

Oklahoma City (OK) Police Department

Officer Wellness

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma is the 25th largest city in the United States covering an area of 607 square miles with a population of approximately 620,000 citizens. The Oklahoma City Police Department is the largest police force in the state of Oklahoma. The Chief of Police, Wade Gourley, oversees 1,230 sworn and 300 non-sworn employees.

In the early 1990s, the department started its first peer support program called “Cops Helping Alleviate Police Problems” (CHAPPS). It was comprised of a combination of chaplains (some of them sworn), and officers acting in a Peer Support capacity. Over the years, CHAPPS evolved into a full-time Chaplain (sworn police officer who oversees other volunteer chaplains in the office, as well as an additional full-time Peer Support Coordinator (also sworn police officer) who oversees the sworn and non-sworn peer supporters in the same office. The team’s mission was to provide support to employees who were going through significant stressors in their life, critical incidents, personal crisis, family crisis, and any other issues requiring their attention. After the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, four line of duty deaths and hundreds of critical incidents, the chaplains and peer support unit combined to form the department’s wellness unit. **The unit currently has one lieutenant, three sergeants, one full time licensed counselor, one full time chaplain, 50 peer and family support team members and Will the Wellness Dog. The Unit also assists with providing its members with medical doctors, licensed mental health professionals, researchers, financial planning experts, retirement experts and fitness instructors.**

The department wellness unit responds to scenes of critical incidents while the officers are still trying to process what they have just seen. The department also offers paid wellness leave so officers can time off to heal without having to use their optional leave balances. The unit also sets up a critical incident de-briefing for officers and another one for spouses and family members. The unit then continues to stay in contact the officers after the initial incident. **Prior to returning to full duty, involved officers participate in decision-making scenarios until they are comfortable to return, rather than just sending the officer back out into the field.**

The OKCPD maintains seven different gyms located throughout the divisions, headquarters, and the Training Center and officers and staff are allowed to work out while on duty.

Understanding the importance of a happy, healthy home life the department created a program called What About Me, (W.A.M.), specifically designed for and limited to the spouses of officers. This program is directed by a Gottman level II certified Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). The goal of the program is to provide healing, understanding, and healthy communication before irreparable damage is done to an officer’s relationship. **This is a six-week training session in a small group therapy setting, every Tuesday from 6pm to 7:30pm. The department hosts two six-week sessions per year.**

The Wellness Unit recognized the need for officers to get assistance with resources for wills and trusts. OKCPD now provides training and a resource to afford the appropriate level of protection for officers and their families. They have also teamed up with a law firm that will assist officers at a discounted rate.

The department teaches recruits in the academy about retirement and the prep work that goes into a healthy, happy, and financially stable retirement. Plans are discussed for working, or not working, after retirement. Financial advice is given to employees regarding the 457(b) deferred compensation program and the city’s pension system. The department used real world examples of the benefits of the 457. They also explain what an IRA is and how diversity is important in a financial portfolio.

The department hired Apex Mobil to create their very own wellness app on the Lighthouse platform. This app contains customized information specifically for the Oklahoma City Police Department. The app is a great resource for employees wanting to be completely anonymous. They can seek resources and examine the app without anyone knowing. They can read about the Wellness team members, vetted counselors, wellness articles, as well as having access to self-care evaluations, EAP information, financial fitness, physical fitness & health and emergency suicide prevention phone numbers. **The app is free and available to employees as well as family members, retired officers, and civilian employees.**

The Police Department's Emergency Management Unit works closely with the Fire Department to issue COVID vaccines as well as Flu vaccines. The Emergency Management Team has created a 25-page COVID Protocol instructional guide to help keep employees safe during the pandemic. This instructional guide covers everything COVID related so if an employee has a question and/or needs a resource they can find it in the COVID Protocol guide. This is a working document that is updated often.

**** This summary is only a brief overview of many of the agency's programs. In the actual submission you will see that the agency has other programs and incentives to benefit its members. Please review their entire submission and its associated documents to gain a complete understanding of their program.**