



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS
Submission for Destination Zero Award Consideration



ABOUT THE BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Baltimore Police Department is the 8th largest municipal police force in the United States, staffed by nearly 3,100 civilian, professional, and sworn personnel.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Baltimore Police Department is dedicated to **upholding the Constitution** and enforcing laws in a fair, impartial, and ethical manner. We commit to **creating and maintaining a culture of service** that builds **trust and legitimacy** in all communities, values the **sanctity of human life**, and provides for the **safety and well-being** of all.



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS

Submission for Destination Zero Award Consideration

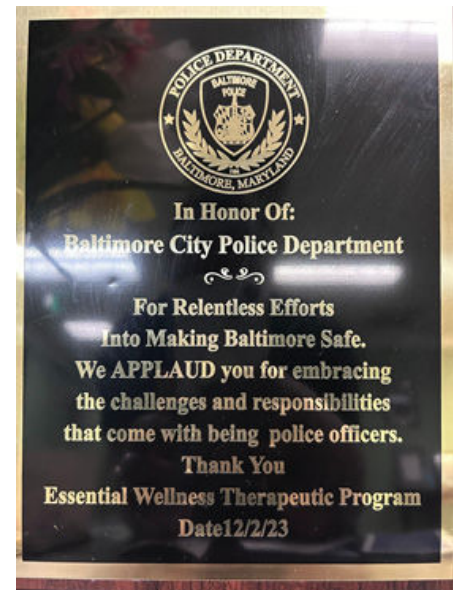
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ABOUT THE BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS SECTION

In the United States, more police officers die by suicide each year than are killed in the line of duty. Recognizing this critical issue, the Baltimore Police Department established its first Officer Safety and Wellness section in January 2018. Prior to that year, minimal or no support was available to officers seeking to improve their mental and physical health.

The **Officer Safety & Wellness Section (OSW)** is dedicated to advocating for the mental and physical health and wellness of police officers, civilians, and professional staff members. OSW is led by **Director Vernon Herron**, a decorated retired Maryland State Police Officer. Under his leadership, a team of passionate professionals and subject matter experts aim to strengthen the personal and professional lives of BPD members by promoting a healthy lifestyle, advocating for mental health check-ups, and utilizing wellness resources. The Baltimore Police Health and Wellness program provides members and their household members with free, confidential assistance to help with personal or professional problems that may interfere with work or family responsibilities.



OSW is the parent command for the **Early Intervention Unit (EIU)**, the **Health and Wellness Unit (H&W)**, and, as of 2021, the **Retiree/Employee Affairs Unit (EAU)**. While the EIU's approach is reactive—assisting officers when problematic behavior has been identified—the H&W takes a proactive approach by educating officers and providing mental, physical, and financial resources. Our newly assigned EAU supports police families who may have lost a loved one in the line of duty and retired members.





OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS SECTION UNITS

Health & Wellness Unit (H&W)

The Health & Wellness Unit focuses on providing resources for officers, civilians, and professional staff that will assist them in maintaining healthy mental, physical, and emotional health—stability managing trauma and trauma-related events and coping mechanisms.

Early Intervention Unit (EIU)

Early Intervention is initiated when certain types of incidents occur, or three or more incidents arise that could lead to a more severe event. Such events may include, but not limited to: performance evaluations, complaints, disciplinary actions, internal affairs, supervisory and employee reports, and domestic or alcohol-related events. EIU assists with providing assistance and resources to eliminate and prevent problematic behavior and transform their minds and bodies while achieving the personal goals they set for themselves and an improvement plan agreed upon with the member, member's supervisor, and representative for OSW. Resources provided, including but not limited to: assisting with stress mitigation/reduction, meditation, physical fitness, and nutrition--all are critical components of health and wellness.

Retiree/Employee Affairs (EAU)

Retiree/Employee Affairs (EAU) reinforces the ties between active and retired employees. EAU assists the retired members and their families by supporting the family when a former member passes or when a line of duty death occurs. It also is an asset to families in their time of need and guides them in what can be the most challenging time.

Health and Wellness remains innovative when providing for the members of the Baltimore city police department. In each district, all three shifts and units within the department are continuously evaluated for their needs. Health and wellness understands the demand and pressure upon each member, sworn and professional; OSW meets the members where they are by taking. The resource to their doors is a mini wellness fare complete with a nutritional meal massage, sound therapy, a relation station, many other health vendors, supplemental insurance, deferred comp, and clinicians and peers to provide a listing ear.



HOW BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS PROGRAM IS HELPING POLICE WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

- WBFF FOX BALTIMORE

MEETING OFFICERS WHERE THEY ARE

Officers are always on the move. In order to reach them, OSW goes out in the streets to meet the officers who have boots on the ground.

In its fully marked wellness vehicle, OSW responds to a specific district and hand out care packages containing carefully chosen items to get the officers through one, maybe two shifts. The care packages consists of various essential items as well a lunch or a snack. The care package shows our appreciation for all their hard work and dedication. When the officers are taken care of, it helps them perform better.



OSW stopped by the ED and provided officers with care packages during breast/prostate cancer awareness month.



Lieutenant Sullivan of OSW in the Central District stopped by to speak with officers and provided a meal and friendship.



When you're going through things, you don't always want to talk to strangers. You want to talk to friends--people you can relate to and (be) comfortable with. There's no fear of being judged, no matter the situation. You can talk to OSW about anything--it doesn't have to be work-related. They also find resources that you may not have thought of.

- INGRID HILL, 911 EMERGENCY DISPATCHER



OSW Provides officers with care packages, lunch, and conversation.



OSW at NWD provided a holiday meal to our officers who could not be with their families.



OSW at SED Pop-up provides nutritious meal resources and camaraderie.



OSW at Northern District Pop-Up

WELLNESS FOR THE BODY AND MIND

The Officer Safety & Wellness unit recognizes the challenges faced by police officers in Baltimore City and other communities around the country. Every day, police officers risk their lives to uphold the law and keep communities and residents safe. While those stories are visible, sometimes the efforts police are taking behind the scenes to make changes are different. Research has shown that officers who practice mindfulness/meditation reported less aggression, and were less likely to inflict physical harm.

Another goal of the Baltimore Police Department's Officer Safety & Wellness unit is to bring mindfulness & meditation to members. Mindfulness training leads to significant reductions in psychological distress and mental health symptoms, anxiety and depression symptoms, and prevents burnout and perceived stress.

Officer Safety & Wellness Unit hosts its FREE WELLNESS, FITNESS, AND MINDFULNESS classes at our headquarters weekly. A moderate and high fitness level is a significant asset for our officers. We begin with our Pilates Mat Class. These classes are held during and after work hours and focus on body awareness, flexibility, mindfulness, and core strength. Also, Our Boot Camp/Weight Training class is held after work and focuses on circuit/interval, cardio, and weight training.



OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS OFFERS FREE FITNESS CLASSES TO ALL BPD MEMBERS THAT INCLUDES: PILATES, CARDIO BOOTCAMP, AND WEIGHT TRAINING



FURRY STRESS RELIEVERS

The Officer Safety & Wellness Unit realizes that our officers are on a mission to save and in return, we must save them. That's why we use therapy dogs.

Our therapy dogs are used as a response to critical incidents as stress relievers, and to bring joy and comfort to give and get love. They promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and cognitive functions, and they help our police officers and staff become present.

Our officers risk their lives daily, and although they are trained to deal with the task at hand, we realize that they FEEL like everyone else. That's when our therapy dogs step in. Our therapy dogs can calm and empower our brave men and women so they may repeatedly go out to save others.

MEET THE BPD OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS SECTION THERAPY DOGS >>>



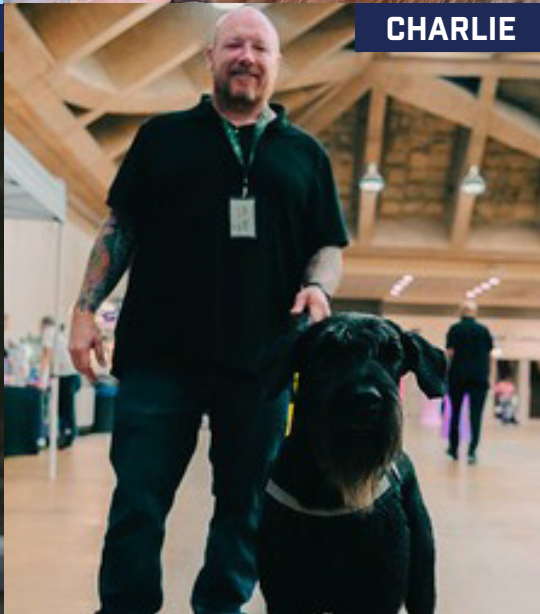
PENNY



SENDER



SCOUT



CHARLIE



KANE



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT WELCOMES A FURRY NEW RECRUIT

- BALTIMORE SUN



**WATCH: HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS SECTION THERAPY DOGS**



PEER TO PEER SUPPORT SYSTEM

Health and wellness touches every corner of the Department. To ensure that OSW is making the greatest impact possible, we sought assistance from our agency-trained peer support class!

We have more than 70 trained peer support members, serving as an extension of the Health and Wellness Unit to cast a broader net and assist our members. These dedicated employees make themselves available to support BPD employees in need during difficult times. Additionally, our Peer Support Team has aided regional police departments that have reached out to BPD for assistance.



As a civilian, I wasn't sure how I could help officers with what they go through. However, I realized my background and passion for mental health allows me to provide support. You don't always have to understand; just have a listening, compassionate ear. Being a part of a community that helps each other has its own healing effects on everyone.

- SUSANNA ASHMAROVA, BPD PEER SUPPORT MEMBER

Officer Safety and Wellness also aids its members by collaborating with BPD chaplains to assist in crises, such as homicides, suicides, barricades, and hostage situations. They offer confidential support in several crucial areas of law enforcement and the communities they serve, including but not limited to: officer wellness and support, spiritual assistance, and community-police engagement.



BEYOND THE BADGE: OSW SERVICES FOR ALL

Although the section is called Officer Safety & Wellness, OSW aims to serve the entire Department. The Baltimore Police Department is comprised of nearly 500 professional staff members--all of whom are entitled to the same benefits as their sworn counterparts.

To ensure that all members of the Department are aware of the services provided, OSW routinely engages in Wellness Debriefs to all members of the Department, including interns, specialty units, crime scene, forensics, etc. OSW also does on-boarding presentations to new recruits so they are immediately made aware of the benefits and resources the section provides.



When I lost my mother in 2020, Officer Safety & Wellness did a phenomenal job of making sure I felt supported. They provided free therapy and even helped me find an organization to donate my mother's unused medical supplies to--a personal touch that would have meant the world to her.

- STACEY JOHNSON, BPD PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER



A FOCUS ON HEALTH

As the saying goes: Health is wealth. It's important to OSW that members of the Department receive their annual physicals and partake in a coronary exam. To ensure that as many members as possible receive these potentially lifesaving health screenings, OSW provides prizes and incentives for doing so.



JUNE WINNER: JOYCE FLEMING, WARRANT SECTION



JULY WINNER: SGT. AILEEN VILLODAS, NORTHERN DIST.



AUG. WINNER: DANIELLE EPPERSON, RECORDS MGMT.



SEPT. WINNER: OFC. TRISTAN HANN, SOUTHEAST DIST.

OSW hosts a department-wide family fair annually. The OSW Wellness Fair provides a wide array of health-conscious activities and vendors for the entire BPD community. More than 400 employees and their family members attended the 2023 event and had the opportunity to win prizes, get facials, massages, sample healthy meals, and interact with more than 40 vendors.

The Officer Safety & Wellness Team aims to educate families on topics to help them make healthier lifestyle choices while enjoying a fun-filled event. And as if the event could not get any better, Commissioner Richard Worley stopped by to enjoy the festivities and show his support.



WATCH: THE BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS SECTION HOSTS A BREAST CANCER AWARENESS EVENT AT HQ

OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS EVENTS



Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Information & Relaxation Event

OSW recently had its 4th Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Information and Relaxation Event. This very special occasion, led by Detective Ellesse McCray and the OSW team, was all about sharing, empowering and communicating information. Ms. Michelle Epps (a breast cancer survivor) gave a dynamic and encouraging speech, and the vendors assisted our community with questions regarding insurance, finance, health and much more.



OSW Lunch & Learn

This voluntary training session contains information and delicious food. Members can learn about finance, health, retirement, and more in an informal, team-building environment. Lunch and learns are given throughout the year.



OSW Mental Health Awareness Month Event

Along with producing an annual Breast Cancer Awareness Month event, OSW does the same for Mental Health Awareness Month. OSW aims to let members know it's OK to not be OK and provides resources and support at the annual event.



Annual OSW Holiday Party

The holiday season is a time for joy but for some, it can also be emotionally challenging. OSW's annual holiday party provides a warm, safe place where members can gather with family and friends for a day of enjoyment and to connect and remember a time when they were happy.

PROMOTING THE MISSION...

Getting the word out on the many services OSW provides is vitally important. To do this, OSW has taken a multi-media approach, creating flyers, posters (complete with a trackable QR code that leads to a list of resources), email blasts and videos aimed at educating members of the Department on the health and wellness work being done and the services provided. OSW even produces a quarterly newsletter: Safety, Wellness & YOU.

Safety, Wellness & YOU

FROM THE DESK OF OSW DIRECTOR VERNON HERRON



This inaugural **Officer Safety and Wellness (OSW) Newsletter** is dedicated to all the employees of the Baltimore Police Department. The purpose of this quarterly publication is to highlight activities of OSW, as it relates to health and wellness initiatives. It will also highlight available health and wellness resources, healthy recipes, and recognize those members of our Department, who promote and inspire others to live a healthy lifestyle.

The Baltimore Police Department is recognized nationally and internationally as the "Gold Standard" for health and wellness. This honor is a direct result of not only the challenging work of the members of Officer Safety and Wellness, but every member of the Baltimore Police Department who has made health and wellness a cultural shift and not merely a program. I am thrilled to announce newly created initiatives for 2024 that were specifically designed to include your family members. We understand that being a police employee can be stressful, and we want to support all our employees and members of their families.

In conclusion, I want to thank the more than **77 Baltimore Police Peer Support members**. These dedicated employees have availed themselves to support BPD employees who need assistance in difficult times. Our Peer Support Team has also assisted regional police departments who have contacted BPD for our assistance. I hope you find this publication informative and a useful tool as you pursue your health and wellness goals.

Thank you. Please remember to stay safe and healthy.

Vernon Herron

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Safety, Wellness & YOU

OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
FALL 2023 EDITION



IN THIS ISSUE:

QUOTE FOR THE QUARTER

Mental health counseling is not a microwave, it's a marinade, the longer you do it, the better the results."
-Vernon Herron

AFFIRMATION FOR THE QUARTER

I am **strong, resilient, and capable** of overcoming any challenge that come my way.

CONTACT OSW: 410-396-2541 ■ WWW.BALTIMOREPOLICE.ORG/OSW ■ OSW@BALTIMOREPOLICE.ORG

Safety, Wellness & YOU

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

5 Warning Signs of Prostate Cancer

As we continue to bring awareness to Breast Cancer and honor its survivors, we want to take a moment to bring awareness to Prostate Cancer. This is the second most common cancer among men worldwide and 1 in 9 men will likely have prostate cancer in their lifetime. Diagnosis of the disease becomes more common as men age. In the US, about 60% of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men over age 55.

Be aware of the Five Warning Signs of Prostate Cancer below:

1. A painful or burning sensation during urination or ejaculation.
2. Frequent urination, particularly at night.
3. Difficulty stopping or starting urination.
4. Sudden erectile dysfunction.
5. Blood in urine or semen.

If you experience any of these symptoms, please call your doctor immediately. You can also reach out to the following organization for assistance:

The Prostate Cancer Foundation
1-800-757-CURE (2873)
www.pcf.org

OSW STRESS RELIEF CIRCLE

When you're stressed, feeling unfulfilled, or having a bad day, **do something for or say something kind to a family member, a friend, or a stranger.**



Upcoming Events

Tea Sampling Extravaganza
November 2023

Holiday Party
Wednesday, December 20, 2023

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We're Here

When You Need Us



BPD OSW: 410.396.2541 BHS: 1-800.327.2251

The **Officer Safety & Wellness Section (OSW)** supports the mental and physical health and wellness of police officers, professional staff, and their families.


Resource List

- ➔ Confidential support from BPD peers
- ➔ Free 24/7 counseling with a licensed clinician
- ➔ Nutritional guidance & meal prep services
- ➔ Sound therapy, acupuncture
- ➔ Financial education & planning

Scan the QR code for a full list of providers



For more information on OSW, email:
OSW@BALTIMOREPOLICE.ORG



Policing Your Thoughts Comes First.
Officer Safety Through Great Mental Health.

For a free and confidential session contact BHS at 1-800-327-2251

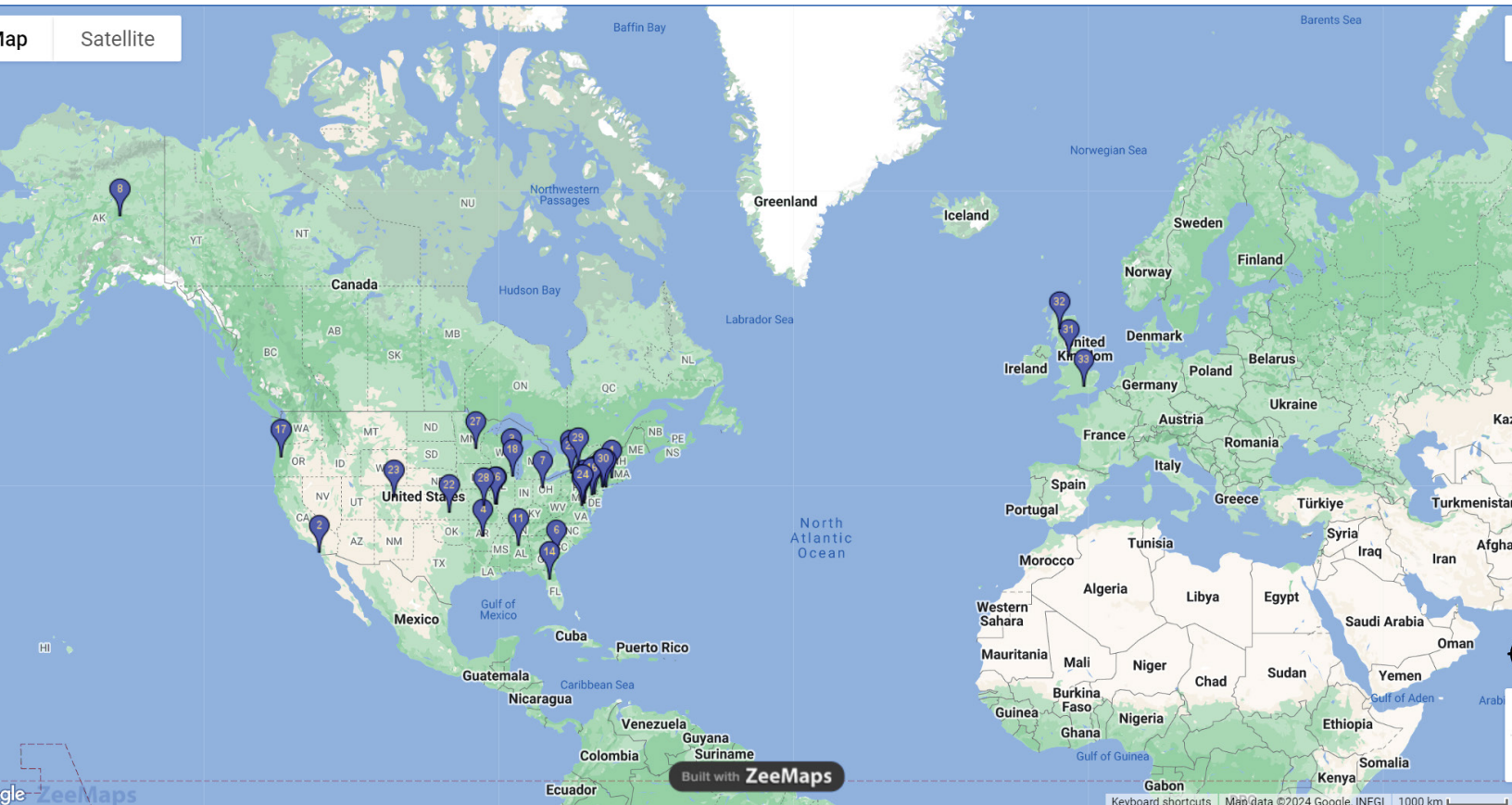


WATCH: BPD 4 YEAR REVIEW: INCREASED FOCUS ON OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS

...EVEN INTERNATIONALLY

In addition to spreading the word about Officer Safety and Wellness to our internal audience, OSW is routinely asked to give presentations to other agencies looking to create their own Wellness Sections or improve existings ones.

Director Herron and the OSW team has given presentations and briefings all over the country--and even given internationally!



OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS AGENCY PRESENTATIONS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Baltimore County, MD
Baltimore, MD
Birmingham, AL
Bladensburg, MD
Buffalo, NY
Charles County, MD
Chicago, IL
Eugene, OR
Fairbanks, AK
Ferguson, MO
Glasgow, Scotland
Guildford, England
Hartford, CT
Howard County, MD

Jefferson City, MO
Lakewood, CO
Lancaster, England
Little Rock, AR
Little Valley, NY
Marion County, FL
Marion, OH
Milwaukee, WI
Minneapolis, MN
Mount Vernon, NY
Nassau County, NY
New York, NY
Philadelphia, PA
Prince George's County, MD

Rochester, NY
San Diego, CA
Savannah, GA
St. Louis, MO
Washington, DC
Wichita, KS
Wilmington, DE



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