



Fredericksburg Police Department

## News Release

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### **Fredericksburg Police Department and Rappahannock Area Community Service Board Create Region's First Team Trained to Respond to Mental Health Calls**

The Crisis Intervention Response Team (CIRT) is a collaborative effort between the Fredericksburg Police Department and the Rappahannock Area Community Services Board (RACSB). The goal is to de-escalate situations involving persons in crisis and connect them to resources that may help address their needs. The CIRT will follow up with individuals, family members, and caregivers after a crisis to see if there are additional services needed.

"I am thrilled to partner with the RACSB to provide this important service to the City of Fredericksburg. The CIRT will help people in crisis access the resources they need quickly, officers will experience less stress and trauma, and the RACSB will make an even bigger impact by reaching a broader audience. This partnership will make our community healthier and safer," said Police Chief Layton.

"Rappahannock Area Community Services Board and all RACSB emergency services staff are motivated and excited to see the inception of our co-response program in partnership with the Fredericksburg Police Department. Individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis will now have an opportunity for an enhanced law enforcement response to continue to best serve the individuals in our community and provide the best outcomes for those in crisis." said Kari Norris, Emergency Services Coordinator.

The team is comprised of one patrol officer and one Rappahannock Area Community Services clinician specializing in crisis intervention. They will be dispatched and serve as the primary unit for calls regarding mental health crisis, suicidal threats, suicide attempts/ self-harm, and emergency custody order/temporary detention order service. They will also be able to self-dispatch or request to assist the primary officer on calls likely to create a crisis for an involved person, including death investigation, homicide, child abuse, sex offense, domestic violence, missing person, barricade, and other serious crimes or events. The CIRT will work four 10-hour shifts built around analysis of high-demand times for mental health calls.

This CIRT will help reduce the risk of violent encounters during a call, reduce the need to

issue an emergency custody order on a person who the team can assist, shorten the emergency custody order process by conducting pre-screens during their interaction, and reduce the likelihood of future volatile situations by linking people in need to the services that will help them.

The new police officer position is funded through June 2023 by a grant the police department requested from the Department of Criminal Justice. The City intends to continue funding this full-time police officer position after the grant obligation period ends.

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