

NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION  
PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE

**Request To Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association/Urban Fire Forum Chiefs**

**BACKGROUND**

Suicide is a national public health issue, affecting millions of Americans each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2017 alone, suicide was the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for all ages, with approximately 47,000 Americans dying by suicide (CDC, 2018).

A study by the Ruderman Family Foundation found that law enforcement officers and firefighters are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty – in 2017, at least 103 firefighters and 140 police officers died by suicide, compared to 93 firefighters and 129 police officers who died in the line of duty.

Recognizing the increased risk of suicide among first responders, the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance) established a public safety task force to develop a comprehensive, national response to suicide among public safety professionals. The Action Alliance is the nation's public-private partnership for suicide prevention, bringing together influential public and private sector leaders (e.g., automobile, construction, defense, education, entertainment, news media, public safety) to make suicide prevention a national priority.

**TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP**

Members of the Action Alliance Public Safety Task Force are national leaders from across the public safety sector (e.g., law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical services, dispatch), researchers, and healthcare, working together to:

- Strategize and take actionable steps to increase help-seeking and reduce suicide among the nation's first responders;
- Close the gaps in suicide prevention efforts across the public safety sector; and
- Share best practices and challenges to suicide prevention for public safety professionals.

Organizations and agencies represented include:

- **Law Enforcement**
  - International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
  - Department of Homeland Security
  - Department of Defense (DoD)
  - Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), Department of Justice
  - Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice
  - National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE)
  - Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)

➤ **Fire Service**

- Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association
- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- International Association of Firefighters (IAFF)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- First Responder Center for Excellence for Reducing Occupational Illness, Injuries, and Death

➤ **Emergency Medical Services**

- International Association of Emergency Medical Services Chiefs (IAEMSC)
- National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

➤ **Research and Healthcare**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

**STRATEGY**

In May 2019, the Action Alliance convened these national leaders at the first-ever national public safety summit in Washington, D.C. Following an analysis of the public safety profession around suicide prevention, attendees identified three key strategies to reduce suicide among first responders:

- Policy change
- Collaboration across systems and departments
- Messaging about help-seeking and suicide

The Action Alliance Public Task Force will focus on these areas for the next 12 months.

**REQUESTED ACTION**

The Action Alliance respectfully requests that the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association/Urban Fire Forum Chiefs endorse the work of the Action Alliance Public Safety Task Force, and commit to working across the public safety sector to reduce first responder suicide.