



## Statewide Behavioral Health Training Program for Police and First Responders

(Senate Bill #1090, House Bill #3257, and House Bill #2401)

NAMI Massachusetts supports the creation of a statewide resource to expand Crisis Intervention Team training, and the establishment of the Criminal Justice and Community Support Trust Fund.

### Overview:

Massachusetts needs a **statewide resource for Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and support** to improve police response to people with mental health conditions.

### The Need:

- ⇒ Police are the **gatekeepers** of the criminal justice system and **protectors** of public health.
- ⇒ Police training and practices are widely inconsistent across the state – **approximately 75% of police departments have not had CIT training.**
- ⇒ Without appropriate training and procedures, **police interactions can escalate quickly**, especially when mental health or substance use issues are involved.
- ⇒ **Devastating consequences** can result: unnecessary arrest or incarceration, or in the worst cases, injury or death.
- ⇒ In Massachusetts, **50% of county jail and house of correction inmates receive mental health services**; many of these arrests are for minor, “quality of life” offenses.

### The Solution:

- A **Statewide Comprehensive Training Program** will:
- ⇒ Serve as a **clearinghouse of best practices** in crisis response and de-escalation.
  - ⇒ Provide 40-hour **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trainings.**
  - ⇒ **Foster partnerships** between police and community organizations.
  - ⇒ Provide **technical assistance** to adapt police policies and procedures.

**The Criminal Justice and Community Support Trust Fund** will create a funding mechanism for these initiatives.

### What is CIT?

A 40-hour interactive training model for first responders that brings together police officers, community organizations, health providers, and individuals and family members with lived experience to improve responses to people in mental health crisis:

- ◇ De-escalation techniques
- ◇ Recognition of the signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use disorders
- ◇ Referral to appropriate resources and treatment

### The Criminal Justice and Community Support Trust Fund

would allow private grants, public funds, and donations to be collected and leveraged to fund:

- ◇ Jail diversion programs for people experiencing behavioral health crises;
- ◇ Mental health and substance use training for police officers;
- ◇ Grants to plan and implement police drop off centers for individuals with behavioral health needs.