BJA FY23 Connect & Protect: Harrisonburg Police Department Mental Health Diversion Project

## Issue:

- Mental health-related issues are among HPD's most frequent calls for service
- Multiple officer responses multiple hour obligations (up to 72+ hrs for ECOs/TDOs)
- De-escalation and diversion from jail/hospital are priorities for HPD to improve citizen outcomes and service delivery.

## **Co-Response Programs – The evolving best practice nationwide**

• Team officers with mental health professionals in the field for immediate response to mental health-related issues.

BJA FY 23 Connect and Protect: Harrisonburg Police Department Mental Health Diversion Project Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Award

- \$550,000 over three years
- Award Number: 15PBJA-23-GG-02203-MENT
- 20/20/40 % Matching Requirement: In-kind contributions from existing HPD resources

Goal: Improve the diversion of individuals with mental health and substance use challenges from arrest and unnecessary hospitalization and increase access to treatment.

Objectives:

1) Create a new co-response program within the HPD, comprised of one Clinician and one Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP)

2) Expand field-based assessment to better connect individuals to community-based mental health, substance use, and other support services

3) Increase follow-up with individuals released from the crisis assessment center, hospitals, or jails

4) Increase CIT refresher and advanced topics training among HPD officers

5) Expand data tracking, coordination, and utilization across regional justice and mental health partners

## Key Components

HPD MHPs will carry a police radio and, when safe, respond with officers directly to calls. MHPs can self-dispatch or respond to requests for assistance or to referrals from officers.

MHPs will assist officers with field assessment and decision making

Training for mental health professionals and HPD officers Collaboration and partnership with existing community resources:

- Community Services Board
- RCSO Co-Response Unit
- HFD Community Paramedic Program:
- -Programs will compliment and
  - supplement each other
- JMU Co-Responder Program

Develop options for future services

- Navigation Center
- Officer Wellness

Evaluation Process and Program Measures Independent evaluators of the grant project will conduct process and outcome evaluations.

• Dr. Amanda Teye and Dr. Lili Peaslee from JMU will serve as Program Evaluators for the project.

Expected outcomes include:

- Reduction in arrests and emergency department admissions
- Reduced officer time on mental health call for service (MH CFS)
- Increased referrals to community-based services