



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Flagler County Awarded \$1.2 Million Dollar Criminal Justice Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant

Flagler County governments learned this week their joint proposal to expand mental health services for youth and young adults was awarded \$1.2 million dollars in funding through the state's competitive Criminal Justice Mental Health Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant fund.

The Reinvestment Grant fund is focused on diverting youth and adults from the juvenile and criminal justice systems into appropriate mental health and substance use disorder services. The proposal, developed by Flagler Cares in partnership with the Flagler Board of County Commissioners, Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO), Flagler County District Schools, and Halifax Health will expand the existing grant-funded initiative that has provided mental health and substance use disorder services and support to over 340 students since its inception.

The new program will continue the behavioral health coordination services provided by staff at Flagler County Schools and Halifax Health and will expand behavioral health services provided to students participating in the district's Restorative School program.

Through this grant funding FCSO will create two new behavioral health positions that will respond with deputies to mental health crisis calls to deescalate situations through a co-responder model that is quickly becoming a national best practice in re-defining police services.

"We are always looking for ways to bring tax money our citizens pay to the state and federal governments back to Flagler County," Sheriff Staly said. "Our team is always looking for new ways to think outside of the box and make Flagler County a safer place by implementing new programs and cutting-edge initiatives. These funds will enable us to assist youth that are having substance abuse or behavioral health issues and, hopefully, keep them out of the criminal justice system and become successful and productive adults. Obtaining this grant was a joint effort and I want to thank Flagler

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Cares, the Flagler County Board of County Commissioners, Flagler County Schools, and Halifax Health for their efforts in securing this grant.”

Flagler Schools Superintendent Cathy Mittelstadt says, “Flagler Schools values our partnerships. This grant will allow all of these groups and agencies to better serve our students. We look forward to providing greater mental health supports to the children of Flagler County.”

“Diversionary and de-escalation initiatives with co-responders to move youth into appropriate mental health and substance abuse programs is a best practice that has been successful in counties throughout Florida and across the country,” said Board of County Commissioners Chair Donald O’Brien. “Of course, it is always a good day when we can bring grant money into Flagler County that allows us to provide enhanced services to our residents.”

“This initiative that started with a small planning grant in 2017 is a perfect example of how Flagler organizations are willing to truly collaborate to create a safety net in our county,” said Flagler CARES Executive Director Carrie Baird. “It is challenging work, but this is where Flagler County shines.”

The scope of the current youth-focused program will also be expanded to include young adults up to age 25 by providing care coordination to assist youth with behavioral health needs to transition to adulthood and ensure they can continue accessing essential supports. For more information on the grant click [here](#).

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