



PRESS RELEASE

Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office Receives Funding Award to Implement a Crisis Call Diversion Program

(FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS) – The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office is pleased to announce that an important new pilot project is now operational: the Crisis Call Diversion Program (CCD). FBCSO received a grant award for this project in the amount of \$349,616 under the FY 2022 COPS Implementing Crisis Intervention Teams, funded through the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). This generous award has allowed FBCSO to partner with the local mental health authority, Texana, to establish the CCD, which embeds mental health professionals in our 911 call center to assist in answering low-risk mental health calls that do not require a law enforcement response.

The objective of the CCD is to provide immediate professional mental health dialogue with persons or family members dealing with a crisis in which counselors may assist where the circumstances are non-life-threatening. A crisis call may be diverted to professional counseling or referred to a service provider. Where an emergency exists, crisis calls are dispatched to first responders.

Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office has partnered with Texana since 2015 with the implementation of the Crisis Intervention Team, followed by the Co-Responder Program where Texana behavioral health professionals ride with a member of the Crisis Intervention Team. The addition of the CCD augments these programs and provides additional support to community members who live with mental illness through more

appropriate and proactive response that reduces the need for a law enforcement intervention.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's office worked with the Houston Police Dispatch Center, reviewing their framework to understand how to create something similar that would fit County needs. The team of stakeholders from both Texana and the Sheriff's Office reviewed data provided by FBCSO's Dispatch Center, Crisis Intervention Team, and the Fort Bend Behavioral Health Department. This helped to identify which calls would be considered low risk and safe for behavioral health call takers to assist.

The grant funds two positions for personnel provided by Texana. Each employee goes through training with Texana as well as additional training provided by law enforcement. This training gives the mental health professional an understanding of the type of training law enforcement officers complete that covers de-escalation and overall response to a person in crisis. In addition to the required Law Enforcement training Texana Care Coordinators bring over 20 yrs of experience that includes training in Applied Suicide Intervention, Crisis Intervention, Coping Skills training and much more.

FBCSO is grateful for the generous support from the U.S. DOJ COPS office and local stakeholders for making this project possible and looks forward to serving our community members experiencing a mental health crisis through the Crisis Call Diversion Program.

"The CCD exemplifies our commitment to community well-being, demonstrating that through collaboration and innovation, we can provide enhanced and compassionate support to those navigating mental health crises," said Sheriff Eric Fagan. "Together, we forge a path towards a safer, more resilient Fort Bend County."

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About the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office was founded in 1837 and is the largest and most diverse law enforcement agency in Fort Bend County. The Sheriff's Office has over 900 employees, including 615 sworn peace officers and 22 reserve volunteer deputies dedicated to protecting and serving nearly 900,000 Fort Bend County residents. Among the 10 fastest-growing counties in the nation, Fort Bend covers 885 square miles and includes 21 unincorporated communities.

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