In recent years, the demands and roles of police and other first responders have changed as the number of crisis calls increased. Crisis calls can be volatile and dangerous to the responding officer, the individual making the call, and the public. It is paramount that first responders are provided with the awareness to recognize when a person is in crisis and the tools to bring the situation to a safe resolution. As we learn about mental health, substance abuse and other conditions that can lead to frequent, high-risk interactions with officers, we recognize how critical the training is to achieving positive outcomes.

While training in tactical skills is important for officers and public safety personnel, law enforcement agencies recognize that training needs to integrate awareness, communication skills, and options for officers to safely handle a range of critical incidents involving people in crisis. Techniques like crisis intervention training, which focuses on giving officers and other first responders the communication skills and options to safely respond to a mental health crisis, can keep both officers and the community safe.

A CENTER FOR COST-EFFECTIVE TRAINING THROUGHOUT THE REGION AND BEYOND

Investing in mental health training for first responders is also cost-effective. Responding to mental health crises takes time, and the cost of that time is borne by taxpayers. Crisis intervention training and other techniques help officers learn how to manage crises as effectively and efficiently as possible and to reduce the likelihood of future law enforcement involvement. In fact, Minnesota Management and Budget has calculated that for every dollar that the State spends on mobile crisis programs it reaps $3.90 in benefits. Investing in crisis training is a smart choice for taxpayers, officers and the public in general.

Dakota County’s Safety and Mental Health Alternative Response Training (SMART) Center will offer space for law enforcement and other first responders from across the region to access these important resources.

The SMART Center will be a centrally located regional hub for law enforcement from across the metro area to collaborate and receive vital training. It will be a space for officers to receive state-mandated crisis intervention training, helping them to respond most effectively to people suffering from potential mental health issues.

The facility will also provide a central location for regional resources like the Electronic Crimes Unit, Drug Task Force and Criminal Justice Network that serve law enforcement throughout the County and beyond.

BUILDING USES

Minnesota Crisis Intervention Team (MN CIT), a nonprofit crisis intervention training provider that works with law enforcement, fire and EMS departments across the state, currently has no permanent location. The SMART Center, to be located in northern Dakota County, would allow MN CIT to not only have a home to stage trainings but would allow them to customize certain rooms to mimic real-world locations (e.g. a bar or a living room) where officers could encounter an individual in need of intervention. This would allow them to
provide a higher quality of training for officers and other first responders. Dakota County received state funding to help construct a 35,000-square-foot facility that is planned to house training space for MN CIT as well as:

- Regional public safety training
- Dakota County Electronic Crimes Unit (ECU), a partnership with 11 police departments
- Dakota County Drug Task Force (DTF), a partnership with 12 police departments
- Dakota County Criminal Justice Network (CJN), which serves more than 40 agencies
- Sheriff’s Office Parks, Lakes and Trails Division, which responds to regional response needs

### FINANCIAL INFORMATION

**Funding sources**
- County budget ............... $6.6M
- State bond funding .......... $6.2M

**Estimated project expenditures**
- Property acquisition ........ $1.1M
- Predesign and design ...... $1.2M
- Construction and project management ... $8.5M
- Furniture and equipment ......................... $2M
- **Total** ................................... $12.8M

### TENTATIVE TIMELINE

- Location acquisition: 2018
- Design and construction: 2019–2020
- Occupancy: Late 2020–2021

### PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

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<tr>
<th>Dakota County Drug Task Force</th>
<th>Dakota County Criminal Justice Network</th>
<th>Dakota County Electronic Crimes Unit</th>
<th>Dakota Communications Center</th>
<th>Minnesota Crisis Intervention Team</th>
<th>Dakota County Attorney’s Office</th>
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<td>Dakota County Chiefs of Police Association</td>
<td>Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office</td>
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<td>City of Northfield Police Department</td>
<td>Minnesota Association of Public Safety Communications Officials and The 9-1-1 Association</td>
<td>Minnesota Ambulance Association</td>
<td>Minnesota Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians</td>
<td>Minnesota Alliance on Crime</td>
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<td>National Alliance on Mental Illness</td>
<td>Casa De Esperanza</td>
<td>Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women</td>
<td>360 Communities</td>
<td>City of Mendota Heights</td>
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### PRIMARY CONTACT

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