

## **Law Enforcement Committee**

### **Committee co-chairs**

- Jeff Futo, Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence (CJ CCoE), NEOMED
- Steven M. Click, Ohio Department of Public Safety

### **Purpose**

The Law Enforcement Committee seeks to help improve outcomes when law enforcement interacts with people with mental illness. Members promote the importance of diverting people with mental illness from the criminal justice system to treatment alternatives and seek ways to transform crisis response systems so that law enforcement is included only when there is an immediate or imminent threat to safety or serious criminal concern.

### **Work highlights**

- Law enforcement and other first responders continue to be trained to appropriately respond to people with mental illness in crisis. QPR Training, Mental Health First Aid Training, and various types of Ohio Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trainings were provided to hundreds of law enforcement officers, dispatchers, firefighters, EMS, and behavioral health specialists across the state. In 2024, over 120 trainings were delivered including topics such as youth mental health, trauma informed response, legal updates, human trafficking, emergency hospitalization, and crisis mitigation and de-escalation. Eleven (11) new law enforcement agencies attended CIT training in their CIT programs.
- Ohio continued to expand community policing strategies to increase their effectiveness in building trust and cooperation between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Awards and mini-grants made possible through the CJ CCoE, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NAMI Ohio, and the Office of Criminal Justice Services funded training and CIT program support and expansion initiatives. These initiatives included program peer reviews, training opportunities, information sharing and data collection efforts, and increased engagement with people with lived experience.
- First responder wellness continued to be a focus in Ohio. Agencies and initiatives such as the Office of First Responder Wellness (Ohio Department of Public Safety), First Responder's Bridge, The Ohio ASSIST Post Critical Incident Seminar, and the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation provided education and support to thousands of first responders who have experienced traumatic events. These programs emphasize the importance of mental health, offering resources such as counseling, peer support, stress management training, and crisis intervention. By prioritizing the well-being of first responders, Ohio aims to ensure that those who serve and protect are equipped with the necessary tools to manage the unique challenges of their roles.

### **Next Steps**

- Identify training needs in law enforcement related to crisis response and collaborate with partners to develop and deliver effective instruction.
- Identify ways to support the CJ CCoE in strengthening law enforcement participation in CIT programs.
- Identify needs related to first responder mental health and wellness support to better understand gaps in services, barriers to access, and areas where additional resources are needed.