

Law Enforcement–Mental Health Learning Sites

Jurisdictions across the country are exploring strategies to improve the outcomes of encounters between law enforcement and people with mental illnesses. As a growing number of communities develop or enhance their comprehensive police-mental health collaboration (PMHC), many agencies are struggling with the planning process and how to tailor successful implementation strategies from other jurisdictions to address their own distinct problems and circumstances.

In an effort to expand the knowledge base for law enforcement agencies interested in starting or enhancing a PMHC, the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, with assistance from a team of national experts and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), selected six police departments to serve as national law enforcement–mental health learning sites. These learning sites represent a diverse cross-section of perspectives and program examples and are dedicated to helping other jurisdictions improve their responses to people with mental illnesses. The original six learning sites, selected in 2010, are the Houston (TX) Police Department, the Los Angeles (CA) Police Department, the Madison (WI) Police Department, the Portland (ME) Police Department, the Salt Lake City (UT) Police Department, and the University of Florida Police Department. In 2017, due to the success of the program, four new sites were added, including the Arlington Police Department (MA), the Gallia, Jackson, Meigs Counties Sheriffs’ Offices (OH), the Madison County Sheriff’s Office (TN), and the Tucson Police Department (AZ).

University of Florida Police Department

Total number of agency personnel: 135

Sworn: 88 **Civilian:** 47

Total population served: 80,000 students, staff, faculty, and visitors

Jurisdiction and state: University of Florida

Program Highlights

- Coordinates among many campus entities involved with student and faculty wellness
- Features on-site support during incidents with trained university officers and crisis intervention consultants
- Provides comprehensive training, including:
 - Intensive 40-hour mental health and crisis intervention team (CIT) training for all sworn officers
 - Annual QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention (Suicide Prevention Resource Center training)
 - Seminars on multicultural and diversity issues
 - Online training for communicating with distressed persons (At Risk-Kognito training)
 - Advanced training on threat assessment and intervention (Gavin DeBecker & Associates training)
- Responds to youth in crisis from K-12 through university-age students due to a K-12 Developmental Research School on campus.

The University of Florida Police Department (UFPD) is a campus law enforcement agency that has, for the last two decades, incorporated mental health crisis training into its in-service training programs for all sworn personnel. This training, conducted with the involvement of staff from the University of Florida Counseling and Wellness Center, has served as a cornerstone of the department’s specialized response to people in mental health distress. Since 2004, UFPD officers have also participated in CIT programs and have collaborated with the counseling center’s staff to formalize the way on-call crisis intervention consultants (CICs) respond to people in mental distress who reside in on-campus housing.