



# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Edward D. Reiskin  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Susan E. Manheimer  
Interim Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** 2020 Law Enforcement Mental Health  
and Wellness Grant

**DATE:** October 19, 2020

City Administrator  
Approval

Date

Nov 19, 2020

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Approve A Resolution: 1) Authorizing The City Administrator Or Designee To Accept And Appropriate One Hundred Twenty-Four Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty-Seven Dollars (\$124,887) To The Oakland Police Department For A Two-Year Law Enforcement Mental Health And Wellness Act (LEMHWA) Grant From The US Department Of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (DOJ COPS) To Purchase And Install Mental Health And Wellness Software Applications And Training For Sworn and Professional Staff; And 2) Waiving The City's Advertising/ Bidding And Request For Proposal Requirements For The Proposed Purchase.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Approval of the resolution accompanying this report will allow OPD and DOJ COPS to enter into a grant agreement in the amount of \$124,887 via funding from the Law Enforcement Mental Health And Wellness Act (LEMHWA), to support OPD's ongoing efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of their employees in providing "Wellness on Demand." Specifically, grant funds will cover the following investments:

- Contracts with two wellness application providers for staff to use on their smartphones; the apps are specifically designed for law enforcement, customizable for OPD's needs, and offer analytics on take-up rates and other critical data, while maintaining privacy for users.
- Overtime for two key staff to ensure 1100 OPD staff get these cutting-edge apps installed on their phones, and to conduct training on how to use the technology.
- Marketing, printing, and office supply expenses related to advertising the app technology to staff.

The grant term is from September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2022.

## **BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

Law enforcement personnel (sworn officers, dispatchers and operations support staff), are tasked daily with addressing the most urgent and often dangerous events in Oakland

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communities. Calls for service are often rapidly evolving and have a high potential for danger. Police personnel routinely respond to trauma-inducing events. The acute, chronic and vicarious trauma over the course of a career in law enforcement can often lead to negative mental health impacts. Years of exposure to trauma often leads to psychological and physical problems including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and substance abuse. Unsurprisingly, unmanaged stressors from policing and related work impacts staff wellbeing, their families and ultimately the safety of the communities they serve. In 2018 a survey of 8000 law enforcement personnel across the United States revealed that on-the-job stress impacted their mental health. Further, 90% of respondents report that law enforcement culture creates a stigma preventing officers from seeking help.<sup>1</sup>

The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act<sup>2</sup> of 2017 (LEMHWA) was signed into law in January 2018. This legislation recognizes that law enforcement agencies need and deserve support in their ongoing efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of their employees. Good mental and psychological health is just as essential as good physical health for law enforcement personnel. Health and wellness needs going untreated can result in serious chronic health problems such as elevated rates of cardiovascular disease and cardiac risk factors in current and retired officers. Debilitating and sometimes fatal mental health issues affect police personnel as well as their loved ones.

OPD is no exception to the stressors that affect the law enforcement community or the tragedies that may ensue if members do not seek help or are unaware of the signs of distress. OPD has faced several losses in recent years including:

- two officer suicides;
- two suicides of members' spouses;
- four deaths of officers while on patrol;
- a near death auto collision that has left a young officer incapacitated;
- the aftermath of the Ghostship Fire where officers and forensic staff processed a horrific scene, where 36 people lost their lives.

Many sworn and professional staff alike have been deeply affected by scenes of violence and death in Oakland, the loss of friends and co-workers. Additionally, the recent shift in leadership that culminated with the termination of the police chief caused additional stress for OPD personnel.

OPD is actively working to embrace and cultivate a culture of wellness to help combat the stressors and adverse health effects associated with law enforcement. In recent years OPD has created a Professional Development and Wellness (PDW) Unit, acknowledging the need for robust support services for those working in law enforcement. While this investment has produced some positive results with respect to employee wellness, substantial gaps remain. A 2018 survey of 845 OPD members revealed that wellness activities were limited and the use of protocols for addressing organizational stress or concerning behaviors was substandard. The survey, which was done via OPD's Collective Healing initiative (funded by the US Department of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/i-team-nearly-1-in-5-cops-has-considered-suicide-amid-stigma-around-mental-health-issues/1817436/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ113/PLAW-115publ113.pdf>

Justice via the International Association of the Chiefs of Police) found that members felt OPD's policies only marginally supported mental health and wellness.

In early 2020, the DOJ COPS office released a Request for Proposal (RFP) grant program, soliciting proposals for their LEMHWA Grant Program, which focused on supporting agencies engaged in promoting wellness and peer support services to staff. On August 13, 2020, OPD learned that its application for a two-year, \$124,887 grant had been approved.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

While OPD is proud of the work of the PDW Unit<sup>3</sup>, there is recognition that all the needs are not being met. OPD needs to enhance its ability to ensure each member has access to a variety of wellness resources. OPD's vision for the next stage of peer support is clear: *wellness on demand for any member who wants or needs it*. OPD seeks for all staff to understand that accessing wellness tools for support is part of their job and relates to their ability to effectively serve the community. As new challenges such as COVID-19 upturn lives and communities, OPD recognizes the need to improve online and remote access to information and solutions. In an era of smart phone technology, PDW wants to utilize various smart-phone-based software applications ("apps") that will provide needed resources at the push of a button. By investing in technology solutions tied to smart phones, OPD will further infuse and expand opportunities to access wellness in convenient, private, and easy-to-access manners.

### ***Headspace App***

Headspace is a technology company and the name of the app that helps users to meditate and better manage stress to improve health and happiness. Headspace is easy to use and offers a suite of unique attributes aligned with the needs of sworn officers, including:

- gamification techniques to keep the user engaged (a proven technique of health and fitness apps);
- techniques to urge the user to continue with guided meditations;
- a user interface that allows for short segments, valuable for officers with limited time for focusing on mental health;
- themed meditations for new users to build familiarity;
- breathing techniques for sleep and finding focus;
- mindfulness workouts (stress relief, awareness and performance); and
- an "SOS Section" which offers help with "intense experiences;"

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<sup>3</sup> The PDW provides mental health resources, physical fitness programs, financial wellness classes and workshops, mindfulness training, yoga, regular communication and a quarterly newsletter, personal development emails sharing podcasts, and cultural awareness programs. There is a designated quiet Wellness space where members can meditate, pray or participate in yoga classes or take a moment of respite to recover from an on-duty incident, three private lactation rooms, and various health and wellness resources.

### ***CordicoShield***

The CordicoShield App is recognized as the industry leader in wellness technology for first responders, and offers several components that are in line with the needs of OPD.

CordicoShield offers the following features:

- CrisisAlert, Officer Wellness Toolkit, Therapist Finder and Anonymous Self-Assessments, Chaplain support; can sync previously existing/utilized mental health resources and services;
- One touch dialing so the user is instantly connected to a “lifeline” with local and national suicide and substance abuse hotlines; contact information for members of the Peer Support team; and
- Ability to connect to additional resources through links for health, nutrition and fitness (e.g.; SugarWOD, GuardianNet) and for individuals to track their own progress

Finally, OPD will also invest in financial management apps to complement the services offered by CordicoShield and Headspace.

### ***Sole Source Purchase***

Oakland Municipal Code Section 2.04.051.B. permits the City Council to waive the request for proposal/qualifications (RFP/Q) requirements upon a finding that it is in the best interest of the City to do so. Staff recommends that it is in the best interests of the City to waive the RFP/Q process because both CordicoShield and HeadSpace offer unique products uniquely suited to the mental health needs of OPD personnel.

### ***LEMHWA Grant Objectives:***

- Purchase, install and utilize the CordicoShield, Headspace, and financial management apps on mobile devices to connect 1100 members of OPD to a variety of wellness services detailed above;
- Ensure all app users have access to training on how to use the apps and provide regular training opportunities; and
- Survey staff to assess value-add of wellness apps and develop a plan to institutionalize apps across the Department

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Table 1 below outlines the spending plan over the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years, based on quotes received by the vendors and estimated training hours required to implement the project.

*Table 1: LEMHWA Grant Spending Plan*

<b>Item</b>	<b>FY* 20-21 Cost</b>	<b>FY 21-22 Cost</b>
CordicoShield – 1 year contract for 1100 licenses	\$38,500	\$38,500
HeadSpace - 1 year contract for 1100 licenses	\$11,000	\$11,000
Financial Management apps (TBD**) - 1 year contract for 1100 licenses	\$2,500	\$2,500
Program Coordinator OT*** (60 hours over 2 years)	\$3,775	\$778
Officer OT (60 hours over 2 years)	\$4,460	\$914
Marketing, printing, office supplies	\$5,480	\$5,480
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$65,715</b>	<b>\$59,172</b>
<b>Total over 2 years</b>	<b>\$124,887</b>	

\*FY = Fiscal Year; \*\*TBD = to be determined; \*\*\*OT=overtime

All of the DOJ COPS (LEMHWA Grant) revenues will be allocated to the Department of Justice (2112); Training Org (103430); Project (TBD); Special Operations Program (PS09), as illustrated below.

<b>Fund Source</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2112	103430	TBD	PS09	\$124,887

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

There was no required outreach beyond standard Council agenda noticing.

### **COORDINATION**

OPD consulted with the Budget Office and the Office of the City Attorney in the development of this report and accompanying resolution.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** This project will support Training overtime expenses related to implementing the Wellness on Demand project.

***Environmental:*** None

***Race and Social Equity:*** The work that will be done under this grant program is of strong interest to Oakland's families and communities, as law enforcement who address their wellness needs will more effectively support the public and provide better law enforcement services. All Oakland residents and visitors benefit from improved policing services. OPD hopes that this support will provide improved police support for disadvantaged communities most in need of support police support services.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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For questions regarding this report, please contact Lieutenant Casey Johnson, Training Division, at (510) 777-8764.

Respectfully submitted,



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