



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Press Release

DA Morrissey awards \$5,000 grants supporting Post-pandemic Mental Health resources

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District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey has given \$5,000 grants to support post-pandemic mental health needs in 15 communities across Norfolk County.

"We try to target our community reinvestment dollars where our towns identify the greatest need," District Attorney Morrissey said. "Coming out of the pandemic year, our partners in the schools and town governments have made it very clear that the deepest need is mental health support and services."

Westwood opted to apply the grant to funding quarterly visits from therapy dogs from the "She's a Keeper" organization, which the schools have previously worked with, and to fund targeted training for mental health staff and teachers through McLean's Hospital in Belmont.

Dedham opted to apply all \$5,000 to defray the cost of implementing a universal mental health screening tool for students from kindergarten to grade 12.

Needham opted for the William James College Interface Referral Program.

"We offered communities grants for three set programs or the ability to propose their own according to their needs," Morrissey said. "One option was the acquisition of a community resource dog, and one was services through McLean's hospital – Westwood decided to tap into both resources, but in its own way."

Past projects the DA has funded with community reinvestment funds have included school safety grants, training for school personnel on substance abuse, and prescription drug collection kiosks, and community service dogs.

"This year our communities are consistently worried about the emotional well-being of students in particular, but the entire population," Morrissey said.

DA Morrissey awarded grants to every community that applied, including Quincy, Randolph, Walpole, Braintree, Avon, Norfolk, Medway, King Philip Regional High School, Franklin, Medfield, and Milton.