



A Service by Your Story Counseling

Date: 12/13/24

Re: RFP #24-124, Wellness Visits and Mental Health Screenings for the Police Department

To whom it may concern,

Enclosed is our submission for RFP #24-124, Wellness Visits and Mental Health Screenings for the Police Department.

Regards,

Clark Beckley, MSW, LCSW  
*Founder of Angie's Place*

**Cover Transmittal Letter for RFP #24-124**

Angie's Place by Your Story Counseling is a healing place for first responders, veterans, and their families carefully crafted to provide culturally competent and multi-disciplinary mental health services deploying clinicians who share similar experiences to those we support. We exist to honor the legacy of Officer Angie Wilhelmi, star #433, who was a suburban police officer for twenty-six years, and not until after retirement, sought support for her post-traumatic stress disorder. For years, she struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder and felt uncomfortable accessing mental health support because of some aspects of police culture that stigmatize emotional support. Sadly, Angie died of pancreatic cancer on Good Friday, 2022. With her permission and blessing to use her experience to reach first responders, and the experiences of our clinicians, we pursue and identify methods to mitigate the cultural barriers that exist that cause apprehension to first responders accessing mental health support.

Angie's Place clinicians are all former first responders, family members of first responders, and family of veterans, which uniquely equips us to join in the experiences of our clients with a knowing compassion and informed method of evaluation, support, and treatment. The commitment to pursue the parts of our first responders' stories that most impact their ability to perform, connect, and heal along with specially trained clinicians to support their families, is a hallmark trait of the Angie's Place team.

Additionally, we are a legislatively active team at the local and state levels that advocates for awareness and considerations unique to those we help. Each of us is continually connected to ongoing efforts to support those families who lost a loved one in the line of duty via the 100 Club of Illinois. Gold Star Families, and the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation. We design and present training topics and wellness assessments and programs in a variety of modalities to police and fire departments, clinicians, at professional conferences, community stakeholders, and family of first responders to increase awareness, identify resources, and create and nurture engagement in processes that support overall officer emotional wellness.

Our parent practice, Your Story Counseling is a multi-specialty mental health practice serving clients across the lifespan with a team of providers supporting children, teens, adults, couples, and families, with specialties in play therapy, substance use disorders, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), and other evidence-based trauma treatment modalities. Our multi-disciplinary approach affords our clients the best opportunity for positive outcomes while supporting the treating clinician with a wide array of opportunities for clinical collaboration and consultation. Angie's Place is a sub-brand of Your Story Counseling wholly leveraging the shared resources to best support our clients.

Your Story Counseling is an Illinois professional corporation in business since 2014 with offices in downtown Lisle (4745 Main Street, #207) and Oswego (3409 Orchard Road). We employ twenty-one clinicians, most of whom are trained in trauma therapy, and seven are allocated to provide individual therapy for Angie's Place clients.



Clark Beckley, MSW, LCSW  
*Founder of Angie's Place*

### **Organization, Personnel, and Staffing**

Each of our personal stories working in law enforcement, being in a law enforcement family, or a family of a veteran, highlights the need for culturally competent mental health providers for first responders. Individually, we each experienced deficiencies in training, methodology, and sociopolitical bias when seeking mental health support, and those experiences often resulted in additional trauma, further symptom impairment, relational dysfunction, and increased feelings of helplessness and hopelessness for the first responder and their family. By allowing our personal stories to shape our interactions with our first responder clients, we ensure that everything from the space in which we attend our sessions to the interactions with support staff in an informed manner that demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the stakes involved with engaging a first responder population that is skeptical, lonely, and tentative about mental health support. All the clinicians reviewed below exceed the qualifications listed within the proposal request and are trained in a variety of evidence-based treatment modalities. Here is a detailed listing of our team:

- Clark Beckley, MSW, LCSW, Founder of Your Story Counseling and Angie's Place, is an Illinois Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Clark is a former police officer. He designs and presents topics to mental health professionals, corporate groups, conferences, and professional associations that highlight unique cultural influences on how we integrate, collaborate, and increase awareness of our uniqueness at the individual, team, and organizational levels. In addition to speaking to professionals at conferences and other trainings, he provided training on a variety of topics at the Chicago Police Department Training Academy, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, as well as other organizations and groups. Clark was nominated and selected to a position on the Joint Department of Public Health and Illinois State Police Working Group for Human Trafficking which serves to identify legislative, awareness, and service needs for survivors of human trafficking. He is a member of the National Association of Social Workers, International Association of Trauma Professionals, and the American Association of Christian Counselors. In all, he has over twenty-five years of experience in public safety and mental health working with children, adults, professionals, and community stakeholders.
  - Clinical specialties: trauma, substance use disorders, mood disorders, couples therapy, family therapy, and men's mental health issues.
- Cristie Fry, MSW, LCSW, CADIC, Director, Angie's Place, is an Illinois Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Cristie is a former police officer, and she designs training topics for clinicians and community stakeholders. She has experience in community engagement and awareness and works closely with our municipal, city, and county partners to identify appropriate services and solutions and provide ongoing resources for support. Cristie collaborates extensively with veterans and first responders. She is a member of the Northern Illinois Critical Incident Stress Management Team (NICISM).
  - Clinical specialties: trauma, substance use disorders, mood disorders, grief, and critical incident management.

- Carla Marquez Ripley, MA, LCPC, RPT, Therapist, is an Illinois Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and Registered Play Therapist. Carla is the daughter of fallen Chicago Police Officer, Donald J. Marquez (End of watch, March 19, 2002), Chicago Police Gold Star Family Member, and former spouse of a Chicago Police Officer. Additionally, she was appointed by Governor J.B Pritzker as Board Member, Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership addressing access and service issues for mental health care for children in Illinois. Carla honors her father's legacy by supporting family members of fallen officers and is committed to teaching families, stakeholders, and first responders how to cope with chronic exposure to trauma, heal relationships, and connect with culturally competent resources.
  - Clinical specialties: trauma, play therapy, child therapy, mood disorders, couples therapy, family therapy, and grief and loss.
- Mariah Carstens, MSW, LCSW, Client Services Manager, is an Illinois Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She is the daughter of a retired police officer and married to a firefighter. Mariah developed an initial intake process that best assesses client needs, symptoms, and relational attributes to facilitate the best match for a client and therapist. This is very valuable for our first responder clients in that it provides an opportunity for casual conversation that feels relational prior to assignment to a therapist who best fits their needs. Mariah works closely with community providers to identify the most appropriate resources for first responders and their families and is a presenter at our workshops and trainings.
  - Clinical Specialties: trauma, mood disorders, and life transitions
- Alexandra Durdon, MA, LCPC, Therapist, is an Illinois Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor. She is married to a defense contractor, is heavily involved with the active and veteran military community and serves with the Red Cross. Alexandra knows uniquely the impact of veteran loss and suicide.
  - Clinical Specialties: trauma, life transitions, grief and loss, and mood disorders.
- Jenifer Ahrens, MA, LPC, Therapist, is an Illinois Licensed Professional Counselor. She is a retired police officer and current President of Northern Illinois Critical Incident Stress Management Team (NICISM) for 17 years.
  - Clinical Specialties: trauma, life transitions, grief and loss, critical incident management, and retirement transition
- Jamie Connelly, MSW, LSW, Therapist, is an Illinois Licensed Social Worker (pending). She is a former police officer. Jamie has extensive experience providing supportive therapy to families, children, teens, and adults.

Clark Beckley will serve as the primary contact for this proposal.

### **Practice Qualifications, Experience, and References**

Angie's Place by Your Story Counseling is uniquely equipped to support the mental health needs of first responders and their families in our commitment to creating an environment that nurtures safety, compassion and privacy for our clients. We currently have active contracts or agreements with various law enforcement agencies for annual wellness checks and training, and agreements with suburban fire departments and districts for consultation for wellness assessments and training.

Our team lives and works in the community and surrounding communities which provides a unique opportunity for us to also experience events impacting the clients we support. Our involvement in community events and outreach provides opportunities for us to create and nurture awareness for first responders' needs with civilians, local officials, and other community stakeholders when they meet our team. These interactions afford us the capability to identify and vet quality community providers who understand the unique, and sometimes complex needs, of first responders when they need support. We developed a compilation of vetted resources accessible to our clients for higher levels of mental health support, addiction, family support, critical incident management, medical needs, and other types of care.

Additionally, our commitment actively pursuing legislative advocacy and awareness at the local, state, and federal levels for the unique wellness needs of law enforcement officers and their agencies, positions us differently than other practices that solely provide therapy services.

Angie's Place by Your Story Counseling clinicians presented emotional wellness and leadership topics at industry conferences, to officers, department leadership, families, and community stakeholders on topics including: fortification of family from chronic exposure to trauma, healthy first responder families, substance abuse, resiliency skills, sharing personal accounts of traumatic events, peer support, cultural influences and barriers to officers healing, and resource awareness. Some of these presentations were benevolently provided for free to the 100 Club of Illinois and the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation. Audiences and benefactors for our presentations and ongoing wellness services include:

- Northern District Office of U.S. Marshalls Service
- 100 Club of Illinois Frontline Convention
- Illinois Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S)
- 100 Club of Illinois
- City of Wheaton Police Department
- Lisle Woodridge Fire Protection District
- Oswego Fire Protection District
- Illinois Department of Revenue Investigations Division

Your Story Counseling is an Illinois licensed continuing education provider which allows us to develop training topics to support development of the cultural requirements for providing therapy to first responders. Often, developing these training courses also serves as an opportunity for our team to enhance their individual and collective skill set.

## **Project Approach**

This is a newer initiative for police departments in the state, and the development, introduction, and integration of these new wellness initiatives requires care and consideration. Our current experiences providing wellness checks and additional services to other law enforcement agencies revealed a few areas that must be inherent to an efficient and competent wellness initiative. Given the recency of this initiative, our practices and procedures will adhere to the wellness check guidelines set forth in the final revision (April 2023) of the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Officer Wellness Committee.

First, is access, not only to the wellness sessions, but also from scheduling to matching the officer with the appropriate therapist. Our Client Services Manager exclusively matches and schedules wellness checks with officers and the Angie's Place team. Additionally, we have two office locations, downtown Lisle and Oswego, for convenient access depending on how the department will handle wellness checks on-duty versus off-duty and can attend sessions virtually or than in-person. However, based on the purpose of these wellness checks, we strongly recommend that officers are off-duty and attend wellness checks in-person in a practice facility rather than the police department or a city location while on-duty. Not only is this a clinical best practice, but research also supports that there is higher engagement by the officer and efficacy, and it significantly reduces liability to the City and Department. Wellness checks can be emotionally evocative.

In the literature, it is well understood that police officers are chronically exposed to trauma and often lack insight and self-awareness as to the presence of cues, or symptoms, they can experience when processing their traumatic exposures with a mental health professional in an environment that is similar to where they work and in the uniform in which the officer experienced the traumatic events. There is not any indication that on-duty or off-duty wellness checks at a city or department building are safest and most effective for the department's desired purposes. Should your department require these sessions be attended outside of our practice offices, we would be amenable to a location that preserves privacy and access and is not a City of Aurora building, and we can assist the department in identifying the safest locations for the desired goals of this program. Should this be the option utilized, we would schedule several sessions in a block format in that location at a time and have our team on-site to attend those sessions.

Currently, the City of Aurora employs approximately 350 sworn officers according to the Request for Proposals. There are two options to ensure service delivery on an annual basis. The first option is to require officers to attend their annual wellness check prior to their anniversary date, schedule them with our Client Services Manager, and attend the wellness check at a practice location. This option ensures the most manageable volume of officers attending wellness checks at any given time, and this option is vastly more efficient than most other options given both entities needs to manage resources to ensure participation and quality service delivery. Furthermore, this option is most efficient, effective, and ensures the highest level of officer engagement during the wellness check if these sessions are attended at a practice location rather than in a City of Aurora building. Officers can attend these sessions during practice hours Monday through Saturday.

The second option requires large blocks of time reserved at least 30 days in advance for Angie's Place clinicians to attend sessions off-site at a City of Aurora location. This is the costlier option for both entities for two reasons. In this scenario, the City of Aurora is paying a contractor to secure several hours of time at an off-site location for the contractor. During the

time spent off-site the City of Aurora is paying for those hours whether officers attend wellness checks during that block of time or not. In our experience, demands of the duty day, illness, family schedules, court appearances, sudden changes to officer schedules, and demands of the street and call volume on that day can restrict officers' ability to utilize those reserved blocks of time efficiently, which results in a higher cost. Additionally, this option offers nearly no flexibility for officers to reschedule as the blocks of time are typically already planned and full which then requires additional allocation of time and resources at additional unplanned cost to accommodate the officers that were unable to attend their initially scheduled wellness check. Again, this option is possible but utilizes resources for each much less efficiently. However, should the City and Department prefer this option, we also have the capability to collaborate with the Department to better understand shifts schedules, department flows, and our availability to develop the best system for ensuring resources of each entity are allocated effectively and efficiently.

The second area inherent to an efficient and competent emotional wellness initiative is clinician's cultural competency. Each Angie's Place by Your Story Counseling clinician is uniquely experienced and trained to attend sessions in a manner that considers the chronic exposure to trauma by personnel, extraordinary stressors, unique impact on lifestyle, family, and balance, and the pressure and scrutiny of the sociopolitical environment. Personally experiencing the rigors of the impact of living as, or living with, a first responder is likely stronger training for our clinicians than anything provided in a formal class setting. Each clinician is trained in at least one evidence-based intervention for trauma- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PET), or Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR)- along with a variety of assessment and evaluative modalities. Additionally, some of our team have unique substance use training to assist with assessment and evaluation. While those interventions involve treatment of trauma, they each uniquely afford the foundation for assessment during a wellness check. Each clinician is equipped to provide safety assessment, safety planning, substance abuse assessment, resource identification and referrals for officers presenting with problems or dangerous behaviors or thought processes.

The last area essential for an efficient and competent wellness initiative should be ongoing assessment, analysis, and reporting. With our experience in program design and evaluation, our intent is to collect non-identifying data, when assessed, that could indicate a trend or pattern for officers that could be mitigated by the department. This could include anything from an identified trend in prolonged grief by multiple officers related to a community death to a collective shift response to an officer-involved incident. Similarly, we could develop other areas to assemble data, when assessed, that could reveal trends in healthy coping, cohesion, etc. We would request an initial meeting to assess department needs related to better understand the needs of the officers attending the wellness checks and to also understand current department culture and community needs or areas of concern.


Two additional services included in our proposal is up to four annual training sessions lasting up to two hours, or eight hours total, on-site at the Aurora Police Department to provide an opportunity for officers to increase their insight and awareness about topics including: suicide, substance abuse, relationships, resiliency, emotional wellness and coping, and chronic exposure to trauma. Also, we have the capacity to provide clinical consultation to the Department's existing peer support teams, on a scheduled as-needed basis.

### **Conclusion**

This proposal serves to provide the sworn personnel of the City of Aurora Police Department with culturally competent, timely, and proactive wellness checks to improve officer wellness, morale, department health, and community safety. Angie's Place by Your Story Counseling provides the best opportunity for your officers to connect with a similarly experienced clinician to engage in a process that serves to improve their health, performance, and professional and personal relationships while offering them an opportunity to experience a de-stigmatizing interaction with a mental health provider.


STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 )  
County of Kane ) SS.

PROPOSER'S TAX CERTIFICATION

Clark Beckley   
~~(PROPOSER'S EXECUTING OFFICER)~~, being first duly sworn on oath, deposes and states that all statements made herein are made on behalf of the PROPOSER, that this despondent is authorized to make them and that the statements contained herein are true and correct.

Proposer deposes, states and certifies that Proposer is not barred from contracting with any unit of local government in the State of Illinois as result of a delinquency in payment of any tax administered by the Illinois Department of Revenue unless Proposer is contesting, in accordance with the procedures established by the appropriate statute, its liability for the tax or the amount of the tax, all as provided for in accordance with 65 ILCS 5/11-42.1-1.

DATED this 17th day of December, 2024.

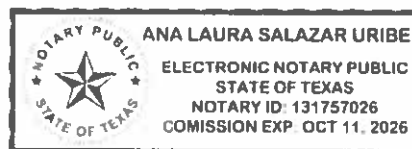
By   
(Signature of Proposer's Executing Officer)  
Clark Beckley  
(Print name of Proposer's Execcuting Officer)  
Founder and President  
(Title)

ATTEST/WITNESS:

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
State of Texas, County of Harris  
Subscribed and sworn to before me this  
17 day of December, 2024.

  
Notary Public

Document Notarized using a Live Audio-Video Connection  
(SEAL)



## PROPOSER'S CERTIFICATION

I/We hereby certify that:

- A. A complete set of proposal papers, as intended, has been received, and that I/We will abide by the contents and/or information received and/or contained herein.
- B. I/We have not entered into any collusion or other unethical practices with any person, firm, or employee of the City which would in any way be construed as unethical business practice.
- C. I/We have adopted a written sexual harassment policy which is in accordance with the requirements of Federal, State and local laws, regulations and policies and further certify that I/We are also in compliance with all equal employment practice requirements contained in Public Act 87-1257 (effective July 1, 1993) and 775 ILCS 5/2-105 (A).
- D. I/We operate a drug free environment and drugs are not allowed in the workplace or satellite locations as well as City of Aurora sites in accordance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of January, 1992.
- E. The Proposer is not barred from bidding on the Project, or entering into this contract as a result of a violation of either Section 33E-3 or 33E-4 of the Illinois Criminal Code, or any similar offense of "bid rigging" or "bid rotating" of any state or the United States.
- F. I/We will abide by all other Federal, State and local codes, rules, regulations, ordinances and statutes.

COMPANY NAME Your Story Counseling

ADDRESS 4745 Main Street, #207

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE Lisle, IL 60532

NAME OF CORPORATE/COMPANY OFFICIAL Clark Beckley

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

TITLE Founder and President

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

*Clark Beckley*

DATE 12/17/2024

TELEPHONE ( 630 ) 442-1895

FAX No. ( 630 ) 442-1895

State of Texas, County of Harris

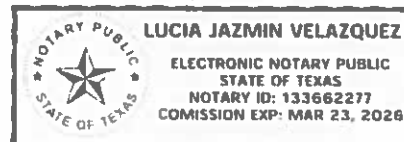
Subscribed and Sworn to

Before me this 17 day

of December, 2024

*Lucia Jazmin Velazquez*

Notary Public



Document Notarized using a Live Audio-Video Connection



CITY OF AURORA  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL 24-124  
WELLNESS VISITS & MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS  
FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

REFERENCES

(Please Type)  
Organization City of Wheaton Police Department

Address 900 W. Liberty Drive

City, State, Zip Wheaton, IL 60187

Phone Number 630-260-2161

Contact Person Chief Princeton Youker

Date of Project Ongoing

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Organization Oswego Fire Protection District

Address 3511 Woolley Road

City, State, Zip Oswego, IL 60543

Phone Number 630-554-2110

Contact Person Chief Josh Flanders

Date of Project Ongoing

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Organization 100 Club of Illinois

Address 875 N. Michigan Avenue #1351

City, State, Zip Chicago, IL 60611


Phone Number 312-265-0920

Contact Person Caitlyn Brennan

Date of Project Ongoing

\*\*\*\*\*

Contractor's Name: Clark Beckley

Signature & Date:  12/13/2024