



# ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DATE: 10/09/2017**

### **Department of Justice Awards \$300,000 to Manage Mental Health Crisis Calls for Local Police**

In early 2017, the collaborative planning group, known as the ACC Justice and Mental Health Collaborative, submitted a joint grant proposal that proposed solutions to help divert individuals from the local justice system. In September, the group received notification of award to fund the proposal for a two-year period. Moving forward, the grant funds address two key areas in our response to justice-involved individuals with mental illness: (1) A Co-Responder Program, and (2) Mental Health First Aid Training (MHFA).

The Co-Responder program will incorporate a fully licensed clinician from Advantage Behavioral Health Systems who will work within the ACC Police Department. The Co-Responder's primary responsibility shall be to respond alongside a Law Enforcement (LEO) Officer on calls when mental illness is identified as a factor.

MHFA is an international evidence-based program that specifically created to provide knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions. This training will support ACCPD sworn officers, criminal justice professionals, and other first responders by training them to identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with mental illness or addiction.

Key partners in this initiative include ACC Police Department, Advantage Behavioral Health Systems, University of Georgia J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development, University of Georgia School of Social Work, and Clarke County Sheriff's Office.



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