



First Responder Resources



GENERAL BACKGROUND

First responders—including firefighters, emergency medical services (EMS) and police officers—are often among the first individuals to arrive at the scene of stressful and traumatic events. Due to the nature of their work, first responders may also experience an increased risk for mental health issues such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, stress, and suicidal behaviors. Additionally, first responders may often have demanding schedules, physically challenging roles, and a lack of safety and security (*Northwestern University*). In 2017, suicide deaths among firefighters and police officers outnumbered deaths in the line of duty (*Northwestern University*).

“To improve the behavioral health of the first responders, a cooperative effort is needed between organizational leadership and coworkers to establish a work environment that provides adequate training and ensures the resiliency and health of first responders by protecting them from overwork and excessive stress and supporting them in seeking help when needed.” -SAMHSA

#morethan**ever**before



RESOURCES

- Frontline Foods supports local restaurants impacted by shelter-in-place measures while feeding healthcare workers on the frontlines of the pandemic. First responders can request a delivery to fuel their teams.
- Operation Gratitude thanks first responders for their service with letters, notes, drawings, snacks, and hygiene items. First responders can request care pouches to supply their department with these items and boost morale.
- First Responders Foundation supports the emotional and mental wellbeing of first responders and their spouses, by providing online support groups and workshops.
- For The Frontlines offers free crisis counseling for essential workers and healthcare professionals dealing with anxiety, stress, fear, and isolation. First responders can text FRONTLINE to 741741 for free crisis counseling.
- YogaShield® Yoga For First Responders is a non-profit organization that teaches first responders and emergency workers yoga to better handle the stress and physical demands of their hazardous jobs. Since COVID-19, YogaShield® Yoga For First Responders has moved to an online platform and is offering 60 days of their Cyber Academy for all first responders.
- First Responders Children's Foundation provides financial support to both children who have lost a parent in the line of duty as well as families enduring significant financial hardships due to tragic circumstances. The COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund helps first responder families in this unprecedented time—first responders can either apply for an individual grant or an agency grant to help with their financial needs.
- FealGood Foundation aims to assist all emergency personnel, including but not limited to firefighters, police officers, nurses, volunteers, sanitation workers, transportation workers and construction workers within the United States who have been injured, or face serious injury due to action or omission, in the course of their duties or within everyday lives.
- First Responder Canine (FRK9) is a nonprofit organization that provides purpose bred Service Dogs to first responders that have incurred life altering injuries to include: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and/or physical mobility disabilities. Retired first responders who have incurred life altering injuries on the job can apply for a service dog.



RESOURCES

- *Puppies Behind Bars* trains prison inmates to raise service dogs for wounded war Veterans and first responders, as well as explosive-detection canines for law enforcement. First responders can *apply for Backup Buddy service dogs* – both to serve individuals as well as to serve departments.
- *Talkspace* is an online and mobile therapy company that provides access to licensed therapists and mental health specialists. Talkspace offers free Facebook led support groups and financial assistance for health care workers and first responders working on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- *Disaster Responder Assets Network (DRAN)* serves as a “one-stop shop” for first responders and health care professionals seeking mental health support. DRAN provides access to free peer support group meetings via Zoom and additional resources such as podcasts, fact sheets, and tips for managing stress during COVID-19.