



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Procedure Number: 23-52

Effective Date: 09/13/2019

Revision Date: NEW

  
County Administrator

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SUBJECT: **TRAUMATIC EVENT COUNSELING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES**

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DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: **HUMAN RESOURCES**

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## I. STATEMENT

As required by Arizona Revised Statute ("A.R.S.") § 38-672, Pima County provides a program for public safety employees 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 per year.

## II. DEFINITIONS

### 2.1 **Public Safety Employee:**

- a. An individual who is a member of the public safety personnel retirement system or the corrections officer retirement plan;
- b. A probation officer, surveillance officer or juvenile detention officer who is employed by this state or a political subdivision of this state. (Does not include peace officers or firefighters.)

2.2 **Human Resources:** The Pima County Department responsible for the administration of traumatic event counseling for public safety employees as required by statute.

2.3 **Licensed Mental Health Professional (LMHP):** Licensed counselor, therapist, or social worker with training and expertise in treating trauma, or a licensed psychologist.

2.4 **Traumatic Event Counseling:** Professional counseling services provided by a LMHP.

### 2.5 **Traumatic Event:**

- a. Visually witnessing the death or maiming or visually witnessing the immediate aftermath of such a death or maiming of one of 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; or,
- c. Requiring rescue in the line of duty where one's life was endangered.

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### III. COUNSELING OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES

#### Traumatic Event Counseling with an LMHP

Public safety employees 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

Public safety employees 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, public safety employees will submit a copy of the completed form to the Human Resources Occupational Medical Manager.

### V. PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Public safety employees 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, public safety employees shall provide the Human Resources Occupational Medical Manager with a copy of the completed Traumatic Event Verification Form.
- 5.3 Public safety employees will make reasonable efforts to arrange treatments so as to not unduly disrupt County and department operations.
- 5.4 Public safety employees will submit all LMHP billing invoices promptly upon 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 public safety employee.
- 6.2 The department is responsible for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of public safety employees submitting Traumatic Event Verification Forms and/or receiving treatment.
- 6.3 The department will make reasonable efforts to allow public safety employees time away from work to attend treatment.
- 6.4 The department shall not directly contact a LMHP to request information on a public safety employee's treatment. If information is needed, the department shall contact the Human Resources Occupational Medical Manager.

**VII. COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 7.1 The County shall pay for up to twelve (12) visits of licensed counseling, including counseling provided via telemedicine.
- 7.2 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.*

- 7.3 The County shall report the following to the Arizona Department of Administration on or before September 1, each year:
- a. Total number of public safety employees who participated in the program;
  - b. Average number of visits per public safety employee;
  - c. Average number of months that a public safety employee participated in the program;
  - d. Average number of days a public safety employee 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; and,
  - f. Total amount of work missed by a public safety employee who participated in the program and how missed work was provided for by the employer or through employee benefits.