

# 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.

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## 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



# 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