



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield

Program Title: Community Education About Mental Health Emergency Response Services

Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Melissa K. Ackley

Title: Prevention Services Manager

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Kelly Fried

Title: Executive Director, Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services

Signature: Kelly Fried

2025 VACo Achievement Award Entry: *Educating The Community About Mental Health Emergency Response Services*

Executive Summary:

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Between 2022 and 2024 major enhancements were made to the continuum of mental health emergency response services at the county, regional, state and national level as well as to the processes for accessing these services. While these changes were profound and resulted in increases to both efficiency and appropriateness of service delivery, much of the public, and many local mental and physical health providers, and stakeholder groups remained unaware of these changes. Chesterfield County Government developed a multifaceted campaign to educate the community about the continuum of local and regional responses available to support people experiencing mental health emergencies. The creation of this campaign filled a gap in community education related to enhanced and new mental health emergency responses in our community including 9-8-8, mobile crisis response and mental health/police co-response.

The Problem:

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Between 2022 and 2024 major enhancements were made to the continuum of mental health emergency response services at the county, regional, state and national level as well as to the processes for accessing these services. Progress included:

- Establishment of 9-8-8 as the national suicide and crisis lifeline

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- Creation of regional 9-8-8 call centers in Virginia that can provide a continuum of services including talk intervention and mobilization of regional mobile crisis response teams
- Creation of a Mental Health and Police Co-response (CORE team) in Chesterfield County to provide mobile emergency mental health response
- Change in Chesterfield County dispatch processes related to mental health emergencies

While these changes were profound and resulted in increases to both efficiency and appropriateness of service delivery, much of the public, and many local mental and physical health providers, and stakeholder groups remained unaware of these changes. Existing campaigns did not cover the full continuum of services available in our County.

Description of the Program

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Chesterfield County Government developed and implemented a multi-faceted campaign to educate the public and stakeholders about the continuum of services available in our county to support people experiencing a mental health emergency. This campaign ran from May 2024 (Mental Health Awareness Month) through September 2024 (Suicide Awareness Month).

The campaign included:

- Community Training Events
 - May 17th Building Resilience Is Community Endeavor training at Brightpoint Community College in partnership with Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition

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- May 30 – presentation on de-escalation, dealing with people in crisis, 988 as a resource- Chesterfield County Officers of Election
- June 5-6 – presentation at Police Academy on suicidality, MH awareness, resources (988), and dealing with suicidal individuals
- September 25th Coffee and Conversation for parents in partnership with Chesterfield County Public Schools
- September 30th Chesterfield County's Response To Mental Health Emergency workshops offered twice- once in person at a library and once virtually
- Mental Health Resource Fair
This event for the public took place on May 14th 2024 at a Chesterfield County Public Library. Participants had the opportunity to interact with a variety of public sector mental health resources and participate in workshops related to recognizing and responding to mental health emergencies, and the services available through Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services.
- Sharing videos related to local response initiatives
[Celebrating a Decade of CIT video](#)
[Exploring CCPD's impact video.](#)
- Media Campaign
 - Media Release
 - Digital ads
 - Billboards
 - Sponsored Story on local news channel
 - Social Media

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- [Interview on local news](#)
 - [Staffed Call 12 help lines at local news](#)
 - [Earned News Coverage](#)
 - [Podcast](#)
 - [Happening In Chesterfield Newsletter](#)
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- Information displays and material dissemination at local middle and high schools, public libraries, community colleges, Department of Social Services, Health Department, recreation centers, libraries, primary care offices and pediatricians' offices. These included rack cards, brochures, magnets, pens and cell phone wallets.
 - Ad at local mall
 - Added components related to new and enhanced services to existing mental health awareness and suicide prevention training curriculum.

The Cost of the Program:

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Staff Time	Staff time from all agencies was provided a no charge to this coordinated project
Paid Media	\$5000
Mall Ad	\$295
Print Products and promotional items	\$3300
Billboards	\$0 (gratis)

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Local Newspaper ad	\$0 (gratis)
Total	8,595

Staffing

Chesterfield County’s campaign to educate the community about the enhanced continuum of services to support people experiencing a mental health emergency is an outstanding example of an innovative initiative that promotes intergovernmental and cross-sector cooperation and coordination to meet a gap in available resources. The campaign was led by Chesterfield County Mental Health in collaboration with Chesterfield County Police Department and Chesterfield County Communications and Media. Chesterfield County’s Library, Parks and Recreation, Health Department, Department of Social Services and Public School System were all implementation sites for this campaign. Additional partners included the Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition, Brightpoint Community College and local medical providers.

Program Results:

Chesterfield County and the Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition achieved our goal of increasing awareness about the enhanced continuum of emergency mental health responses in our community.

Highlights of the reach of our campaign include:

- Over 400 people participated in workshops related to the enhanced continuum of services
- Over 15,000 print products and promotional items distributed

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- Media campaign reach of over 153,000
- 15% increase in calls to 9-8-8 from our locality from August 2024 (before our heavy media campaign) to September 24

This campaign reached over 300,000 people with information about local and regional resources for mental health emergencies and increased the capacity of providers and educators to further share the information with those they serve. The creation of this campaign filled a gap related to comprehensive education about the continuum of local and regional emergency mental health resources.

Innovation

This program demonstrated innovation by taking a multi-faceted approach to promoting the full continuum of mental health emergency response services in our County. While many localities likely relied on 9-8-8 toolkits developed by federal and state agencies to share information about recent changes to the mental health emergency response system, Chesterfield County went well beyond that by also sharing information about regional mobile crisis response teams, Chesterfield's Mental Health and Police Co-response (CORE team) and changes in changes in Chesterfield County dispatch processes related to mental health emergencies. This information was shared in a multitude of ways including community training events, a mental health resource fair, videos, media campaign, information displays, material dissemination, ad at a local mall and mental health awareness curriculum enhancement.