



Office of the Governor, Public Safety Office Criminal Justice Division Funding Announcement: *First Responder Mental Health Program, FY2023*

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/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. VOCA funds are made available through a Congressional appropriation to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. 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).

Due to limited resources, priority will be given to applicants that have received three years or less of continuation funding.

Application Process

Applicants must access the PSO's eGrants grant management website at <https://eGrants.gov.texas.gov> to register and apply for funding. For more instructions and information, see the OOG's *eGrants User Guide to Creating an Application*, available [here](#).

Key Dates

Action	Date
Funding Announcement Release	12/13/2021
Online System Opening Date	12/13/2021
Final Date to Submit and Certify an Application	2/10/2022 at 5:00pm CST
Project Start Date	10/01/2022

Project Period

Projects **may not exceed 12 months** and must begin on or after 10/01/2022 and expire on or before 9/30/2023.

Funding Levels

Minimum: \$10,000

Maximum: No Maximum

Match Requirement: None

Note: Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for the amount of funding they can responsibly expend in the grant period. PSO 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 Texas Grant Management Standards ([TxGMS](#)), [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;
- 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.

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 PSO.

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 to perform activities related to fitness-for-duty examinations and/or activities involved with officer involved shooting investigations.
- 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. Entities receiving grant funds must demonstrate a record of effective services to victims of crime and support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund; or substantial 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. Local units of governments must comply with the Cybersecurity Training requirements described in Section 772.012 and Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code. Local governments determined to not be in compliance with the cybersecurity requirements required by Section

2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code are ineligible for OOG grant funds until the second anniversary of the date the local government is determined ineligible. Government entities must annually certify their compliance with the training requirements using the [Cybersecurity Training Certification for State and Local Governments](#). A copy of the Training Certification must be uploaded to your eGrants application. For more information or to access available training programs, visit the Texas Department of Information Resources [Statewide Cybersecurity Awareness Training](#) page.

3. Entities receiving funds from PSO 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. This 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.

Counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90% of convictions within five business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety.

4. Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting complete UCR data and the Texas specific reporting mandated by 411.042 TGC, to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Crime in Texas (CIT) publication. 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 by the deadline(s) established by DPS. Due to the importance of timely reporting, applicants are required to submit complete and accurate UCR data, as well as the Texas-mandated reporting, on a no less than monthly basis and respond promptly to requests from DPS related to the data submitted.
5. 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, 2022 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

6. 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>).

7. 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 or 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. Program income;
15. Creation of a voucher program where victims are directly given vouchers for such services as housing or counseling;
16. 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;
17. Leasing or purchasing of vehicles;
18. 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;

19. Research and studies, except for project evaluations under 28 CFR § 94.121(j);
20. Activities that may compromise victim safety;
21. 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 PSO;
22. Promotional items; and
23. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, state or local law or regulation.

Selection Process

Application Screening: The Office of the Governor will screen all applications to ensure that they meet the requirements included in the funding announcement. Applications that meet those requirements will move forward to the merit review phase.

Merit Review: The Office of the Governor will review applications to understand the overall demand for the program and for significant variations in costs per item. After this review, the Office of the Governor will determine if all eligible applications can be funded based on funds available, if there are cost-effectiveness benefits to normalizing or setting limits on the range of costs, and if other fair-share cuts may allow for broader distribution and a higher number of projects while still remaining effective.

Final Decisions – All Projects: The Office of the Governor will consider rankings along with other factors and make all final funding decisions. Other factors may include cost effectiveness, overall funds availability, PSO or state government priorities and strategies, legislative directives, need, geographic distribution, balance of focuses and approaches, or other relevant factors.

PSO may not fund all applications or may only award part of the amount requested. In the event that funding requests exceed available funds, PSO may revise projects to address a more limited focus.

Contact Information

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