



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Procedure Number: 23-51

Effective Date: 09/13/2019

Revision Date: NEW


County Administrator

SUBJECT: **TRAUMATIC EVENT COUNSELING FOR PEACE OFFICERS**

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: **HUMAN RESOURCES**

I. STATEMENT

As required by Arizona Revised Statutes ("A.R.S.") § 38-673, Pima County provides a program for certified peace officers exposed to traumatic events, while in the course of duty, which may require traumatic event counseling by a licensed mental health professional (LMHP). The benefits are designed so that the employee may obtain employer-paid mental health counseling for up to twelve (12) visits within one year of the first visit and up to an additional twenty-four (24) visits if qualified.

II. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Certified Peace Officer:** A peace officer certified by the Arizona peace officer standards and training board.
- 2.2 **Human Resources:** The Pima County Department responsible for the administration of traumatic event counseling for peace officers as required by statute.
- 2.3 **Licensed Mental Health Professional (LMHP):** A licensed psychiatrist or psychologist who is responsible for treatment plan development and implementation.
- 2.4 **Traumatic Event Counseling:** Professional counseling services provided by a LMHP.
- 2.5 **Traumatic Event:**
 - a. Visually witnessing the death/maiming or immediate aftermath of such a death/maiming of one or more human beings;
 - b. Responding to or being directly involved in a criminal investigation of an offense involving a dangerous crime against children as defined in A.R.S. § 13-705;
 - c. Requiring rescue in the line of duty where one's life was endangered;
 - d. Using deadly force or being subjected to deadly force in the line of duty, regardless of whether the peace officer was physically injured;
 - e. Witnessing the death of another peace officer while engaged in the line of duty; or,
 - f. Responding to or being directly involved in an investigation regarding the drowning or near drowning of a child.

III. COUNSELING OPTIONS FOR PEACE OFFICERS

Peace officers who have experienced a qualifying traumatic event, as defined under 2.5 above, are eligible for traumatic event counseling with a LMHP and may:

- A. Select their own LMHP; or,
- B. Choose a LMHP from the County's contracted list

Though not part of this program, Pima County's Employee Assistance Program ("EAP") also provides Traumatic Event Counseling. Please see AP 23-9 for information on EAP Traumatic Event Counseling services.

IV. PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING TRAUMATIC EVENT COUNSELING

Peace officers involved in a traumatic event who wish to pursue traumatic event counseling with an LMHP, under the parameters of this program, shall submit a Traumatic Event Verification Form to their Appointing Authority or designee. Upon receipt of the completed Verification Form, peace officers will submit a copy of the completed form to the Human Resources Occupational Medical Manager.

V. PEACE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Peace officers shall obtain written verification of their eligibility for traumatic event counseling using the procedure stated in section (IV) above before seeking LMHP counseling services as part of this program.
- 5.2 Prior to their first visit with a LMHP, peace officers shall provide the Human Resources Occupational Medical Manager with a copy of the completed Traumatic Event Verification Form.
- 5.3 Peace officers will make reasonable efforts to arrange treatments so as to not unduly disrupt County and department operations.
- 5.4 Peace officers will submit all LMHP billing invoices promptly after its receipt to the Human Resources Occupational Medical Manager.

VI. DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 Within two (2) business days of receipt of a Traumatic Event Verification Form the department shall complete and return the Verification Form to the requesting peace officer.
- 6.2 The department is responsible for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of peace officers submitting Traumatic Event Verification Forms and/or receiving treatment.
- 6.3 The department will make reasonable efforts to allow peace officers time away from work to attend treatment.
- 6.4 The department may not require a peace officer who is receiving treatment to use their accrued sick or annual leave, or compensatory time, if the peace officer leaves work to attend a treatment visit.
- 6.5 The department shall not directly contact a LMHP to request information on peace officer treatment. If information is needed, the department shall contact the Human Resources Occupational Medical Manager.

VII. COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 As part of this program, the County shall pay for up to twelve (12) initial visits of licensed counseling, including counseling provided via telemedicine. If the LMHP determines that additional visits of licensed counseling are needed beyond the initial twelve, and that the additional visits are likely to improve the peace officer's conditions, the County shall pay for up to an additional twenty-four (24) visits, if the visits occur within one year after the first visit.
- 7.2 If the LMHP determines that the peace officer is not fit for duty, the County must ensure the peace officer has no loss of pay and benefits for up to thirty (30) calendar days per incident after the date the LMHP determined the peace officer is not fit for duty if all of the following apply:
- a. The peace officer is unable to work light duty or the County does not offer a light duty option;
 - b. The peace officer has exhausted sick, annual, or other leave that is provided as part of the peace officer's benefits package;
 - c. The peace officer elected Short-Term Disability Benefits, but is not eligible to receive Short –Term Disability benefits; and,
 - d. The County does not have a supplemental program that provides pay and benefits after the occurrence of a traumatic event (for the purposes of this paragraph, a supplemental program that provides pay and benefits after the occurrence of traumatic event does not include a supplemental benefits plan established pursuant to section A.R.S. § 38-961 or presume compensability under the workers' compensation benefits established pursuant to A.R.S. § 23-901.01).
- 7.3 The County shall pay the LMHP pursuant to the Schedule of Fees (Fixed by the Industrial Commission of Arizona). Payment by the County does not create a presumption that a claim is compensable under workers' compensation.
- Human Resources Workers' Compensation is responsible for coordination of ICA and/or workers' compensation status.*
- 7.4 The County shall report the following to the Arizona Department of Administration on or before September 1, each year:
- a. Total number of peace officers who participated in the program;
 - b. Average number of visits per peace officer;
 - c. Average number of months that a peace officer participated in the program;
 - d. Average number of days a peace officer missed work;
 - e. Total number of peace officers who participated in the program and filed a workers' compensation claim, with the number of claims approved and denied;
 - f. Total amount of work missed by a peace officer who participated in the program and how missed work was provided for by the employer or through employee benefits;
 - g. Total number of peace officers who participated in the program and received additional visits beyond the initial twelve; and,
 - h. Total number of peace officers who were deemed not fit for duty by a LMHP.