



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Criminal Justice Services

The Honorable Jackson H. Miller
Director

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February 14, 2023

The Honorable Robert Mosier
Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security
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1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Barry D. Knight
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
Pocahontas Building
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Janet D. Howell
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance and
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Pocahontas Building, 14th Floor
900 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Mr. Michael Maul
Director
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Patrick Henry Building
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The Honorable George L. Barker
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance and
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Richmond, VA 23219

Annual Report on the Critical Incident Stress Management Grant Program

Attached please find the ***Annual Report on the Critical Incident Stress Management Grant Program*** in accordance Item 406.K of the 2020 General Assembly appropriation language.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jackson H. Miller".

Jackson H. Miller
Director

Attachment

Report on the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Grant Program – 2022



Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
1100 Bank Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
www.dcjs.virginia.gov

July 2022

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Preface

The 2020 Appropriations Act (Item 406.K) contains the following provision:

Included in the appropriations for this Item is \$300,000 the first year and \$300,000 the second year from the general fund for the Department of Criminal Justice Services to make competitive grants to nonprofit organizations to support services for law enforcement, including post critical incident seminars and peer-supported critical incident stress management programs to promote officer safety and wellness, under guidelines to be established by the Department. The Department shall evaluate the effectiveness of the program and report on its findings to the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, and the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by July 1, 2022.

In accordance with the requirements of the 2020 Appropriations Act, this report includes information on the administration of the competitive grant program by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) through April 2022.

Executive Summary

The 2020 General Assembly appropriated funds to the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to create a grant program to “support services for law enforcement, including post critical incident seminars and peer-supported critical incident stress management programs to promote officer safety and wellness” (Item 406.K). In spring 2020, DCJS awarded grant funding to the Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP) (\$99,055 and \$99,871) and the Virginia Peer Support Association (VAPSA) (\$100,129) to provide these services to Virginia law enforcement during FY2021. In the fall of 2021, VALEAP (\$200,000) and VAPSA (\$100,000) were given new awards to provide peer support services for FY2022.

The 2020 appropriation language also directed DCJS to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and report on its findings by July 1, 2022. This report is submitted to meet that directive.

During the reporting period, VALEAP provided seven peer support training courses, certifying 320 participants as peers. VALEAP also provided four Post Critical Incident Seminars (PCIS) in Harrisonburg, and another one in Virginia Beach, Virginia. There were 155 participants served through the five seminars.

During the reporting period, VAPSA provided seven peer support training courses, certifying 70 participants as peers. VAPSA also provided two peer support recertification courses, recertifying 22 participants.

Report on the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Grant Program – 2022

Time Period for 2022 Report

The 2022 report mandated by Item 406.K of the 2020 Appropriations Act references information about grant program implementation and evaluation for FY2021 and the first three quarters of FY2022.

CISM Grant Program Purpose

Law enforcement officers are routinely exposed to events that threaten their lives and expose them to horrific, traumatic situations. According to statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Law Enforcement Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) data and survey results from the 2012 National Study on Police Suicides, law enforcement officer deaths by suicide were twice as high compared to deaths by traffic accidents and felonious assaults. This data indicates that some law enforcement officers suffer – and die – from mental health issues and suicidal ideation and behavior. It suggests that mental health and well-being is integral to officer safety and wellness and critical to preventing officer suicide.

However, at the same time, the law enforcement profession has long perpetuated a stigma attached to mental health that prevents both officers from seeking the necessary treatment and leaders from providing it. Although law enforcement agencies provide resources such as firearms training and physical fitness programs to ensure that officer safety and physical fitness standards are met, there are few comparable resources to ensure officers' mental health wellness (or safety).

To address this, in 2013 the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice hosted *Breaking the Silence: A National Symposium on Law Enforcement Officer Suicide and Mental Health*. Participants at the symposium developed a national strategy to address officer mental wellness and suicide prevention, built on four cornerstones: 1) Culture Change; 2) Early Warning and Prevention Protocols; 3) Training; and 4) Event Response Protocols.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a method of helping first responders and others who have been involved in critical incidents who have become emotionally and/or physically affected by those incidents. CISM is a process that enables peers to help their peers understand problems that might occur after an event. This process also helps people prepare to continue to perform in their profession or in some cases return to a normal lifestyle.

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) – the State Administrative Agency (SAA) – is the primary criminal justice planning agency in Virginia and is designated as the SAA for purposes of federal grants through the U.S. Department of Justice. It is responsible for providing the data, planning, and administration necessary for supporting policy and resource allocation across the criminal justice system. As such, DCJS is responsible for the administration of multiple federal grant awards to the state which are then distributed to the appropriate constituents.

The *Code of Virginia* (§ 9.1-102(28)) requires DCJS to define, develop, organize, encourage, conduct, coordinate, and administer programs, projects and activities for the Commonwealth and units of general local government, or

combinations thereof, *designed to strengthen and improve law enforcement* and the administration of criminal justice at every level throughout the Commonwealth.

The 2018 General Assembly first appropriated funds to DCJS to create a grant program to “support services for law enforcement, including post critical incident seminars and peer-supported critical incident stress management programs to promote officer safety and wellness.”

Description of Competitive Grant Process: FY2021 and FY2022

Eligibility and Grant Priorities

Applicants for this grant program were required to be 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Applicants were required to have well-established partnerships with law enforcement agencies in Virginia and demonstrated experience in providing Peer-Supported Critical Incident Stress Management training, seminars, programs, and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies and their staff. Applicants were further asked to address how they would provide geographically diverse support to law enforcement officers throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Grant Review Process

DCJS staff used a standardized rating form to review and rate grant applications, as is standard practice for the agency with all grant programs. Each grant application can earn a maximum score of 60 points. DCJS staff – and, when necessary, colleagues chosen from outside the agency – review and score each application. The grant program elements as captured in the application are evaluated based on ratings of Excellent, Acceptable, Marginal, or Unacceptable. The rating points that can be awarded for each grant program element are:

- Itemized Budget: 0–6 points,
- Budget Narrative: 0–9 points,
- Needs Justification: 0–12 points,
- Project Description: 0–12 points,
- Goals and Objectives: 0–9 points,
- Implementation Steps: 0–9 points, and
- Technical Compliance Elements: 0–3 points.

After DCJS staff have rated the applications, applications are reviewed based on the priorities outlined above. Funding recommendations are then forwarded to the Grants Subcommittee of the Criminal Justice Services Board, which makes recommendations to the full Board. Final grant approval is at the discretion of the Criminal Justice Services Board.

Fiscal Year 2021 Funding

DCJS released a funding opportunity (solicitation) in February 2020 making available \$100,000 for competitive grants in support of peer-supported critical incident stress management programming for state FY2021.

This funding opportunity resulted in one submitted application. The application was reviewed by DCJS staff and later presented to the Executive Committee of the Criminal Justice Services Board (CJSB) for final approval. In

March 2020, the Executive Committee approved a single award to the Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP) in the amount of \$99,055.

The 2020 Appropriations Act increased the total funding allocated to this grant program to \$300,000. In anticipation of the funding increase, in March 2020 DCJS released a second funding opportunity making available the additional \$200,000 for competitive grants in support of peer-supported critical incident stress management programming for state FY2021.

Two eligible applications were received as a result of this funding opportunity. The applications were reviewed by DCJS staff and presented first to the Grants Committee of the CJSB and later to the full CJSB for approval. In May 2020, the final decision of the CJSB was to make two provisional awards, one to the Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP) in the amount of \$99,871 and a second to the Virginia Peer Support Association (VAPSA) in the amount of \$100,129. The awards were approved on a provisional basis in light of action by the Northam administration – specifically unallotting and placing on hold new spending for FY2021 – to reduce spending and generate savings in response to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time (April 2020).

The amended Appropriations Act signed by Governor Northam in November 2020 included the funds that were previously unallotted for this programming. DCJS subsequently awarded the funding as previously approved by the CJSB.

Fiscal Year 2022 Funding

In April 2021, in response to the 2021 Appropriations Act that included \$300,000 for Peer-Supported Critical Incident Stress Management, DCJS released a funding opportunity making available the funding for competitive grants in support of peer-supported critical incident stress management programming for state fiscal year 2022. The funding opportunity allowed the successful applicant to receive a four-year renewable award, contingent on program compliance and the availability of funding. This change was the result of feedback from applicants that indicated the unpredictability of ongoing funding made it difficult to budget and plan for upcoming years.

This funding opportunity resulted in three eligible applications being received, with each applicant's request exceeding \$231,000.

- Virginia Peer Support Association (VAPSA) – requesting **\$231,184**
- Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP) – requesting **\$254,230**
- National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C) – requesting **\$299,883**

Due to the competitive nature of this application process, DCJS made the decision not to present the applications at the June 2021 meeting of the CJSB Executive Committee. This would allow staff and external reviewers additional time to consider the applications more thoroughly. The decision was later made to present the applications to the Grants Committee of the CJSB at their next scheduled meeting in October 2021.

To assist the Grants Committee members in their decision making, each applicant was asked to provide their proposed project in video presentation format, no longer than eight minutes long. The video presentations were reviewed at the scheduled October 2021 meeting, where the Grants Committee voted to approve two awards, one to the Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP) and a second to the Virginia Peer Support Association (VAPSA). VALEAP was awarded \$200,000 and VAPSA was awarded \$100,000. The award decisions of the Grants Committee were presented and formally approved at the meeting of the full CJSB on October 14, 2021.

Summary of Activities Supported by CISM Grant: FY2021 and first three quarters of FY2022

VIRGINIA LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP) is an established 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the Internal Revenue Service. VALEAP is a collaborative that is modeled after the highly effective and successful South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program. The organization is composed of trained and experienced law enforcement peers of all disciplines from across the Commonwealth of Virginia. During the grant period, VALEAP has trained approximately 320 law enforcement peers from a wide range of jurisdictions who voluntarily provide services around the Commonwealth. They are assisted in these efforts by clinical mental health volunteers. VALEAP offers a broad range of services and training that are designed to meet the particular needs of Virginia's law enforcement professionals and the agencies in which they are employed.

VALEAP was awarded a total of \$398,926 (two awards in FY2021 – \$99,055 and \$99,871 and one award in FY2022 – \$200,000) during this reporting period. The following activities were reported to have occurred during state fiscal year 2021 and the first three quarters of state fiscal year 2022.

Training

The Peer Support and Critical Incident Stress Management grant program allowed VALEAP to provide essential peer support training throughout the Commonwealth. VALEAP follows the *Mitchell Model* of crisis intervention and therefore contracts with approved *International Critical Incident Stress Foundation* (ICISF) instructors to facilitate training opportunities and certify peers who complete the program. Peer certification is contingent upon the completion of this week-long basic training that incorporates *Assisting Individuals in Crisis, Group Crisis Intervention, and Suicide Prevention*.

The grant program allowed VALEAP to facilitate the following training opportunities:

2020

- 1) Charlottesville, Virginia: Forty-two (42) participants completed the required training and were certified as peers.
- 2) Virginia State Police Training Academy, Virginia: Forty (40) participants completed the required training and were certified as peers.

2021

- 1) Manassas, Virginia: Fifty-four (54) participants completed the required training and were certified as peers.
- 2) Virginia State Police Training Academy, Virginia: Forty-nine (49) participants completed the required training and were certified as peers.
- 3) Virginia Beach, Virginia: Forty-eight (48) participants completed the required training and were certified as peers.

2022 (through April)

- 1) Prince William County, Virginia: Fifty-three (53) participants completed the required training and were certified as peers.
- 2) Virginia State Police Training Academy, Virginia: Thirty-four (34) participants completed the required training and were certified as peers.
- 3) VALEAP is preparing for an ICISF training scheduled for June 6–9 in Montgomery County, Virginia where 30 peers and clinicians will receive training.

VALEAP also provided *pre-event* psychoeducation across the Commonwealth to multiple agencies and regional/state academies, most recently a first-line supervisor school in partnership with the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police.

POST CRITICAL INCIDENT SEMINAR (PCIS)

PCIS offers an unparalleled opportunity for Virginia law enforcement professionals to share their experiences with peers and to offer and receive valuable support. Participants find that discussing their experiences with fellow officers who have been down similar paths facilitates normalization and recovery. Attendees also have access to mental health professionals who work closely with law enforcement and understand the challenges of the profession. PCIS provides education on trauma, identifies effective patterns of resolution, and offers proven coping strategies to promote recovery and resilience.

The grant program allowed VALEAP to facilitate the following PCIS events:

2020

- 1) In November of 2020, VALEAP facilitated the 21st Virginia PCIS in Harrisonburg, Virginia where 30 participants received critical services from volunteer peers and clinical professionals.

2021

- 1) In April of 2021, VALEAP facilitated the 22nd Virginia PCIS in Virginia Beach, Virginia where 25 participants received critical services from volunteer peers and clinical professionals.
- 2) In June of 2021, VALEAP facilitated the 23rd Virginia PCIS in Harrisonburg, Virginia where 25 participants received critical services from volunteer peers and clinical professionals.
- 3) In October of 2021, VALEAP facilitated the 24th Virginia PCIS in Harrisonburg, Virginia where 45 participants received critical services from volunteer peers and clinical professionals.

2022 (through April)

- 1) In April of 2022, VALEAP facilitated the 25th Virginia PCIS in Harrisonburg, Virginia where 30 participants received critical services from volunteer peers and clinical professionals.
- 2) VALEAP is preparing for Virginia PCIS #26 in Harrisonburg, Virginia where 39 participants are scheduled to receive critical services from volunteer peers and clinical professionals.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM)

Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP) offers Critical Incident Stress Management services (CISM) to law enforcement personnel. VALEAP Law Enforcement Peer Support Team coordinates services at a location convenient for the requesting agency or individual(s) and can provide immediate peer support of personnel, assess the need for **Defusing, Debriefing, Grief Session**, or all of the above.

VALEAP responds to any calls from agencies across the Commonwealth to provide CISM services following critical incidents. Many of the large scale CISM deployments do not allow for an accurate measurement of participants served based upon the vast response.

During the calendar years of 2020–2022 thus far, VALEAP has experienced a significant inflation in the demand for services across the Commonwealth due to civil unrest/riots, law enforcement suicides, and a staggering number of Virginia Line of Duty Deaths.

The grant program has allowed VALEAP to respond to and render CISM services to large-scale critical events where multiple CISM services were conducted over a multi-day response. Those services were as follows:

2020

July 10–11, 2020. Roanoke City/Roanoke County – Civil Unrest/Riots

August 11, 2020. Roanoke County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Suicide

November, 2020. Smyth County Sheriff's Office – Murder/Suicide, three child fatalities

2021

January 6, 2021. Capitol Insurrection

In coordination with sister programs from multiple other states, VALEAP conducted a vast response to Washington D.C., following the January 6th insurrection, an officer-involved shooting, and two Capitol police officer suicides. **(VALEAP did not utilize grant funding for this deployment.)**

January, 2021. Pulaski County Sheriff's Office – Off-duty deputy death

March 15, 2021. Stanley Police Department – Line of Duty Death

April 2, 2021. Bristol Police Department – Fatal Officer-Involved Shooting

May, 2022. Smyth County Sheriff's Office/Marion Police Department – Firefighter Line of Duty Death

June 15, 2021. Roanoke Police Department – Non-fatal Officer-Involved Shooting

September 15, 2021. Lake Monticello Police Department – Officer Suicide

November 9, 2021. Bedford County Sheriff's Office/DWR – Fatal Officer-Involved Shooting

November 15, 2021. Big Stone Gap Police Department/Wise County Sheriff's Office – Line of Duty Death

2022 (through April)

January, 2022. Chesapeake Police Department – Officer Suicide

January, 2022. Virginia Tech Police Department/Giles County Sheriff's Office – Officer Suicide

January, 2022. Danville Police Department – Off-Duty Officer Death

February, 2022. Henry County Sheriff's Office/VSP – Fatal Officer-Involved Shooting

February, 2022. Bridgewater Campus Police Department/Rockingham County Sheriff's Office/Harrisonburg Police Department/Dayton Police Department – Two Line of Duty Deaths

March, 2022. Covington Police Department/Alleghany Sheriff's Office – Line of Duty Death

March, 2022. Henrico Police Department – Line of Duty Death

April, 2022. Smyth County Sheriff's Office – Structure Fire, Child Fatality

VALEAP conducted three diffusings, six debriefings, eight grief sessions, and several days of compassionate care to the first responder community following the line of duty deaths of Covington Police Department Officer Caleb Ogilvie and Henrico County Police Department Officer Trey Sutton.

These events are only *major deployments*. They do not account for smaller deployments and/or one-on-one peer support activities.

Between November 2021 and April 2022, VALEAP has tallied 48 total deployments across the Commonwealth serving over 530 law enforcement officers, communications professionals, other responders, and their families. To facilitate these services, VALEAP deployed 158 volunteer peers and 55 clinicians during this period, resulting in 146 hours of services rendered and over 4,000 miles of travel response.

VIRGINIA PEER SUPPORT ASSOCIATION

The Virginia Peer Support Association (VAPSA) is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization formed in 2006 that is purposed with training, certification, and maintenance of Peer Support Professionals (PSPs) in the Commonwealth. VAPSA has certified over 600 criminal justice professionals. VAPSA provides resources like CISM debriefings, training and development of and technical support for peer support (PS) programs; policy and implementation of programs for PSPs and their agencies to build and maintain viable peer support teams (PSTs). VAPSA services are available to all criminal justice agencies in the Commonwealth interested in developing and maintaining PSTs. Services are offered by highly trained and experienced instructors, through Level-1 PSP Training, Level-2 Advanced Training for Administrators of PS Programs, and Level-3 Train the Trainer education, as well as Continuing Education in person and online. VAPSA provides model policies and offers its police psychologist as a consulting member of the team to assure compliance with Virginia law and to provide professional oversight to deal with issues of clinical significance.

VAPSA was awarded a total of \$200,129 (two awards: FY2021 – \$100,129 and FY2022 – \$100,000) during this reporting period. The following activities were reported to have occurred during state fiscal year 2021 and the first three quarters of state fiscal year 2022.

Training

The Peer-Supported Critical Incident Stress Management Grant Program assisted VAPSA in provided the following trainings events.

Peer Support Level 1 Certification Class: Level One Peer Support (Three-Day Program) (LOPS) focuses on strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and emergency medical service departments to implement a systemic peer support program based on critical counseling skills, assessment skills, referral skills and critical incident stress management. The purpose of this training is to offer departments trained peer supporters to assist their colleagues when experiencing job related stress and emotional challenges. Ultimately, departments utilize available resources to maximize the health of their employees, increasing performance, morale, and professional longevity.

Specifically, the scope of the program is to measurably increase the skills and abilities of law enforcement and emergency medical service providers so that they may more accurately assess, support, and refer those colleagues in need to other professionals. In order to achieve this, the LOPS program consists of a core curriculum and instructor development component. The core curriculum is designed for direct dissemination to law enforcement officers and emergency medical service practitioners. Certifying the core curriculum is the Virginia Peer Support Association (VAPSA) that prepares instructors to disseminate the core curriculum in an efficient, consistent, and measurable manner.

Total: 7

Number of Students Trained: 70

Locations:

Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy, Weyers Cave, September 21–23, 2020

Longwood College, Farmville, January 4–6, 2021

Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy, Weyers Cave, April 21–23, 2021

Southwest Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy, Bristol, May 10–12, 2021

Crater Criminal Justice Training Academy, Disputanta, May 12–14, 2021

Winchester, July 13–15, 2021

Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy, Weyers Cave, March 22–24, 2022

Peer Support Recertification Classes:

Level One Peer Support Recertification is a course that is designed to keep the peers active and refreshed on current information, laws, and major concerns that are vital to them. It is designed to be conducted once every 18 months. This accommodates new information that affects best practices in peer consultation. Recognizing that information retention has a half-life, these updated trainings offer specific and time sensitive topics that also offer the trainers contact with active peer supporters to reiterate or emphasize specific skills.

Total: 2

Number of Students Trained: 22

Locations:

Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy, Weyers Cave, October 5, 2020

Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy, Weyers Cave, March 25, 2022

Critical Incident Stress Management Seminar

Law enforcement professionals are exposed to considerable daily stress and frequent critical incidents that can result in significant health issues, time loss, and burnout. Peer support professionals (PSP's) are recognized as a highly effective approach to provide assistance to officers to address the stress and challenges of their profession and the vicarious trauma they encounter.

These trainings offer first responders the skills to better recognize and address trauma among their colleagues. At the conclusion of this training, attendees are better able to understand trauma responses, recognize critical incident stress, and recognize and adapt to cultural challenges in dealing with stress among first responders.

Total CISM Seminars: 4

Number of Students Trained: 135

Locations:

Fredericksburg, April 15, 2021

Richmond, March 29–30, 2021

Roanoke, June 10, 2021

Williamsburg, May 4, 2021

VAPSA reported having 18 incidents in which peer support professionals trained through their organization were called out. Due to confidentiality and because the responding professionals were not paid through grant funds, the names and locations of the incidents were not provided. PSP's respond as members of their own agency, not the VAPSA.

Program Effectiveness and Factors Impacting Implementation: FY2021 and first three quarters of FY2022

From a process perspective, the implementation of the Peer Support Critical Incident Stress Management Grant Program continues to be successful in ensuring that supportive services for law enforcement are made available. As indicated, the grantees have provided supportive services and/or provided training opportunities for law enforcement personnel to become peer support professionals in their agencies or as needed around the Commonwealth.

To determine the effectiveness of the services provided, each grant recipient relies upon an evaluation form, which consists of both numeric and qualitative responses from their participants. Some of those results are provided below.

EVALUATIONS

VALEAP

On day one of each PCIS, VALEAP staff administer a PCL-5 to participants. The PCL-5 is a scale that measures potential levels of post-traumatic stress based upon symptoms and experiences noted by the participant following their critical incident. The PCL-5 comes from the National Center for PTSD with the latest updated version from April 2018.

Also, on day one of each PCIS, VALEAP staff administer an IES (Impact of Events Scale) to participants. The IES is a scale that measures the effect of routine life stress, everyday traumas, and acute stress.

Virginia Post Critical Incident Seminar (PCIS)

At the conclusion of each PCIS, participants are offered an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on their experience of the program, how the program has benefited them, and if they would recommend the program to another law enforcement officer.

According to the evaluations from the most recent PCIS training course (25th) participants, the following information was recorded on their evaluations:

Participants reported a reduction in stress and an increase in encouragement and hope. Many participants' remarks include the impact of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy in their emotional responses to the critical event. Remarks also included the meaningfulness of attending the seminar with their spouses and the normalization of critical incident stress symptoms by listening to the experiences of other officers.

Many remarks state that PCIS should be a required program for all law enforcement professionals.

When prompted on the importance of the large group component of the program, the evaluations revealed:

Critical – 83.3%	Very Important – 16.7%	Important – 0%	Not Important – 0%
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When prompted on the importance of the small group component of the program, the evaluations revealed:

Critical – 70%	Very Important – 26.7%	Important – 3%	Not Important – 0%
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When prompted on the importance of the EMDR therapy provided in the program, the evaluations revealed:

Critical – 46%	Very Important – 23%	Important – 20%	Not Important – 10%
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When prompted on the importance of the medical massage (not covered by the grant) provided in the program, the evaluations revealed:

Critical – 30%	Very Important – 40%	Important – 23.3%	Not Important – 6.7%
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When prompted on the importance of the evening social time with other participants and peers. The evaluations revealed:

Critical – 40%	Very Important – 40%	Important – 16.7%	Not Important – 3.3%
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When asked if participants would recommend PCIS to other law enforcement professionals:

100% of the population stated, “YES”.

Copies of these evaluations are available upon request.

ICISF Training

VALEAP administers post-course evaluations at each ICISF certification trainings.

One of the most recent ICISF certification courses was hosted in Prince William County where 43 new peers were trained. Their end of course evaluations revealed the following:

This course was beneficial.

Strongly agree – 83.7%	Agree – 16.3%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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This course provided new information.

Strongly Agree – 74.4%	Agree – 23.2%	Neutral – 2.3%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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This course was well organized.

Strongly Agree – 86%	Agree – 13.9%	Neutral – 0%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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This course will assist me in my job.

Strongly Agree – 74.4%	Agree – 20.9%	Neutral – 2.3%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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The course materials were useful.

Strongly Agree – 72%	Agree – 25.6%	Neutral – 2.3%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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The instructor was well prepared.

Strongly Agree – 79%	Agree – 20.9%	Neutral – 0%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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The instructor provided a positive learning experience.

Strongly Agree – 90.7%	Agree – 9.3%	Neutral – 0%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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The instructor was knowledgeable on the topic.

Strongly Agree – 90.7%	Agree – 9.3%	Neutral – 0%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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I would recommend this course to others in my field.

Strongly Agree – 86%	Agree – 13.9%	Neutral – 0%	Disagree – 0%	Strongly Disagree – 0%
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VAPSA

At the conclusion of each course offered by VAPSA, participants are also offered an opportunity to provide feedback of the program. These evaluations did provide a space for participants names and the organizations with which they were affiliated.

On October 5, 2020, VAPSA conducted a one-day, Peer Support Professional Program Recertification course at the Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy in Weyers Cave, Virginia. The results of the numeric responses are provided below. There were opportunities to provide written comments that varied widely and therefore not captured in this report. In the written comments, participants were asked to respond to what parts of the training were “most” and “least” interesting, and to provide recommendations on how to improve the course.

Peer Support Professional Program Recertification Course – Seven (7) participants completed surveys for this course. (Some results have been rounded to the nearest whole number.)

What was your impression of the course?

Outstanding – 71%	Very Good – 29%	Good – 0%	Fair – 0%	Very Poor – 0%
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How do you feel this course was organized?

Very Organized – 86%	Acceptably Organized – 14%	Fairly Organized – 0%	Poorly Organized – 0%
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Instructor Rating

Please rate this instructor on a scale of 1–5 on the below listed categories.

1=Poor 2=Needs Improvement 3=Average 4=Above Average 5=Excellent

1 – 0%	2 – 0%	3 – 0%	4 – 0%	5 – 100%
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On May 4, 2021, VAPSA conducted a one-day, CISM Seminar course in Williamsburg, Virginia. The results of the numeric responses are provided below. There were several written comments from participants who indicated that more time for the course would have been beneficial.

Critical Stress in Critical Times Seminar – Twenty-six (26) participants completed surveys for this course. (Some results have been rounded to the nearest whole number.)

Participants were prompted to select a number between 1 – 5, with 1 being Disagree and 5 being Agree.

(Circle one) Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

The seminar addressed the topics I anticipated:

1 – 0%	2 – 0%	3 – 8%	4 – 35%	5 – 58%
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The objectives were stated during the seminar.

1 – 0%	2 – 4%	3 – 8%	4 – 19%	5 – 69%
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The objectives were met during the seminar.

1 – 0%	2 – 8%	3 – 4%	4 – 19%	5 – 69%
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The material was well organized and presented in a manner to promote understanding.

1 – 0%	2 – 0%	3 – 8%	4 – 32%	5 – 60%
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The length of the seminar was appropriate for the material.

1 – 11%	2 – 11%	3 – 31%	4 – 19%	5 – 31%
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First instructor was clear and presented the information professionally.

1 – 0%	2 – 0%	3 – 0%	4 – 31%	5 – 69%
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Second instructor was clear and presented the information professionally.

1 – 0%	2 – 0%	3 – 0%	4 – 12%	5 – 88%
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Third instructor was clear and presented the information professionally.

1 – 0%	2 – 0%	3 – 0%	4 – 23%	5 – 77%
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On March 22–24, 2022, VAPSA conducted a three-day, Peer Support Professional Level 1 course at the Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy in Weyers Cave, Virginia. The results of the numeric responses are provided below. There were opportunities to provide written comments that varied widely and therefore are not captured in this report. In the written comments, participants were asked to respond to what parts of the training were “most” and “least” interesting and to provide recommendations on how to improve the course.

Peer Support Professional Level 1 Course – Fourteen (14) participants completed surveys for this course. (Some results have been rounded to the nearest whole number.)

What was your impression of the course?

Outstanding – 64%	Very Good – 36%	Good – 0%	Fair – 0%	Very Poor – 0%
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How do you feel this course was organized?

Very Organized – 79%	Acceptably Organized – 21%	Fairly Organized – 0%	Poorly Organized – 0%
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Instructor Rating

Please rate this instructor on a scale of 1–5 on the below listed categories.

1=Poor 2=Needs Improvement 3=Average 4=Above Average 5=Excellent

1 – 0%	2 – 0%	3 – 0%	4 – 21%	5 – 79%
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Program Outcomes

While the course evaluations provide sufficient insight into participant feedback at the conclusion of each event/course, to fully evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program(s), a more holistic evaluation with the assistance of research partners would be beneficial. This additional research could determine more broadly the short and longer-term impacts of this grant programming on law enforcement personnel and the agencies with existing and active peer support programs.

Existing evaluations also identified the varied nature of services offered by the grantees funded through this program. This, and the fact that grantees being funded at different levels, creates another challenge in determining if one program is more effective than another. Future evaluations should ensure the use of common metrics and reporting, to include timely and accurate reporting of grant activities through the DCJS Online Grants Management System (OGMS).

Funding Challenges

DCJS received feedback from one of the applicants who stated that having to participate in an annual competitive grant process made their ability to plan and budget for the future very difficult. DCJS revised the FY2022 funding opportunity to allow the successful applicant(s) to receive four-year renewable awards. The renewals would be based on prior-year program compliance and the availability of funding. This would assist the grantee(s) with budgeting for future years should the funding remain available through appropriation.

As a competitive grant, DCJS staff, external reviewers, and DCJS administration has worked diligently to ensure the funds are awarded in accordance with current legislation. It has repeatedly been brought to the attention of DCJS staff that the funds associated with this appropriation were created and intended for one organization, VALEAP. DCJS has attempted, on several occasions, to review and reference the specific budgetary language with which the agency must remain in compliance. The budget language “*to make competitive grants*” requires DCJS to release the funding opportunity and review all eligible applications that are received.

Recommendations to Strengthen CISM Grant Program

As noted above, VALEAP has repeatedly requested that DCJS eliminate the competitive grant requirement and award the funds directly to one agency/organization in order to better support one statewide system of care for law enforcement officers suffering trauma from critical incidents and traumatic events. The data captured in this report and the comments/ratings from the evaluations significantly underscores the need for a statewide system of care for law enforcement officers in need of services.

At the time of the writing of this report, funding for the FY2023–FY2024 biennium budget has been approved. Recommendations which could be considered during the upcoming General Assembly session include:

- Change the budget language to make the funding a pass-through to a specific agency(ies) to establish a statewide system of care for law enforcement officers in need of services.
- Expand funding to support full time personnel in the selected agency/organization to sustain the program and offer support 24/7.
- Include additional funding to support a holistic program evaluation to determine the short- and long-term effectiveness and benefits of critical incident stress management programming.