

## CONTACT US

### Application to Submit Officer Safety or Wellness Programs

Does your agency or department have an effective officer safety program? The deadline for the 2022 awards submissions has concluded; however, please share your submission for the **2023 awards**.

### Questions?

**Email:** [Icecchettini@nleomf.org](mailto:Icecchettini@nleomf.org)

**Phone:** 202.737.3128

## DESTINATION ZERO AWARDS

The Destination Zero Program is proud to recognize outstanding officer safety and wellness programs that proactively engage employees in initiatives designed to increase overall officer wellness and/or reduce line-of-duty injuries or deaths. Each year, awards are presented in four categories: **General Officer Safety**, **Officer Traffic Safety**, **Officer Wellness**, and **Comprehensive Safety**. Winners are acknowledged during Police Weekend ceremonies in Washington, DC, and featured on the Destination Zero website.

### GENERAL OFFICER SAFETY AWARD

This award recognizes a program improving officer safety in the areas of personal protection or tactical training or has adopted measures that create a safer work environment. The program should demonstrate the ability to increase an officer's physical safety by reducing job-related injuries, enhancing personal safety, or by providing life-saving training. Likewise, the agency has both developed and actively promoted their officer safety programs and, in doing so, achieved employee buy-in and program acceptance. The

agency has successfully achieved its goals to increase safety or reduce injuries or deaths as it continues to set new goals and further enhance officer safety.

### **OFFICER TRAFFIC SAFETY AWARD**

This award recognizes a program's success in improving officer traffic-related safety practices. The agency has developed and successfully promoted their officer traffic safety program and, in doing so, achieved employee buy-in and program acceptance. The program has successfully increased officer safety related to traffic and made strides towards reducing traffic-related injuries or deaths while building a culture focused on traffic safety measures.

### **OFFICER WELLNESS AWARD**

Officer Wellness is the most encompassing category of the four, focusing on topics such as physical, psychological, occupational, financial, and spiritual wellness, mental health-related programs, stress management initiatives, peer support, suicide awareness and prevention programs, and resilience. Officer Wellness is a multi-faceted category that addresses an officer's overall well-being. This award recognizes innovative measures to increase officer wellness.

### **COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY AWARD**

This award recognizes the law enforcement agency that has successfully developed, implemented, and promoted the most comprehensive and strategically implemented officer safety or officer wellness program. The program employs an overarching communications strategy that embraces voluntary participation and an enhanced departmental awareness and has achieved a high degree of employee buy-in through its creative and innovative implementation strategies.

## **SUBMIT YOUR PROGRAM**

### **Nominated Agency Information**

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**Agency Name \***

Miami-Dade Police Department

28 of 600 max characters

**State of Agency \***

Florida

7 of 800 max characters

**Head of Agency \***

Interim Director George A. Perez

32 of 700 max characters

**Rank of Head of Agency \***

Interim Director

16 of 600 max characters

**Agency Size \***

- ☐ Small: 1-49 Officers
- ☐ Medium: 50-199 Officers
- ☒ Large: 200+ Officers

**Program Category \***

- ☐ General Officer Safety
- ☒ Officer Wellness
- ☐ Traffic Safety
- ☐ Comprehensive Safety

**Check all that apply to your program. (Comprehensive Safety Award applicants may check items across various categories.)**

**GENERAL OFFICER SAFETY**

- ☐ Tourniquets
- ☐ Quick Clot
- ☐ Sucking Chest Wound Patches
- ☐ Ballistic Vests
- ☐ Ballistic Shields
- ☐ Ballistic Helmets

- ☐ High Visibility Vests
- ☐ Shotguns
- ☐ Patrol Rifles
- ☐ Tasers
- ☐ Body Cameras
- ☐ Trauma/First Aid Kit
- ☐ Regular Firearms Qualification
- ☐ Narcan
- ☐ PPE Kits
- ☐ Gas Masks
- ☐ Active Shooter Training

#### **TRAFFIC SAFETY**

- ☐ Below 100 Training
- ☐ EVOC Training
- ☐ GPS
- ☐ In-Car Cameras
- ☐ Supervisor Monitoring of Speeds
- ☐ Officers Held Accountable for Speeding
- ☐ Officers Rewarded for Safe Driving
- ☐ High Visibility Vests
- ☐ Traffic Safety Posters

#### **OFFICER WELLNESS**

- ☒ Peer to Peer Support Program
- ☒ Department Psychologist
- ☒ Workout Program
- ☒ Department Gym
- ☐ Department Paid Gym Dues
- ☐ Incentive for Working Out

☐ Annual Physical Fitness Test

☐ Suicide Prevention Training

☒ Mental Health Training

☒ Financial Wellness Program

☐ Employee Assistance Program

☒ Yoga

☒ Fitness Instructor

☐ Hepatitis/Flu Vaccinations

☐ Spousal Wellness Program

## Contact Person Submitting Nomination Form

**Name \***

Diana

First

García

Last

**Email \***

dlgarcia@mdpd.com

**Phone \***

(305) 471-2741

**Direct Telephone Number \***

(305) 471-2741

**Cell Phone \***

(305) 773-7491

**Rank of Contact Person \***

Administrative Officer 2

**How did you hear about Destination Zero? \***

Conference/Presentation

Police One

Social Media

Another officer

### More information/questions

0 of 5000 max characters

All submissions will be reviewed for follow-up with full application instructions. Two members of each winning agency will be flown to Washington, DC during Police Weekend in October to receive their award at a reception held in their honor. Any program deemed to have a proven record of safety and wellness, whether or not the program is an award winner, will be featured on DestinationZero.org. There are currently over 200 programs and program components available to any law enforcement agency free of charge.

Submit

[Save and Continue Later](#)



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## 2022 NATIONAL OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS AWARD SUBMISSION



The Destination Zero program maintains a database of all submitted programs and corresponding materials in an effort to benefit law enforcement by providing a robust resource center of proven officer safety programs and wellness programs. The National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum require acknowledgment by the submitting agency that any materials submitted including, but not limited to relevant promotional materials, training guides, curricula, photos, policies and procedures that relate to the submitted officer safety and wellness program will be shared into the public domain website or other means of transmission.

### AGENCY RELEASE

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Signature of the agency representative acknowledges and agrees to the release of all submitted materials into the public domain via website or other means of transmission.

Name of agency: Miami-Dade Police Department

(Printed Name and Title) George A. Perez, Interim Director

(Signed Endorsement of Chief/Agency Head)

(Date)



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**History of Miami-Dade Police Department**

Dade-County was established in 1836 and encompassed an area which now comprises Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin Counties. In the early years, the area was policed by as few as three deputies on horseback.

Dade County's seat was moved from Juno to Miami in 1899, when the population of Miami was approximately 5,000. Prior to this time, Dade's sheriffs were appointed by the Governor. From the turn of the century through 1966, the office of the sheriff was an elected position.

By 1950, Dade County's population had grown to 495,000, and the jurisdiction area had been reduced to approximately its present 2,139 square miles. The metropolitan form of government was approved in 1957, and the Dade County Sheriff's Office was subsequently renamed the Public Safety Department (PSD).

In 1960, in addition to providing Countywide police services, responsibility was assumed for police operations at the Port of Miami and Miami International Airport. The Department had a complement of 623 sworn personnel that year. In 1966, with a Department comprised of approximately 850 sworn officers, a longstanding controversy over the selection/election procedure for choosing a county sheriff was resolved by voter mandate. Subsequently, sheriffs were appointed by the County Manager as "Director of the Public Safety Department and Sheriff of Metropolitan Dade County."

PSD's organizational structure as determined by the Metropolitan Charter included responsibility for fire protection, the jail and stockade, civil defense, animal control, and motor vehicle inspection, in addition to police functions. By 1973, however, the Department had been divested of ancillary responsibilities in order to concentrate entirely on police services. The Department's sworn force consisted of approximately 1,200 employees.

During the 1970s great strides were made toward professionalizing the Department through development of innovative community programs, standard operating procedures, rules and regulations, and departmental training programs. By July 1981, the Department was reorganized and renamed the Metro-Dade Police Department. As the complexity of its challenges grew, the Department expanded its size and skills accordingly. This expansion was characterized by acquisition of the latest equipment, and by training and educational programs offered to its officers. Examples include Survival City, where officers are trained in physical surroundings that replicate an urban setting, and a master's degree program in management presented by the University of Miami.

Keeping pace with the increase in population and subsequent service demands, construction of a new police headquarters complex began in 1986 and was completed in 1990. In its commitment to law enforcement excellence, the Department became fully accredited in 1993 by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Reassessment occurs every three years to ensure continued compliance.

In 1997, citizens voted to rename our county Miami-Dade County. Currently, 3,052 sworn officers and 1,499 civilians are employed by the Miami-Dade Police Department. As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Department will continue to build partnerships and expand its resources to meet the needs of our ever-changing community.

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The Miami-Dade Police Department has been at the forefront on focusing on officer wellness, and for over 40 years has offered a wide range of holistic services that include a physical fitness program, psychological counseling, financial guidance, and other self-improvement programs. In an era when there was stigma attached to seeking help, the Department imparted a different message to its staff, that seeking help is nothing to be ashamed of or viewed as a weakness. Having someone to talk with about stress, relationships, substance abuse, and traumatic experiences improves overall mental health and well-being, and can benefit one's career and home life. Seeking therapy should be considered normal.

Additionally, the physical demands placed on police officers require that they prioritize their fitness and nutrition. The Department not only places an emphasis on fitness, but it also offers a diverse range of activity programs to help officers achieve and maintain a high-level of fitness. There is also a wide range of financial counseling services that help officers manage and align their financial responsibilities and retirement goals. Along with various support groups and peer counseling, the Department is wholeheartedly committed to officer wellness. This proactive approach is reflected in former Director Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez' public speeches and in his internal messaging to the staff. Interim Director Perez is now leading the Miami-Dade Police Department and has expressed similar views of officer wellness as a priority and has been in support of the Department's Psychological Services Bureau (PSB), and Wellness Program.

### **Psychological Services Bureau**



The PSB is located inside a privately leased office with multiple exits allowing visitors to enter and exit without the likelihood of seeing another employee, thus providing another layer of confidentiality. The Bureau's staff, consisting of one psychologist and six licensed counselors, provide counseling to police officers and professional staff on substance abuse, relationships, and trauma intervention. Visits have increased by 60 percent since 2017; as a result, the staff has grown from four licensed mental health professionals to seven, with an additional clinician and psychologist to be hired in 2022. The clinicians offer individual counseling for a variety of mental health concerns to include anxiety, depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, relationship difficulties, substance abuse, and stress management. They also offer couples' counseling. Our clinicians are trained in all areas of mental health and have different areas of expertise; therefore, depending on the presenting issue, employees are matched with the best therapist for treatment. The PSB hosts three wellness groups that are open to sworn and professional staff: the "Badge of Hope" is a monthly bereavement support group, the Military/Veteran Group meets once a month, and the "Blue In Recovery" substance support group that meets weekly.



The clinical staff is available 24/7 and has implemented a call-out criteria to be utilized by supervisors, when incidents occur that can potentially leave responding officers with psychological trauma. To decrease the likelihood of development of psychological distress, the Bureau has taken a more proactive approach in reaching out to officers, who may be potentially impacted by those incidents. The psychological staff teaches psychoeducational courses to



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recruits in the academy as well as in-service training to sworn and professional staff. In addition, the clinical staff regularly visits district stations to attend roll-calls, and ride-alongs with officers during shifts. This practice has been instrumental in demystifying the clinical staff and allowing them to develop a rapport with officers.



Under the purview of the PSB, the Backing Our Brothers & Sisters in Blue (BOBS) Peer Advocate Team was established in 2020 and has been instrumental in providing an additional layer of support to officers and professional staff. Dozens of volunteer officers were recruited to serve as peer advocates at their respective entities and received extensive training on how to spot warning signs among their peers that could be linked to psychological distress. Some of the BOBS Team members are current and/or former clients of the PSB. One officer anonymously shared that after suffering from anxiety and depression on the job, he created a suicide plan; he credits the PSB for saving his life. Now as a peer advocate, he hopes to share his experiences with young officers, in hopes that they do not have to go through the same things he did. During the tragic Surfside Building Collapse in June of 2021, the BOBS Team witnessed the positive impact the therapy dogs had on first responders who worked tirelessly at the collapse site. The PSB immediately partnered with the Department's Community Oriented Support Dog Program to enhance the BOBS Team's ability to provide much needed support to personnel. Both the handlers and dogs are receiving peer training along with Critical Incident Stress Management training, specifically designed for support of officers involved in critical incidents, police shootings, and other trauma responses.

The PSB is in the midst of rolling out a new wellness application. The application gives officers 24/7/365 confidential support. It provides access to a wide range of wellness programs and services on their phone or other mobile devices. For example, the "Wellness Toolkit" on the app includes information about family support, financial fitness, healthy habits, psychological first aid, marriage guidance, and other topics. The app also includes a variety of self-scoring assessment tools, allowing officers to quickly obtain feedback about their wellness. Additionally, with one-click, officers can immediately reach a staff clinician or a BOBS Team member.

Through the PSB, the Department offers religious-based counseling, provided by 12 volunteer chaplains on staff, who are also available around the clock. A chaplain is assigned to every Departmental entity. Through its recruiting efforts, the Department has established a diverse team, which represents various religions, and its members speak multiple languages. They are pastors, rabbis, and reverends at their respective churches or synagogues, that are skilled counselors, allowing their conversations with employees to remain confidential. The primary task of a chaplain is to counsel and support officers and their families. The rigors of being a police officer combined with exposure to traumatic and violent events can have a lasting effect. The chaplains also support the Department's Communications Bureau, which receives more than 2.4 million calls annually through the 911 Center. With lives hanging in the balance during many calls, Communications Bureau personnel skillfully help citizens navigate through potentially fatal situations until police arrive. Chaplains are notified of every critical event that involves the Department's officers and are often requested to respond to scenes. Also, when neighborhoods are struck by violence,





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chaplains may be requested by district commanders to provide spiritual support or counseling to officers affected by the incident.

### Wellness Program



The Wellness Unit was established in 1989 corresponding to the opening of a fitness center at our Training Academy. It began with a staff of four officers, one exercise physiologist, and one recreational therapist. Nutritional services and physical therapy were also offered at that time. Today, the Wellness Unit consists of an exercise physiologist and a recreational therapist. Our facility has a full set of free weights, a variety of exercise machines, cardiovascular equipment, an Olympic size swimming pool, and a basketball gym. In addition, AvMed, the insurance provider, also offers additional services

to employees on nutrition counseling and health coaching, which provides additional health coaches and a registered dietician to employees.



With an increase in focus towards officer wellness, the Wellness Unit offers courses on longevity, being "mindfully healthy," stress management, yoga, body composition screenings, and instructions on how to reduce injuries and increase performance. The Wellness Program aims to remaster how the Department offers services, to make it more system-based and aligned to one's progression throughout his or her career. Previously, the various components of officer wellness have

been offered independent of one another, but now, with the holistic approach, they are wrap-around services, complementing each other to help the officer take advantage of the best in self-care. Opportunities to heat food, sit and eat after training, have meetings with colleagues, or decompress after a training session are available at our bistro tables and chairs in the lobby of our fitness center.



The purchase of an InBody Body Composition Analyzer, for more accurate readings on body composition, is used with our police academy recruits and Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation academies as well. We can track data on lean mass, fat mass, basal metabolic rate, and track visceral fat for all recruits and officers to help track progress.

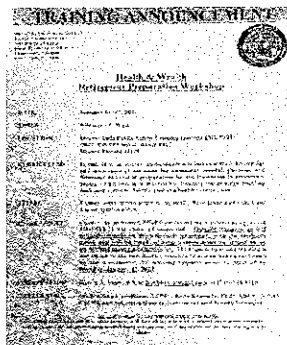
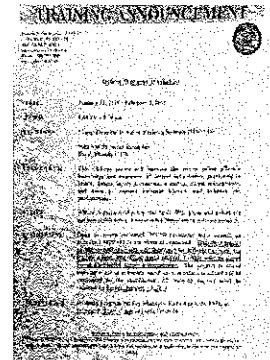
We have collected fitness testing results, recorded the results in a database called Microfit, and analyzed the data for our police academies since 2000. We have one of the most extensive databases available to analyze results and develop best practices to improve the quality of fitness training instruction for our recruits.

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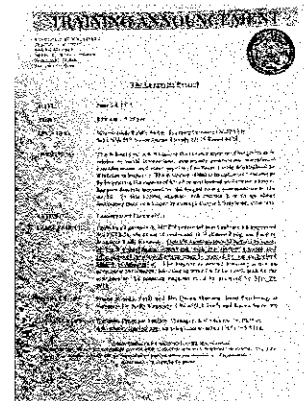
The fitness programs are diverse, offering routines for strength, and improving aspects of athleticism and sports nutrition to improve recovery and performance markers. Classes on Nutrition, Fitness Instructor, Advanced Training Techniques, Nutrition on the Road, Officer Wellness, Healthy Heart, Project Longevity, Diabetes Awareness, Health and Wealth, Water Safety Instructor, and Lifeguarding amongst other trainings, are offered year-round to help support a well-rounded employee.

The Department has a full-time exercise physiologist that teaches a fitness and recovery block of instruction in every Special Response Team, Rapid Deployment Force, Bike, and Defensive Tactics school to help address issues of dehydration and recovery during training. We also provide stress management courses that include hours devoted to mental and physical health. In addition, a two-day retirement workshop is offered as a "toolkit" to not only prepare for retirement, but to continue to live an active and engaging lifestyle after personnel leave the Department. Additionally, we are coordinating with universities like the Citadel, to have strength and conditioning interns this year. This provides them the opportunity to learn under the supervision of an exercise physiologist to help teach best practices for this population.



Currently, the Department offers a financial wellness program. Personal finances, especially about budgeting for fixed household expenditures and retirement, can often be the source of stress, which is directly linked to personal health and the health of relationships. In acknowledging that our officers have the same concerns and worries that anyone else would in society, the Department has taken a proactive approach in offering free financial wellness seminars guided by professionals, to help officers make well-informed choices with their finances.

The "Longevity Project" is another popular class through the Wellness Program that was initiated in January 2020. It explores ways that personnel can create healthy strategies in their lives that mirror some of the longest living populations in the world. This class explores best practices of several small communities across the globe known for longevity. The program delves into keys elements for healthy living, through classroom sessions hosted by Kelly J. Kennedy, PhD, the Department's Exercise Physiologist and Wellness Program Facility Manager. A review of those communities revealed several commonalities, such as dietary considerations, regular exercise, and strong ties to family and friends. The class includes a holistic approach to life, stressing the importance of healthy relationships, eating vegetables, reducing exposure to chemicals and toxins, refraining from smoking, and limiting alcohol consumption, and if necessary, getting proper counseling or treatment for addictive behaviors.



In comparison to other known programs, we believe we might have one of the largest databases of fitness testing data, and longest running program for officer health and wellness in the nation.