



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Advocate of the Year

### Larry Friedland

Valley Community Services Board



The CIT Advocate of the Year Award honors individuals who demonstrate exceptional commitment to CIT principles, collaboration, and compassionate behavioral health response in their communities.

Friedland has spent nearly two decades advancing CIT initiatives in Virginia and beyond. After completing CIT training in 2009, he became one of the program's first instructors in 2010 and has since participated in every local CIT training and Training for Trainers session. As a staff trainer and core team member at Valley Community Services Board,

he has played a key role in curriculum development, mentoring instructors, and strengthening local CIT programs.

Known for his engaging teaching style, Friedland is highly respected for bringing empathy, realism, and practical insight into the classroom. He regularly teaches cultural competence and crisis response scenarios, helping first responders and community

partners improve their understanding of behavioral health crises and compassionate intervention strategies.

Beyond training, Friedland leads the Advanced Emergency Response Team for Valley Community Services Board and has responded to behavioral health crises for more than 20 years. He also serves as a volunteer police chaplain with the Waynesboro Police Department, providing support to victims, families, officers, and community members during traumatic incidents.

Friedland remains a dedicated advocate for behavioral health awareness and CIT programming through conference presentations, public education, outreach efforts, and community engagement initiatives. In 2019, he was recognized as the inaugural "CIT Champion of the Year" by Mental Health America of Augusta and BRCIT.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Behavioral Healthcare Practitioner of the Year

### Addison Duck

CIU Specialist and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Roanoke Police Department



This award recognizes an individual who demonstrates exemplary, ongoing commitment to active participation in CIT community partnerships and works to improve access to behavioral health services within their own system and the broader community mental health system.

In just one year of involvement with the local CIT program, Duck quickly established herself as a key contributor to strengthening crisis response and expanding behavioral health supports within law enforcement operations. She has played a central role in building

partnerships with mental health providers, social service agencies, and advocacy organizations, ensuring individuals in crisis are connected to appropriate treatment, housing resources, and long-term care. Her work has significantly strengthened diversion efforts and reinforced the core CIT goal of reducing unnecessary incarceration.

Duck also provides direct clinical support in high-risk situations, working alongside the Crisis

Intervention Unit and remaining on call for Mental Health Commitments. She offers crisis stabilization, safety planning, and trauma-informed guidance to individuals and families, while also supporting officers during complex field interactions and negotiations. Her presence ensures that behavioral health expertise is integrated into real-time decision-making.

As an instructor, Duck teaches de-escalation, Mental Health First Aid, trauma-informed practices, and broader behavioral health topics. She is also instrumental in developing and sustaining CIT-related training by identifying evidence-based curricula, supporting certification efforts, and tailoring instruction to meet agency-specific needs across officers, dispatchers, and peer support teams.

In addition, she supports grant development and program sustainability efforts, helping secure resources that expand training, peer support initiatives, and long-term CIT program growth. Her work ensures the program remains both current and sustainable.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Michael Woody/Michele Saunders CIT Coordinator of the Year

### Edward C. Dobleman

State Director of the CIT-NJ Center of Excellence Program



The CIT Coordinator of the Year Award honors an individual who demonstrates exceptional leadership in organizing, growing, and sustaining Crisis Intervention Team programs through strong community collaboration and adherence to CIT International best practices. A retired Chief of Police with more than 25 years in law enforcement, Dobleman has spent the last 14 years leading the expansion of CIT throughout New Jersey. Under his leadership, CIT-NJ has grown into a statewide program serving all 21 counties and nearly 10 million residents through collaborative partnerships among law enforcement, mental health providers, advocates, and community organizations.

Dobleman is recognized for his innovative and inclusive approach to crisis response. He developed a specialized CIT training program for 9-1-1 dispatchers that provides continuing education credits and ensures telecommunicators are equipped with de-escalation skills from the very first point of contact

during a crisis. He also established a Veterans Response Team that coordinates services across three separate VA healthcare systems spanning New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, improving access to care for veterans in crisis. Additionally, Dobleman created the K9 Crisis Response Team, an innovative wellness and emotional support initiative he has presented at ten consecutive CIT International Conferences as a model for responder wellness and community resilience. His leadership has also emphasized cultural awareness, implicit bias training, and support for underserved populations throughout New Jersey's CIT programs.

Known for his hands-on leadership style, Dobleman actively participates in county steering committees across the state to help ensure local CIT programs remain sustainable, collaborative, and responsive to community needs. His work continues to strengthen New Jersey's crisis response system while advancing the mission and values of CIT International.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Corrections Officer of the Year

### First Sergeant Amanda Rourke

Prince William–Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center



The CIT Corrections Officer of the Year Award recognizes a corrections professional who demonstrates consistent and exemplary use of CIT knowledge and skills, along with a sustained commitment to advancing CIT principles within correctional environments.

First Sergeant Rourke has become a respected leader within the Adult Detention Center through her dedication to integrating CIT into daily operations, supervision, and training. CIT certified since 2018 and serving as a CIT instructor since 2022, she has played a key role in strengthening correctional crisis response practices and ensuring CIT principles are fully embedded within facility culture.

Known for her authenticity and instructional impact, Rourke regularly volunteers for complex scenario-based role plays during CIT training, creating realistic and emotionally challenging learning experiences that build officer confidence in de-escalation and crisis communication. She has also led the

development of advanced correctional-specific CIT courses, ensuring training reflects real-world detention center challenges and can be directly applied in the field.

In addition to her training contributions, Rourke is recognized for her leadership on shift, where she consistently uses calm communication, behavioral assessment, and early intervention strategies to de-escalate volatile situations. Her approach has contributed to improved safety outcomes, reduced use-of-force incidents, and stronger staff confidence in managing crisis situations. She also helped establish the ADC Wellness and Morale Committee, reinforcing staff wellness as a critical component of crisis prevention and response.

Rourke has also strengthened collaboration between custody staff and behavioral health professionals by working closely with mental health clinicians to improve communication, shared decision-making, and coordinated responses for individuals in crisis.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Telecommunication Specialist of the Year

### Sicily Wright

Specialist in 211 and Crisis Services with Heart of Florida United Way



The CIT Telecommunication Specialist of the Year Award recognizes a crisis line professional who demonstrates exemplary application of CIT principles while providing high-quality support through 988, 211, or other crisis response systems. Recipients are recognized for their commitment to de-escalation, resource connection, collaboration, and compassionate crisis intervention.

Wright quickly distinguished herself as a leader within Heart of Florida United Way's 211 and Crisis Services contact center, which serves 19 counties and more than 7 million residents across Central Florida. Since joining the organization in 2022, she has consistently demonstrated professionalism, empathy, and strong crisis communication skills while supporting individuals experiencing behavioral health crises.

As a 988 Specialist, Team Lead, and certified ASIST and CRS professional, Wright applies active listening, de-escalation techniques, and trauma-informed communication to help stabilize callers in distress.

She is widely recognized for her calm presence and ability to build trust quickly, ensuring callers feel heard, supported, and connected to appropriate care and resources.

Wright also demonstrates strong knowledge of available community resources through her cross-training in both 211 information and referral services and 988 crisis support operations. She routinely goes above and beyond to connect individuals and families with housing, behavioral health services, and other essential supports, while also completing follow-up outreach to ensure continuity of care.

Her compassion and professionalism are frequently recognized by callers and colleagues alike, including direct expressions of gratitude from individuals she has supported during moments of crisis. Her nomination reflects a strong commitment to CIT principles, collaborative crisis response, and improving outcomes for individuals experiencing mental health and emotional distress across Central Florida.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## First Responder of the Year Award

### Officer Michael Sciarrillo

CIU Officer with the Roanoke Police Department



The CIT First Responder of the Year Award recognizes a CIT-trained officer who consistently demonstrates exemplary crisis intervention skills and a strong commitment to advancing collaborative, trauma-informed responses.

Officer Sciarrillo led the development of the Roanoke Police Department Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU), building the program from the ground up. He designed its operational framework, secured leadership support, restored grant funding, and helped hire a Licensed Professional Counselor. Within two years, he established a fully operational unit grounded in CIT principles of de-escalation, diversion, and connection to care.

He has responded to hundreds of mental health crisis calls, consistently using de-escalation, active listening, and stabilization techniques. He routinely remains on call beyond duty hours to ensure individuals in crisis receive timely and compassionate intervention. As a SWAT negotiator, he also applies CIT principles in high-risk incidents, prioritizing

communication, rapport-building, and preservation of life.

Officer Sciarrillo has demonstrated strong ability to serve diverse populations. In one case, he coordinated care for a woman experiencing psychosis and medical vulnerability, working with family, courts, and providers to prevent incarceration and homelessness while securing stabilization and reunification. In another, he led a stalking investigation resulting in charges, victim protection, and comprehensive safety planning.

He is also developing a Peer Support Program focused on officer wellness and vicarious trauma, and has initiated grant funding and training efforts to ensure long-term sustainability of the program. His work reflects a commitment to compassionate, collaborative, and effective crisis response systems. The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program is a partnership of law enforcement, behavioral health professionals, individuals with lived experience, families, and advocates working together to improve crisis response systems.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Law Enforcement Executive of the Year Award

### Chief Louis A. Quiñones, Jr.

Chief of the Orange County Corrections Department



The CIT Law Enforcement Executive Award recognizes a Sheriff, Chief, or law enforcement executive staff member who actively supports CIT programs. Honorees demonstrate commitment to CIT core elements including collaboration, training, and strong partnerships. Recipients may help build new programs or sustain existing initiatives that incorporate refresher training, advanced instruction, and coordinated response models to improve outcomes for individuals experiencing mental health crises. Chief Quiñones has strengthened correctional crisis response in one of Florida's largest jail systems. The Orange County Jail

is the fourth largest in the state, averaging 3,064 daily inmates in 2025, nearly half with mental health diagnoses. Under his leadership, CIT principles have been embedded into operations to improve safety, de-escalation, and continuity of care for individuals in crisis.

He has strengthened partnerships with Aspire Health Partners, a 24-hour mobile crisis response and assessment provider, allowing diversion from incarceration to clinical care when appropriate.

He also works with the Mayor's Citizens Safety Task Force, a coalition of more than 30 leaders focused on violence prevention and crisis intervention. He previously served on the NAMI Central Florida board, supporting stigma reduction and access to care.

Chief Quiñones promotes CIT training across the system, offering 22 CIT sessions in 2026 and regular refresher courses to maintain skills. More than 500 staff have completed CIT training, strengthening system-wide response to behavioral health crises. Mental Health First Aid courses are also provided to enhance early intervention and de-escalation capabilities.

His leadership reflects CIT as essential to correctional practice, strengthening collaboration, training, and compassionate care to improve outcomes for incarcerated individuals experiencing crisis. He continues to be a trusted leader advancing compassionate, effective crisis response across corrections each day.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Fred Frese CIT Person with Lived Experience of the Year Award

### Auvergne Williams

NAMI Mississippi's In Our Own Voice program



This award, named in honor of the late CIT International Board Member Dr. Fred Frese, recognizes individuals who live with mental illness or co-occurring substance use disorders and who actively advance CIT programs through training participation, advocacy, education, and sustained community engagement. Honorees demonstrate how lived experience strengthens crisis response systems and promotes hope, recovery, and collaboration. Auvergne Williams has demonstrated more than five years of consistent involvement in CIT programs across Mississippi. As a trained In Our Own Voice

presenter, he regularly participates in CIT training classes statewide, sharing his personal journey of living with mental illness and recovery. Through honest and courageous storytelling, he helps officers and first responders better understand the human experience behind mental health crises, reinforcing empathy, dignity, and de-escalation in real-world encounters.

His willingness to travel and repeatedly present in diverse communities ensures that officers throughout

Mississippi have direct access to lived-experience perspectives. This consistent engagement helps strengthen CIT training fidelity while reducing stigma and improving trust between law enforcement and the behavioral health community. His presentations frequently inspire both officers and peers with lived experience to become more involved in CIT efforts.

A retired attorney, Williams brings a powerful perspective that recovery is possible and that mental illness does not define a person's future. His message has become a cornerstone in CIT classrooms, helping professionals see individuals in crisis as whole people rather than diagnoses or incidents.

*"Auvergne Williams exemplifies the spirit of CIT through courage, authenticity, and service."* CIT International noted.

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model is a community partnership of law enforcement, mental health professionals, individuals with lived experience, families, and advocates working together to improve crisis response systems.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Telecommunication Specialist of the Year Award

### Kimberly Matos

911 Training Supervisor for the Linden Police Department



With 25 years of dispatch experience, Matos has become a respected leader in crisis communications and CIT program development throughout New Jersey. She played a key role in creating CIT New Jersey's specialized telecommunicator curriculum, a dispatcher-focused training program now utilized statewide to strengthen crisis intervention and de-escalation practices.

At the Linden Police Department, Matos trains dispatchers to support the department's co-responder model and ARRIVE Program, helping ensure behavioral health calls are handled with informed, compassionate, and timely responses. She is widely recognized for her calm demeanor, empathetic communication style, and ability to de-escalate high-pressure situations before officers arrive on scene, enhancing both officer safety and community outcomes.

Matos also maintains strong partnerships with behavioral health organizations, including NAMI Union County, and regularly connects callers and officers with community resources and support services.

Beyond her professional responsibilities, Matos has remained actively involved in community outreach and mental health awareness initiatives. Since 2011, she has participated in the Linden CIT Easter Egg Hunt for children with developmental disabilities and has supported the annual Linden CIT BBQ since 2012, helping foster positive relationships among families, providers, and first responders. She also serves on the City of Linden Stigma Free Task Force and CIT New Jersey's Steering Committee.

Her nomination reflects a career dedicated to compassionate service, crisis intervention leadership, and strengthening community-centered responses to behavioral health crises.



# CITI 2026 Award Recipients

## Response Team of the Year Award

### Veterans Mobile Evaluation Team (VMET)

VA Central Ohio Healthcare System



The nominated VMET members include Dr. Heather Robinson, Psychologist; Alexandria Woodruff, Investigator; Benjamin Stark, Social Worker; and Jason Zwettler, Investigator. The team operates under the VA Central Ohio Healthcare System in Columbus, Ohio, with Dr. Heather Robinson serving as the lead team contact.

The CIT Response Team of the Year Award recognizes multidisciplinary teams that demonstrate sustained excellence in applying CIT principles, including de-escalation, resource linkage, crisis intervention, and compassionate engagement with individuals experiencing mental health crises.

The Veterans Mobile Evaluation Team is a co-responder CIT model that pairs VA Police Officers with licensed behavioral health clinicians to respond to veterans experiencing psychiatric emergencies. The team provides on-scene assessment, trauma-informed de-escalation, suicide risk evaluation, and stabilization services for individuals facing crises involving PTSD, substance use disorders, suicidal

ideation, and co-occurring medical or behavioral health conditions.

Beyond immediate response, VMET plays a central role in continuity of care. The team conducts proactive follow-up outreach with veterans and families, coordinates with VA and community providers, and supports long-term safety planning. This extended engagement helps reduce repeat crises and strengthens recovery pathways.

VMET members also serve as instructors in the Veterans in Crisis Training Program, providing specialized education to law enforcement, first responders, and community partners. Their instruction focuses on veteran culture, military service-related trauma, suicide prevention, and effective co-response strategies, strengthening CIT capacity across the region.

The team further contributes through advisory participation, case collaboration, and post-incident reviews with community partners. The Veterans Mobile Evaluation Team exemplifies the CIT mission of safety, dignity, and community-based crisis care.