



For Immediate Release

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City of Buda Receives Texas Municipal League Municipal Excellence Award *Buda Police Department's Mental Health Officer Position Recognized*



BUDA, TX — The City of Buda is the proud recipient of a Texas Municipal League Excellence Award. The Buda Police Department's Mental Health Officer position won in the Public Safety category for cities under 25,000. The award recognizes the police department's efforts to improve the safety and security of the city.

In 2016, Buda PD submitted an application for the Mental Health Officer Grant Program. Up to that point, Buda PD had seen a substantial increase in mental health cases. The grant, which is funded through the Department of Justice, is offered to departments through the Capital Area Coalition of Governments. The City was ultimately awarded the grant which totaled \$78,500.00. That covered the salary, benefits, and equipment for one fiscal year. Buda PD decided to keep the position and incurred the cost of the mental health officer starting in Fiscal Year 2017-2018.

The position has helped the department be proactive in dealing with mental health issues. Mental Health Officer Josh McNeal is responsible for a number of visits and implements preventative measures to help individuals avoid possible problems.

"Mental health affects everyone in some form or fashion. It is our duty to normalize and help those struggling with mental illness in order to better service our community," said Officer McNeal.

The mental health officer position has helped ease the burden on the rest of the department when it comes to these types of cases. In turn, it has allowed Buda PD to provide a higher level of service.

Buda PD intends to keep the mental health officer position and even build on it in the future.

The City of Buda was presented with the TML Municipal Excellence Award on Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018 at the TML Conference in Fort Worth.