



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MOVEMBER FUNDS TWO NEW PROGRAMS IN THE US SUPPORTING FIRST RESPONDERS

The leading global men's health charity is funding projects which will go to support the mental health of first responders

Los Angeles (November 9, 2021) Movember has announced it is funding two new programs that go to support first responders in the US. The \$6.2 million global initiative in support of veterans and first responders, as well as their families, is a collaboration between Movember and [The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride](#). There is growing evidence that first responders [firefighters, paramedics, and police officers] and military veterans are at increased risk of poor mental health and suicide.

The two new US initiatives being funded by Movember are for the First Responder Center for Excellence and Southcentral Foundation's Soldiers Heart program.

The First Responder Center for Excellence for Reducing Occupational Illness, Injuries and Deaths, located in Crofton, MD, an affiliate of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, was created in 2016 to promote quality educational awareness and research to reduce physical and psychological health and wellness issues for first responders. The project will seek to develop and implement more accessible digital tools in identifying and addressing suicidal ideation and provide psychological peer support, including actions designed to promote self-care and co-worker support.

"We are extremely excited and thankful for the opportunity to expand behavioral health opportunities for first responders through this grant. With the support of Movember we will be able to further address the complex network of stresses, strains, and coping mechanisms faced by these occupations", stated the First Responder Center for Excellence's Managing Director, Ed Klima.

Based in Anchorage, [Southcentral Foundation's Soldiers Heart program](#) will focus on supporting the Alaska Native Community reaching firefighters and police in isolated areas in Alaska who are experiencing workplace mental health stress. The program is a six-day educational retreat that incorporates cultural principles such as learning circles to share experiences, aftercare and support which will be evaluated for effectiveness.

"Since its inception in 2016, Southcentral Foundation's Family Wellness Warriors Soldier's Heart training has helped first responders, combat veterans, and law enforcement officers address post-traumatic stress. It is an honor to support healing in an environment that fosters camaraderie, support, and trust," said Southcentral Foundation's board member and U.S. Navy veteran Charles Akers.

Although many programs that aim to support these groups already exist, a 2019 [report](#) commissioned by Movember and conducted by men's health researcher Dr. Don McCreary, found a lack of publicly available evidence showing the effectiveness of such programs.

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Based on the report, Movember launched the Veterans and First Responders Mental Health Grant Program in September 2020, with the aim of identifying promising mental health or suicide prevention programs and collaborating with those projects to demonstrate their effectiveness through rigorous program evaluation.

“Our first responders are on the front lines each day and we owe so much to them. Through this initiative, Movember wants to help our grant funding partners prove that their programs are positively impacting mental health outcomes. We want to build programs that continue to help these men live healthier and longer lives,” Greg Oliva, Community Development Manager for Movember.

To date, Movember has welcomed six million supporters and helped fund 1,250 innovative health projects across 20 countries.

For more information or to join the Movember movement today, visit www.movember.com. For individuals working in emergency services, visit Movember’s [First-Responder Challenge](#), which pits all fundraisers working in emergency response in a friendly fundraising competition in support of men’s health.

Images are available for download [here](#).

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Note to Editors:

Movember strongly encourages the inclusion of appropriate help-seeking information for stories about suicide and mental health. For support at any time, day or night, we encourage people to reach out to:

Crisis support can be found at Crisis Text Line: (Text :741741 to get connected with a crisis counselor www.crisistextline.org)

For more help-seeking information: visit: <https://us.movember.com/mens-health/get-support>

About Movember:

Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health on a global scale, focusing on mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer. The charity raises funds to deliver innovative, breakthrough research and support programs that enable men to live happier, healthier, and longer lives. Committed to disrupting the status quo, millions have joined the movement, helping fund over 1,250 projects around the world. In addition to tackling key health issues faced by men, Movember is working to encourage men to stay healthy in all areas of their life, with a focus on men staying socially connected and becoming more open to discussing their health and significant moments in their lives. The charity's vision is to have an everlasting impact on the face of men's health. To donate or learn more, please visit Movember.com.