



**COLORADO**  
**Department of Local Affairs**  
Division of Local Government

# PEACE OFFICERS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GRANT PROGRAM

## Colorado Revised Statute 24-32-3501

### SMART ACT REPORT

January 4, 2022



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## **SMART ACT REPORT Peace Officers Mental Health Support Grant Program January 1, 2022**

Section 24-32-3501, of the Colorado Revised Statute (C.R.S) requires the Department of Local Affairs, Division of Local Government, provide an update regarding the effectiveness of the Peace Officers Mental Health Support Grant Program in the Department’s annual report as required by the “State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent (SMART) Government Act” part 2 of article 7 of title 2. This document serves as a response to this reporting requirement.

### **Peace Officers Mental Health Support Grant Program (POMH)**

#### **Program Launch and History**

The Peace Officers Mental Health Support Grant was created in the Colorado Senate. Senate Bill 19-091 signed on April 23, 2019 appropriated two million dollars for the program and would be administered by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The Bill required that state and local law enforcement agencies develop and maintain a policy for supporting a peace officer involved in a shooting or fatal use of force, and provide peace officers mental health support. In 2018 the first funding cycle totaling \$1.4 million was awarded to 16 local law enforcement agencies with an average grant amount of \$84,700. After accounting for administrative costs, approximately \$500,000 remained in the fund. Under the initial statute, county sheriff’s offices and municipal police departments were eligible to apply for the POMH grant. On May 20, 2019 HB 19-1244 amended the statute to include other eligible agencies, such as state and higher education law enforcement and peace officer’s organizations. The bill also expanded the allowable uses of the grant funds to include, on-scene response services to support peace officers’ handling of persons with mental health disorders, job-related mental trauma training and education programs and peer support programs.

#### **Program Status**

The appropriation for FY 19-20 and FY 20-21 remained at \$2 million. One funding cycle is conducted each year following the July 1 appropriation. Any funds remaining from the grant cycle are carried over to the next funding cycle. In FY 19-20, 21 applications were received and because of funds carried over from the prior year the program was in a position to award the total amount requested from the eligible applicants, totaling \$2,040,142. As a result of the revised bill HB 19-1244 which expanded eligible agencies, applications for FY 20-21 significantly increased. Seventy-five (75) applications were received requesting over \$6 million. Since the funding amount had not increased an administration decision was made to only fund projects related to peace officers mental health counseling, mental health and peer support training and programs. Out of the 75 applications a 257% increase from the year before, 62 grants were awarded totaling \$1,987,817. These grants will expire March 31, 2023.



## Program Awards

FY 2018-2019	
Archuleta County	\$ 5,000.00
Basalt, Town of	\$ 130,000.00
Carbondale, Town of	\$ 177,000.00
Colorado Springs, City of	\$ 95,160.00
Eagle County	\$ 266,000.00
Garfield County	\$ 168,000.00
Grand Junction, City of	\$ 13,640.00
Gunnison, City of	\$ 80,000.00
Lake County	\$ 45,000.00
Larimer County	\$ 44,950.00
Longmont, City of	\$ 150,000.00
Montezuma County	\$ 12,935.00
Rifle, City of	\$ 6,750.00
Routt County	\$ 20,000.00
San Miguel County	\$ 100,000.00
Woodland Park, City of	\$ 41,680.00
Total	\$ 1,356,115.00
FY 2019-2020	
Arapahoe County	\$ 56,975.00
Aurora, City of	\$ 238,480.00
Boulder County	\$ 225,370.00
Boulder County	\$ 75,000.00
Boulder, City of	\$ 67,600.00
Brighton, City of	\$ 50,000.00
Collbran, Town of	\$ 2,400.00
Douglas County	\$ 93,940.00
Eagle County	\$ 144,833.00
Grand County	\$ 34,000.00
Grand Junction, City of	\$ 25,000.00
Jefferson County	\$ 125,000.00
Littleton, City of	\$ 27,996.80
Louisville, City of	\$ 125,039.33
Mesa County	\$ 10,500.00
Montezuma County	\$ 15,000.00
Montrose, City of	\$ 42,745.44
Ouray County	\$ 93,322.00
Pueblo, City of	\$ 11,440.00
Summit County	\$ 345,500.00
Thornton, City of	\$ 230,000.00
Total	\$ 2,040,141.57



FY 2020-2021	
Adams County	\$ 8,857.00
Alamosa County	\$ 83,000.00
Aspen, City of	\$ 44,000.00
Auraria Campus Police Department	\$ 6,000.00
Aurora, City of	\$ 110,000.00
Bayfield, Town of	\$ 5,500.00
Boulder County	\$ 65,000.00
Boulder County	\$ 95,000.00
Boulder, City of	\$ 30,858.00
Brighton, City of	\$ 10,000.00
Canon City, City of	\$ 24,000.00
Carbondale, Town of	\$ 2,000.00
Colorado Department of Law, Colorado Attorney General's Office	\$ 7,750.00
Colorado Department of Revenue	\$ 20,520.00
Colorado Fraternal Order of Police	\$ 145,000.00
Colorado Springs, City of	\$ 53,055.00
Colorado State Patrol	\$ 120,000.00
Colorado State Patrol Family Foundation	\$ 20,000.00
Commerce City, City of	\$ 26,000.00
Denver, City and County of	\$ 49,460.00
Douglas County	\$ 67,140.00
Eagle County	\$ 15,000.00
Fort Collins, City of	\$ 58,658.00
Fremont County	\$ 6,000.00
Garfield County	\$ 55,800.00
Gilpin County	\$ 26,592.00
Glenwood Springs, City of	\$ 2,700.00
Granby, Town of	\$ 10,000.00
Grand Junction, City of	\$ 25,000.00
Greeley, City of	\$ 17,700.00
Greenwood Village, City of	\$ 20,180.00
Hayden, Town of	\$ 18,500.00
La Plata County	\$ 12,000.00
Lake County	\$ 30,000.00
Lakewood, City of	\$ 79,278.00
Lone Tree, City of	\$ 6,900.00
Longmont, City of	\$ 98,000.00
Louisville, City of	\$ 5,000.00
Mesa County	\$ 4,000.00
Montezuma County	\$ 14,500.00
Morgan County,	\$ 10,000.00
Northglenn, City of	\$ 25,625.00
Otero County	\$ 2,800.00



Parker, Town of	\$ 24,024.00
Prowers County	\$ 16,000.00
Pueblo County	\$ 4,480.00
Pueblo, City of	\$ 9,280.00
Rangely, Town of	\$ 5,000.00
Rifle, City of	\$ 3,000.00
Rocky Mountain Police Chaplains	\$ 15,000.00
Routt County	\$ 9,900.00
Sheridan, City of	\$ 9,450.00
Silverthorne, Town of	\$ 780.00
Steamboat Springs, City of	\$ 5,000.00
Sterling, City of	\$ 4,680.00
Summit County	\$ 46,200.00
Thornton, City of	\$ 161,000.00
University of Colorado Anschutz Police Department	\$ 6,000.00
Westminster, City of	\$ 46,250.00
Wheat Ridge, City of	\$ 40,000.00
Windsor, Town of	\$ 26,400.00
Woodland Park, City of	\$ 18,000.00
Total	\$1,987,817.00

### **Program Effectiveness**

The Statute requires that the SMART Act Report discuss the effectiveness of the program. In addition to the grantees' quarterly reporting requirements they were asked to provide information related to the effectiveness of their projects. Thirty-one (31) grantees responded.

Of the grantees reporting, 61% are using their grants to fund mental health services for their peace officers, 7% are funding on-scene services and 32% are funding both mental health and on-scene services.

### **Mental Health Services**

Good mental and psychological health is just as essential as good physical health for law enforcement officers to be effective in keeping our Colorado communities safe from crime and violence.

During this three-year reporting period grantees were faced with the challenges of COVID-19 which caused delays in many of the peace officers mental health support projects. They also reported 148 critical incidents.

By the grantee's accounts however, this program has nonetheless been very successful. The grant funding has allowed local law enforcement agencies the ability to provide their peace officers the opportunity to receive anonymous counseling beyond the normal EAP programs which often are not familiar with the challenges first responders face. Peer support teams trained with grant dollars were in place as well as counselors and therapists (some funded by the grant program) to assist during critical events, such as the shooting in Boulder.



These mental health support projects have allowed for direct mental health support, wellness webinars, peer support training and critical incident debriefings. These avenues of release for first responders with professional counselors has proven to be invaluable.

Many agencies report that their officers voluntarily took advantage of initial evaluation and a significant percentage continued to meet with clinicians in follow up sessions.

A good example of a program implemented with the dollars provided through this grant is the creation of the Wellness Smart Phone app at a cost of \$30,000 per year. The program went on line in September 2021, and data has been collected for three months. The app has been downloaded 167 times with twenty-one (21) new downloads in the month of November alone. The app has been visited 1,089 times including 184 of those in November 2021.

Across the state peer support teams were utilized and found to be effective in providing emotional support, tools and resources to officers dealing with traumatic events.

Not all peace officers mental health support programs are designed the same way as each local agency understands the needs of their local law enforcement staff and develop their programs accordingly. Mental health counseling, wellness evaluations, summits, trauma training, and peer support training and programs are all elements of mental health support programs.

The tables below show the aggregate number of individuals participating in their local mental health counseling programs.

FY 18-19 Program Start	FY 18-19 Program End	FY 19-20 Program Start	FY 19-20 Program End	FY 20-21 Program Start	FY 20-21 Program End
432	432	377	935	445	1,080

Mental Health Training/Education	Peer Support Program/Training
1300	492

### On-scene Services

The on-scene program pairs law enforcement and behavioral health specialists to intervene and respond to behavioral health related calls for police service. The program and team structure varies among locations to meet the needs of the local community.

Amid the continuing challenges of the pandemic law enforcement continued partnerships with mental health co-responders to implement or continue their on-scene service projects. Some utilized video capability during the height of the pandemic to provide services to those suffering from mental illness. In numerous instances, the preemptive mental health services provided by the team during an initial contact with those in crisis served to avoid escalated behavior and potential criminal charges. In the



Table 1 below is the number of arrests avoided but a few grantees disclosed they did not track this number however, they are confident that the number of avoided criminal charges that are unreported is significant.

The on-scene program also known as a co-responder program, is reported a tremendous success with the partnership of law enforcement and mental health agencies. One benefit of this program is that peace officers obtain vital training from mental health professionals. Another benefit is regional partnerships developed such as the Jefferson County Sheriff’s office, Golden Police department and Wheat Ridge Police department.

Through the on-scene programs, referrals are made to other agencies such as: Gunnison Valley Health ER, Mind Springs, Aspen Hope, Center for Mental Health, Denver Mental Health, and The Action Center, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, West Pines and others which then allows peace officers to respond to other service calls once the scene is safe.

Mental health issues are often the cause of callouts to law enforcement agencies. The POMH grant has been key in allowing grantees to provide a program that involves mental health professionals who are trained to handle these situations. Their involvement has been critical to both the deputies and citizens involved in helping to diffuse and address the respective situations.

Table 1: Reported on-scene calls for this reporting period.

<b>Responses to Mental Health calls</b>	<b>Number of arrests avoided</b>	<b>Referrals made to other agencies</b>
1,757	119	530