



**SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

**Kenny Winslow
Chief of Police**

Springfield, Illinois - The Springfield Police Department has been awarded \$532,492 from the U.S. Department of Justice for its Community Response Network (CRN) program, an initiative to reduce stress on the police force, create a community mental health program, and relieve the healthcare and judicial systems of unnecessary intervention. The CRN is a partnership between the Springfield Police Department, the City of Springfield, and Memorial Behavioral Health.

“The role and responsibilities of the men and women of the Springfield Police Department continues to grow and evolve,” said Springfield Police Chief Kenny Winslow. “In 2020, the Springfield Police responded to 720 mental health dispatched calls for service, resulting in 570 reports being completed. This grant will allow us to build upon our current mental health partnerships and deploy an innovative co-responder model as we continue to address increasing call volume, while getting our residents the help and services they need in time of crisis.”

Through the partnership with Memorial Behavioral Health (MBH), a Mental Health Professional will be available to respond to mental health dispatched calls with a Springfield Police Officer who is experienced and trained in Crisis Intervention. MBH and the officer will work together regularly to identify individuals through calls for service, officer referrals, citizen complaints or concerns, and hospital admissions, who may have a behavioral health issue and could benefit from the co-responder program. “MBH is excited to further our collaboration with the City and Springfield Police Department as we continue to improve our responses to citizens in need of mental health services,” said Diana Knaebe, MSW, President, MBH.

Sara Anderson, LCSW, MBH Manager of Care Coordination and Complex Care said, “Police officers are often the first point of contact for those experiencing a traumatic event or a behavioral and emotional issue or crisis. This partnership will allow our trained mental health professionals to assist our officers and community quicker with a goal of creating a more sustainable pathway to support and treatment. This immediate response, along with ongoing training and education for behavioral health professions and officers, in addition to the community, will assist us in expanding community-based approaches, providing point-in-time intervention, aiding us in making advancements in how we as service providers and a community are addressing social determinants of health and growing behavioral health needs.”

The City of Springfield applied for funding from the Department of Justice in 2021 and received notification late December of the award. The City Council will vote to accept funding in early February with the program rolling out late fall of 2022.

“Funding for programs like this is critical for a municipal government and its police force,” stated Mayor Jim Langfelder. “Across the U.S. policing is strained, especially in the area of recruitment. However, through programs like CRN, it shows our officers we understand their daily demands and are looking at innovative ways to assist them in the field and in partnership with the private sector. I am appreciative to the City staff and Memorial Behavioral Health for their time and effort in securing this important funding to improve public services.”

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