

Not just officers: KCPD expands social work program

by: [Stuart Downing](#)

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Most police encounters don't end in an arrest. But everyday, officers interact with people in need. That's why KCPD is hiring a social worker for each of its six patrol divisions.

On Friday the department announced it is expanding the pilot program led by a single social worker. [Since late 2016](#), Gina English has been working out of the Central Patrol Division on Linwood, with a focus on at-risk youth. She will now coordinate the new social workers as they continue her work.

"We are willing to forge nontraditional partnerships that work to decrease crime in our city," Chief Rick Smith said in a news release. "People who don't have their basic needs met will always look for alternative means. The KCPD is striving to assist with those alternative means, as opposed to criminal means."

The new social workers are expected to assist officers on calls, assess the needs of people interacting with police, and refer them to appropriate services. They'll be extra focused on turning at-risk youth away from crime.

"There are a lot of people dealing with issues in Kansas City that are frankly not the job of police to address: family problems, poverty, addiction and more," said Smith. "But it is those very issues that create crime problems in our community."

The program is funded by a \$640,000 gift from the Hall Family Foundation, plus \$470,000 from the City of Kansas City.

KCPD plans to post a job description soon. Candidates with a degree in social work can email gina.english@kcpd.org.

[Read KCPD's announcement here.](#)