



### **Agenda Action Form Overview**

Presentation on HEART Framework and De-escalation Practices. This will include the background and data research used to develop and launch HEART in the City of Durham.

### **Background/Justification**

The Board is requested to receive a presentation regarding de-escalation practices, training and information on the City of Durham's HEART Program. The Durham County Sheriff's Office has previously discussed its current de-escalation practices and trainings, and staff will be available for further discussion and questions. Part of the discussion will lead into framework on next steps for HEART in Durham County.

The City of Durham's HEART Program has been incredibly successful, and its expansion into Durham County has its benefits. Over the coming months, Durham County leadership will undertake a similar approach as the City took years ago when developing and deploying HEART. While the overall Program is already developed and successful, it should be noted that potentially deploying HEART into Durham County will look a bit different. Durham County has a different response model, its own 911 call center, much of the area is sparsely populated and the intended users for this expansion live further away from responders. County leadership will go on to study:

- 911 call data
- Use of force analysis
- First responder input
- Community input sessions

As an additional point of focus, County staff is currently working to publish an RFQ for a consultant to evaluate the potential of combining the two separate call centers (Durham Emergency Communications Center and the Sheriff's Call Center). A collaborative group of staff from the County, City and Sheriff's Office have had discussions on this topic, and representatives from each will continue to participate in the selection process and evaluation of our two separate call centers.

Since 1983, the Durham County Sheriff's Office has operated its own comprehensive training academy for law enforcement and detention officers, receiving full state accreditation in 1989. All deputies and detention officers complete mandatory annual training as specified by the Sheriff's Education and Training Standards Commission.

The Sheriff has discretionary authority to implement supplementary training requirements based on specific community needs. For over 15 years, Durham County has mandated Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for all staff members. More recently, deputies have participated in implicit bias education through the Fair and Impartial Policing program. Staff in specialized divisions receive additional tailored training through workshops, classes, conferences, and other professional development opportunities relevant to their roles.

Crisis Intervention Training employs evidence-based strategies focused on de-escalation and diversion, forming a crucial component of Durham County's Stepping Up Initiative. This



comprehensive program provides officers with specialized skills for effectively managing encounters with individuals experiencing mental health crises, ultimately reducing potential conflicts and enhancing community safety outcomes.

**Policy Impact**

A continued discussion around de-escalation practices and HEART expansion into Durham County will continue to move us towards continual improvement in efficient and effective response operations.

**Procurement Background**

Not applicable.

**Fiscal Impact**

No immediate fiscal impact is presented by this item. As County leadership works through the evaluation process, the Board will be updated on any potential fiscal impact associated with the evaluation findings and recommendations.

**Recommendation**

The County Manager recommends that the Board receive the presentation.