

## Benchmark Announcement

Police Standards and Training is pleased to announce that funds resulting in the passage of Senate Bill 376-FN are now available to provide NH law enforcement agencies the opportunity to submit for total reimbursement for all expenses incurred while officers are engaged in the 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team Programs (CIT) for New Hampshire's First Responders. This reimbursement opportunity commences immediately and is retroactive to agencies whose officers (1-per agency) have successfully completed the CIT program since July 8, 2022, the date Senate Bill 376-FN was enacted.

This important educational opportunity is presented by NAMI NH as a solution-focused community response to identifying and helping people with mental illness that officers all too frequently encounter. Many presenters are well known leaders in New Hampshire law enforcement, fire, emergency services and the mental health field. The CIT Program is predicated on the "Memphis Model" which was developed following the fatal shooting of a young black man by two white officers in 1987, the aftermath of which exacerbated to the then existing civil unrest. The young man was known to have a history of mental health issues. As officers ordered the young man to drop the knife, he became more upset and ran toward the officers, who discharged their weapons, killing the man. The response to the incident drew widespread criticism because the perception on the call was the only life in danger was the man who wanted to kill himself.

The CIT Program's focus is to educate officers and first responders on signs and symptoms exhibited by people who are in mental health crisis. Course material identifies additional resources available to assist first responders in handling such calls. This is accomplished by lecture, exercises, training scenarios and enhanced with frank, open discussions amongst course attendees and presenters.

The application for reimbursement, associated documents, and FAQs are in Benchmark. Completed reimbursement applications and paid receipts can be uploaded to the Benchmark platform for processing. After the information is reviewed and verified, it is presented to the Director for approval. Once approved, payment is issued by the PSTC Business Office directly to the agency.

The over-arching goal of SB 376-FN is to provide every law enforcement agency in the state with at least one CIT officer on staff. To this end, from this point forward, agencies providing officers for CIT Programs (to include a 4-hour refresher) shall be able to submit for reimbursement for an officer's expenses (not payroll) while in training (hotels, travel, meals & expenses). Additionally, departments can now be reimbursed for payroll expenses for all officers who back fill the CIT attendee's open shifts while attending CIT Programs (40-hours and 4-hours, respectively).

Enhancing education and training has always been the motivation and purpose of PSTC. With this strong legislative support, officers will be better prepared when (not if) they encounter a person in a mental health crisis. Agencies can better plan for contingencies related to expenses and shift coverages. This is certainly a win-win opportunity for New Hampshire law enforcement! To emphasize the importance of CIT, this significant program has now been added to the curriculum for the 193<sup>rd</sup>, 194<sup>th</sup>, (and future) recruit academy sessions. Professional Development courses for CIT will continue to be presented to all agencies. Some NAMI NH regional CIT programs will also be offered. Schedules will be available in Benchmark and on the NAMI NH website.

Please direct applications, paid receipts, and any questions to:

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