



CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager **DATE:** March 23, 2020

SUBJECT: Consider Resolution No. 2020-xxx, authorizing submission of the grant application and acceptance of allocated funds if awarded for the FY20 Community Oriented Policing Services Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act Program.

PRESENTER: Jimmy Perdue, Director of Public Safety

SUMMARY:

The Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has announced the FY20 COPS Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) application, which provides funding to governmental agencies to improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services for law enforcement. This is achieved through training and technical assistance and implementation of practices related to peer mentoring mental health and wellness programs. The Police Department will use the grant funds to increase the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services for all law enforcement employees. The mental and psychological health of our employees is paramount in keeping them effective in their jobs serving the community as personnel are exposed to continuous incidents of trauma and stress.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Police Department is seeking authorization to apply for and utilize grant funds offered through the FY20 COPS-LEMHWA application to implement a peer support program that is an extension of our current SHIELD program (Service, Honor, Integrity, Ethics, Life, De-escalation). The peer support program will focus on the wellness of the employees by providing resources and support specific to law enforcement professionals. Law enforcement employees experience cumulative exposure to traumatic events, are prone to social isolation due to shift work and time away from family, are more likely to have relationship, financial and/or legal problems due to the nature and liability of the job, and endure a constantly changing social political climate. Studies indicate exposure to suicide increases the risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior. Job related suicide exposure for law enforcement professionals is unavoidable requiring the department to be reactive to prolonged exposure.

Among police officers the number of suicides is increasing and surpasses that of line of duty deaths. In January of 2018, the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act was signed into law. In March of 2019, the COPS office responded with its report to Congress. Mentioned in this report is the development, implementation, and success of peer supported programs. The mental health and wellness of law enforcement



professionals is a priority of the North Richland Hills Police Department. The healthier our professionals are mentally, emotionally, and physically, the better equipped the police department is to serve our community.

The FY20 COPS-LEMHWA is a two-year award program that will provide up to \$125,000. The funding will support the creation of a full time civilian position, salary and fringe benefits, training expenses, and peer support program implementation expenses. There is no local cash match requirement.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider Resolution No. 2020-xxx