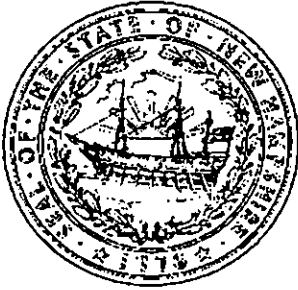


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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

P.O. Box 1806  
CONCORD, NH 03302-1806  
603-271-5610 FAX: 888-908-6609  
TDD ACCESS: 1-800-735-2964  
www.nh.gov/nhdoc

HELEN E. HANKS  
COMMISSIONER

JONATHAN K. HANSON  
DIRECTOR

July 15, 2022

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu  
and the Honorable Executive Council  
State House  
Concord, NH 03301

**REQUESTED ACTION**

1. Pursuant to RSA 4:8, Gifts to the State, authorize the NH Department of Corrections (NHDOC) to accept a donation from the State Employees Association of N.H., Inc., in the amount of \$1,800.00, for the purpose of funding training and travel expenses for a NHDOC comfort dog effective upon Governor and Council approval.
2. Contingent upon the approval of requested Action #1, authorize the NHDOC, to expend the donation in the amount of \$1,800.00, for funding the training and travel expenses for the NHDOC comfort dog effective upon Governor and Council approval through June 30, 2023. 100% Other Funds

Funds will be budgeted in the following account: Security and Training: 02-46-46-461510-NEWXXXX

Class/Account	Description	FY 23 Current Adjusted Authorized	Requested Action	FY 23 Revised Adjusted Authorized
005-401734-20	Private & Local Funds	(\$0.00)	(\$1,800.00)	(\$1,800.00)
080-500717	Out of State Travel	\$0.00	\$1,800.00	\$1,800.00

**EXPLANATION**

The NH Department of Corrections received a donation of \$1,800.00 from the State Employees Association of N.H., Inc. for the purpose of supporting training and travel expenses for a NHDOC comfort dog. The Department will be acquiring a comfort dog to provide aid and comfort for correctional staff during times of crisis, as well as assist individuals/groups and help improve mental health and the wellbeing of personnel. The comfort dog program may be used externally through the Department's outreach programs with community partners to provide comfort in times of crisis for individuals and/or groups impacted by violence, tragedy, or traumatic events as a good steward to our NH communities. The Department of Corrections is taking a multifaceted approach to advancing departmental employee wellness due to the stressors of working in correctional environments as they are real and the hours worked by our NH correctional officers is significant. In addition, several studies have found that correctional law enforcement professionals are experiencing high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder associated with being first responders in prisons and within the community setting associated with probation and parole. Corrections officers are first responders when those incarcerated attempt and/or complete suicide, engage in self-injurious behavior, overdose and engage in acts of violence to list a few incidents that trigger trauma symptoms in our departmental staff.

Research Articles:

[Fighting Stress in the Law Enforcement Community \(ojp.gov\)](#)

[How corrections officers can recognize PTSD \(corrections1.com\)](#)

[SLU Study Finds Jail Corrections Officers Suffer from PTSD : SLU](#)

[Study reveals high rates of PTSD among correctional officers \(corrections1.com\)](#)

**Highlights** – “Prison employees have a rate of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) roughly equivalent to war veterans who’ve served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to newly reported findings from a study in Washington State.

Nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of prison workers surveyed “reported symptoms that were severe enough to be diagnosed as PTSD” – a rate six times higher than that found in the general population and slightly above what previous studies have discovered among police officers (18 percent). The PTSD rate among veterans from America’s most recent wars is estimated at 11-20 percent.”

[Correctional officers at high risk for depression, PTSD, suicide, survey finds | Berkeley News](#)

[The Sound of Silence: The Occurrence of PTSD in Nursing - Trusted Health](#)

These research articles focus not only on the law enforcement officers within corrections but correctional nurses, social workers and others who are also first responders in our facilities should not be overlooked when it comes to post-traumatic stress associated with their official duties. Nurses are responding to render first aid in all the events listed above and social workers are listening to the thousands of traumatic life-histories shared with them through therapy by the men and women incarcerated as well as the crime description which often involve sexual abuse (i.e. 1/3 of men are incarcerated in NH for sexual offenses). Probation Parole Officers are entering homes daily that include responding to gun violence, domestic violence, interventions with drug addiction and countless other events increasing their likelihood to experience trauma.

A Comfort dog program is just one part of the department’s plan associated with creating protective factors to aid our staff in reducing the stressors of the work environment. We are also moving forward with a peer-to-peer program as well as advancing our training and creating wellness spaces within our facilities for staff to use as needed post events in the facilities to decompress.

Resource Articles demonstrating the value of comfort dog programs with law enforcement agencies are as follows:

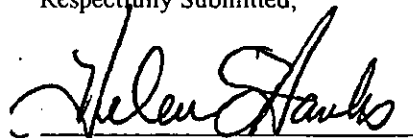
[Power of the Dog: Emotional Support Dogs in Law Enforcement | Officer](#)

[Peer Support Service Dogs Provide Comfort, Stress Relief in Fairfax County \(connectionnewspapers.com\)](#)

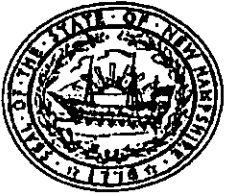
[An Argument for Widespread Use of Therapy Dogs in Policing - Patrol - POLICE Magazine](#)

The department appreciates the Council consideration of our respect to improve the wellness of state correctional staff.

Respectfully Submitted,



Helen E. Hanks  
Commissioner



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Attachment I  
Helen E. Hanks  
Commissioner

**DONATION RECORD**  
All information must be filled in

Mr.  
 Ms.

Donor/Contact Name: Mrs. David Burris for SEA ch. 24  
(Circle one title or write out title(s) with name on line above)

Donor Organization /Business: SEA, Chapter 24

Donor Street Address: 207 North Main Street

Donor Mailing Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

City Concord State NH Zip 03301

Donor's Phone Number: 603-271-1996 (O)

Donor's Relationship to DOC:

Volunteer  
 Employee  
 Support Group or Organization  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please describe)

Note: No donations are allowed from inmate family or anyone on a visitor list.

Intended Area of Use by DOC:

NHSP/Men  
 NHCF/Women  
 Field Services (list office) \_\_\_\_\_  
 NCF  
(TIU/TWC): (CHM, NEH, SFH, TWC) (circle one)  
FCC: (NHSP/Men, NHCF/Women, NCF) (circle one)

QUANTITY	DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	INTENDED USE	ESTIMATED \$ VALUE *
1	funds for training for the dog and handler as well as airfare to and from training location		\$1800.00

\* IRS Publication 561 Determining the Value of Donated Property indicates that the donor determines the value; DOC staff members shall not do this.  
Each donation must include a dollar value, no matter how small.

Method of delivery: hand delivered Date: 6-7-22  
Shipping method (UPS, Fed Ex, etc.) If hand delivered enter persons name above.

Verified by: David H. [Signature] SEA Date: 6-7-22  
Signature above verifies that the donor is NOT a family member or on a visitor list for the inmate.

**DOC recipient and contact for information regarding this donation:**

Name: Ashley Gray Phone: 603-271-6946

Approved By: Helen E. Hanks Title: 603-271-5603  
Director/Warden or Designee