

## Bureau of Justice Assistance Justice Mental Health Collaboration Program Category 2 Planning Grant - Project Abstract 2019 Application

Colorado has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest prevalence of mental illness and substance use disorder<sup>3</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> highest suicide rate in the nation.<sup>4</sup> It is 15<sup>th</sup> highest in adults with a mental illness reporting they cannot receive the treatment that they need.<sup>3</sup> When individuals cannot obtain timely services, some end up needing higher cost services or having criminal justice involvement.

Over the past seven years, Colorado experienced a precipitous rate increase in drug crime arrests (39%) and felony assault on first responder court filings (29%).<sup>6</sup> Rates for competency evaluations with assault on first responder charges increased by 577%<sup>8</sup> in ten years, suggesting some of these charges involve individuals with serious mental illnesses.

Calls to 9-1-1 present a critical intervention point to reverse these trends. This project will develop integrated dispatch and crisis services responses to mental health related 9-1-1 calls by:

1. Continuing process improvement meetings with dispatch, crisis services and information technology experts to plan and implement integrated, evidence-based responses;
2. Planning and implementing a culture shift in dispatch and crisis services collaboration and establishing mental health first responders as a fourth dispatch option along with traditional law enforcement, fire and EMS;
3. Collaborating with national dispatch and psychiatric organizations to identify or develop effective psychiatric/behavioral health protocols for 9-1-1 call takers in a similar format to the medical protocols that they routinely use;
4. Developing dispatch and crisis services staff training, in collaboration with the Colorado 9-1-1 Training Standards Committee, that includes the following topics: behavioral health warning signs, psychiatric/behavioral health crisis protocols, de-escalation, protocols for transferring or conferencing crisis hotline call takers into dispatch calls, protocols for dispatching mental health first responders, co-responders, or Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained officers;
5. Establishing a legal framework and standards for information exchange between mental health and law enforcement;
6. Developing legally permissible standards based electronic data sharing capabilities and procedures;
7. Exploring use of psychiatric advance directives and Smart911 to expand information sharing permissions;
8. Identifying or developing dispatch and crisis services staff training on stress inoculation, compassion fatigue, workplace environments that minimize secondary trauma and on-going support resources to improve staff retention; and
9. Developing data for system needs analysis and program evaluation.

## Bureau of Justice Assistance Connect and Protect Grant Application Submitted July 2021

The new grant application builds sequentially from the 2019 JMHCP planning grant (award number: 2019-MO-BX-0029) to develop specialized responses for 911 calls involving behavioral health crises.

The applicant agency, the Colorado Department of Public Safety Division of Criminal Justice, will partner with the Colorado 911 Resource Center, Colorado Office of Behavioral Health, Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners, Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention, Colorado Cross Disability Coalition, Mental Health Colorado, Colorado Mental Wellness Network, Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council, and the Colorado Task Force Concerning the Treatment of Individuals with Mental Health Disorders in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System to accomplish the grant goals.

Specifically, this project requests \$440,024 to accomplish the following activities and deliverables planned during the 2019 JMHCP grant:

- A web-based interactive planning process and decision-making tool for region specific specialized responses;
- A specialized response program registry and interactive map;
- Several eLearning courses for emergency responders; and
- State designated JMHCP peer learning sites modeled after the national program.

It will also:

- Explore a voluntary registry for individuals who want information on their disability available to emergency responders to dispatch specialized responses and
- Develop a model peer specialist pilot program, focused on post-crisis peer-led engagement and support services navigation to decrease repeat crisis intervention needs.