



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2017.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince William County

Program Title: Wellness & Resiliency

Program Category: Health and Human Services

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Christopher E. Martino

Title: County Executive

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **2017 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION – BRIEF SUMMARY**

With the alarming trend of mental health, diabetes, obesity, and other health concerns related specifically to first responders nationwide, Prince William County sought to provide employees with the tools necessary to recognize, combat, and ultimately prevent these wellness-related issues. In response to several difficult years within the Police Department, as well as the Department of Fire and Rescue, the Police Department's Wellness & Resiliency Unit was established in 2016 and given a mission to assist employees in maintaining and/or improving their overall wellness by providing a multi-faceted approach that offers educational opportunities, peer fitness support groups, and a variety of other tools.

Prior to the implementation of the Wellness & Resiliency Unit, the Police Department began coordination of a county-wide Health and Wellness Fair in conjunction with other County agencies. The goal was to move toward a culture of awareness of healthy lifestyles in the workplace by providing educational opportunities, hands-on experiences, and small group presentations to address a large array of health and wellness-related topics for all employees.

Continuing in this forward-thinking trend, the County recognized the importance of providing public safety staff with easily-accessible, quality mental health care in a way that both protected confidentiality of staff while also providing strong opportunities for rapport-building and law enforcement cultural awareness by the mental health provider. The Police Department, in partnership with the County's Department of Fire and Rescue and Public Safety Communications, developed an idea for a Public Safety Resilience Program. The program would be a stand-alone unit within the County government. While the County does have an established Employee Assistance Program, this PSRP is offered in conjunction with the EAP services. This idea was implemented by the County in September of 2016.

As the County and the Department have a goal of focusing on opportunities that are inclusive of all aspects of wellness, the Wellness & Resiliency Unit is also responsible for overseeing a robust volunteer

Chaplain Program, the Department's Peer Support Team, and the Peer Fitness Advisor Team. All of these teams together have the tools to address a variety of wellness-related issues for staff including spiritual, social, and physical wellness.

## **2017 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION – SHORT OVERVIEW**

With the alarming trend of mental health, diabetes, obesity, and other health concerns related specifically to first responders nationwide, Prince William County sought to provide employees with the tools necessary to recognize, combat, and ultimately prevent these wellness-related issues. In response to several difficult years within the Police Department, as well as the Department of Fire and Rescue, the Police Department's Wellness & Resiliency Unit was established in 2016 and given a mission to assist employees in maintaining and/or improving their overall wellness by providing a multi-faceted approach that offers educational opportunities, peer fitness support groups, and a variety of other tools.

Prince William County leaders recognized the importance of providing public safety staff with easily-accessible, quality mental health care in a way that both protected confidentiality of staff while also providing strong opportunities for rapport-building and law enforcement cultural awareness by the mental health provider. County leaders, in conjunction with the Police Department, Department of Fire and Rescue, and Public Safety Communications, developed an idea for a Public Safety Resilience Program. The program would be a stand-alone unit within the County government. While the County does have an established Employee Assistance Program, this PSRP is offered in addition to the EAP services. This idea was implemented by the County in September of 2016.

The program is held up by several pillars to include the Wellness & Resiliency Unit housed within the Police Department, the Health & Safety Unit housed with the Department of Fire & Rescue, and the Public Safety Resilience Center. All of these teams together have the tools to address a variety of wellness-related issues for staff including spiritual, social, physical and mental health.

## **2017 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION – THE PROBLEM/NEED**

With the alarming trend of mental health, diabetes, obesity, and other health concerns related specifically to first responders nationwide, Prince William County sought to provide employees with the tools necessary to recognize, combat, and ultimately prevent these wellness-related issues. In response to several difficult years within the Police Department, as well as the Department of Fire and Rescue which included 3 line of duty deaths, 4 active duty member suicides, and one retiree suicide, the Police Department's Wellness & Resiliency Unit was established in 2016 and given a mission to assist employees in maintaining and/or improving their overall wellness by providing a multi-faceted approach that offers educational opportunities, peer fitness support groups, and a variety of other tools. The program is focused on addressing all aspects of wellness to include emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and occupational.

## **2017 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

With the alarming trend of mental health, diabetes, obesity, and other health concerns related specifically to first responders nationwide, Prince William County sought to provide employees with the tools necessary to recognize, combat, and ultimately prevent these wellness-related issues. In response to several difficult years within the Police Department, as well as the Department of Fire and Rescue, the Police Department's Wellness & Resiliency Unit was established in 2016 and given a mission to assist employees in maintaining and/or improving their overall wellness by providing a multi-faceted approach that offers educational opportunities, peer support groups, and a variety of other tools.

The Police Department's Wellness & Resiliency Unit supervisor is responsible for overseeing the coordinated efforts of all wellness initiatives. This supervisor not only manages the Chaplain Program, the Peer Support Team and the Peer Fitness Team, but also acts as a liaison to the County's Public Safety

Resilience Program. The Unit also designs and distributes a quarterly wellness-related newsletter based on topics pertinent to public safety.

Prior to the implementation of the Wellness & Resiliency Unit, the Police Department began coordination of a county-wide Health and Wellness Fair in conjunction with other County agencies. The goal was to move toward a culture of awareness of healthy lifestyles in the workplace by providing educational opportunities, hands-on experiences, small group presentations, and keynote speakers to address a large array of health and wellness-related topics for all employees in an effort to deliver practical information, as well as to highlight County resources. The first Wellness Fair was held in November 2014 and has continued to be held each year thereafter.

Continuing in this forward-thinking trend regarding holistic wellness for employees, the County recognized the importance of providing public safety staff with easily-accessible, quality mental health care in a way that both protected confidentiality of staff while also providing strong opportunities for rapport-building and law enforcement cultural awareness by the mental health provider. The Police Department, in partnership with the County's Department of Fire and Rescue and Public Safety Communications, developed an idea for a Public Safety Resilience Program. The program would be a stand-alone unit within the County government and not report up the chain of command to any of the involved Department heads. This structure would create more comfort with employees regarding confidentiality of treatment. Each of the three Departments would be assigned a behavioral health specialist and a director would oversee the program. While the County does have an established Employee Assistance Program, this PSRP is offered in conjunction with the EAP services. This idea was implemented by the County in September of 2016 and has met with positive feedback to this point.

The idea was implemented by the County in September of 2016. Since that time, three of the four staff positions have been filled to include the Director and a behavioral health specialist for the Police

Department and one for the Department of Fire and Rescue. The County is currently actively searching to fill the fourth position, which will then be assigned to work with the Public Safety Communications staff. Both therapists currently on staff have begun meeting with staff, building rapport, and learning the culture of each agency. The therapists have participated in training, shadowed recruit classes, participated in ride-alongs with officers, and conducted meetings/training for various units. The two therapists, along with the program director, have begun meeting with clients through numerous referral options.

As the County and the Department have a goal of focusing on opportunities that are inclusive of all aspects of wellness, the Wellness & Resiliency Unit is responsible for not only acting as liaison for the Public Safety Resilience Program, but it also manages a robust volunteer Chaplain Program, the Department's Peer Support Team, and the Peer Fitness Advisor Team. All of these teams together have the tools to address a variety of wellness-related issues for staff including spiritual, social, and physical wellness.

The Department's Peer Fitness Advisor Team is responsible for meeting with staff in a group setting to provide training on fitness and nutrition. They also meet one-on-one with individuals who have an interest in goal-setting, program design, and accountability partnership. The Police Department team has partnered with the Department of Fire and Rescue team to efficiently and effectively train in a collaborative environment and maintain the highest standard by utilizing cutting edge trade information and techniques.

As has been practice for years, the County continues to mandate age-based physical check-ups for all public safety staff. These physicals include vision and hearing screenings, pulmonary testing, EKG monitoring, blood pressure check, cholesterol screening, weight/body fat, and blood work to test glucose and hormone levels.



As a good majority of the Police Department staff is younger in age (just out of college, single, newly married, and/or young families), there was recognition of the need to provide support in the area of financial wellness. Staff set up the “Total Money Makeover Sharing Group,” an email-based group that is open for all County employees. Participants receive weekly emails which include tips on managing finances/paying off debt, success stories from other group members, and suggested reading material on financial management. To date, the group has grown to over 1,000 members and paid off over \$7 million in debt.

Another valuable wellness-related tool, and part of the County’s overall focus on employee well-being, is the Police Department’s Peer Support Team. When the department suffered their line of duty deaths and suicides over the past four years, the Peer Support Team was instrumental in reaching out to staff and providing support at a level that was comfortable for employees. In response to those difficult times and recognizing the need, the department has grown the team from 4 up to 20 diverse employees, both sworn and civilian, with an end goal of growing the team to 30.

As stated above, the overall goal of the Wellness & Resiliency Unit is to provide employees with the tools necessary to recognize, combat, and ultimately prevent wellness-related issues through the use of a multi-faceted approach that offers educational opportunities, peer support groups, and a variety of other means. The County aims to offer inclusive support to public safety personnel covering all aspects of wellness to include physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and social. Through a coordinated effort, the above programs have been implemented and are proven successful. Continuing forward, more program growth is planned to include allowing public safety personnel time for physical exercise, as well as increasing the variety of wellness-related training available to staff.



## **2017 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION – USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The County's wellness initiative is utilizing a variety of technologies to assist with implementation of the various programs. The intranet is widely utilized to advertise wellness-related events to County employees such as the County Health & Wellness Fair, Medical Screening Schedules, and intra-departmental Fitness Challenges.

A technology-based company, Corehealth, developed a software program that the County is using to manage and track fitness challenges. This program allows employees to sign up, log in their daily fitness activity, and compare their daily status with other teams from across the County.

The Public Safety Resilience Program will be utilizing a stand-alone medical record-keeping system called Valant. This will enable them to keep records necessary for professional and ethical standards while maintaining client confidentiality, ensuring that the record will not be co-mingled with other personnel data within the County.

## **2017 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION – PROGRAM COST**

The main cost associated with implementing a program such as this is in the staffing. The Public Safety Resilience Program is staffed with 4 full-time positions to include a Director and 3 Behavioral Health Specialists. A separate office space and software program must be utilized for this program to ensure confidentiality of clients.

The Police Department has 1 full-time supervisor dedicated to managing its wellness efforts. All other wellness-related teams (Peer Support and Peer Fitness Advisor) are part-time and in addition to other duties performed. Chaplains are part-time volunteers.

Training must be budgeted if outside vendors and trainers are utilized. Training for staff must also be taken into consideration. For example, Peer Fitness Advisors are certified personal trainers. Peer

Support Team members also attend training which may or may not cost money, depending on the host agency.

## **2017 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION – RESULTS/SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM**

### Public Safety Resilience Program

The Police Department Behavioral Health Specialist was hired in January 2016. As of that time, he has conducted 31 presentations to Department Units/Squads. He has participated in 7 ride-alongs with different officers on varying shifts and in varying districts in an effort to get to know the staff and learn the Police Department culture. He has conducted 3 individual consultations and received 3 referrals from supervisors. He has also received 4 referrals from officers initiating assistance for themselves. Fourteen wellness checks have been conducted. The Program Director and both Police Department and Department of Fire and Rescue Behavioral Health Specialists have conducted two trainings for staff at the request of unit supervisors. Having this resource in place for officers has already proven to be valuable and we will continue to grow this program.

### Chaplain Program

Both the Police Department and the Department of Fire and Rescue currently have 7 active chaplains each. The team liaison officers foster an environment of cooperation, maintaining an open line of communication, assisting with on-call coverage, and sharing of training and ideas. Chaplains are active with employees and can typically be seen walking through the stations, bringing detectives homemade muffins, participating in ride-alongs, and taking part in other Department events. Many times throughout the previous year, chaplains were on ride-alongs with officers when calls came in where a chaplain was needed to include a detective suicide and a homicide. Because the chaplains take such an interest in staff and have spent time building rapport with officers, they are trusted and valued confidants.

#### Peer Support Team

Since 2014, the team has responded to approximately 16 call-outs involving a variety of issues including officer line of duty deaths, officer suicides, and other emotionally charged events. On average, the team receives about 3 referrals per month. These referrals typically come from a supervisor or co-worker who is concerned about an employee, whether they are having a hard time at work or at home. The number of officers who reach out to team members for assistance themselves is on the rise.

#### Peer Fitness Advisor Team

The Peer Fitness Advisor Team continues to grow as the County's wellness initiatives are implemented. Peer Fitness Advisors in the past month have assisted squads with wellness and stress management training, provided fitness/nutrition training to the Department's Explorer Post, coordinated a Department-wide fitness challenge, and are in the process of planning numerous other events for the year.

#### Total Money Makeover Sharing Group

This County-wide email-based group has grown to over 1,000 members. To date, the members of that group have paid off over \$7 million in debt. The County now provides financial educational materials to employees through this group. The group founder also provides financial training to each of the Police Department and Department of Fire and Rescue recruit classes.

## **2017 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION – WORTHINESS OF AWARD**

This program offers an innovative solution for upgrading the working conditions and level of training for public safety employees. It promotes intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in addressing shared problems. This program is a ground-breaking initiative implemented by Prince William County in response to nationwide concerns regarding public safety employees and their overall wellness. While some other localities may address one issue or another, this is a comprehensive program through a coordinated effort that focuses on all aspects of wellness from mental health to physical to spiritual to financial to social.