



Ohio

**Office of
First Responder
Wellness**

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
First Responder Wellness, Recruitment,
Retention & Resiliency

2022

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline: June 17, 2022

OHIO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

2855 West Dublin-Granville Road

Columbus, Ohio 43235-2712

Telephone: 614.889.7150

MIKE DEWINE, *Governor*

JON HUSTED, *Lt. Governor*

THOMAS J. STICKRATH, *ODPS Director*

SIMA MERICK, *Ohio EMA Executive Director*





OHIO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

ARPA First Responder Wellness, Recruitment, Retention & Resiliency Grant

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OEMA AND ARPA

The primary mission of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency is to coordinate activities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. This mission is carried out by closely interfacing with local, state and federal agencies in an effort to bring resources of recovery and support to Ohioans impacted by the disaster. In addition to disaster response and recovery, Ohio EMA agency activities include education, training, planning and preparedness - strengthening Ohio's First Responder capabilities and improving communication across the state.

House Bill 169 of the 134th General Assembly appropriated a total of \$75 million to provide grants to support communities that have experienced adverse impacts to First Responder personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Mike DeWine designated ODPS/OEMA to administer this portion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. As such, all funding is subject to ARPA guidelines and the final rule for Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds [[SLFRF-Final-Rule.pdf \(treasury.gov\)](#)].

OFRW AND OCJS

The Office of First Responder Wellness (OFRW) provides training and resources for First Responder personnel and serves as a connection between agencies and mental health services and resources. The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) is a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. By statute, OCJS is the lead justice planning and assistance office for the state, administering millions of dollars in state and federal criminal justice funding every year. OCJS also evaluates programs and develops technology, training, and products for criminal justice professionals and communities.

Ohio First Responders stand ready to protect, defend and provide life-saving services to the citizens of the State of Ohio, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Often, this can put them at risk, both physically and mentally. Governor Mike DeWine, The Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services, and Ohio Office of First Responder Wellness support all Ohio First Responders.

WHAT TO EXPECT

As part of the application process, the eligibility screening tool must be completed and submitted with the application. This information will be reviewed by OEMA/OCJS staff upon receipt. If additional information is required, applicants will be contacted.

Application. For technical assistance on the narrative and budget pieces of the ARPA Wellness and Resilience application, email arpa@dps.ohio.gov.

Review. OEMA, OCJS, and other external grant reviewers will review ARPA proposals. Reviewers will ensure that project budget costs are allowable and directly related to the program. The OEMA Executive Director makes final funding recommendations and the Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety approves them.

AWARD NOTIFICATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Projects will be notified and required to complete all forms and pre-award conditions electronically via email. Forms and assurances included with pre-award conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Special Conditions Form
- Registration in the System for Award Management (www.sam.gov/SAM/)

Project applicants are required to complete all forms and pre-award conditions and send them via email to Geoffrey Martin, Grants Branch Chief, Ohio EMA at gsmartin@dps.ohio.gov.

In addition to the above requirements and this Grant Guidance, all subrecipients are bound by the [Federal Subgrant Conditions Handbook](#). Please note that once awards have been issued, projects will be required to submit Quarterly Subgrant Reports through the EM Grants online grants management system as well as meet the requirements of the grant including but not limited to performance reporting requirements as described in the Pre-Award Conditions

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All ARPA applicants must have an organization, or subrecipient, that will serve as the fiduciary agent and assume overall responsibility for the grant. As this is a First Responder grant, First Responder agencies or their units of government are eligible. Eligible ARPA subrecipients include:

1. First Responder agencies include Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS, or Public Safety Answering Point / Multi-Agency Dispatch Center, or
2. A unit of local government that has legislative autonomy, jurisdiction, and authority to act in certain circumstances. Units of government include a city, county, township, or village. If two or more jointly apply, they must designate one body to take the lead role and identify that agency's fiscal officer, or
3. State agencies.

For an applicant and project to be eligible, the application must successfully complete the Eligibility Screening Tool (First Responder) that demonstrates eligibility in one or more of the purpose areas on the tool.

***Note: applications may include research or evaluation components if the applicant is partnering with an established college, university, or credentialed researcher for up to 10% of the funding awarded.**

***Note: Law enforcement agencies that applied for the Office of Criminal Justice Services' *Law Enforcement Violence Reduction & Staffing* funding in the areas of Hiring and Payroll or Retention Bonuses, Incentives and Activities are not eligible to apply for those areas of this funding.**

APPLICANT BIDDERS CONFERENCE

A voluntary bidders conference training webinar for the American Rescue Plan Act Funding will take place May 13, 2022, from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. The training will provide information helpful for both the application preparation and review process.

Please register for the webinar at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8308524909329326860>

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of this ARPA wellness and resilience funding is to address the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. All proposals must demonstrate how the pandemic has negatively impacted the First Responder community and how the proposed response will mitigate that negative impact. Specifically, applicants can use these funds to address the mental and behavioral health impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on First Responder personnel, as well as staffing challenges brought on or made worse by the pandemic.

LENGTH OF FUNDING

Projects may apply for 12 months or 24 months of funding. Funding may be backdated to April 1, 2022.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

All budget items must be related to the purpose of addressing the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Unallowable Costs

- Deposit into any pension fund - *does not include the payment to a pension fund as part of covered benefits for eligible personnel charged to the fund.*
- Contribute to rainy day funds, financial reserves, budget stabilization, or similar funds – the revenue reduction amounts must be applied to general government services.
- Offset a reduction in net tax revenue.
- Pay interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments, including short-term revenue or tax anticipation notes, or other debt service costs.
- Satisfy a settlement agreement, judgment, consent decree, or judicially confirmed debt restructuring plan in a judicial, administrative, or regulatory proceeding.
- Serve as non-federal match for other federal grant programs.

Fiscal Compliance Review

- OEMA is required to perform a funding pre-risk assessment on all grant applicants resulting in a risk assessment of low risk, moderate risk, or high risk.
- Moderate or high risk subrecipients will receive a fiscal compliance review. OEMA staff will be monitoring fiscal and programmatic activities to ensure federal subawards are being used for authorized purposes and financial and performance goals are being achieved.
- Reviewing performance and financial reports and following up on noted deficiencies are required activities per the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance 200.331-333 Subrecipient Management and Monitoring and Subpart F Audit.

POST AWARD REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All ARPA subgrantees are required to comply with any reporting requirements set forth by Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS CHECKLIST

Use the following checklist as a general guide for submitting proposals to OEMA. Read the entire Grant Guidance document before completing proposals.

- ARPA Eligibility Screening Tool
- Narrative
- Budget
- External Audit or Financial Report

FORMAT AND SUBMISSION

Please submit the Request for Proposal (RFP) and Audit/Financial Information via email to Geoffrey Martin at gsmartin@dps.ohio.gov. The deadline for application submission is 5:00 PM, June 17, 2022. The RFP form should be submitted in Excel format only and is available for download at the following location:

<https://www.ema.ohio.gov/Documents/PreparednessGrants/ARPA-First-Responder-Application.xlsx>

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Narrative (limited to 8000 characters)

Describe the project to be implemented with grant funding. Narratives must respond to the following:

- Describe the behavioral health, recruitment or retention problem to be addressed by the proposed program.
- Describe the benefits of the proposed program for First Responders.
- Describe the history and background of the programs being recommended.
- Describe any measures or metrics that will be used to evaluate the efficacy of the program.
- Describe the plan to partner with local resources in providing training or support for First Responders.

Budget

Describe any costs associated with implementing the activities described in the narrative.

- Present a clear and detailed budget with a narrative that explains and justifies the budget information.
- Justify the costs of the proposed program and that the costs are considered reasonable and cost-effective in view of the types and range of activities to be conducted, the number of participants to be served, and the expected results and benefits.
- Include information on related funding the agency may be applying for or receiving.

*There is not a match requirement for this award; please leave this section of the budget blank.

Equipment

Agencies / departments are encouraged to tailor wellness initiatives and programs to fit their agency / department and the jurisdiction they serve. Please note the following guidance regarding the eligibility of equipment: ARPA funds may not be used for the purchase or acquisition of equipment unless there is a documented correlation between the equipment being requested and wellness and resilience, related directly to the adverse effects of COVID pandemic on First Responder Personnel. Documentation explaining the need for the equipment must be included with the application for consideration. These requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

External Audit or Financial Report

Please email a PDF copy of your organization's most recent external audit or most recent financial report as part of your application packet. This allows OEMA to ensure requirements are met for 2 C.F.R. § 200.331(f). Single Audit Act Amendment of 1996, and the OMB Circular A-133.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING (ARPA) GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Responding to the Pandemic and its Negative Impacts

The purpose of the First Responder Wellness, Recruitment, Retention and Resiliency ARPA funding is to respond to the negative impacts of the pandemic by addressing the mental wellness needs of Ohio's First Responder Community. The grant also offers assistance in hiring and retention incentives to promote First Responders to remaining in their chosen fields. Law enforcement, fire, EMS and dispatch have seen major staffing issues since the beginning of the pandemic. Below is a non-exhaustive list of potential projects that address this purpose.

Purpose: Hiring and Payroll

- First Responder recruitment efforts, such as recruitment drives, job fairs, and advertising.
- First Responder personnel payroll costs to (1) replace vacant or eliminated positions from the pandemic or to (2) return to pre-pandemic levels; whichever reason for hiring is used must be justified and demonstrated by using option 1. or 2. under "PURPOSE: HIRING AND PAYROLL" on the ARPA Eligibility Screening Tool. Payroll costs are limited to First Responder staff, which include dispatchers.
- First Responder hiring bonuses; limited to First Responder staff, which include dispatchers.

Purpose: Retention Bonuses, Incentives and Activities

- First Responder retention bonuses or other retention incentives, which may include reasonable compensation increases for employees to remain at the current employer versus leaving for other options. Any incentives must be in addition to regular compensation, tailored to the need and not exceed amounts traditionally offered by the current employer or competitive employers. Retention incentives must be less than 10% for a group/category of employees (may extend up to less than 25% if the incentive is only for an individual employee). These percent limits apply to annual salary and are for the life of this ARPA funding, meaning that they can be paid in a one-time payment to employees, or the equivalent of that one-time amount can be spread out in smaller payments during

the grant period. Retention bonuses are allowable for First Responder staff, including dispatchers.

Purpose: First Responder Agency / Personnel Wellness

- Examples of possible fundable projects include, but are not limited to:
 - Agency / Personnel Wellness Checks
 - Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS & Dispatch agencies will contract with a clinician or clinical practice to provide periodic wellness checks for their personnel.
 - Wellness check frequency to be determined by chief executive but no less often than every two (2) years.
 - Wellness checks will be mandatory for all personnel, including chief executive and command staff.
 - Clinician or practice may not be used for hiring evaluation, discipline or promotional process.
 - The clinician / practice will not report anything beyond personnel attendance to the agency / department unless required by their licensure.
 - All records of visits will be retained by the clinician / practice as a clinical record and protected as a medical record.
 - Additional visits, if needed, and consideration for a major event should be factored into the contract.
 - Peer Support Team Training
 - Support from peers after an event(s) has been shown to be very beneficial for First Responders. Being able to talk to someone “dressed like me” can be very impactful for First Responder personnel.
 - Having trained personnel within an agency provides on-going and immediate support for agency personnel.
 - Peer Support Team training must meet best practices and be provided by accredited programs such as, but not limited to; International Association of Firefighters, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Mental Health First Aid.
 - Funding would be provided for training cost, salary of attendee, overtime costs incurred covering an open shift, books and course costs.
 - Funding may cover reasonable travel costs associated with attending training.
 - Development and staffing of a Wellness Office or Program
 - Funding to cover cost of personnel assigned to perform duties as the Wellness Coordinator (or however an agency / department wants to designate).
 - Funding to cover training for personnel assigned to fulfill the role of wellness coordinator
 - (Resources are available through the International Association of Chiefs of Police)