



TEXAS LINE OF DUTY DEATH

TASK FORCE





**REMEMBERING THE FALLEN SO WE
NEVER FORGET THE FALLEN**

TO THE TEXAS FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Over the past 21 years, the Texas Line of Duty Death Task Force has provided excellent and compassionate services to first responder agencies, their members, and to the loved ones of those who have been catastrophically injured or killed in the line of duty. Our services are provided at no cost to those that call on us for help.

Even through the darkest moments of the pandemic, the Texas LODD Task Force continued and continues to be present and serve Texas first responders, their agencies, and their families that are experiencing a crisis or a loss. Despite the fact that a majority of our volunteers are also first responders and are working longer hours, and have experienced illness and loss themselves, they continue to provide at-need and ongoing support and response services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Over the last twenty months, the requests for our services such as at-need response to fatalities and injuries, benefits assistance, family support, requests for referrals, and resources, and consulting have increased exponentially. In an average year, we assist with approximately 6-10 new cases and carry over about 12-15 cases from previous years. There are now currently over 200 pending ERS LODD claims due to COVID and cancer and our organization has been involved at some level with close to 75% of those cases. We have worked hard to be able to respond to each need that is presented to us but we are starting to feel the effects of the increased need for assistance.

Because of the increased need for assistance and because all of our fundraising events for 2020 and 2021 have been canceled, our donation levels have decreased dramatically and we have had to do more with less. This perfect storm has inevitably had a detrimental effect on our finances and could, in the longer term, threaten our ability to continue providing assistance and services to Texas first responders and their loved ones.

We are fully funded by generous individuals and entities that support our mission, and more than ever, as we look into 2022, we are hoping for the continued graciousness and generosity of our supporters. We hope that you will be able to join us in funding either one of our specific programs or our organization in general so that we can continue to provide excellent care and support to firefighters, LEOs, and EMS professionals.

Please take a look at the following pages with a short breakdown of our specific programs as well as some of our financial needs. If I can answer any questions for you, please don't hesitate to contact me at 832-647-6770 or by email at wendy@texasloddtaskforce.com. Any support will be highly appreciated by the Task Force and those we serve. We would be proud to continue our partnership with the Texas Fire Chiefs Association.

Wendy C. Norris
President and CEO, Texas LODD Task Force





The Texas LODD Task Force honors fallen and critically injured first responders by providing response, resources, and remembrance programs to and for first responder agencies and families.

WHAT WE DO

The Texas Line of Duty Death Task Force provides excellent, compassionate, and immediate care to first responders (LE, fire, and EMS) who have been injured or have fallen ill in the line of duty (including psychological injuries) and to the families and agencies of those who have died by suicide and those who have died while performing their duties.

The Task Force provides at-need response services, crisis management, communications, and logistics, chaplaincy, peer support, benefits assistance, social services, resources management, and long-term care to the families and agencies in order to ensure that they are fully supported as they face life that has been forever altered.

We believe in giving full respect to the dignity of each individual that we work with, whether it be a family member, a command staff officer, or a rank-and-file first responder. Our wish is to show honor to the fallen (both injured and those who have died) in the work that we do.

PROGRAMS

The Texas LODD Task Force is most known for its at-need response team which is made up of chief-level officers, honor guard members, a logistics and communications team, and chaplains. Whether an agency needs only one support team member or an entire team, the Task Force provides experienced and well-educated individuals to assist an agency with funeral planning and crisis management.

What the Task Force is also known for is its benefits assistance program. State and national benefits can be wrapped up in bureaucracy and red-tape but because of our twenty-year relationship with both the Employee Retirement System and the Department of Justice, we are able to navigate through the process much easier and quicker.

Some of our lesser-known programs but are of equal importance are:

- **Education-** training on a variety of topics at little to no charge to agencies, area schools, conferences, and symposiums
- **Consulting-** assisting agencies with creating guidelines for handling deaths, peer support programs, benefits, and more.
- **Family Support-** programs and resources that we have will put you in touch with others who understand your grief and provide the support and care you need.
- **Agency Support-** equipping agencies with resources and support services that will strengthen their agency and their personnel
- **Survivors of Support-** providing non-judgmental support, resources, and companionship to departments and loved ones who have experienced the death of a first responder due to suicide
- **The Phoenix Project-** peer support for first responders that have been catastrophically injured in the line of duty.



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**LIFELONG
RELATIONSHIPS
BUILT ON
COMPASSION
AND TRUST**
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FINANCIAL NEED

Photo
by Rufus Stewart

RESPONSE TEAM

When our response team is deployed to assist on the ground at an LODD, it costs an average of \$500 to send one response team member. We deploy an average of 4-5 team members depending on the need.

FAMILY CARE

The average time spent taking care of loved ones after a death or catastrophic injury is approximately 5 years. Between providing comfort care baskets, peer support, benefits assistance, resource management, recovery assistance, and long-term support through family network events, and support groups it costs approximately \$3,000 to provide holistic and complete care for one first responder's family.

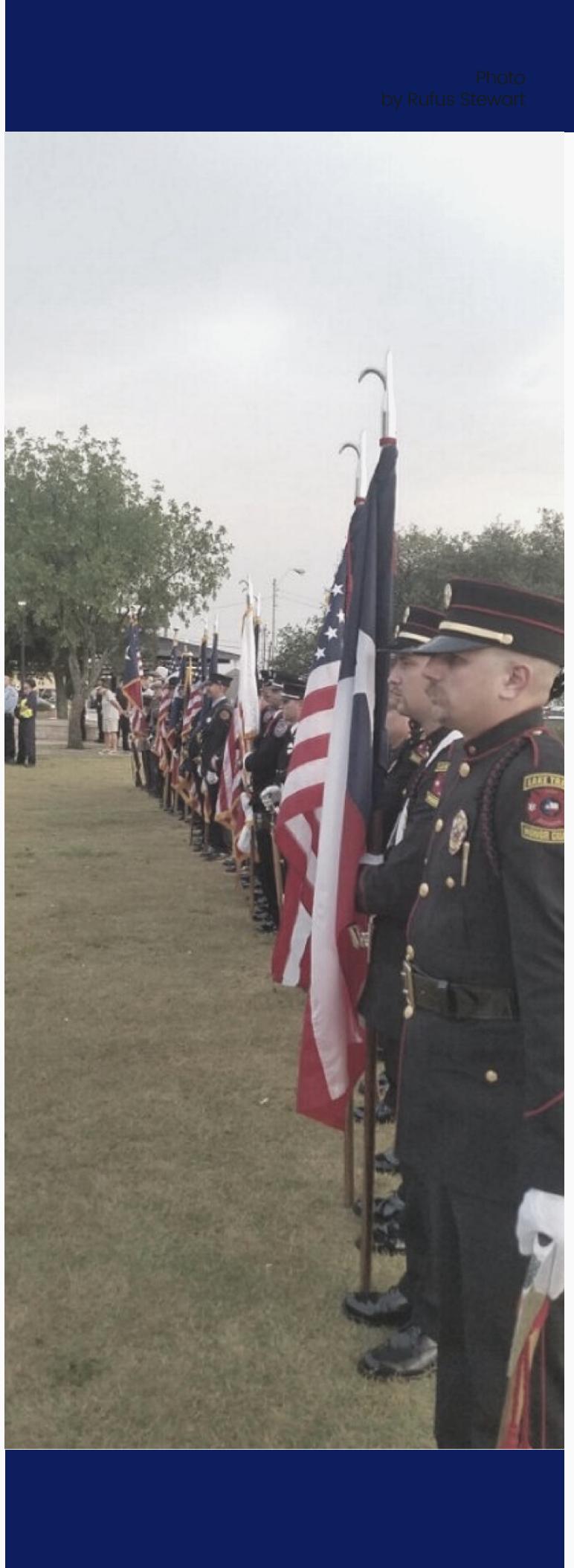
EDUCATION & CONSULTING

Many of our education programs are provided at no cost to the agency or entity that is requesting us to teach. We also offer one-on-one assistance to agencies that are creating guidelines. It costs approximately \$500 gives us the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

LONG-TERM GOALS

Survivor Weekends & Family Camp- Our survivor weekends and family camps brought the loved-ones of the fallen together to receive respite, peer support, and time to step away for their grief, if only for a moment. Due to the enormous financial cost of the events and the downturn of our motorcycle ride that funded the camps, we stopped hosting them. It is our goal to bring back mini-weekend events that specialize in specific losses like suicide, LODD, cancer, and now COVID. The approximate cost for a weekend camp is \$30,000.00

Staff Support & Education- We are an all-volunteer organization and the majority of our volunteers are first responders. Many of our other volunteers are spouses to those first-responders. We are truly a family-supported organization. Death work is hard and our circumstances and culture are rapidly changing. We would like to offer in-person training retreats yearly to give our volunteers time to decompress, fellowship with one another, and to learn about updates in the organization and to learn new skills. We would also like to offer training and meeting opportunities in conjunction with other emergency services training events such as the Fire Chiefs Conference, Municipal school, SFFMA conference, etc.





“ IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US TO REMEMBER THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE LINE OF DUTY AND FOR US TO NEVER FORGET THEIR LOVED ONES, CO-WORKERS, AND AGENCIES THAT THEY HAVE LEFT BEHIND. WE QUICKLY STATE THAT WE WILL NEVER FORGET AND THAT WE WILL 'TAKE IT FROM HERE,' WHEN A FIRST RESPONDER PERISHES. WHAT DOES THAT TRULY MEAN AND HOW CAN WE HELP CARRY ON THEIR LEGACY. HOW CAN WE SHOW SUPPORT TO THE FAMILIES YEARS AFTER THE LOSS HAS OCCURRED? THE TEXAS LODD TASK FORCE BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO KEEP THE MEMORIES OF OUR FALLEN FIRST RESPONDERS BURNING IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS. ”

