

## Commander's Outreach Initiative + Habersham County Co-Responder Program

### A Veteran-Centered Second Responder Framework

The Commander's Outreach Initiative was created following 2 Veteran-related incidents in Clarkesville and Demorest. This initiative is being aligned with Habersham County's developing Co-Responder Program to enhance veteran crisis response. By integrating Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) as potential cosecond responders, the initiative ensures timely, culturally competent support for veterans in crisis.

Through structured communication protocols, VSO commanders are notified when law enforcement encounters involve veterans. Peer-trained VSO reps then conduct follow-ups, connect veterans to VA services, and provide ongoing support. Officers gain training on veteran-specific challenges, and a shared resource network strengthens continuity of care.

This collaboration improves outcomes, reduces repeat incidents, and builds trust between veterans, law enforcement, and the broader community.

For more information or to support implementation, contact:

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**The Veterans Crisis Line (988, then press 1)** is a confidential, 24/7 support resource for veterans, service members, and their families. **For law enforcement, it's a vital tool during veteran-related calls** — officers can call with or on behalf of a veteran in crisis, connecting them directly to trained VA responders who understand military culture and can guide next steps in real time. It's a lifeline — **not just for veterans, but for the officers trying to help them.**

