

PREPARED BY:

First Responder
Wellness Division

2026-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

PROTECTING THOSE WHO
PROTECT US



Executive Summary

The Oklahoma First Responder Wellness Division (OKFRWD) exists to champion the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of the men and women who serve on the front lines of public safety across our state. This strategic plan establishes a clear, four-year roadmap to position OKFRWD as the state’s primary entity to support first responder wellness and support the many entities seeking to help and serve public safety personnel. As a central coordinating provider, the OKFRWD aims to unify a fragmented nonprofit landscape, building credible programs, and driving systemic change.

Oklahoma’s public safety personnel face unique and chronic stressors associated with protecting and serving their communities. The consequences of unaddressed trauma and burnout are well-documented: increased rates of suicide, substance use, relationship breakdown, and early career departure. Despite the dedication of numerous nonprofit organizations working in this space, efforts remain disconnected, underfunded, and inconsistently accessed by those who need them most.

This plan addresses four strategic priorities:

- **Organizational Positioning:** establishing OKFRWD as a recognized, credible resource hub within the Oklahoma wellness ecosystem;
- **Peer Support, Training & Connection:** expanding peer-to-peer touch points that reduce stigma and create a culture of help-seeking within the first responder community;
- **Family Wellness:** launching dedicated programming that addresses the often-invisible burden carried by first responder families; and
- **Advocacy & Change:** influencing state legislation and agency-level policy to embed wellness as a structural element of first responder service.

Success over this four-year plan will be measured through clear, quantifiable goals within each priority area. OKFRWD will track engagement, partnership depth, and community impact. Annual reviews will allow the organization to adapt goals and strategies in response to emerging needs and opportunities.

Organizational Context

About the Oklahoma First Responder Wellness Division

OKFRWD was established by 74 O.S. § 9101 to address a critical gap in Oklahoma’s public safety infrastructure: a dedicated, statewide entity focused exclusively on the wellness of those who serve. The Division operates across law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, dispatchers, corrections professionals, retirees, all other public safety personnel, and the families of the men and women who serve, recognizing that each sector faces unique challenges while sharing common needs rooted in service and sacrifice.

The Problem We Address

Oklahoma’s first responders face a disproportionate burden of occupational trauma, cumulative stress, and crisis exposure. National data consistently shows that first responders die by suicide at rates higher than line-of-duty deaths from all other causes combined. Oklahoma’s rural geography, workforce shortages, and limited access to mental health services compound these challenges significantly.

Compounding the individual burden is the ecosystem challenge: dozens of organizations offer wellness-related programming across the state, but they operate in silos. Duplication of effort drains limited resources. First responders and their agencies lack a single trusted source for navigating available support. OKFRWD’s strategic positioning as a unifying body is both timely and necessary.

The Landscape: Unifying the Ecosystem

Oklahoma is home to numerous nonprofits, coalitions, and faith-based organizations serving first responders in various capacities. OKFRWD’s strategy is one of coalition-building: establishing shared standards, reducing duplication, amplifying collective impact, and becoming a resource to funders and policymakers.

Key ecosystem stakeholders include peer support organizations, spouse and family support networks, faith-based chaplaincy programs, organizations with transferable expertise, and university-based research and training programs. OKFRWD will continue to pursue partnership agreements with aligned organizations to create a seamless continuum of care.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

MISSION

To protect the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of Oklahoma’s first responders and their families by providing coordinated access to education, peer support, and advocacy — ensuring no one who serves faces their struggles alone.

VISION

An Oklahoma where every first responder has access to evidence-based wellness support, where help-seeking is normalized within the culture of service, and where the wellness of those who protect us is a statewide priority embedded in law, policy, and community.

Core Values

- **Dedication:** Committed to excellence, accountability, and consistently serving.
- **Dignity:** Every first responder deserves confidential care without stigma, shame, or judgment.
- **Unity:** Collaboration across organizations, agencies, and families amplifies impact.
- **Accountability:** Measure what we do and report transparently on our outcomes.
- **Compassion:** Meet people where they are, recognizing that the path to wellness is personal and non-linear.
- **Resilience:** Build systems and relationships designed to last, adapting to challenges without abandoning our mission.

Strategic Pillars

The following four pillars form the foundation of OKFRWD’s four-year strategy. Together, they address organizational positioning, programming, community, family, and systemic change.

- 1

Organizational Positioning & Ecosystem Leadership
Establish OKFRWD as a recognized, trusted hub for first responder wellness in Oklahoma, unifying nonprofit partners and departments while serving as the state’s central coordinating provider.
- 2

Peer Support, Training, & Connection
Develop and sustain robust peer support networks that reduce stigma, increase help-seeking behavior, and ensure no first responder feels isolated in their struggles.
- 3

First Responder Family Wellness Programs
Launch dedicated programming that addresses the unique stressors faced by first responder families, recognizing that a healthy family system is foundational to a resilient first responder.
- 4

Advocacy & Systemic Change
Support Oklahoma state legislation, agency policy, and professional standards to embed first responder wellness as a structural and funded priority.

Pillar 1: Organizational Positioning & Ecosystem Leadership

Strategic Intent

OKFRWD occupies a unique and necessary position in Oklahoma’s wellness landscape as a convener, coordinator, and amplifier of the ecosystem. OKFRWD’s organizational strategy is to become the trusted “north star” that agencies, first responders, families, and funders look to first, while building the infrastructure, partnerships, and connections that make the entire ecosystem more effective. By bringing stakeholders together, identifying gaps, and promoting collaboration, OKFRWD helps strengthen wellness resources and support systems for first responders across Oklahoma.

Strategy

OKFRWD will continue building a statewide wellness infrastructure that improves access, coordination, and effectiveness across Oklahoma. This includes creating streamlined referral pathways, expanding collaborative programming, and identifying opportunities to maximize resources. By reducing duplication of effort and improving coordination, OKFRWD can help strengthen services for first responders while presenting a clear and unified vision to the Oklahoma Legislature and private funders.

Positioning strategies include:

- Conducting a statewide landscape mapping of organizations serving first responders to identify gaps, strengths, and duplication.
- Hosting an annual Oklahoma First Responder Wellness Summit to convene partners, share data, and align priorities.
- Developing a certification and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) framework for formal nonprofit partnerships that define roles, referral protocols, and data-sharing standards.
- Creating a OKFRWD Strategic Partnership Team composed of first responder representatives, family members, mental health professionals, and/or policy stakeholders.

Measurable Goals — Pillar 1

Goal #	Goal Statement	Key Objectives	Metric / KPI	Timeline
1.1	Complete a statewide ecosystem mapping of first responder wellness organizations	– Identify all active nonprofits/programs – Document service gaps by region/sector – Publish findings	<i>Mapping report published; 100% of counties assessed</i>	Year 1
1.2	Formalize partnerships with aligned organizations through certifications and/or signed MOUs	– Develop certification & MOU framework – Conduct outreach to existing partners – Execute 5+ new agreements	<i>5 signed MOUs; shared referral activity tracked quarterly</i>	Year 1–2

Goal #	Goal Statement	Key Objectives	Metric / KPI	Timeline
1.3	Sustain annual events and launch Oklahoma First Responder Wellness Summit	– Host inaugural summit, launch Year 1 – Secure continued partnership for Wild at Heart Retreat – Launch OKFRWD Bus Tour to 6 Oklahoma regions – Achieve 200+ attendees across events by Year 2	<i>Summit held annually; attendance, partner count, evaluation scores</i>	Year 1 (launch); Annual
1.4	Establish a functioning OKFRWD Strategic Partnership Team	– Recruit 5–10 diverse members – Meet quarterly – Publish annual report	<i>Team established; quarterly meetings; 80%+ attendance rate</i>	Year 1

Pillar 2: Peer Support, Training, & Connection

Strategic Intent

Research consistently shows that first responders are more likely to seek support from someone with lived experience rather than a clinician or supervisor. Peer support programs reduce stigma, increase help-seeking behavior, and provide an informal safety net that no professional service can fully replicate. OKFRWD’s peer support strategy is to build a statewide network of trained, certified peer supporters embedded within agencies and accessible across organizational boundaries.

In addition to supporting frontline personnel, OKFRWD is recognized as the statewide peer support home for command staff, agency leadership, and retired first responders, ensuring those who may have limited peer resources due to rank or status still have access to confidential support from trusted peers who understand the unique challenges of their roles.

Strategy

OKFRWD will develop and maintain a Statewide Peer Support Registry, a vetted network of OKFRWD-certified peer supporters available to first responders across Oklahoma. The registry will ensure accessible peer support for personnel in smaller and rural agencies, command staff and agency leadership, and retired first responders who may have limited access to peer resources within their own organizations.

Positioning strategies include:

- Building and maintaining a statewide Peer Support Registry that provides all Oklahoma first responders—including those in rural agencies, leadership positions, and retirement—with access to trained, certified peer supporters when local resources are unavailable.
- Supporting agencies in developing an internal peer support team using OKFRWD-certified training and support.
- Deploying standardized check-in protocols (post-critical incident, anniversary contacts, quarterly wellness calls) that normalize outreach before crisis occurs.
- Advancing a culture of wellness by reducing stigma surrounding help-seeking behaviors through peer support education, awareness initiatives, leadership engagement, and ongoing evaluation of responder attitudes toward mental health and wellness.

Measurable Goals — Pillar 2

Goal #	Goal Statement	Key Objectives	Metric / KPI	Timeline
2.1	Build a statewide Peer Support Registry with 100+ OKFRWD certified peer supports	– Establish registry platform – Recruit and certify peers; target rural agencies – Maintain active roster with annual renewal	<i>100+ active certified peers; geographic distribution by county; renewed annually</i>	Year 1–3

Goal #	Goal Statement	Key Objectives	Metric / KPI	Timeline
2.2	Support agency leadership in establishing and/or strengthening internal peer support teams	– Develop agency team-launch toolkit – Provide ongoing consultation procedures – Support development of internal tracking for team activation and utilization	<i>40+ agency touchpoints; utilization data reported annually</i>	Year 4
2.3	In 20+ agencies, implement structured protocol for peer touch point and critical incidents	– Develop post-incident and wellness check protocols – Train supervisors on activation – Collect utilization data	<i>20+ agencies using protocols by Year 3</i>	Year 3
2.4	Achieve documented reduction in stigma among trained responders as measured by validated survey	– Administer baseline stigma survey – Repeat annually post-training – Report trend data publicly	<i>10%+ reduction in stigma scores from baseline by Year 4</i>	Year 1 (baseline); Year 3–4 (outcome)

Pillar 3: First Responder Family Wellness Programs

Strategic Intent

Behind every first responder is a family system absorbing the secondary effects of a demanding, often traumatic career. Spouses and partners navigate shift schedules, hypervigilance at home, emotional withdrawal, and the persistent fear of loss. Children grow up in households shaped by the unique culture of public safety. And yet, family members are almost entirely absent from the formal wellness ecosystem.

Strategy

OKFRWD will address this gap by building the first coordinated, statewide suite of family wellness programming in Oklahoma. We view family investment not as supplementary to our mission, but as essential to it: a first responder with a supported, resilient family is a more resilient first responder.

Positioning strategies include:

- Developing a Family Orientation Program that provides onboarding educational series for new first responder families covering what to expect, how to communicate across shift work, and how to access support. Delivered online and in person.
- Training family peer supporters (spouses and partners of active/retired first responders) available to connect with other family members navigating shared challenges.
- Developing age-appropriate children’s literature that helps first responder families navigate topics such as worry, changing routines, emotional wellness, resilience, and pride in a loved one’s service.
- Supporting crisis navigation by identifying support pathways for families experiencing acute crisis (e.g., line-of-duty injury, PTSD episode, marital breakdown) and educating on available professional resources.
- Strengthening relationships between OKFRWD and agency HR/wellness coordinators to ensure families are proactively reached during critical career transitions (new hire, promotion, retirement, LOD death).

Measurable Goals — Pillar 3

Goal #	Goal Statement	Key Objectives	Metric / KPI	Timeline
3.1	Launch the Family Orientation Program and reach 300 first responder family units	– Develop curriculum in Year 1 – Partner with agencies for new-hire rollout – Offer ongoing open-enrollment cohorts	<i>300 family units served; 85%+ satisfaction score</i>	Year 1 (develop); Year 2 (300 reached)
3.2	Develop and launch a first responder children’s book series	– Partner with child therapists and first responder families to develop content – Create and publish books addressing common first responder family	<i>500+ children books provided</i>	Year 3

Goal #	Goal Statement	Key Objectives	Metric / KPI	Timeline
		experiences and wellness topics – Distribute books statewide through conferences, academia, schools, and community partners		
3.3	Establish a statewide Family Liaison Program to strengthen support, communication, and resources for first responder families	– Define the Family Liaison model, responsibilities, and family engagement framework – Develop training and resource tools for Family Liaisons and agency wellness team – Implement and track proactive family outreach, education and resource connection opportunities statewide	<i>Family Liaison Program established and active, with at least 25+ family touchpoints conducted annually.</i>	Year 3–4

Pillar 4: Advocacy & Systemic Change

Strategic Intent

Programs and peer networks save lives one person at a time. Policy saves lives at scale. OKFRWD’s advocacy strategy is designed to move first responder wellness from a “nice to have” into Oklahoma state law, agency policy, and professional standards — ensuring that wellness infrastructure is funded, required, and sustained regardless of organizational leadership or budget cycles.

Strategy

OKFRWD’s four-year policy agenda centers on the following priorities:

- **Mandatory Wellness Training Standards:** Pursuing incorporation of wellness and resiliency training into CLEET baseline certification requirements for all Oklahoma law enforcement personnel, with parallel efforts in fire and EMS certification bodies.
- **Funding Mechanisms:** Working with the Oklahoma Legislature and the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety to establish a dedicated line-item appropriation and/or grant program supporting first responder, retirees, and first responder family wellness programming statewide.

Advocacy Infrastructure

Effective policy work requires strategic relationships, a credible evidence base, and sustained engagement. OKFRWD will build its advocacy infrastructure through:

- Relationship development with the Oklahoma Legislature’s Public Safety Committee and appropriations stakeholders.
- Coalition alignment with the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police, Oklahoma Firefighters Pension and Retirement System, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, and more.
- Annual data reporting on first responder wellness outcomes to build the evidentiary case for legislative investment.
- Testimony preparation and stakeholder mobilization for legislative sessions, including first responder and family member voices.

Measurable Goals — Pillar 4

Goal #	Goal Statement	Key Objectives	Metric / KPI	Timeline
4.1	Seek and secure dedicated state appropriation for first responders and retirees under Statute 74.9101	– Identify legislative champions – Draft request for review – Mobilize testimony from responders and families	<i>Passage of legislation for dedicated funding to support wellness services for first responders & retirees.</i>	Year 1 (engagement); Year 2–4 (legislation)

Goal #	Goal Statement	Key Objectives	Metric / KPI	Timeline
4.2	Achieve mandatory wellness training inclusion in CLEET baseline certification	– Explore options with CLEET leadership – Provide model curriculum and data – Secure vote/adoption from CLEET Council	<i>Wellness training adopted as CLEET baseline requirement</i>	Year 2–4
4.3	Publish an annual Oklahoma First Responder Wellness State of the State Report	– Design data collection framework – Partner with academia for analysis – Present report to legislature and media	<i>Annual report published on website.</i>	Year 1 (framework); Year 2 (annual report)
4.4	Secure dedicated state appropriation or grant funding for first responder wellness	– Engage appropriations committee – Build funding case with outcome data – Identify federal grant opportunities	<i>State or federal funding secured; amount and duration tracked</i>	Year 3–4

Implementation Roadmap

Four-Year Overview

The following phased approach ensures that OKFRWD builds credibility, relationships, and infrastructure before scaling programs and policy efforts.

Pillar	Year 1 Foundation & Design	Year 2 Launch & Pilot	Year 3 Scale & Embed	Year 4 Sustain & Advocate
Positioning	Landscape mapping; MOU framework; Strategic Partnership Team	Summit launch; Sustain existing events	5+ MOUs; Coalition operating; Sustain Summit event	Full ecosystem integration; Funding diversified
Peer Support	Registry platform; Peer certification design	50 certified peers; 10 agency teams; Protocol pilot	50 more certified peers; 25 teams; Digital access pilot	150 peers; 40 teams; Digital statewide 2,500
Family	Family program design; Strategize children’s literature	Family orientation live; Peer pilot	Children’s program; 200 families; 50 peers trained	Family liaison team member; 500+ distribution of literature
Policy	Legislative mapping; Champion identification	First bill introduced; CLEET engagement formal; State report v1	Funding ask	CLEET adoption; Appropriation secured

Measurement & Accountability

Performance Management Framework

OKFRWD is committed to rigorous, transparent measurement of its progress. All goals outlined in this plan are assigned specific metrics, baselines (where applicable), and target timelines. Progress will be tracked through a quarterly internal review process and shared with the OKFRWD Strategic Partnership Team and partnered agencies through a quarterly report. Public reporting will be published annually on the OKFRWD website.

Key Performance Indicator Categories

- Reach — Number of individuals, agencies, and families touched by OKFRWD programs and services.
- Engagement — Depth of participation: training completion rates, peer contact frequency, summit attendance, and partner activity.
- Outcomes — Measurable changes in knowledge, attitudes, stigma, help-seeking behavior, and wellness indicators among participants.
- Systems Change — Legislative milestones, policy adoptions, and institutional changes achieved through advocacy.
- Organizational Health — Staff capacity, financial sustainability, partnership strength, and donor/funder diversification.

Annual Review Process

Every January, OKFRWD leadership and the Strategic Partnership Team will conduct a comprehensive annual plan review. This review will assess progress against all measurable goals, identify barriers encountered, evaluate the continued relevance of strategies, and update targets as needed based on available data. The review outcomes will inform the annual report and any mid-course corrections to the strategic plan.

Reporting & Transparency

OKFRWD will publish an annual State of Oklahoma First Responder Wellness report documenting organizational progress, statewide data trends, partner highlights, and policy updates. This report will be disseminated to legislative stakeholders, partner organizations, agency leaders, donors, and the public.

Conclusion

The men and women who serve Oklahoma’s communities as first responders give more than can be measured. They run toward danger, absorb trauma on behalf of others, and carry that weight home each night. Their families share this burden quietly. The organizations working to support them do so with dedication and limited resources, often without the coordination needed to maximize impact.

The Oklahoma First Responder Wellness Division is positioned to change that. This strategic plan is not simply a document — it is a commitment: to the first responders who need us, to the families who support them, to the partners who share our mission, and to the communities of Oklahoma that depend on those who protect them.

By unifying the ecosystem, building credible programs, investing in peer connection, centering families, and driving systemic policy change, OKFRWD will help ensure that no one who serves Oklahoma faces their hardest moments alone.

Oklahoma First Responders Wellness Division

Protecting Those Who Protect Us