



# Police and Peers

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## Concept Paper



### BACKGROUND & PROBLEM STATEMENT

Law enforcement consistently performs “catch-all” tasks. This forces law enforcement to perform in uncomfortable, unmanageable situations. These added “catch-all” tasks distract officers from their primary responsibility of law enforcement. As the substance use epidemic grows, these issues have compounded the problem and forced law enforcement into unprecedented situations.



### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Police and Peers (PNP) is a grant-funded program aimed at sharing the workload placed on law enforcement when responding to a nonviolent, non law enforcement-specific incident. The concept of PNP is to pair an embedded or co-responding Peer Recovery Support Specialist (PRSS) with law enforcement to assist with social service needs encountered during a domestic response. PNP is a progressive, fast response program aimed at confronting the substance use disorder (SUD) issues law enforcement face when responding to an incident.

The PRSS is specially trained in overdose reversal, case management, and motivational interviewing and can help control and de-escalate sensitive behavioral health, substance-related, or domestic situations. Law enforcement is then able to focus on the enforcement aspect of public safety. The PRSS has access to resources and outreach capabilities linking individuals to substance use disorder treatment centers, social services, and programs such as Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams, Quick Response Teams (QRT), and West Virginia Department of Human Services (DoHS) continuum of services such as family assistance, housing assistance, and Child Protective Services, as well as veteran social services.

DoHS's, Bureau for Medical Services (BMS) requires the West Virginia Certification Board for Addiction and Prevention Professionals Peer Recovery certification as credentials for all existing and new PRSS. A Peer Recovery Certification carries 500 hours of volunteer or paid experience plus 25 hours of supervision with a minimum of six hours of ethics. Education includes a high school diploma/GED and applicants must pass the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium PRSS exam.



**WEST VIRGINIA OFFICE OF  
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