

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



City of Duluth - Police Department

Mike Tusken, Chief of Police
2030 North Arlington Avenue • Duluth, Minnesota 55811 •
www.duluthmn.gov

*For more information contact Ingrid Hornibrook,
Public Information Officer 218-730-5491*

DATE: 2/10/2020

SUBJECT: DPD Receives \$200,000 Renewal from Community Justice Reinvestment Grant

BY: Ingrid Hornibrook

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Grant Renewal

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE:

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

[DULUTH, MN] Today the Duluth City Council is considering the acceptance of a two year \$200,000 grant from the Department of Public Safety's 2020 Community Justice Reinvestment Grant, which will continue the position of a Duluth Police Officer to follow-up with people experiencing a mental health crisis and who without intervention are at risk of hospitalization or loss of housing, employment, social supports, etc. This police officer is part of the DPD's mental health unit (MHU) located in the DTA substation in downtown Duluth. The MHU is a diversion program which has two Duluth Police Officers and two embedded social workers, one from St. Louis County and one from the Center for Alcohol and Drug Treatment.

The first grant was awarded in February, 2018. Between March 2018 and December 2019, the DPD Mental Health unit has responded to 278 referrals. Of those, 34 cases remain open with people whom the unit has regular contact.

"The goal is to connect with people before their crisis becomes even more life changing" said embedded social worker, Patty Whelan. "What we're seeing is trusting relationships forming between us and the individuals we work with. Those same people who used to run from police or hide behind their locked doors are now coming to us to talk through an issue and get help."

"In the past two years we've heard from patrol officers that they feel the impact of our work and the data is starting to back that up," said Mental Health Officer Angela Robertson. "The ER isn't necessarily the right place for individuals in crisis, and neither is the jail. We work to fill in that gap by getting to people before their condition escalates. From there, we can refer them to over 20 partner agencies to get individuals the help they need to begin recovery."

###