

SF 983: Community Engagement Response Team (CERT) appropriation

THE MISSION:

The Community Engagement Response Team (CERT) of Rochester, Minnesota, plays a critical role in fostering public safety, crisis intervention, and community resilience. By working directly with individuals facing housing insecurity, substance use challenges, mental health crises, and other vulnerabilities, CERT provides immediate support and long-term solutions that strengthen the well-being of our community.

Through collaboration with local organizations, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and social services, CERT ensures that at-risk individuals receive the resources they need while reducing the strain on emergency response systems. The team's proactive outreach, de-escalation strategies, and culturally competent approach have significantly improved crisis response efficiency and strengthened trust between residents and service providers.

Collaborating organizations include: Rochester Police Department, Rochester Public Schools, Olmsted County Corrections, Olmsted County Fair Board, Three Rivers Community Action, and more.

THE PROBLEM:

CERT has grown and flourished with the support of a talented and committed cohort of volunteers. Funding constraints have placed a limit on this growth and impact, however, because it's difficult to retain volunteer team members when there is no prospect of hiring highly committed volunteers as paid staff. With greater funding, CERT could retain valuable team members and increase its positive impact on public safety in the Rochester area.

THE SOLUTION:

SF 983 is a request for \$250,000 from the state General Fund to support CERT's work improving public safety in the Rochester-area community.

Continued support and investment in CERT will expand its reach, enhance its capabilities, and allow it to serve more individuals in need. By funding this essential program, we can build a safer, healthier, and more connected Rochester community.