

2018-2019 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Austin Police

REQUEST NO.: 92

REQUESTED BY: Alter

DATE REQUESTED: 8/25/18

DATE POSTED: 9/5/18

REQUEST: Please provide detail on what the Austin Police Department added to the base budget for mental training activities for the FY 2019 proposed budget.

RESPONSE:

The Austin Police Department's FY 2019 proposed budget includes funding for a new Staff Psychologist for the Health Services Unit of the Training & Recruiting Division, for a total of two staff psychologists within the Department. The annualized cost of this position is \$157,354.

The staff psychologist plays an active role in Peer Support and works closely with the Peer Support Sergeant. In 2017, Peer Support made 532 new contacts and facilitated fourteen Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) debriefs. With only one psychologist currently on staff, the Peer Support Sergeant refers a number of officers to external resources. One benefit of providing these services internally is staff may feel more comfortable seeking support from a psychologist familiar with the "police culture". With a second psychologist on staff, the Department could better serve sworn and civilian staff, as well as their families. A second psychologist would also allow additional time for advanced evaluations and counseling to Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Explosives Ordinance Detection (EOD), and Hostage Negotiator units.