



Autism and I/DD Safety Training for First Responders

Year 1: October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025

System Gap Addressed

- People with I/DD and other disabilities are unnecessarily jailed, injured, and even killed during routine interactions with law enforcement officers and other first responders.
- Law enforcement officers and other first responders do not always receive training on how to appropriately interact with people with autism and I/DD.

Initiative Goals and Timeline

- Research the autism and I/DD safety training landscape in North Carolina for first responders, including law enforcement officers, to determine where the greatest areas of need exist.
- Pilot a training or a series of trainings in one or more areas of need.
- Scale the training statewide after the pilot to train first responders, including law enforcement officers, and people working in North Carolina's justice system as well as people with I/DD and their caregivers.

Description of Activities

- Conduct an inventory of available trainings related to I/DD for law enforcement and/or related crisis response in North Carolina and nationally and conduct a gap analysis of what is needed for law enforcement and/or related crisis response to determine where training and education needs exist in North Carolina.
- Meet with state agency officials, non-profit organization officials, and officials at private businesses who are involved in training law enforcement officers or providing crisis response for people with I/DD in North Carolina.
- Do outreach to diverse populations, including North Carolina Hispanic and Latino I/DD community and North Carolina's black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) I/DD community.
- Develop and implement, adapt, or utilize a pilot training for first responders, including law enforcement officers, crisis response teams, and related personnel.
- Scale the training statewide after completing the pilot training during Year 1.

Achievements and Outcomes to Date

- Grantee connected to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, the Autism Society of North Carolina, and various individuals with I/DD and their family members who are concerned stakeholders in this work.

Expected System Change as Result

- Increase the quality of interactions between people with I/DD and first responders, especially law enforcement officers.
- Improve the number of positive interactions between people with I/DD and first responders, especially law enforcement officers.
- More individuals with I/DD and their caregivers as well as first responders will stay safe during interactions with each other, particularly in times of emergency or crisis.
- Fewer individuals with I/DD will be unnecessarily arrested, injured, or killed during interactions with law enforcement officers and other first responders.