

Step 1 - Research and Development to Determine Organizational Readiness

Conducting a Needs Assessment

Gathering information from stakeholders and seeking input from personnel can provide important information for planning a peer support program. When conducting a needs assessment, develop a list of internal and external stakeholders, create a survey of all employees and other stakeholders to measure buy-in for a peer support program, and ask questions gauging perceptions about peer support.

Examples of Stakeholders

Director
Supervisors
Agency head
Individual public safety employee
Community leaders
Behavioral health service providers
First responder families

Determine if there is enough leadership and employee support to make the program successful and if there is enough staff capacity to recruit and train peer support specialists internally. Create a realistic budget that projects the costs of training, overtime pay, training costs, and materials needed. The projected budget will help determine if the initiative can be supported internally or if outside funding sources will need to be secured.

Consider the size of your agency when developing the model for a peer support program. Larger organizations may already have overall wellness programs in place that a peer support program could complement, while smaller agencies may need to look for organizations with which to partner, such as the Kentucky Community Crisis Response Team (KCCRT). [The KCCRT](#) is a multi-disciplinary, trained team of emergency service workers and mental health professionals who volunteer their time to assist peers who encounter a critical incident. KCCRT has peer members from all the emergency services disciplines, hospital emergency medical personnel, public schools, and a variety of non-emergency organizations and services. The KCCRT can be requested at no charge to the requesting agency 24/7/365 via a toll-free number answered by the state Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Duty Officer.

BUDGET

Create a realistic budget that projects the costs of training, overtime pay, training costs, and materials needed.

Line items to consider include:

Overtime costs or other compensation for peer support team members

Training costs – while some trainings are free, others will require funding for trainers, supplies, and certifications

Materials, which can include brochures about the program, and supplies for peer support team members

Travel expenses