



## Legislation Details (With Text)

**File #:** 21-0920      **Version:** 1      **Name:**  
**Type:** Consent Item      **Status:** Agenda Ready  
**File created:** 9/22/2021      **In control:** Board of County Commissioners  
**On agenda:** 10/12/2021      **Final action:**  
**Title:** Acceptance of the Contract with Meridian Behavioral Healthcare to fund 1 Clinician and fully implement 1 additional Co-Responder Team in partnership with Gainesville Police Department under the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Grant No. 2020-MO-BX-0021 to the County

**Sponsors:**

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. \_11986\_FY2021\_AGREEMENT\_BETWEEN\_Alachua\_County\_and\_Meridianvendor\_signed ATF by CAO (1).pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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**Agenda Item Name:**

Acceptance of the Contract with Meridian Behavioral Healthcare to fund 1 Clinician and fully implement 1 additional Co-Responder Team in partnership with Gainesville Police Department under the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Grant No. 2020-MO-BX-0021 to the County

**Presenter:**

David Johnson: Court Services, Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program, Program Manager (352-384-3005)

**Description:**

Under the terms of the contract, Meridian will supply 1 Clinician for 1 additional Co-Responder team in partnership with Gainesville Police Department and 2 (.5 ) FTE Peer Specialists to conduct Jail in reach to assist Peers in the Criminal Justice system navigate their episodes more effectively.

**Recommended Action:**

Accept the contract with Meridian under the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program grant award from BJA as developed by the Department of Court Services.

**Prior Board Motions:**

This grant application was submitted to the Bureau of Justice on May 15, 2020 with the approval of the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners.

11/10/2020: Approval to accept the FY 20 BJA Justice and Mental Health Grant

7/13/2021 Approval of the Interlocal Agreement with City of Gainesville for the Officer portion of Co-

Responder team.

**Fiscal Consideration:**

Fund 061.36.3612.569.3400 (\$425,000 budgeted)

Grant 2 is a 3 year Project (10/1/21 through 9/30/23) with a cumulative award of \$1,135,144 (Federal \$729,639, County/ Meridian/ Gainesville Police Department In-kind of \$405,505). The City of Gainesville Police Department is providing in kind support consisting of 1 officer and a vehicle to create a 2nd co-responder model in conjunction with Meridian Behavioral who will supply the clinician. The salary and related costs for the Clinician is funded from the Federal award, as are the salaries of the two (.5 FTE) Peer Specialists to provide jail-in reach services.

Alachua County has committed to providing 20% of the Criminal Justice Liaison's time and \$25,000 cash match in the third year of the grant.

Meridian is supplying the Clinician portion of the Co-Responder team in partnership with Gainesville Police Department and 2 (.5 FTE) Peer Specialists to provide Jail in reach

No FTEs being requested

Requested by:

David Johnson 352.745.0266

Originating Department

Court Services

**Strategic Guide:**

Choose an item.

**Background:**

The FY 2017 (2017 - 2020) Project leveraged the resources of the grant, resulting in a comprehensive process analysis of the criminal justice and behavioral health intersect in Alachua County. This study resulted in a Strategic Plan presented to and accepted by the Public Safety Coordinating Council and JMHCP partners. A second primary effort of the initial grant developed a strong collaboration between the criminal justice system, law enforcement agencies, hospitals, and behavioral health providers.

Grant 2 is a cumulative award of \$1,135,144 (Federal \$729,639, County/ Meridian/ Gainesville Police Department \$405,505) over a three year period. The new Project is designed to build upon this platform to deepen the collaborative efforts of the partners to better serve those living with mental illness who are risk for or come into contact with the criminal justice system. Through the grant from BJA and local support, the Project has developed an executive oversight sub-committee including members of the PSCC and community stakeholders. The grant has also developed a Coordination Team made up of behavioral health stakeholders, law enforcement, and researchers designed to carry out the day to day efforts.

The teams developed in grant 1 represent a comprehensive group of stakeholders which have committed personnel and resources to the JMHCP vision which will continue through grant 2. The Executive PSCC JMHCP Oversight Sub-Committee was created as a result of the Strategic Plan developed and includes the Alachua County Sheriff, Gainesville Police Department Chief of Police,

Judicial, State Attorney, Public Defender, Meridian Behavioral CEO, UF Health Psychiatric CEO, North Florida Regional Medical Center CEO, Alachua County Commissioner, and National Alliance on Mental Illness President. The Operational team includes invested leadership from Gainesville Police Department, Alachua County Sheriff's Office, Meridian Behavioral, University of Florida Police Department, National Alliance on Mental Illness, UF Health Shands Psychiatry, North Florida Regional Medical Center, Veterans Administration, DCF Forensics, Co-Responder teams, ACSO Department of the Jail, ACSO DOJ Medical, Research Consultants, Florida Department of Corrections, and Court Services Data / Programmers.

Performance measures include seeking to aim for the Stepping Up Initiative's "Set, Measure, Achieve" goals of 5% annual reduction in average daily jail population, 10% annual reduction in jail bookings, 5% annual reduction in average length of jail stay, 10% annual increase in post-release connections to care, and 5% annual reduction in recidivism. By setting prevalence reduction targets, measuring progress, and achieving results, participating counties can help advance the national movement to reduce incarceration among people with mental illnesses. The CO-Responder Teams in operation since 2016 have shown a high value in the reduction of Jail admissions in the 80-95% averages. The Peer Specialists will be tasked with assisting peers increase connections to referred treatment and their Criminal Justice episode successfully.

Grant 2 makes possible the addition of a 2nd co-responder model (law enforcement officer and clinician ride along model to respond to mental health related calls) to the community and forensic peer specialists to provide in/ outreach. The focus of these staff will be on helping peers who are also clients in the criminal justice system while also guiding them through the legal processes with light case management as needed. Grant cycle 2 operationalized on May 10th, 2021 following a six month delay occasioned by BJA's slow grants management system start-up. The County's plan for Grant 2 also focuses on building on its wide array of partners to better coordinate care between the systems involved. Coordination between agencies and disciplines will be enhanced via JMHCP in efforts to create familiarity and open communication through regular meetings and developing a platform for effective discussion and problem solving. Memorandums of Understanding and Business Associate Agreements will be developed at the onset of the Project to define expectations with additional partners for data sharing and collaboration. This effort is intended to leverage the current resources more efficiently and effectively for the benefit of all involved and improve coordination across the criminal justice and behavioral health systems. The greatest benefit will be to reduce the silo effect which was found in the process analysis as currently inhibiting full expression of the potential of the significant countywide resources.