

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY  
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 6689**

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 1136

**NOTE PREPARED:** Dec 22, 2022

**BILL AMENDED:**

**SUBJECT:** Mental Health Care for First Responders.

**FIRST AUTHOR:** Rep. Jackson

**FIRST SPONSOR:**

**BILL STATUS:** As Introduced

**FUNDS AFFECTED:**  GENERAL  
 DEDICATED  
 FEDERAL

**IMPACT:** State

**Summary of Legislation:** The bill establishes the Indiana First Responders Mental Health Wellness Fund and Program. It provides that the Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA) of the Office of the Secretary of Family and Social Services (FSSA) shall administer the program and fund.

The bill also provides that a first responder who meets certain requirements may apply to the DMHA for: (1) costs associated with the first responder's active participation in a mental health treatment plan as determined by the first responder's treating physician; and (2) compensation if the first responder is unable to work.

It establishes requirements for obtaining compensation. The bill also makes a continuous appropriation.

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2023.

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** The bill establishes the Indiana First Responders Mental Health Wellness Program (Program) to provide benefits to Indiana first responders, who are residents of Indiana, and have been diagnosed with PTSD directly related to a qualified critical incident, as prescribed in the bill. The bill also establishes the nonreverting Indiana First Responders Mental Health Wellness Fund (Fund) to provide benefit payments to first responders eligible for the Program. The Fund consists of appropriations from the General Assembly and money in the Fund is continually appropriated. The Program and the Fund are both to be administered by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA).

The total increase to state expenditures resulting from this bill is indeterminate. The bill provides that a first responder meeting the qualifications prescribed in the bill may be eligible to receive compensation equal to

two-thirds of their average weekly wages for a period of up to 10 days, or in some cases for a period of up to 30 weeks. The total amount of compensation paid by the state will depend how many first responders meet the various eligibility requirements, as well as the wages earned by each qualifying first responder.

In addition to administering the Program and Fund, the DMHA must also establish a mental health review panel as prescribed in the bill. These requirements represent an additional workload [and/or expenditure] on the agency outside of the agency's routine administrative functions, and existing staffing and resource levels, if currently being used to capacity, may be insufficient for full implementation. The additional funds and resources required could be supplied through existing staff and resources currently being used in another program or with new appropriations. Ultimately, the source of funds and resources required to satisfy the requirements of this bill will depend on legislative and administrative actions.

*Additional Information:* In Indiana during 2021, the median annual salary of the various first responder occupations ranged from approximately \$29,000 to \$81,000, with an average median salary of approximately \$54,000.

First responders may be at a greater risk of developing mental health issues due to their line of work. The most recent studies surrounding the topic of first responders mental health indicate that first responders deal with higher levels of mental health issues than the general population.

Firefighters and police officers are five times more likely to deal with PTSD and depression than the general population. Roughly 15% to 22% of firefighters, 35% of police officers, and 24% of dispatchers deal with symptoms of PTSD compared to about 7% of the general population. Depression affects 11% of firefighters, anywhere from 9% to 31% of police officers, and nearly 25% of dispatchers, compared to about 7% of the general population.

**Explanation of State Revenues:**

**Explanation of Local Expenditures:**

**Explanation of Local Revenues:**

**State Agencies Affected:** Division of Mental Health and Addiction, Family and Social Services Administration.

**Local Agencies Affected:**

**Information Sources:**

[https://rudermanfoundation.org/white\\_papers/police-officers-and-firefighters-are-more-likely-to-die-by-suicide-than-in-line-of-duty/](https://rudermanfoundation.org/white_papers/police-officers-and-firefighters-are-more-likely-to-die-by-suicide-than-in-line-of-duty/);

<https://www.in.gov/dhs/fire-and-building-safety/division-of-fire-and-building-safety-overview/first-responder-behavioral-health/>;

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/supplementalresearchbulletin-firstresponders-may2018.pdf>;

[https://www.ems.gov/newsletter/fall2021/first\\_responder\\_mental\\_health\\_and\\_suicide.html](https://www.ems.gov/newsletter/fall2021/first_responder_mental_health_and_suicide.html);

<https://business.kaiserpermanente.org/insights/mental-health-workplace/first-responder-support>;

<https://nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Frontline-Wellness/2021/Documenting-the-Traumata-of-First-Responders>;

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28822615/>;

<https://www.bls.gov/oes/>.

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