

	<p style="text-align: center;">BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POLICY AND PROCEDURE GENERAL ORDER</p>	Distribution	General Order Number
		ALL PERSONNEL	8.10
		Original Issue Date	Reissue/Effective Date
		2/18/20	5/29/20
Order Title: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM		Accreditation Standard: POSTC: 1.8.5	Section 8
		Section Title PERSONNEL	
Rescinds:		Armando J. Perez, Chief of Police	

This General Order is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This General Order should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this General Order will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) within the Bridgeport Police Department and to promulgate policy and procedures for referrals to, controls on, and all other relevant factors pertaining to that program.

II. POLICY:

The Bridgeport Police Department recognizes the special nature of law enforcement work and the stress inherent in the profession. It is the policy of the Bridgeport Police Department to provide employee access to an employee assistance program geared towards those employed in the public safety industry. The EAP is intended and designed to serve the needs of all employees, including employees who may be the subject of disciplinary proceedings. Therefore, all employees including, but not limited to supervisors, may make referrals to the program as a show of concern for a fellow employee who exhibits impaired behavior, which adversely affects job performance.

III. PROCEDURES:

A. General Information

1. The Bridgeport Police Department's EAP is a twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) day a week confidential counseling and referral service for sworn and civilian personnel and their families. Trained peer counselors work in conjunction

with the EAP coordinator in referring employees and their families to qualified treatment and counseling facilities, programs, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other professionals, who are particularly sensitive to the needs of police personnel.

2. The EAP was developed to assist employees in dealing with stress and the areas identified below. The program is not intended, nor shall it be used, as a means of depriving an employee of his or her collective bargaining or other rights, nor it is intended or shall be used to deprive management of its rights to administrative obligations. The program shall be administered so that an employee will not suffer any penalty, prejudice, or jeopardy in his or her position with the City of Bridgeport, solely as a result of participation in the EAP. Similarly, the program is not intended to infringe upon management's right to invoke the disciplinary process whenever such action is consistent with established procedures.
3. The EAP identifies and approves a variety of treatment centers and counseling services where payment for same is covered by employee insurance.
4. Employee assistance is available for:
 - a. Alcohol and substance abuse;
 - b. Family problems (including spouse and children);
 - c. Interpersonal/attitudinal problems;
 - d. Traumatic incidents;
 - e. Bereavement;
 - f. Job adjustment/career burnout;
 - g. Gambling problems;
 - h. Financial problems; and
 - i. Psychiatric/behavioral problems.

B. Confidentiality Policy

1. It shall be the policy of this program (as per federal regulations), the Bridgeport Police Department, and all other departments, agents, and employees of the City of Bridgeport, that a firm and absolute guarantee of confidentiality shall be maintained at all times for all participants or persons referred to the EAP. No individual, group, organization, department, City employee, or outside person or agency shall have any access to any information regarding individuals referred to or participating in the program.
2. Neither the coordinator, nor any member of the staff, shall discuss or disclose any fact or aspect of an individual's case, unless the participant makes a specific request to do so in writing. All information shall be considered privileged and will not be available to the Department or any other agency of the City for disciplinary proceedings, promotional opportunities, or other

considerations affecting a participant's standing with the City of Bridgeport.

C. Referral Procedure

1. This order does not change or alter the inherent responsibility of a supervisor to timely and appropriately refer an employee for disciplinary action in the event of a breach of the Code of Conduct. This order, however, does recognize the discretion of a supervisor to refer an employee, who has committed a minor breach of the Code of Conduct, to the EAP in lieu of, or in addition to, disciplinary action.
2. At no time shall any referral be considered disciplinary action in any form, nor shall the fact that a referral has been made be held against an employee in any manner.
3. Referrals:
 - a. Employee referral and self-referrals may be made:
 - 1) Verbally, by calling the EAP's 24-hour telephone number; or
 - 2) In writing, by submitting a completed "EAP Referral Form," in a sealed envelope, clearly marked "Confidential," and Submitting it directly to EAP. REFERRING EMPLOYEE SHALL NOT RETAIN A COPY, and shall submit original only.
 - b. Anonymous referrals will not be accepted. EAP staff, however, will keep the name of the person making the referral confidential, if so requested.
 - c. When referral is made, it should include:
 - 1) Name of person making referral;
 - 2) Name, address, and telephone number of person being referred;
 - 3) Reason for referral (specific impaired behavior and adversely affected performance; if self-referred, specify problem);
 - 4) Whether any changes or disciplinary actions are pending, or have been taken against the referred individual.
 - d. Supervisors referring subordinate personnel shall:
 - 1) Inform the affected employee of the referral and the reason for same;
 - 2) Submit a referral form to the EAP. Do not retain a copy (supervisory referrals cannot be made anonymously);
 - 3) Keep the fact of the referral confidential between the EAP and

the person referred, and refrain from making inquiries about individuals participating in the EAP.

4. In the event an employee has been referred to the EAP, and the Chief of Police has suspended disciplinary charges, the EAP Coordinator shall notify the Chief of Police of the employee's failure to participate in the program immediately upon the employee's failure or refusal to participate. Such report shall be made verbally, and no record shall be made of the failure to participate. This information will be kept only by the EAP staff, except as noted herein. Should such disciplinary charges be reinstated, the timeliness of such reinstatement shall not be considered a factor in arguing for withdrawal of those charges. Similarly, such timeliness shall not impact the grievance procedure, as the process shall start on the date the reinstated charges are lodged against the employee.
5. All participation in the EAP shall be strictly voluntary, and no pressure or penalty shall be placed on an employee to participate.
6. In cases involving disciplinary proceedings, an employee may request, and on written authorization, a representative of the program may present to the hearing officer, pertinent information concerning the problems the employee is experiencing, which would serve to assist the hearing officer in making an adjudication.
 - a. In cases in which an employee has been found guilty of a breach of the Code of Conduct, the hearing officer may recommend and/or the Chief of Police may offer, at their discretion, the facilities of the program to the employee in lieu of, or in conjunction with, a lesser punishment.
 - b. In any event, participation in the program shall be strictly voluntary. A greater penalty than otherwise would have been imposed will not be imposed to coerce participation.
7. When the EAP refers an employee for any type of intervention, and the employee must be absent from work for such intervention, the EAP or the employee himself may place the employee on the sick roll by notifying the employee's commander. The employee will provide evidence of treatment for a medical problem, and proof of fitness for employment at the time of return to duty.

D. Length of Participation in the EAP

1. Employees referred for alcohol abuse will be afforded a maximum of two referrals by the EAP for treatment. In cases of illegal and controlled-substance abuse, given the legal considerations regarding this issue, only one opportunity for rehabilitation treatment will be afforded to any given

employee. Therefore, the EAP will only accept one self-referral for illegal or controlled substance abuse treatment.

2. In the event the Department defers or substitutes referral to the program in lieu of disciplinary proceedings, the employee will not be required to participate in the program for a period longer than thirteen (13) months.

E. Alternative Treatment

1. Nothing in this order shall prevent or preclude any employee from seeking assistance, advice, or other aid from any physician or other health care provider of the employee's own choosing.

F. Unit Organization

1. The Peer Support Team is coordinated by sworn members of the Bridgeport Police Department. The Peer Support Team shall be comprised of qualified, experienced members of the Department, who as counselors possess the required skills on personal crisis intervention, alcohol and substance abuse, and interpersonal and family relations, with an emphasis on the law enforcement profession.
 - a. The Coordinator shall:
 - 1) Be responsible for all daily administration of the program, including staffing and budget;
 - 2) Maintain time and personnel records required of an administrative unit for staff personnel;
 - 3) Be responsible for keeping all records of participation that are essential to the orderly administration of the program; and
 - 4) Assure all records and files are kept secure and confidential at all times.
 - b. Peer Counselors shall be employees of the Bridgeport Police Department, who shall:
 - 1) Provide services as intake and peer counselors;
 - 2) Maintain contact with active participants within the program;
 - 3) Continue to develop resources for referral agencies and professional help. This will be accomplished, in part, by keeping abreast of developments in the counseling field. Also, participants should be asked to provide feedback on referral agencies and professional help relevant to their problems;
 - 4) Appear at disciplinary hearings upon participant request;
 - 5) Ensure maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. Breach of confidentiality will be grounds for

immediate dismissal as an Peer Support counselor.

G. Record Keeping

1. The Peer Support Coordinator shall keep the only records pertaining to referral to, or participation in, the program. The records kept by the Coordinator shall be only those essential for the orderly administration of the program. The Coordinator shall be responsible for and see to it that all records and files are kept secure and confidential at all times. The Department shall not have access to an employee's records of participation, or lack thereof, in the program; nor shall any member of the staff provide the Department with information regarding such participation, unless specifically authorized by the participant, or otherwise specifically authorized pursuant to the provisions of this order.
2. The only records, reports, letters, correspondence, memoranda, or other documents, which shall be kept by the City of Bridgeport, the Bridgeport Police Department, or any other City department, or any of its employees, agents, or assigns, shall be those documents specifically described in the preceding paragraph. Accordingly, by way of example, no document shall be kept in any personnel, medical, or other employee file that he or she was referred to, or participated in, the program. There shall be no separate files kept for the purpose of filing such a record. All supervisory personnel shall periodically be instructed not to keep any materials or letters in any of their files concerning an employee's referral to or participation in the program.

H. Training

1. The Police Academy shall cooperate and coordinate with the Peer Support Coordinator in providing regular and periodic re-training of all supervisors and employees of the City of Bridgeport in reference to the Peer Support Team's proper use and procedure.

I. Media Releases

In keeping with the absolute commitment to confidentiality and anonymity, the Coordinator, and the Chief of Police shall carefully screen all press releases.