

## MODIFIED ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

**Dear Task Force Focus Group Participants** - To ensure an efficient and productive use of our time together, please review and follow the guidelines (below) for today's Alternative Response Task Force (ARTF) focus group session.

*Thank you for your commitment to exploring alternative responses to public safety in Urbana!*

**Goal:** A productive session focused on understanding your perspectives and gathering your insight, to support LEAP in developing options for Urbana's future alternative response model to public safety.

### Structure and Group Leadership:

- **LEAP** consultants, supported by the City Clerk, are responsible for conducting the **ARTF** focus group sessions efficiently.
- Participants are asked to observe the **civility, courtesy, and decorum** of Robert's Rules, summarized below.

### Guidelines for Participation:

- **Keep remarks brief** when addressing **LEAP's** questions.
- Only **one person should speak** at a time, as directed by the **LEAP** consultants.
- **Address the LEAP consultants** or the focus group as a whole - **not other participants directly**.
- **Do not engage** audience members or members of the public.
- Keep comments **relevant to the question** at hand and confined to the issue's merits.

### Prohibited Conduct:

- **Personal insults** are prohibited. **Do not disparage** other people or organizations.
- Do not speculate on **others' motives, states of mind, or unarticulated beliefs**.

### Focus and Logistics:

- **Defer private or sidebar conversations** to avoid muddling the recording: the "Owl" microphone is extremely sensitive.
- Phones should be set to **silent or put away**.
- **LEAP** consultants will guide the discussion to keep it **focused and balanced**, so not every participant will need to speak on every topic.
- To make sure a variety of perspectives are heard, **LEAP** may occasionally redirect or move the conversation forward so that **less common viewpoints can be shared**.
- Subsequent touchpoints (one-on-one, small group, and community engagement events) will be set up by **LEAP**.



**CITY OF URBANA  
ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE TASK FORCE  
(ARTF) FOCUS GROUP SESSION**

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**DATE:** Thursday, December 11, 2025

**TIME:** 3:30 PM

**PLACE:** Independent Media Center (IMC) 202 South Broadway Avenue, Urbana, IL, 61801

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**AGENDA**

- A. Call to Order and Opening Remarks**
- B. Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) Presentation and Stakeholder-only Discussion**
- C. Alternative Response Task Force (ARTF) Stakeholder-only Questions and Answers**
- D. Announcements**
  - 1. Next ARTF Focus Group Session – January 29, 2026**
- E. Adjournment**

This Focus Group Session will be recorded. Details on how to watch are found on the UPTV webpage located at <https://www.urbanail.gov/executive-department/page/urbana-public-television>. Meeting materials can be found <https://www.urbanail.gov/meetings>

## **FAQs: ARTF Stakeholder Focus Group Session #2 (December 11, 2025)**

### **What is the Alternative Response Task Force (ARTF)?**

The Alternative Response Task Force (ARTF) has two meanings. It is the name of a stakeholder group of representatives from community organizations and key City staff whose experiences and perspectives will inform Urbana's approach to an Alternative Response Model to traditional public safety. More broadly, it also serves as the name of Urbana's overall Alternative Response initiative, which also includes data analysis, one-on-one conversations, and community engagement. The City of Urbana has selected the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) as the consulting partner to lead the overall ARTF initiative as well as various community engagement touchpoints, including the ARTF Focus Group Sessions. Learn more about the ARTF on the City of Urbana website:

<https://www.urbanail.gov/executive-department/page/alternative-response-task-force>

### **What is an ARTF "Focus Group Session"?**

An ARTF focus group session (or just "session") is an opportunity for ARTF stakeholders to provide feedback, perspectives, and ideas to LEAP. Their insights help LEAP develop a practical and community-informed alternative response model. Participation by community organizations is voluntary. The ARTF does not make formal recommendations or decisions for the City, nor does it have budgetary authority

### **When and Where are the ARTF Sessions Held?**

The first three ARTF sessions will be held on **Thursdays: November 6, December 11, and January 29 from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.** at the **Independent Media Center (IMC)**. The IMC is located at 202 South Broadway Avenue in Urbana, in the Post Office building. Check the IMC's FAQ page for more information on parking and bus routes: <https://www.ucimc.org/faq>. LEAP anticipates about eight ARTF sessions in total. Additional dates will be announced shortly.

### **What is the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)?**

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2002. It is made up of social scientists, community advocates, and current and former judges and law enforcement officials committed to criminal justice reforms that make communities safer and more just. LEAP advises on a range of topics including police-community relations, incarceration, and alternative response models. Additional information can be found at their website: <https://lawenforcementactionpartnership.org/>

### **How Will Transparency and Public Access be Ensured?**

The City is committed to following procedures that promote transparency and public engagement in alignment with the Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA). Agendas will be published in advance ("noticed") as Community Civic Events. Summaries of sessions, similar to minutes, will be prepared and published. Feedback received via email or other channels will be included in session records, although time constraints prevent reading into the record. Sessions will follow procedural rules to maintain decorum and productive discussion, guided by the City Clerk and Robert's Rules of Order.

## **FAQs: ARTF Stakeholder Focus Group Session #2 (December 11, 2025)**

### **How Can the Public Participate?**

Sessions are open for public attendance. Members of the public may record sessions as long as it does not interfere with others' ability to see or hear the discussion. Check online for an agenda from any recent City Council Regular Meeting or Committee of the Whole for important information on how to share email, verbal, and written input. For more information on public input, please contact the City Clerk's Office at least 48 hours in advance by: (1) phone: 217-384-2366; (2) email: [CityClerk@urbanail.gov](mailto:CityClerk@urbanail.gov); or (3) in-person during normal business hours. The IMC is accessible. For more information on accessibility, please review the IMC's website page (<https://www.ucimc.org/accessibility>) or contact the IMC at [accessibility@ucimc.org](mailto:accessibility@ucimc.org)

### **Will There be a Public Comment Period before the ARTF Sessions?**

Due to time and facility constraints, **verbal public comment on the ARTF or Alternative Response should be shared at any City Council Regular Meeting or Committee of the Whole**, usually on Monday evenings in City Hall Council Chambers. Please see **How Can the Public Participate?** for important information on how to share email, verbal, and written input. The discussion format is focused on ensuring LEAP can collect input from the ARTF stakeholders, so we will not be able to entertain audience participation. LEAP will set up subsequent touchpoints, including one-on-one and small group meetings as well as larger community engagement events.

### **Are the ARTF Sessions Governed by the Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA)?**

The City is committed to following procedures that align with the spirit of the OMA, promoting transparency and public engagement. However, the ARTF sessions are not strictly governed by OMA, because they are not a public body, board, or commission, nor do they have budget authority, direct advisory capacity, or formal decision-making power. Practically speaking, there are also time and facility constraints that require flexibility. No more than two City Council members may participate in any session although they may attend as part of the audience.

### **Will Sessions be Recorded?**

Yes. Sessions will be audio and visually recorded, with a best effort to livestream, and recordings will be made available online when possible.

### **Where Can I Learn More?**

For more details on the ARTF initiative, including **key deliverables**, the **timeline**, other **community engagement touchpoints**, and **other cities LEAP has advised**, please review the FAQs for the October 6 Council presentation: <https://www.urbanail.gov/media/6841>.

*Please join Urbana's Journey to an Alternative Response to Public Safety  
on December 11 – and beyond. Thank you!*

# Urbana Alternative Response Task Force Meeting - November 6, 2025

The Alternative Response Task Force (ARTF) met in their first session on November 6, 2025 at the Independent Media Center. Mayor DeShawn Williams welcomed the task force and emphasizing the importance of stakeholder input in shaping the alternative response model. The Stakeholders were asked to introduce themselves and share what they are most excited for from this process.

Stakeholders introduced themselves:

- Lisa Wilson (Refugee Center): excited about cultural and linguistic access.
- Matthew Fletcher (Courage Connection): wants to give community members what they ask for to service a diverse community.
- Steven Doggett (Urbana Fire): wants to understand the variety of alternative responses.
- Larry Boone (Urbana Police): excited to see what the data shows about citizens' needs.
- Maryalice Wu (City Council): excited about everyone's ideas to improve community response.
- Jaya Kolisetty (RACES): excited about crafting options for sexual and domestic violence survivors.
- Darcy Sandefur (Urbana City Clerk): looking forward to the impact on public safety.
- Daut'e Martin (LEAP): excited to learn from Urbana and apply it to other cities.
- Tom Thompson (LEAP): excited to develop something unique to serve Urbana citizens.
- Charles Davidson (First Followers Reentry Program): hopes it will save money.
- Minnie Pearson (NAACP): there to learn and help, paying close attention to the data.
- Olivia Jovine (Community Development Services): excited to learn and hear how community voices can shape public policy.
- Jessica Vela (OSF Heart of Mary Emergency Department): wants to see how to service and support patients and share available resources.
- Melissa Pappas (Rosecrance Behavioral Health): excited to dive into the data to create a program that keeps staff and the community safe.

- Betsy Smith (METACAD): curious to find out how all the folks fit together for the right response at the right time.
- Danielle Chynoweth (Cunningham Township Supervisors Office): supports unhoused residents wants to ensure residents are supported and connected to appropriate services not just pushed aside.
- Lynn Canfield (Mental Health Board): wants to brag about what's working in the community.
- Stephanie Stewart-Cockrell (The Well Experience): supports the holistic development and growth of families.

Amos Irwin presented data from October 2024 to September 2025, including every call for service handled by Urbana Police. The top call types included remove subject, domestic, check welfare, police alarm, and meet complainant. Call narratives can provide additional context. The narratives are notes taken by the call taker while on the call.

Call types were classified into eight categories: in progress and serious crime (21%), report taking calls, rapid assist (14%), alarms, towing and roadway assistance, other, non-violent conflict (30%), behavioral health needs, and suspicious activity.

There was a question of whether there is one person who could be an expert in the variety of calls. The consultants responded that every different type of call would benefit from a different set of skills.

Domestic violence calls were assigned to "in progress and serious crime" for the purposes of the chart shared in the presentation slides.

Amos explained the different program types utilized in other cities. The co-responder program pairs an officer and a mental health clinician to handle mental health-related calls. Report-taking calls can often be handled without sending an officer to the scene. False alarm reduction programs can save police bandwidth.

Next steps for data analysis include reviewing a larger random sample of call narratives and comparing them to situations handled by community responder programs in other cities.

The presentation included case studies of alternative response programs in other cities:

- **Dayton Mediation Response Unit (MRU):** Started in 2022. Responders are trained civilians responding to calls related to conflict and service connection. Dispatched by 911.

- **Evanston CARES Program:** Started in July of last year. Trained responders handle calls related to mental health, service connection, and conflict resolution. Dispatched by 911.
- **Durham HEART:** Sends out three different teams depending on the need: co-response, crisis intervention, and community responder. Responds to mental health, conflict resolution, service connection, substance use, and suspicious person calls. Dispatched by 911.

A question was asked regarding who had the real decision-making power, and the response was that it is left up to the city council and mayor. A question was asked regarding how the impacted communities were able to be part of the conversation, and it was responded that as long as the stakeholders are willing and able and have the connections and are willing to connect LEAP to the people, they will talk to them in order to shape the recommendations to be people centered.

A question was asked regarding if there has been a reduction of racial disparities in stops, arrests, use of force, or citations in other cities due to these programs. The response was that the field is fairly new and the team is still working on gathering the data to analyze this.

LEAP provided a few discussion questions for the stakeholders: What concerns do you have about community responder programs?

- Staff safety
- Liability questions
- Logistical issues with call screening
- The risk of other authorities imposing a model without any concern for the work that's already been done
- If the teams are going out to support people, we need to make sure we have the resources to provoke real change.

Next steps include one-on-one meetings with the LEAP consultants, looking at existing community resources, and doing a much deeper dive into the data. The next meeting will be December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 3:30 PM. Full presentation slides can be found [here](#). The full meeting can be watched [here](#).