor of support and knowledge within their embedded departments, and would work with EAPFirst (a

subsidiary of Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing) counselors (counselors with a specific interest and training in working with first responders) for an additional level of support when needed. Furthermore, trained peer mentors would become part of an established network of highly-skilled first responders that are able to work together (along with EAPFirst counselors) as a crisis response team in the event that a participating Vermont agency experiences a traumatic incident.

Term and Amount of Grant

DAIL is a subrecipient of the grant and has been awarded \$49,773.90 for Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing's role in the project. The grant is for a total two-year term for the period of October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2022.

Project Design

To implement this project, a total of five regional peer hubs have been identified in Vermont. Each regional hub is strategically located to provide for state-wide coverage. Those hubs are: (1) Springfield Police Department (covering the southeast); (2) Bennington Police Department (covering the southwest); (3) Lamoille County Sheriff's Department (covering the central area); (4) Williston Fire Department (covering the northwest); and (5) Orleans County Sheriff's Department (covering the northeast). Care has been taken to include a mix of first responder professions when identifying regional hubs so as to diversify the knowledge and expertise of a State-wide peer mentorship and crisis response coalition.

Each of the five regional hubs serve as an anchor from which recruiting and training of surrounding regional departments will occur. Prospective peer candidates will be identified from surrounding local departments within each region, and will be invited for training and participation within one of the local hub departments.

Peer participation will consist of an upfront, intensive individual crisis assistance and group crisis intervention training. Following this initial training, each regional peer group will meet once every other month, for a total of six meetings per year. Each meeting is facilitated by an EAPFirst counselor and is dedicated to continued education on wellness topics, such as nutrition, mental health, exercise, and sleep, as well as peer support skills practice and departmental policy development. Additionally, all five groups will come together once per year for an annual meeting to establish network cohesiveness and further mission goals.

Project Goals

The primary goals for this project are to:

1. Establishment of 5 Regional Peer Support Hubs. A total of 5 regional hubs, which have been identified in the project, will work to recruit eligible peer mentors in surrounding departments within each region to create and participate in peer groups stationed in each of the hubs.

2. Implementation of First Responder Peer Support and Mentorship Program. Program curriculum will be developed to train and educate participating peer mentors during bi-monthly meetings in each of the regional hubs.
3. Integration and Coordination of Peer to Counselor Support Services. Development of systems and processes to coordinate peer support services and referral of first responders from peer to qualified mental health support services.
4. Development of State-wide Peer-led Critical Incident Response Team. Each regional peer group will undergo substantial training and practice in leading a group defusing and debriefing after a major critical incident. With each regional peer group properly trained, a state-wide network of trained peer mentors can be utilized and deployed to any first responder department within the State that has been affected by a critical incident.
5. Development of Vermont First Responder Peer Wellness Toolkit. Each regional hub will be tasked with focusing on specific components and policy objectives that can be combined into a comprehensive wellness toolkit. The kit will include an evaluative component, in which health and behavioral risks can be assessed through use of a departmental survey tool, along with a regional assessment of existing resources and gaps in services. Regional groups will work on model policies that will incentivize behavior change around a variety of identified health risks (such as nutrition, physical activity, and smoking cessation) and offer strategies on supporting departmental health goals.

Project Staffing

The Department is not requesting additional staffing to carry out the requirements of the project.

Contact Person for Project

James Smith
Deputy Director
Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
james.smith@vermont.gov
(802) 279-3713

Developing and Expanding the Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Mentor and Support Network

Cost Reimbursement Subaward Agreement Between

Lamoille County Sheriff's Department

162 Commonwealth Avenue
Hyde Park, VT 05655
DUNS #: 105400860

And

State of Vermont

**Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living,
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation,
Invest EAP**

110 Cherry St., Suite 2-1
Burlington, VT 05401

Under Prime Agreement between the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department and the U.S.
Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
Grant # 2020-MHWXK040
CFDA Number: 16.710

Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act

1. Subaward Period of Performance

The period of performance for of this subaward agreement is 24 months from the cooperative agreement award date (award period 10/1/2020 to 9/30/2022)

2. Scope of Work

This is a Subaward agreement between the State Invest EAP (SUBRECIPIENT) and the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department (SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT). SUBRECIPIENT will use reasonable best efforts to participate in the effort as described in the below Project Description and Attachment 1, the Project Proposal. A copy of the original Award # 2020-MHWXK040 between SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT and the DOJ/COPS is available in Attachment 2. In its performance of work SUBRECIPIENT shall be an independent entity and not an employee or agent of SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT.

3. Project Description

The purpose of this project is to develop, implement, and expand a statewide network of peer mentors to address the stress, anxiety, and other mental health and wellness issues that affect first responders. To address these issues, the project will:

- Coordinate outreach and recruitment of peer mentors

- Establish and implement regional hubs for peer mentorship education
- Plan and coordinate one-to-one peer assistance and group debriefing training
- Coordinate and plan educational presentation on wellness topics
- Encourage and develop peer mentor skills practice
- Establish logistical framework for responding to traumatic incidents using trained peer mentors
- Develop First Responder Peer Wellness Toolkit
- Plan and implement annual meeting of peer mentorship wellness conference

For a detailed description of work to be performed, see the proposal in Attachment 1.

SUBRECIPIENT shall grant to SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT an irrevocable, royalty-free, non-transferrable, non-exclusive right and license to use, reproduce, make derivative works, display, and perform publicly any copyrights or copyrighted material (including any computer software and its documentation and/or databases) first developed and delivered under this Subaward Agreement solely for the purpose of and only to the extent required to meet SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT'S obligations to the Federal Government under its Prime Award.

4. Invoices and Payments

Total Funds Cumulatively Obligated: \$49,773.90

In consideration of SUBRECIPIENT'S performance hereunder, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT agrees to pay the SUBRECIPIENT no more than \$49,773.90 on a cost reimbursable basis. SUBRECIPIENT agrees not to exceed this amount without prior written authorization of SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT shall reimburse SUBRECIPIENT in accordance with the below schedule of invoices and programmatic reporting. All invoices shall be submitted using SUBRECIPIENT'S standard invoice, but at a minimum shall include current and cumulative costs in accordance with the below budget categories and certification as required in 2 CFR 200.45 (a). For your reference Attachment 3 shows an example invoice and financial report.

Budget Categories to be included in invoices are:

- Personnel Costs
- Consultant Services
- Indirect Costs

Schedule of expected receipt of invoices:

- April 15, 2021, covering activities and costs from October 1, 2020 through March 30, 2021.
- July 15, 2021, covering activities and costs from April 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021.

- October 15, 2021, covering activities and costs from July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021.
- January 15, 2022, covering activities and costs from October 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.
- April 15, 2022, covering activities and costs from January 1, 2022 through March 30, 2022.
- July 15, 2022, covering activities and costs from April 1, 2022 through June 30, 2022.
- October 15, 2022, covering activities and costs from July 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022.

The invoice due on September 30, 2022 will serve as the final statement of costs and should be marked "FINAL." Invoices should be paid by SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT within thirty (30) days of receipt. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT reserves the right to reject an invoice, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.305. Payment may be delayed if a written programmatic report (see Section 5) is not received with the SUBRECIPIENT invoice.

5. Reporting

The SUBRECIPIENT will complete a final programmatic report that is provided to SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT within 30 days of the completion of the program.

6. Terms of this Subaward

Any changes to this contract must be agreed to in writing by both the SUBRECIPIENT and SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT.

Each party shall be responsible for its negligent acts or omissions and the negligent acts or omissions of its employees, officers, or directors, to the extent allowed by law.

No-cost extensions require the written approval of SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. Any requests for a no-cost extension shall be directed to the Principal Investigator not less than 30 days prior to the desired effective date of the requested change. In addition, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT may issue non-substantive changes to the Period of Performance and Budget if agreed to in writing by both the SUBRECIPIENT and SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT.

This Subaward assumes the provision of funds under the DOJ/COPS Grant # 2020-MHWXK040, necessary for completion of the outlined Scope of Work covered by this Subaward. If the underlying DOJ/COPS Grant is terminated or modified in any manner that affects the funding for the Scope of Work outlined in this Subaward, SUBRECIPIENT will be notified in writing and all work under this Subaward should cease. Any payments for work already completed by SUBRECIPIENT will be paid according to the terms of this Subaward and to the extent of available funding.

SUBRECIPIENT will be expected to provide a final invoice and programmatic report within 30 days of notice to cease work. In this case, final invoice and programmatic report would cover activities and costs from the first day of the current quarter up to the date of notification to cease work.

7. Certifications and Assurances

By signing this Subaward agreement, SUBRECIPIENT makes the certification and assurances required by Uniform Guidance: 2 CFR 200 et. seq., including:

I. Certification Regarding Lobbying (2 CFR 200.450)

- a. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid, by or on behalf of the SUBRECIPIENT, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, and office or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal Contract, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement.
- b. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or intending to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the SUBRECIPIENT shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," to SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT.
- c. The SUBRECIPIENT shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. The Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

II. Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters (2 CFR 200.213 and CFR 180)

- a. SUBRECIPIENT certifies by signing this Subaward Agreement that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.

III. Audit and Access Records

- a. SUBRECIPIENT certifies by signing this Subaward Agreement that it complies with the Uniform Guidance, will provide notice of the completion of

required audits and any adverse findings which impact this Subaward as required by parts 200.501 – 200.521, and will provide access to records as required by parts 200.336, 200.337, and 200.201 as applicable.

SUBRECIPIENT will also follow 45 CFR Part 75 where applicable.

8. Lamoille County Sheriff's Department Contacts and Support

- **Sheriff – Roger Marcoux**
(802) 888-3502, roger.marcoux@lamoillesheriff.org
- **Community Liaison – Anna Kern, PhD**
(785) 760-2285, anna.kern@lamoillesheriff.org

Matters concerning the technical performance of this Subaward shall be directed to the either the Sheriff or the Community Liaison. Matters concerning the request of negotiation of any changes in the terms, conditions, or amounts cited in this Subaward agreement, and any changes requiring prior approval, shall be directed to either the Sheriff or Community Liaison. Matters concerning invoicing shall be directed to either the Sheriff or Community Liaison.

The SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT Sheriff and Community Liaison are subject to change upon written notification from SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT to SUBRECIPIENT.

9. Signature

By signing this Subaward agreement SUBRECIPIENT certifies that it will perform the work under this agreement in accordance with the terms of this agreement, the applicable terms of the Prime Award, Federal, state and local law, rules and regulations, and the SUBRECIPIENT's policies.

Roger Marcoux
Lamoille County Sheriff's Department

Date



Monica White
State of Vermont
Department Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

5/14/2021

Date

**DEVELOPING AND EXPANDING THE RURAL VERMONT FIRST
RESPONDER PEER MENTOR AND SUPPORT NETWORK**

**Topic: 2020 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA)
Program Application**

Subtopic: Peer Support Implementation

Submitted by: The Vermont Lamoille County Sheriff's Department

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Section A: Issue Identification and Strategy

Section A.1. Statement of Need

Physical Health Risks Associated with First Responder Professions. Policing and emergency services are inherently dangerous. Nationally, over 188,000 first responders are injured on the job each year.¹ Physical hazards include direct exposure and threats to personal safety, long working hours, frequent shift changes, poor sleep, and inadequate nutrition.² As a result, these risk factors account for the lower life expectancy of first responders when compared to the general population.³

Current first responder culture and life-style practices may also not adequately address the physical risks outlined above. Commonplace twelve-hour shifts can lead to poor nutrition choices and excessive fatigue. As a result, first responders experience sleep disorders at nearly twice the rate of the general population.⁴ These risk factors are in turn associated with various co-morbidities, including an increased risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease⁵, as well as psychological health risks like anxiety and depression.⁶

¹ The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Emergency Preparedness and Response. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/epr/risks.html>

² SMHSA, Disaster Technical Assistance Center Supplemental Research Bulletin, First Responders: Behavioral Health Concerns, Emergency Response, and Trauma, May 2018.

³ Violanti, Hartley, Gu, Fekedulegn, Andrew, and Burchfiel, "Life Expectancy in Officers: A Comparison with the US General Population." *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health*, 2013.

⁴ Charles, Burchfiel, and Fekedulegn, Vila, Hartley, Slaven, Mnatsakanova, and Violanti, "Shift Work and Sleep: The Buffalo Police Health Study." *Policing: An international Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 2007.

⁵ Rajaratnam, Barger, Lockley, Shea, Wang, Landrigan, O'Brien, Qadri, Sullivan, Cade, Epstein, White, Czeisler, "Sleep Disorders, Health, and Safety in Police Officers." *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2011.

⁶ Stanley, Boffa, Hom, Kimbrel, & Joiner, Differences in Psychiatric Symptoms and Barriers to Mental Health Care Between Volunteer and Career Firefighters, *Psychiatry Research*, 2017.

Mental Health Risks Associated with First Responder Professions. First responders are also at a higher risk of developing complications related to exposure to psychological trauma.⁷

Stressful incidents, compounded by long-term, repeated exposure can lead to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).⁸ These high levels of anxiety and depression can also lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as substance use, further compounding the problem.⁹

Such conditions, when left unaddressed, can lead to suicide. First responders are 20 percent more likely to complete suicide than the general population.¹⁰ While this figure alone is striking, the risk of suicide is even higher in smaller, rural departments where the suicide rate for officers increases to almost four times the national average.¹¹ This higher risk in smaller departments exposes a critical weakness in those agencies, which are more isolated and often don't have the resources and access to quality services.

Insufficient Resources, Dearth of Programming, Lack of State-wide Coordination of Efforts, and a Ray of Hope. As mentioned above, a major impediment to first responder mental health and wellness services, particularly among small, rural departments, is a lack of access to resources based on geographic location and funding. As one of the most rural states in the nation, this puts Vermont departments at a special disadvantage. Departments in larger metropolitan centers generally have greater access to these resources due to larger budgets and the fact that

⁷ Harley, Burchfiel, Fekedulegn, Andrew, and Violanti, "Health Disparities in Police Officers: Comparison to the US General Population." *International Journal of Mental Health*, 2011.

⁸ Id.

⁹ McCaslin, Rogers, Metzler, Best, Weiss, Fagan, Liberman, and Marmar. "The Impact of Personal Threat on Police Officers' Responses to Critical Incident Stressors. *Journal of Nervous Mental Disorders*, 2006.

¹⁰ https://rudermanfoundation.org/white_papers/police-officers-and-firefighters-are-more-likely-to-die-by-suicide-than-in-line-of-duty/

¹¹ Violanti, Mnatsakanova, Hartley, Andrew, and Burchfiel, "Police Suicide in Small Departments: A Comparative Analysis," *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health*, 2012.

many social support services are based in major population centers. This leaves departments located in smaller, and more isolated communities without access to necessary support.

There are a few individual counseling practices in the State that focus on first responder wellness. However, those practices are small and primarily only serve a few of the larger departments and agencies within the State. The State Police operate a peer support network, but municipal departments want their own program and do not want to follow the dictates of a state agency or one focused solely on policing. This has left rural Vermont first responders with few peer support services.

One bright exception has been services provided by *EAPFirst*, an employee assistance program (EAP) for first responders provided by the State of Vermont's Agency of Human Services in coordination with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT). In addition to providing first responders with access to EAP counseling, the program has recently developed a highly effective rural peer support group in southeastern Vermont. *EAPFirst* reached out to, and assembled, a broad cross section of first responders interested in providing peer support. They ran them all through a 3-day International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) peer support training. A licensed clinician experienced with working with first responders provides bimonthly supervision to the group. The group provides a foundation for a regional response group following critical incidents. It is this program that we seek to both replicate and greatly expand throughout Vermont as the focus of this project.

Section A.2. Deliverables and Projected Outcomes

Establishment of Five Regional Peer Support Hubs. To remedy the disparity of access faced by rural first responders, five regional peer support hubs have been identified within Vermont to

participate in this project. These peer support hubs are law enforcement or emergency response agencies that are geographically positioned within five diverse areas of the State, creating a network of peer support that is easily accessible to first responders throughout Vermont.

Hubs have also been selected based on agency type to provide for a diversity of knowledge and experience within varying first responder professions. As such, two peer support hubs are municipal police departments, one hub is a municipal (career and volunteer) fire department, and two are county sheriff's departments. By also diversifying agency types that are represented within each hub, a state-wide network is created that serves the diverse needs and interests of *all* rural Vermont first responders that seek assistance.

The five peer support hubs are departments that will serve as a central support center within each respective region. Chiefs of peer hubs have committed to supporting the peer services work within their region, and their departments will serve as a regional focal point for meetings, trainings, and coordination within their respective regions. Peer support hubs, with the assistance of the technical assistance provider, will perform outreach and marketing services to identify and recruit peer mentors from regional departments that are located within a one hour driving distance of the regional hub. Once identified, those peer mentors will meet on a consistent basis at the regional hub and will form the basis of the regional peer support and mentorship program team. The five regional peer hub departments, their executive leadership, and the area that they will serve are as follows:

Northeast Regional Peer Support Hub: Orleans County Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Jennifer Harlow. The Orleans County Sheriff's Department will serve as the peer hub for law enforcement and emergency response agencies in the northeast region of Vermont. Agencies served will include municipal police, sheriff's, and fire departments located in Orleans, Essex,

and Caledonia counties. The Sherriff's recruitment efforts for peer mentorship participation will focus on agencies in local surrounding towns, such as Lyndonville, St. Johnsbury, and Hardwick.

Northwest Regional Peer Support Hub: Williston Fire Department – Chief Kenneth Morton.

The Williston Fire Department will serve as the peer hub for law enforcement and emergency response agencies in the northwest region of Vermont. Agencies served will include municipal police, sheriff's, and fire departments located in Franklin, Chittenden, and Grand Isle counties.

The Chief's recruitment efforts for peer mentorship participation will focus on agencies in local surrounding towns, such as Shelburne, Milton, Hinesburg, Richmond, and Colchester.

Central Regional Peer Support Hub: Lamoille County Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Roger

Marcoux Jr. The Lamoille County Sheriff's Department will serve as the peer hub for law enforcement and emergency response agencies in the central region of Vermont. Agencies will include municipal police, sheriff's, and fire departments located in Lamoille, Washington,

Orange, and Addison counties. The Sherriff's recruitment efforts for peer mentorship participation will focus on agencies in local surrounding towns, such as Montpelier, Barre, Middlebury, and Vergennes.

Southwest Regional Peer Support Hub: Bennington Police Department – Chief Paul Doucette.

The Bennington Police Department will serve as the peer hub for law enforcement and emergency response agencies in the southwestern region of Vermont. Agencies will include municipal police, sheriff's, and fire departments located in Rutland and Bennington counties.

The Chief's recruitment efforts for peer mentorship participation will focus on agencies in local surrounding towns, such as Killington, Rutland, Castleton, and Winhall.

Southeast Regional Peer Support Hub: Springfield Police Department – Chief Mark Fountain.

The Springfield Police Department will serve as the peer hub for law enforcement and emergency response agencies in the southeastern region of Vermont. Agencies will include municipal police, sheriff's, and fire departments located in Windsor and Windham counties. The Chief's recruitment efforts for peer mentorship participation will focus on agencies in local surrounding towns, such as Ludlow, Chester, Bellows Falls, and Wilmington.

Implementation of the Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Mentor and Support Network Program. Once peer mentors have been identified and recruited within the local regional agencies, those peer support staff will convene periodically at their respective regional hubs to form a regional peer group. The peer group meetings will occur bi-monthly and will be facilitated by an *EAPFirst* program counselor, who will be a dedicated counselor for the regional peer group. All *EAPFirst* clinicians are licensed psychologists, mental health counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists with strong backgrounds in the treatment of trauma and a dedicated interest and familiarity in working with first responders.

Regional peer group meetings will serve as an opportunity for peer mentors to receive ongoing training in assisting fellow first responders in their respective departments who are in crisis or seeking guidance on a variety of identified wellness topics. Meetings will also serve to establish a connection and rapport with other participating peer mentors in their region, as well as with their respective facilitating counselor. Building trusted relationships between peers and their dedicated counselor within the region will provide for a network of support that can be relied upon when a peer mentor is seeking additional information for guidance or when a referral to counseling or other professional services is needed.

Once the regional peer group is convened, the group will receive an intensive three-day training in peer support skills that will form the foundation of the group's work together. The training will rely on the peer support framework that has been established by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF), and will focus on both individual crisis assistance, which peer members can use within their own home departments, and group crisis intervention skills, which peer mentors can employ together after a trauma has been experienced within an affected agency in Vermont.

Individual crisis assistance training will be provided by an approved ICISF instructor, and will focus on basic crisis communication techniques, recognizing and understanding common psychological and behavioral crisis reactions, building resiliency, when and how to refer to professional services, and the risks of iatrogenic harm.

Group crisis intervention training will also be provided by an approved ICISF instructor and will focus on group crisis intervention skills. Specifically, the training will focus on demobilizations, defusings, and the facilitation of a critical incident stress debriefing (CISD). Skills learned in the group crisis intervention training will ultimately support our creation of a state-wide critical incident response team, comprised of both peers and their local *EAPFirst* counselor, that can be alerted and deployed in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident.

In addition to core crisis intervention skills, continuing wellness education will be a core component of regional peer meetings. Education will focus on wellness topics that have been identified as having a disproportional impact on first responders. Topics covered and skills learned will be tailored to address the physical and mental health risks that have been identified within the community and individual first responder professions.

For example, subject matter experts on the physiological effects of sleep will be utilized to provide an overview of the etiology of sleep problems and successful strategies for first responders to resolve such problems. Nutrition experts will be utilized to provide an overview of nutrition-based health risks affecting the first responder demographic, along with information that highlights the importance of balanced nutrition and ways to incorporate healthful foods into one's diet (especially for those whose life-style does not lend itself easily to getting proper nutrition). Education around physical fitness and incorporation of exercise into one's daily routine will be provided.

Lastly, continuing education on mental health awareness, stress management, and resiliency building and stress inoculation practices will be an ever-present component to the regional peer gatherings. *EAPFirst* counselors that will be facilitating regional peer meetings are especially equipped to provide this emotional support training, as they are well versed in resiliency building practices such as the use of mindfulness in emergency response work. Not only will this continual education be immensely powerful for each peer mentor's own health and wellbeing, it will provide a trove of tools that mentors can rely on in supporting others.

In addition to continuing education on select wellness topics, significant time will be devoted to skills practice and policy development. Skills practice will entail an *EAPFirst* counselor working with each regional peer group on mock crisis intervention scenarios. One-on-one scenarios will be practiced under the SAFER-R model of crisis intervention, wherein peers will work on skills intended to stabilize another first responder in the aftermath of a trauma, normalize their feelings and thoughts, recommend and encourage healthy coping skills, and refer to professional assistance when needed.

Furthermore, group crisis intervention skills will similarly be practiced under the guidance of an *EAPFirst* counselor. Scenarios will be enacted to simulate the response of a peer-led crisis deployment team, in which peer mentors will facilitate a defusing of an affected group, as well as a more in-depth critical incident stress debriefing (CISD). Peer mentors will build and practice skills intended to mitigate the crisis response of individuals within a group, restore healthy functionality for individuals, identify participants who may be struggling, and work with a counselor to refer on to professional care.

Integration and Coordination of Peer Counselor Support Services. A necessary corollary to the implementation of a peer mentor and support program is the integration and coordination of counselor support services. A lynchpin in the education and skills training in the program is the ability of a peer mentor to refer to a counselor or mental health professional. As such, each regional peer group meeting will be facilitated by a licensed *EAPFirst* counselor, who will be available for consultation and follow-up support in the event that a peer mentor needs to refer a colleague for professional assistance.

Research has shown that first responders are more likely to utilize or recommend counseling services if they have a familiarity with the provider. Through the *EAPFirst* counselor's continued interaction with, and facilitation of, the peer group, a level of familiarity and trust will be developed between counselor and peer mentor. The counselor will gain an understanding of the immediate stresses of the job and regional departmental dynamics, while the peer mentor will be better able to understand and trust the work that the counselor provides. In this way, each peer mentor can come to rely on the support and quality of care that is available to them and their colleagues, and will be more likely to employ those services when needed.

Development of Statewide Peer-led Critical Incident Response Team. A key project deliverable will be the development and formation of a statewide peer-led critical incident response team. As previously mentioned, each regional peer group will undergo substantial training. With each regional peer group properly trained, a statewide network of trained peer mentors can be deployed to any first responder department within the State that has been affected by a critical incident.

EAPFirst will work with all regional peer groups to establish a logistical framework for requesting a debriefing from the crisis response team, as well as administrative support and coordination to plan and deliver a critical incident response within an appropriate amount of time. *EAPFirst* is a core program operated by the State of Vermont, which has access to extensive resources to operate a 24/7 critical incident response telephone line, plan a response, and coordinate the presence of an appropriate *EAPFirst* regional counselor along with a peer to facilitate a debriefing.

Development of the Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Wellness Toolkit. The last deliverable, for all regional peer hubs is to work together to formulate a comprehensive Rural Vermont First Responder Peer Wellness Toolkit. Each regional hub will be tasked with focusing on specific components and policy objectives that can be combined into a comprehensive toolkit. The kit will include an evaluative component, in which health and behavioral risks can be assessed through use of a survey tool, along with a regional assessment of existing resources and gaps in services. Regional groups will work on model policies that will incentivize behavior change around a variety of identified health risks (such as nutrition, physical activity, and smoking cessation) and offer strategies on supporting departmental health goals.

Section B: Impact on the Field

Section B.1. Intended Service Area

The intended service area for this project is statewide. As described in the previous section, the implementation of all five regional support hubs, which include membership from surrounding regional departments, will provide for full coverage across the State of Vermont. Each regional peer hub will recruit 15 to 20 peer mentors from the surrounding agencies. The peer mentor and support network will be comprised of 75 to 100 peer mentors from the same number of agencies, which will include municipal police departments, fire departments, and sheriff's departments.

The program's service area and reach will extend beyond peer mentor participation within each regional hub. Education, skills, and policy development will extend to peer colleagues and officers within their respective departments. Each participating department's staff will benefit from their peer mentor's skills, consultation, and policy development for a cumulative reach of over 1,100 first responders within the State.¹² Furthermore, the development of a comprehensive Rural First Responder Wellness Toolkit will be made available to all participating departments, and will be shared online as a model wellness toolkit for other rural departments (nationally and internationally) to adopt or draw inspiration from, for implementing their own wellness programs.

Similarly, the implementation and reach of the critical incident response team will initially be relegated to serving departments in Vermont that have been affected by a recent trauma. However, many regional peer hubs have the advantage of being located close to bordering states. Because of this, trained peer mentors that comprise the critical incident

¹² US Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2008 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies.

response team may be deployed to assist rural departments in adjacent areas of neighboring states.

Section B.2. Data Collection, Oversight, and Performance Measures

Data collection and programmatic oversight will be conducted by the technical assistance provider, the State of Vermont, Agency of Human Service's Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing, the parent organization of *EAPFirst*. As a public entity, *EAPFirst* has the unique capability to collect and track participation and outcomes measures using industry standard technology and data storage that is both digitally secure and HIPAA compliant. *EAPFirst* uses a HIPAA compliant database operated by Caspio, a secure Silicon Valley based data provider that serves Blue Cross Blue Shield and other major U.S. Corporations, and adheres to the highest levels of information security. Staff of *EAPFirst* have extensive experience in managing and working with large databases that are part of the Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing.

Programmatic oversight will be conducted by a combination of *EAPFirst* counselors that oversee each of the respective regional peer hubs, and administrative staff at Invest EAP. *EAPFirst* counselors will work with chiefs within each regional hub to establish priorities, build agendas, and meet targeted goals for the group. Administrative staff at Invest EAP will ensure that data is collected for each performance measure, and will provide logistical support to *EAPFirst* counselors when it comes to establishing meetings, recruiting educational wellness speakers, and coordinating peer group crisis response.

Programmatic performance measures are established below, along with oversight responsibility for each measure, and tool(s) used to achieve each respective measure.

Performance Measure	Oversight	Tool(s)
Number of applications received from peer mentor candidates.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Caspio database.
Number of peer mentors recruited within each regional peer support hub.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Caspio database.
Number of peer group meetings at each hub and number of participants at each meeting.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Caspio database.
Number of peer mentors who have completed ICISF individual crisis assistance and group crisis intervention training.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Caspio database.
Number of peer mentor and counselor consultations.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Caspio database.
Number of recruitment and outreach phone calls, meetings, and messages that have been performed.	Regional hub leadership and Invest EAP administration.	Caspio database.
Number of counseling referrals made by a participating peer mentor.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Peer group survey, Caspio database, and ProtoCall phone intake services.
Number of peer-to-peer consultations, including demographic information such as location and department type.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Peer group survey and Caspio database..
Number of one-to-one counseling sessions provided to staff of a participating department.	<i>EAPFirst</i> and Invest EAP administration.	Caspio database and ProtoCall phone intake services.
Number of CISD's facilitated by crisis support unit, along with information regarding location, department, and incident type.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Peer group survey, Caspio database, and ProtoCall phone intake services.
Number of participants at each CISD, including demographic information regarding profession type.	<i>EAPFirst</i>	Peer group survey and Caspio database.

Section B.3. Marketing and Outreach Plan

Coordination, Outreach and Involvement of Regional Peer Support Hub Chiefs. The Lamoille County Sherriff's Department will serve as the primary grant recipient and will lead outreach activities to involve and coordinate the efforts of each of the other regional peer support hub chiefs. Each chief has already committed to fully participating in this program. Coordination

will ensure cross-learning between the efforts within each regional hub. The Lamoille County Sheriff's office will also administer and oversee the subcontract with the State of Vermont's *EAPFirst* program.

Targeted Recruitment of Peer Mentors. Peer regional hub leadership, with the assistance of regional *EAPFirst* counselors, will work to identify and target prospective peer mentors in departments surrounding regional peer hubs. Peer mentor candidates will be identified by a combination of interest of the candidate and a recommendation from leadership in the department where the peer is located.

Applications will be distributed by regional peer hub leadership to first responder agencies operating within the region. Applications will be sent to leadership of identified agencies surrounding the regional hubs, and will include a description of expectations of peer mentors, instructions on the dissemination of the applications, and a general encouragement for candidates that leadership think would be a valuable addition to the program. Recommendations from leadership are key as it ensures that candidates are in good standing with their departments, and that leadership is supportive of the program. A lynchpin to any successful wellness program is the visible support of leadership in the department.

Education and Training for Town Managers and Selectboard Members. As mentioned above, the key to successful recruitment, retainment, and performance of peer mentors is the continued support of leadership. For municipal police and fire departments, this not only means earning the support of chiefs in participating departments, but that of the town managers and elected officials that oversee those departments. Therefore, the Vermont Lamoille County Sheriff's Department will partner with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), a non-profit organization that serves Vermont's municipal governments, to provide trainings to educate

town managers and selectboard members on the importance of the Vermont peer mentorship program, and how to support participating agencies.

This training will provide a foundation of understanding of the importance of supporting peer mentorship programs. In the same way that towns understand the importance of providing functional equipment like protective vests, we seek to develop their understanding of the importance of physical and mental wellbeing programming. This continued education for managers, and those that procure funds and set budgets for departments, will be a key step in the longer-term viability of the program after initial grant funds have been expended.

Annual Vermont Peer Mentor Wellness Conference. A key outreach and networking tool will be to provide an annual gathering of all peer mentors in the State each year. This will strengthen and retain membership within the program, create a visible media presence that will publicize the program, and incentivize participation by new candidates and agencies in the future. This conference will also serve a dual purpose of bringing together peer mentors from all participating regional hubs, who might not otherwise have any interaction with one another. It will solidify the cohesiveness of the group and provide an opportunity to review mission goals and strategic planning for the future.

Section C: Project Management Plan

Section C.1. Timeline and Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

Timeline for Tasks, Deliverables, and Division of Labor. Below is the quarterly work breakdown structure for the 24-month award performance period. It is broken down by deliverable, tasks associated with each deliverable, and delineated task responsibilities.

	Year 1 Quarters			
	1	2	3	4
Deliverable 1: Outreach and Recruitment				
Regional peer hub leadership and EAPFirst counselors create applications and reach out to prospective peer mentor candidates.				
Review applications and select candidates for participation.				
Coordinate and host educational training for Vermont managers and selectboard members.				
Deliverable 2: Implementation of Vermont First Responder Rural Peer Mentorship Program				
Plan and coordinate a three-day intensive ICISF individual crisis assistance and group crisis intervention training for each regional peer hub.				
Host three peer mentor meetings within each regional hub for the remainder of year one.				
Coordinate and plan wellness speakers for each of the three peer meetings in year one.				
Work with each regional peer group to develop skills practice in individual assistance and group crisis intervention.				
Year 2 Quarters				
	1	2	3	4
Host six peer mentor meetings within each regional hub in year two.				
Coordinate and plan wellness speakers for each of the six peer meetings in year two.				
Work with each regional peer group to develop skills practice in individual assistance and group crisis intervention.				
Deliverable 3: Development of State-wide Peer-led Critical Incident Response Team				
Create critical incident request phone line for departments to request a debriefing.				
Establish logistical framework for responding to CISD requests that integrates EAP procedures with outreach to the peer-led crisis support unit.				
Develop flyer that notifies departments of the peer-led critical incident response team and educates them informs them of how to request a debriefing.				
Deliverable 4: Development of Vermont First Responder Wellness Toolkit				
Work with each regional peer hub on developing material for a First Responder Peer Wellness Toolkit. Individual portions will be allocated across different groups, and will be combined for a final product.				
Compile work product from regional groups and will put together PDF of final Wellness Toolkit for distribution.				
Deliverable 5: Annual First Responder Rural Peer Mentorship Wellness Conference				
Plan and host annual meeting of peer mentors by end of year 2.				
Work with regional peer groups on drafting an agenda and establishing priorities for annual meeting.				

Section C.2. Project-Specific Risks and Quality Control Processes

Recruitment and retainment risk. An identified project-specific risk is the successful recruitment and retainment of peer mentors for the program. The success of the program predominately relies on the identification of high-quality applicants and the continued participation and engagement of those participants with the program. To mitigate that risk, substantial effort has been placed on ensuring support from leadership through training and continued engagement. Furthermore, administrative support from Invest EAP provides a degree of quality control that will ensure the successful tracking of participation and continued logistical support to coordinate meetings and services. A further measure of quality control is the established relationship that Invest EAP already has with municipalities and their law enforcement and emergency services departments. Familiarity with the interworking of departments and their staff are a benefit in gaining access to leadership and promoting the program.

Unforeseen circumstances, natural disasters, and national emergencies. As we have recently seen with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, unforeseen circumstances can be immensely disruptive and suspend normal operations. In the case of an infectious disease pandemic such as COVID-19, core components of the project can be put at risk if groups are discouraged to gather. As a result, Invest EAP has recently instituted full use of tele-counseling capabilities for counselors to provide counseling sessions remotely via teleconference capabilities. Invest EAP uses Zoom, a teleconferencing platform which is HIPAA compliant, confidential, and secure. In the event that groups are unable to gather due to the ongoing social distancing recommendations, or for any other unforeseen reason, Invest EAP has the capability and preparation to complete the

objectives of this project through its teleconferencing protocols. This includes the ability to disseminate this technology and provide it broadly for peers to use with one another.

Section D: Experience and Capacity

Section D.1. Key Staff

Roger Marcoux, Sheriff, Vermont Lamoille County. Sheriff Marcoux is one of the longest serving Sheriff's in Vermont, with almost 20 years on the job. His department is the project applicant and one of the core regional peer support hubs. His 40 years in law enforcement has included a 12-year assignment with the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency, where he was part of a task force investigating drug distribution in large cities like Miami and Los Angeles. He is also fluent in French, and was part of a law enforcement team dispatched to Haiti by the Clinton administration to train local law enforcement on anti-corruption investigations after the 1991 *coup d'etat*.

Mark Fountain, Chief, Springfield, Vermont Police Department. Chief Fountain has over 40 years of law enforcement experience in Vermont, first serving as an officer with Burlington Police, and then later as a lieutenant at Springfield Police. His department is one of the core regional peer support hubs. Chief Fountain is a firm believer in community policing initiatives and strives to build trust between members of the police force and the community. As Chief of Springfield Police Department, he established the "coffee with a cop" program, where local residents and community members could share a cup of coffee and conversation with members of the department.

Jennifer Harlow, Sheriff, Vermont Orleans County. Sheriff Harlow has been working in law enforcement in Vermont for over 20 years. Her department is one of the core regional peer

support hubs for this project. Prior to becoming Sheriff, she served with the Newport, Vermont Police Department where she focused on preventing and investigating crimes against children, and worked toward addressing community issues such as school safety, the opioid crisis, and domestic violence.

Kenneth Morton, Chief, Williston, Vermont Fire Department. Chief Morton oversees operation of the Williston, Vermont Fire Department, and is active in efforts to promote mental health awareness for first responders. His department is one of the core regional peer support groups, and the only such group that is a fire department. His diverse range of skills and connections will provide immeasurable support in broadening a base of trained first responders.

Paul Doucette, Chief, Bennington, Vermont Police Department. Chief Doucette oversees operation of the Bennington, Vermont Police Department, and is supportive of community policing initiatives in Bennington, Vermont. His department is one of the core regional peer support groups. His support and experience as a leader in the law enforcement community will be beneficial in recruitment efforts statewide.

Section D.2. Subcontractors

Steve Dickens, Director, Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing. Mr. Dickens is a licensed psychologist-Master and directs the Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing for the State of Vermont, which includes *EAPFirst*. Invest EAP serves over 160,000 Vermonters, including 1,100 first responders, and over 200 organizations. Mr. Dickens provides logistical support, supervision, and coordination to staff counselors, conducts outreach to organizations across the State, and directs all administrative and clinical aspects of the program. Mr. Dickens is a Visiting Scholar Emeritus with the T.H. Chan Harvard School of Public Health, where he has held an

appointment for the past two decades. He will provide oversight of the data collection and research components of the program.

Tony Parmenter, EAPFirst Counselor, Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing. Mr. Parmenter is an experienced counselor and military veteran. His practice focuses on post-trauma growth, where he utilizes acceptance & commitment therapy (ACT) as a model for mental and physical resilience. Mr. Parmenter will be coordinating the oversight of *EAPFirst* counselors that are assigned to regional peer support hubs for this project. Prior to his work with EAPFirst, he was the lead therapist for the Uniformed Services Program of the Brattleboro Retreat.

Bobby Arnell, Account Manager, Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing. Mr. Arnell oversees the *EAPFirst* Program and provides administrative oversight and logistical support for *EAPFirst* operations. He will provide project management support for implementing objectives and deliverables for this project. Prior to his work with EAPFirst, he was the Director of the Federal Fuel Assistance Program in Vermont. He is also an attorney and graduate of Vermont Law School.

Section D.3. Key Partnerships and Stakeholders

Vermont League of Cities and Towns. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) is a key supportive partner in this project. VLCT is a nonprofit organization that supports Vermont municipal government. VLCT provides support and advocacy for legislation that strengthens local government, and manages comprehensive insurance trusts that provide coverage for municipalities. In conjunction with Invest EAP, the *EAPFirst* program was developed in 2017 to serve local municipal first responders.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
145 N Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20530

COPS

Sergeant Christian Watson
Selectman Eric Osgood
Lamoille County Sheriff's Office
162 Commonwealth Avenue
P.O. Box 96
Hyde Park, VT 05655

Re: COPS Office Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA)
Award Number: 2020MHWXK040
Project Title: Lamoille County Peer Support Project
ORI: VT00800

Dear Sergeant Watson and Selectman Osgood:

On behalf of the Attorney General of the United States, William Barr, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), it is my pleasure to inform you that we have approved your proposal for the Lamoille County Peer Support Project through the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) program in the amount of \$124,194.00. The COPS Office recognizes and appreciates your commitment to this very important initiative.

Contained in this packet is the Award Document, which shows an official award start date of 09/01/2020. The Award Document contains terms, conditions, and requirements for your award. Be sure to familiarize yourself with all terms, conditions, and requirements before signing and accepting your award. A limited number of agencies may be subject to an Additional Award Notification as a result of an ongoing federal civil rights investigation, other award review, or audit of your agency by the U.S. Department of Justice. If applicable to your agency, the Additional Award Notification is included at the end of this letter and is incorporated by reference as part of this letter. In addition, a limited number of agencies may be subject to Special Conditions as a result of high risk designation or other unique circumstances. If applicable to your agency, these Special Conditions will be found in an Award Document Supplement in your award package. **To officially accept the award, electronically sign the Award Document with the Award Terms and Conditions; the Cooperative Agreement that is incorporated by reference into the Award Document; and, if applicable, the Special Award Conditions, High Risk Conditions or both in the Award Document Supplement via the Account Access tab in the COPS Office website at www.cops.usdoj.gov.**

The awarded Government Executive/Financial Officer (GE/FO) will need to establish an electronic signature in NexGen in order to electronically sign important documents in the grant management process and accept the award. Please contact the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770 or send an email to askCopsRC@usdoj.gov to learn more about the award acceptance process and establish e-signatures.

Please note that the Account Access tab will link to additional award acceptance guidance after September 22, 2020. After this date, the NexGen Agency Portal Login will also no longer be available.

Recipients that have not signed the award document prior to September 22, 2020, will be required to complete the award acceptance process and all future award management activities in the Department of Justice's [Justice Grants System \(JustGrants\)](#) which will launch on October 15, 2020. To accommodate this transition, the COPS Office has extended the award acceptance period from 45 to 65 days from the date of this letter.

ADVANCING PUBLIC SAFETY THROUGH COMMUNITY POLICING



A supplemental online award package for FY 2020 LEMHWA award recipients can be found at <https://cops.usdoj.gov/lemhwa>. We strongly encourage you to visit this site immediately to access a variety of important and helpful documents associated with your award, including the LEMHWA Award Owner's Manual which applies to all LEMHWA awards and specifies the terms, conditions, and requirements of your award. If you have any questions about your award, please do not hesitate to call your Program Manager Sarah Estill at 202-307-1533 or Sarah.estill@usdoj.gov.

I want to extend my personal appreciation for your efforts and congratulate you on this award. On behalf of the staff at the COPS Office, we look forward to your progress on this important project.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phillip E. Keith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phillip E. Keith, Director,

Date: 08/13/2020

Additional Award Notification