

## Peer Support Program

<b>Effective Date:</b>	2-3-25
<b>Revised Date:</b>	2-3-25
<b>Issuing Authority:</b> Chief Probation Officer	

### 415.1 PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for managing and participating in the Peer Support Program.

### 415.2 DEFINITIONS:

Peer Support Program: A department program implemented to provide an agency-wide network of peer representatives trained to assist fellow employees with support services and referrals. The assistance is confidential, provided that it does not violate any law or policy/procedure.

Peer Supporter: An employee selected by the Peer Support Advisory Committee and approved by the Chief Probation Officer who provides resources and assistance to staff facing personal or professional challenges. They complete the required training and offer support during crisis situations including, but not limited to officer-involved shootings, suicides, divorce, financial issues, natural disasters, family deaths, and serious injuries or illness.

Peer Support Coordinator: An individual appointed by the Chief Probation Officer who manages the Peer Support Program.

Peer Support Advisory Committee: A team of three to five peer supporters and a Counseling Team International member, led by the Peer Support Coordinator.

Peer Support Area Leaders: Peer supporters chosen by the Peer Support Coordinator to oversee operations in assigned areas of the County.

Peer Support Accounts: The Peer Support Program is supported by two separate accounts, both funded through fundraising activities:

1. The Officer Down account is designated for supporting officers who have died or sustained serious injuries in the line of duty.
2. The Peer Support account provides one-time financial assistance to staff experiencing a financial crisis.

### 415.3 GUIDELINES:

- A. A contact list of peer supporters and the Peer Support Coordinator is accessible to all staff in ProbTools.

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#### **415.4 RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- I. Application/Selection Process:
  - A. Peer Supporters are volunteers selected from all ranks (PCO, PO, PCSI, PCSII, SPO, DD, and Professional Staff).
  - B. The selection process is as follows:
    1. The Peer Support Advisory Committee will send a recruitment letter to all staff to solicit peer supporters.
    2. Any staff member may apply for a position.
    3. Interested staff must read the Peer Support Program Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (located in ProbTools) and agree to its expectations before submitting a memo of interest.
    4. The Peer Support Coordinator will contact the applicant's Supervisor and Division Director/Superintendent/Manager for written approval via the Peer Support Program MOU form, which must be signed and submitted within five business days.
    5. The Peer Support Advisory Committee will interview the applicant.
    6. The Professional Standards unit will review selected applicants' personnel files.
    7. The Chief Probation Officer or designee will give final approval for applicants selected by the committee and cleared by Professional Standards.
- II. Peer Support Advisory Committee:
  - A. Set program policies for program operation and direction, subject to the approval of the Chief Probation Officer or designee.
  - B. Participate in the selection of Peer Supporters.
  - C. Selected by three to five Peer Supporters for the committee.
  - D. Serve up to two years on the committee with rotations occurring for one-half of the committee each year.
  - E. Attend Peer Support Advisory Committee meetings as scheduled.
- III. Peer Support Coordinator:
  - A. Oversee the program and the maintenance of anonymous statistical data collection of reported contacts by peer supporter area leaders.
  - B. Serve as a member of the Peer Support Advisory Committee.
  - C. Assign recruitment duties and coordinate the screening of the Peer Support Advisory Committee.
  - D. Coordinate peer supporter training.
  - E. Review statistical data monthly.

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- F. Offer guidance to peer supporters when concerns arise.
  - G. Coordinate follow-up responses of peer supporters when referrals are made to the Counseling Team.
  - H. Notify the on-call Deputy Chief Probation Officer, via telephone or in person, to approve all peer support emergency response requests after normal working hours.
  - I. Overtime shall only be authorized by the Deputy Chief Probation Officer.
  - J. Maintain Peer Support Accounts and review requests for funds as needed.
  - K. Designate a backup Peer Support Coordinator when unavailable. Inform the Chief, Assistant Chief, Deputy Chiefs, Directors, and Peer Support staff when the Acting Coordinator is covering.
  - L. Maintain a current peer supporter list for after-hours use.
  - M. Update the peer supporter list in ProbTools quarterly to ensure an updated list is available.
- IV. Peer Support Area Leaders:
- A. Supervise the program within your assigned area.
  - B. Foster trust and assure anonymity and confidentiality for staff seeking assistance from the peer support program within established guidelines.
  - C. Identify and utilize resources to assist individuals when issues are identified.
  - D. Provide support by referring staff to appropriate external resources when necessary.
  - E. Be available for additional follow-up support to staff as needed.
  - F. Coordinate follow-up actions of peer supporters when referrals are made to the Counseling Team.
  - G. Attend Peer Support training as assigned.
  - H. Maintain regular contact with the Peer Support Coordinator regarding program activities.
  - I. Contact the Peer Support Coordinator promptly for approval when an emergency response is requested after normal business hours.
  - J. May be contacted and can respond to a designated location at any time, provided they are available.
  - K. Attend scheduled Quarterly Peer Support Advisory Committee meetings.
  - L. Review and forward anonymous statistical data from area peer supporters to the Peer Support Coordinator.
- V. Peer Supporters:
- A. Convey trust and ensure anonymity and confidentiality within department guidelines.

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- B. Verbally advise staff requesting assistance upon first contact that the peer supporter is required to report a criminal offense or a violation of policy/procedure if the staff chooses to disclose such information.
- C. Provide assistance and support to staff when both are on duty and promptly contact the Peer Support Coordinator for approval when a response is requested after hours.
- D. Refer staff to the appropriate external resources when necessary.
- E. Submit requests for funds to the Peer Support Coordinator as needed.
- F. Be available for additional follow-up support to individuals.
- G. Maintain contact with the Peer Support Coordinator regarding program activities.
- H. May be contacted and can respond to a designated location at any time, provided they are available.
- I. Attend Quarterly Peer Support meetings.
- J. Participate in Peer Support training as assigned.
- K. Shall perform duties as outlined in the Line-of-Duty Death procedure.
- L. If called to testify in a civil or family law matter, appear in court only after being subpoenaed, consulting with Professional Standards, and notifying the Peer Support Coordinator.
- M. Shall not compromise any internal or criminal investigations.
- N. Internal Investigations:
  - 1. A peer supporter may assist an individual who is or becomes the subject of a disciplinary investigation.
  - 2. Follow the confidentiality policy of the Peer Support Program.
  - 3. The peer supporter should not volunteer any information received in confidence; however, peer supporters may not hamper or impede the actual investigation nor may they attempt to shelter the individual from any investigation.
  - 4. The peer supporter's role in disciplinary situations is limited to supporting and assisting individuals through the stress experienced during the disciplinary process.
  - 5. Consult the Peer Support Coordinator with any questions or concerns.
  - 6. Peer supporters shall not be interviewed, nor shall they discuss details of support sessions with Department personnel conducting an investigation without the written authorization of the Chief Probation Officer, or the written permission of the employee.

#### VI. Critical Incidents:

- A. Watch Commander/PCS I/PCS II/SPO:

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1. Notify the Peer Support Coordinator by phone or in person within 24 hours of a critical incident. Include details such as the nature of the incident and the names of involved staff etc.