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Renton RFA Awarded \$100,000 Grant from Medic One Foundation to Launch Peer Support Application for Firefighters

October 31, 2024 – Renton, WA – Renton Regional Fire Authority (Renton RFA) is thrilled to announce the receipt of a \$100,000 grant from the Medic One Foundation. This generous support will fund the creation of a custom peer support application tailored specifically to the behavioral health needs of firefighters throughout King County and beyond.

Firefighters face unique challenges in their daily work, including high-stress incidents, extended hours, and sometimes even a cultural barrier to discussing mental health. Recognizing the urgent need for effective support in this area, Renton RFA has led a pioneering initiative to develop a digital peer support solution that breaks down barriers and offers immediate access to behavioral health resources. Backed by the incredible support of the Medic One Foundation, this project represents a historic step forward in firefighter wellness, making access to peer support and professional care easier than ever.

A Tech Platform Tailored for First Responder Wellbeing

Partnering with the MelEos Group, a consulting firm with expertise in first responder peer support and benefit design, Renton RFA has spearheaded an initiative to create a solution tailored specifically to the unique mental health challenges faced by first responders. Through comprehensive fact-finding sessions conducted across Zone 3, MelEos collaborated closely with agencies and personnel to identify their critical needs. These assessments revealed significant gaps in existing programs and support applications, underscoring the necessity for an integrated solution designed to prioritize proactive, resilience-focused support.

This research laid the groundwork for Renton RFA's compelling grant proposal to the Medic One Foundation, which will generously fund the first phase of the technology build. MelEos Group, in collaboration with Anshar Labs for software development and First Tracks as a clinical partner, will guide the creation of this groundbreaking application. Designed from the ground up to seamlessly connect first responders with vetted resources, the platform empowers teams with proactive support and adaptable tools. This approach not only strengthens individual mental health but also reinforces organizational resilience, fostering sustainable wellbeing and integrated health solutions tailored to the evolving needs of all members.

A Collaborative Effort to Break Down Barriers

The project's first phase will enter beta testing in early 2025. This phase will include essential functionality and will gather critical user feedback from the field, ensuring that every element of the app reflects firefighters' needs and realities. Additional phases are planned to introduce more features, refine the app's interface, and, above all, facilitate ease of use so firefighters can quickly find the help they need.

In a parallel effort, MelEos is working to establish streamlined pathways to care by connecting local behavioral health providers with the platform. This coordinated approach aims improve both the quality and accessibility of care.

A Gift That Extends Beyond Renton RFA

The \$100,000 grant from the Medic One Foundation not only supports Renton RFA's peer support initiative but also establishes a transformative benchmark for firefighter mental health support in the region and beyond. Renton RFA participates in a regional South King County (Zone 3) peer support group and routinely works with King County medics and private ambulance companies. With their partnership, Renton RFA is prepared to continue investing in this important work, creating a tool that addresses the critical behavioral health needs of the fire service community at large in a way that has never been done before.

Looking Ahead

Mental health is fundamental to a firefighter's readiness and resilience, and the new peer support app, powered by Medic One Foundation's grant, represents a powerful step forward in safeguarding this vital aspect of health. Renton RFA is honored to work alongside the Foundation, MelEos Group, and their partners to create a lasting positive impact for firefighters.

Renton Regional Fire Authority sincerely thanks the Medic One Foundation for their commitment to this essential project, paving the way for improved access to care and a stronger, healthier fire service community.

About Renton Regional Fire Authority

Renton Regional Fire Authority serves the communities of Renton, Fire District 25, and Fire District 40. With a coverage area of 38 square miles, Renton RFA provides fire and life safety services to over 138,000 community members. The Renton RFA team abides by the guiding principles of professionalism, integrity, leadership, loyalty, accountability, and respect, and continually works to build an organization that reflects the unique diversity of the Renton community. Learn more at www.RentonRFA.com or call 425-276-9500.

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