

DATE: Wednesday, June 25, 2025
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order and Roll Call
- B. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
- C. Additions to the Agenda
- D. Presentation and Public Input
 - 1. General Presentation on Alternative Response Models - CM's Wilken and Evans
- E. Reports of Officers
 - 1. Human Resources Staffing – HRF
- F. Council Input and Communications
- G. Reports of Standing Committees
- H. Committee of the Whole (*Council Member Maryalice Wu, Ward 1*)
 - 1. Consent Agenda
 - a. **Resolution No. 2025-06-039R:** A Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – Exec
 - b. **Resolution No. 2025-06-040R:** A Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for Head Start – Exec
 - 2. Regular Agenda
 - a. **Ordinance No. 2025-06-019:** An Ordinance Approving the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget – HRF
 - b. **Ordinance No. 2025-06-020:** An Ordinance Revising the Annual Budget Ordinance (Budget Amendment #10 – Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Estimates) – HRF
 - c. **Ordinance No. 2025-06-021:** An Ordinance Amending City Code Chapter 22 (Taxation) by Adding Article X (Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax and Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax) – HRF

All City meetings are broadcast on Urbana Public Television and live-streamed on the web. Details on how to watch are found on the UPTV webpage located at <https://www.urbanail.gov/executive-department/page/urbana-public-television>.

I. Reports of Special Committees

J. New Business

K. Mayoral Appointments

1. Staff Appointment

Interim Public Works Director

– Vincent (Vince) Gustafson (term ending June 30, 2026 or until position filled, whichever is sooner)

2. Staff Board Appointment

Police Pension Fund Board - Kristine Francisco (term ending June 30, 2027)

3. Staff Board Reappointments

Firefighters' Pension Fund Board of Trustees

- Elizabeth Hannan (term ending June 30, 2028)

- Kristine Francisco (term ending June 30, 2028)

4. Board and Commission Reappointments

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory
Commission**

- Bruce Michelson - term ending June 30, 2028

- Susan Jones - term ending June 30, 2028

Civil Service Commission - Bill Gray – term ending June 30, 2028

Community Development Commission - Chris Diana – term ending June 30, 2028

Design Review Board - Travis Schiess – term ending June 30, 2028

Historic Preservation Commission

- Dennis Roberts – term ending June 30, 2028

- Andrew Weiss– term ending June 30, 2028

Sustainability Advisory Commission - Jessica Lehmkuhl – term ending June 30, 2028

**The Urbana Free Library Board of
Trustees**

- Beth Shied– term ending June 30, 2028

- Julia Pollack– term ending June 30, 2028

- Shirese Hursey– term ending June 30, 2028

Urbana Arts & Culture Commission - Barbara Hedlund– term ending June 30, 2028

Zoning Board of Appeals

- Harvey Welch– term ending June 30, 2030

- Nancy Uchtmann – term ending June 30, 2030

L. Adjournment

PUBLIC INPUT

The City of Urbana welcomes Public Input during open meetings of the City Council, the City Council's Committee of the Whole, City Boards and Commissions, and other City-sponsored meetings. Our goal is to foster respect for the meeting process, and respect for all people participating as members of the public body, city staff, and the general public. The City is required to conduct all business during public meetings. The presiding officer is responsible for conducting those meetings in an orderly and efficient manner. Public Input will be taken in the following ways:

Email Input

Public comments must be received prior to the closing of the meeting record (at the time of adjournment unless otherwise noted) at the following: citycouncil@urbanail.gov. The subject line of the email must include the words "PUBLIC INPUT" and the meeting date. Your email will be sent to all City Council members, the Mayor, City Administrator, and City Clerk. Emailed public comments labeled as such will be incorporated into the public meeting record, with personal identifying information redacted. Copies of emails will be posted after the meeting minutes have been approved.

Written Input

Any member of the public may submit their comments addressed to the members of the public body in writing. If a person wishes their written comments to be included in the record of Public Input for the meeting, the writing should so state. Written comments must be received prior to the closing of the meeting record (at the time of adjournment unless otherwise noted).

Verbal Input

Protocol for Public Input is one of respect for the process of addressing the business of the City. Obscene or profane language, or other conduct that threatens to impede the orderly progress of the business conducted at the meeting is unacceptable.

Public comment shall be limited to no more than five (5) minutes per person. The Public Input portion of the meeting shall total no more than two (2) hours, unless otherwise shortened or extended by majority vote of the public body members present. The presiding officer or the city clerk or their designee, shall monitor each speaker's use of time and shall notify the speaker when the allotted time has expired. A person may participate and provide Public Input once during a meeting and may not cede time to another person, or split their time if Public Input is held at two (2) or more different times during a meeting. The presiding officer may give priority to those persons who indicate they wish to speak on an agenda item upon which a vote will be taken.

The presiding officer or public body members shall not enter into a dialogue with citizens. Questions from the public body members shall be for clarification purposes only. Public Input shall not be used as a time for problem solving or reacting to comments made but, rather, for hearing citizens for informational purposes only.

In order to maintain the efficient and orderly conduct and progress of the public meeting, the presiding officer of the meeting shall have the authority to raise a point of order and provide a verbal warning to a speaker who engages in the conduct or behavior proscribed under "Verbal Input". Any member of the public body participating in the meeting may also raise a point of order with the presiding officer and request that they provide a verbal warning to a speaker. If the speaker refuses to cease such conduct or

behavior after being warned by the presiding officer, the presiding officer shall have the authority to mute the speaker's microphone and/or video presence at the meeting. The presiding officer will inform the speaker that they may send the remainder of their remarks via e-mail to the public body for inclusion in the meeting record.

Accommodation

If an accommodation is needed to participate in a City meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at least 48 hours in advance so that special arrangements can be made using one of the following methods:

- Phone: 217.384.2366
- Email: CityClerk@urbanil.gov



LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

Item D1.

Report for the City of Evanston

2023

Letter From Our Executive Director

As the Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP), I am excited to present this report, which I feel holds significant importance in the context of our current public safety landscape. As an organization of law enforcement officials, LEAP monitors the evolving dynamics surrounding public safety response and the influences that shape the perspectives of many across the nation.

The tragic and unjust death of George Floyd, along with far too many others, has brought into sharp focus the need to reevaluate the approaches cities employ in responding to calls about public safety concerns. In the years following the mass awakening triggered by Floyd's death, cities across the United States have earnestly embraced new paradigms in their public safety response strategies.

As law enforcement officials, we recognize that dispatching the appropriate responder to calls for service not only enhances the delivery of public services but also fosters a safer environment for all parties involved.

We are delighted to have joined forces with the city of Evanston in our shared pursuit of innovative ways to enhance public safety response. This report represents our year-long collaborative effort to assist Evanston in improving its public safety response through the integration of community responders. We believe that the contents of this report will serve as a crucial stepping stone allowing Evanston to create an effective, responsible, and pioneering community responder program.

Thank you for your attention to this vital matter. We look forward to the transformative potential this partnership holds for Evanston's public safety and welfare.

Respectfully,

Lieutenant Diane Goldstein (Ret.)
Executive Director

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Law Enforcement Partnership would like to extend our sincere appreciation and acknowledgement to the City of Evanston, including Mayor Daniel Biss, Evanston City Council, Chief Schenita Stewart and the Evanston Police Department, Fire Chief Paul Polep, Director Ike Ogbo, Director Audrey Thompson, and the Reimagining Public Safety Committee. Your unwavering commitment and dedication to serving and protecting the people of Evanston is truly commendable.

We thank you for your leadership and tireless efforts in creating a more equitable city. Your expertise and dedication to providing essential services, ensuring public health and safety, and enhancing the quality of life in the community are deeply appreciated.

Your collective efforts contribute to the well-being of the city of Evanston, and we are grateful for your time, hard work, professionalism, and commitment to LEAP's research and recommendation process. Again, thank you for your continued efforts in making Evanston a safer, more inclusive, and thriving community for all its residents.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the many individuals and groups in Evanston who contributed feedback, questions, and other input during the course of our research.

Best Regards,

Major Mike Hilliard (Ret.)
Lionel King, Ph.D.
Amos Irwin
Daut'e Martin

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cities across the country, including Evanston, Illinois, are actively attempting to reimagine public safety and create a more equitable, just, and effective system that confronts the issues of racial justice, community trust, and safer communities. The current landscape of public safety response and community relations in the United States necessitates a new approach that prioritizes proactive community engagement, de-escalation, and the establishment of trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

In response to widespread public outrage over the deaths of numerous Americans during encounters with law enforcement, particularly the death of George Floyd, cities throughout the country have chosen to tackle the issue of racial justice. Cities from Dayton to Albuquerque, Baltimore, and Durham have turned these conversations into action by establishing community responder teams, which consist of unarmed civilians who are trained to handle low-risk 9-1-1 calls. Through thorough training and careful call screening, community responders nationwide (as of the time of this writing) have successfully managed hundreds of thousands of calls without any reported casualties or injuries.

The city of Evanston established the Reimagining Public Safety Committee to explore innovative methods to enhance public safety and racial justice, including new alternative response systems. The Committee sought the expertise of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) to provide research and make recommendations on how Evanston could most effectively expand civilian response to 9-1-1 calls.

LEAP developed detailed, locally tailored recommendations by analyzing Evanston's 9-1-1 call data, researching existing community responder programs, meeting with Evanston police, dispatch, and other system stakeholders to understand current infrastructure, and engaging community members to understand local priorities.

We recommend that Evanston establish a community responder program staffed by teams of two specially trained community responders. When a member of the public calls 9-1-1 or a non-emergency line about a low-risk situation, the call-taker would screen the call for potential disqualifiers

that may indicate a need for police or medical response. If the call-taker finds no disqualifiers, the dispatcher would radio the community responder team to respond.

Based on our data analysis, we have determined that community responders have the potential to handle over 9,800 calls each year, or approximately 36% of all calls for service currently handled by Evanston police. Police currently spend about 5,000 hours per year handling these calls. In addition, community responders can handle officer referrals and conduct proactive engagement within the community.

Based on the volume of eligible calls, we recommend that Evanston hire six teams of two community responders, so that the city could provide in-person responses 24/7 to most eligible situations.

LEAP recommends housing the program within the Parks and Recreation Department, which has already developed relevant capacity through initiatives such as Evanston Outreach. Evanston Outreach trains credible messengers to reach out to at-risk and gang-involved youth and young adults referred and connect them to essential services.

We also recommend that the City of Evanston hire a program director, support staff, and these two-person response teams as city employees. In hiring responders, rather than requiring advanced degrees, the city should consider racial and ethnic diversity, lived experience with key issues, ties to the community they will serve, and skills in de-escalating crises and resolving conflict.

LEAP recommends that Evanston actively seek multiple sources of funding to support its program. We recommend that the city allocate general funds towards the program, demonstrating a commitment to its long-term success. By diversifying its funding sources, Evanston can ensure the sustainability and expansion of the program to better serve the community.

In sum, we conclude that community responders would be critical assets for the City of Evanston in conserving police resources, effectively de-escalating crisis and conflict, resolving long-standing issues through referral to other services, addressing root causes to prevent future crime, and preventing negative or even dangerous interactions between officers and community members.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. Introduction

Most cities across the country rely on armed police officers to respond to the majority of 9-1-1 calls, even though most of these calls are not related to specific crimes. Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) data indicates that in 2021, the Evanston Police Department (EPD) received about 27,000 citizen-initiated calls for service. That year, EPD made 391 arrests. EPD resolved the vast majority of calls without making an arrest or taking a report.

Recent studies have shown that in many other cities, a significant portion of 9-1-1 calls do not necessitate police intervention. In 2022, the Vera Institute of Justice analyzed 15.6 million 9-1-1 calls from nine cities, including New Orleans, Baltimore, Detroit, and Seattle. [Their report](#) revealed that 62% of these calls involved "noncriminal" situations. These calls did not require any arrests or other action that could only be completed by sworn police officers.

Similarly, a 2020 [report](#) released by the Center for American Progress (CAP) and LEAP examined data from eight cities, including Hartford, Minneapolis, and Tucson. Through a detailed analysis of individual call types, CAP and LEAP found that 38 to 72% of 9-1-1 police calls for service did not necessitate an armed police response.

Both reports emphasized that trained, unarmed responders could effectively handle a significant portion of these 9-1-1 calls for service. The [Albany Law School Government Law Center \(GLC\)](#) examined programs in Austin (EMCOT), Eugene (CAHOOTS), Olympia (CRU), and Edmonton (REACH). GLC reported that CAHOOTS responded to roughly 20% of all calls dispatched and in the first two months of operation, the CRU team responded to 700 calls. In addition to these, programs benefit public safety response in other ways. For example, the peer-reviewed journal [Science Advances](#) examined the Denver STAR program and found "robust evidence that the program reduced reports of targeted, less serious crimes (e.g., trespassing, public disorder, and resisting arrest) by 34% and had no detectable effect on more

serious crimes.” In addition, the Center for Policing Equity released a [report](#) that stated “individual crisis teams have been associated with fewer hospital admissions and reduced incarceration of people experiencing mental health emergencies.”

First, by redirecting the focus of officers from non-essential tasks, police can allocate more attention to combating serious crimes. In February 2023, the union representing the officers of the Los Angeles Police Department released [a list of 28 call types](#) that they want removed from the police’s plate. Their department, like most others across the country, is understaffed and struggling to fill open positions. The union recognized that these low-level calls require significant police time and resources that compound the strain on the department, exacerbating its understaffing challenges. This strain hampers the department's efforts to effectively address serious crimes.

The union stressed that these calls “may be better suited for unarmed service providers.” The calls often involve underlying issues that officers are not specially trained or equipped to address. Unarmed responders, by contrast, can be extensively trained in identifying root causes and referring individuals to services that can prevent issues from reoccurring.

“This would be an opportunity for Evanston to again lead the way in taking new approaches to resolving long standing problems.”

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSE

In addition to needlessly depleting police resources, a small number of these calls result in injury, death, or unnecessary arrest. These incidents have prompted cities nationwide to reevaluate policing practices and analyze the influence of implicit bias and structural and institutional racism in law enforcement's interactions with community members.

In 2020, the Mayor of Evanston created the [Reimagining Public Safety Committee](#) to actively seek ways to make public safety responses more equitable and efficient. One of the options that the committee considered was the creation of a community responder program.

Community responder programs consist of teams of two well-trained, unarmed civilians who the city dispatches as first responders to handle low-risk 9-1-1 calls. These responders often bring lived experience and skill in de-escalation, conflict resolution, and behavioral health issues. Community responder teams undergo

specialized training, enabling them to de-escalate crises and conflicts in the short term and connect individuals to services that prevent more serious issues in the long term. CAHOOTS, the nation's first community responder program, has been operating in Eugene, Oregon since 1989. Supportive police chiefs subsequently founded the CRU program in Olympia, Washington and the STAR program in Denver, Colorado. Since 2020, over two dozen other cities have launched programs, from Durham, North Carolina and Chicago, Illinois to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

To make specific recommendations on a community responder program that would best fit Evanston, the city of Evanston contracted with the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP). LEAP is an organization of law enforcement officials that seeks to reform public safety response. We understand the demands of policing and the ways community responders can provide a more appropriate response to many low-risk 9-1-1 calls. LEAP designed the Dayton, Ohio Mediation Response Unit program, which launched in May 2022 and has since been lauded by city and community leaders, national organizations, and Dayton police alike. LEAP also designed the Amherst CRESS program, which began responding to direct-line calls in August 2022. LEAP has since assisted Milwaukee, Brooklyn Center, Atlanta, and other cities.

1a. Research Methodology

To guide our recommendations on expanded response in Evanston, LEAP utilized a four-pronged mixed methodology approach:

1. LEAP analyzed police calls for service data from the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system from calendar year 2021, which was provided by the Evanston Police Department (EPD). In addition to analyzing the temporal and geospatial occurrence of calls, we assessed which calls could be handled by unarmed responders by examining a sample of over 1,000 call narratives, which are the actual notes taken by the 9-1-1 call-taker while on the phone with the caller (see [Figure 6](#) for sample narratives). We determined a call to be ineligible for community responders if we found a "disqualifier": mention of a weapon, threat of violence, medical emergency, or need to file a police report. We also determined the primary skill type required to resolve each call, such as conflict resolution, mental health, substance use, or medical expertise.
2. LEAP met with system stakeholders, including representatives from the Evanston Police Department and emergency communications center, fire department, city agencies, and several civic organizations. We gathered information from them about existing programs, services, and infrastructure

that could be relevant to expanded response. And we solicited their input on goals, priorities, and concerns related to expanded 9-1-1 response.

3. LEAP also worked with Evanston’s Reimagining Public Safety Administrator, Rachel Williams, to seek feedback from the citizens of Evanston regarding a potential community responder program. Administrator Williams participated in ward meetings held in Wards 2, 4, 5, 8, and 9, and she organized and presented the issue at a town hall meeting. To further engage the community, LEAP created a survey, which was completed by nearly 600 Evanston residents. We provide the full survey results in [Appendix 2](#).
4. LEAP examined the variation in existing community responder models across the U.S., analyzing aspects such as call types, dispatch method, responder types, responder training, responder agency, and budget. LEAP examined programs that shared key features with Evanston, including cities with similar demographics to Evanston, such as Dayton, Ohio, and Durham, North Carolina.

We integrated the results of the call analysis, system stakeholder interviews, community input, and existing model research to produce the following recommendations specifically tailored to the city of Evanston.

Ib. Calls For Service Overview

LEAP began by preparing a high-level overview of calls for service to share with system stakeholders and community members, in order to enable them to provide informed feedback.

First, we provided a summary of all citizen-initiated calls for service currently routed to police by grouping them into a few basic categories. As in most cities, Evanston’s 9-1-1 call-takers sort each police call for service into one of about 100 “call types,” from Traffic Accident to Suspicious Person. The call type names can be deceiving – for example, in Atlanta most of the “Fight in Progress” calls do not involve a physical altercation. As a result, we reviewed a sample of call narratives for each call type in order to sort each call type into the most appropriate category.

We categorized 28% of citizen-initiated police calls for service in Evanston as Minor Disputes, which included call types such as Nuisance Complaint, Disturbance, and Disorderly Conduct. We classified another quarter of calls as “Report-Taking Calls,” which included call types such as Traffic Accident and Theft because they primarily involve filing reports for insurance or other documentation purposes. We labeled 16%

of calls simply as Police, since they required a sworn officer response for safety or investigation. Calls associated with Behavioral Health Needs constituted another 13%, and the Suspicious, Alarm, and Rapid Assistance¹ categories made up the remaining 18%. [Figure 1](#) provides an overview of the total number of citizen-initiated calls in each category and their respective percentages, while [Appendix 1](#) shows which of the 100 call types we placed in each category.

Since we placed all calls in a given type in one single category, this overview should be regarded as approximate, because several call types include multiple categories of calls. In the Call Types section, we present a deeper analysis of the call categories potentially eligible for community responders – Minor Disputes, Behavioral Health Needs, and Suspicious – which constitute over half of all citizen-initiated calls for service currently routed to police.

Figure 1: Overview of Call Categories

Category	# of calls	% of calls
Total	26,596	100%
Minor disputes	7,378	28%
Report-taking calls	6,527	25%
Police	4,320	16%
Behavioral health needs	3,581	13%
Suspicious	2,582	10%
Alarm	1,578	6%
Rapid assistance	630	2%

In addition to the call overview, we provided stakeholders with sample call narratives in order to gather their thoughts and concerns about community responders handling specific, real-life scenarios. See [Figure 7](#) for sample call narratives from the Minor Disputes, Behavioral Health Needs, and Suspicious call categories.

¹ Rapid Assistance calls include situations such as heart attacks and overdoses, in which dispatchers send police not because the calls require an armed officer but because due to staffing levels, police can often respond faster than EMS.

2. Overview of Stakeholder Concerns

As we reviewed our stakeholder conversations and analyzed open-ended survey responses, we identified several common concerns with creating a community responder program in Evanston. These concerns relate to the safety, liability risk, training, and authority of responders, as well as alternative options to take the place of community responders, such as community service officers. We address these concerns below.

2a. Responder Safety

In interviews, several Evanston stakeholders questioned whether responders would be safe showing up on scene without police. Existing programs have demonstrated a strong safety record. For instance, in Eugene, Oregon, CAHOOTS handled over 15,000 dispatched calls for service in 2019. About 2.2 percent of the calls required subsequent police follow-up. Emergency police backup was needed on only 0.2 percent of the calls. Remarkably, as of the date of this report, the CAHOOTS program has never experienced any responder casualties, and there have been no reported injuries or close calls. Similarly, Denver's STAR program has been operating for about two and a half years without any calls requiring police backup or leading to responder injury. Durham's CRT program cleared 95% of over 2,700 calls without police or fire assistance, with responders reporting that they felt safe on 99% of calls and experienced zero assaults. In studying dozens of programs nationwide, we have

not uncovered any cases of a person on scene causing injury to a community responder.

Programs ensure responder safety through two primary processes. First, call-takers screen calls for disqualifiers, which include factors that would put responders at risk (see the [Call Screening section](#)). Second, community responders themselves perform another round of screening upon their arrival at the scene. They assess the situation, approach cautiously, and engage only if determined to be safe. Call-takers receive training and written protocols on call screening for community responders, and the responders receive extensive safe arrival training and written protocols (see [Training section](#)). By implementing appropriate protocols and training, community responder programs are able to maintain a solid safety record.

Other similar programs also demonstrate that unarmed responders can safely handle mental health calls. Evanston already has Trilogy's FACT mobile crisis team, which responds in-person to individuals in mental or behavioral health crises. While the FACT team is relatively new, other cities from San Diego and Salt Lake City to Baltimore have been operating mobile crisis teams for years, some for more than a decade. Call-takers and responders on mobile crisis teams receive careful training that has kept responders safe from harm.

In every city, public employees and other unarmed workers frequently engage with distressed residents in potentially risky situations. Unarmed individuals visit homes unannounced to conduct child protective services investigations, repossess or tow cars, shut off water and electric utilities, inspect homes for code enforcement, and build relationships with unhoused individuals or young people at high risk of violence. These employees rarely sustain injuries during these interactions.

Compared to other unarmed individuals showing up to the same addresses unannounced, community responders receive extensive training in threat assessment, on-scene safety, de-escalation, behavioral health, and conflict resolution. Unlike these other individuals, community responders carry the same communications equipment that police officers utilize, so they can rapidly summon backup, and dispatchers know their exact location. One mental health case worker who became a community responder noted that he felt much safer, because he had already been responding to the same locations as a caseworker, and now he had a police radio in case of emergency.²

² Interview with Hennepin County official via Google Meet, August 21, 2023, on file with the authors.

Over 20 cities with community responder programs, including Austin, Albuquerque, Dayton, Denver, Atlanta, Louisville, and New York City, have recognized that safety risk is not one-sided. Community responders could potentially come to harm. But sending police brings its own safety risks – police can also come to harm, and police may use force which in rare cases can cause a tragic outcome. By developing a community responder program that prioritizes responder safety through focused training and screening, Evanston can strive to balance these risks effectively.

2b. Responder Authority

Some survey respondents raised the concern that community responders would be ineffective without the authority to make arrests or give citations. Before the launch of community responder programs in other cities, police officers have worried that community responders will have to call them for assistance with almost every call. Once the programs launched, officers could hear dispatch on the radio sending community responders to handle the types of minor conflicts that the officers normally resolved using threats of citation and arrest. Then they heard community responders radio back to say that they had resolved the situations. Police have [become vocal advocates of community responder programs](#) because they have seen the responders resolve call after call without needing to involve police. In Denver, for example, the STAR team [resolves about 4,700 calls per year](#) and has not called for police backup once.

Community responders achieve these results by exercising not authority but rather expertise to defuse tense situations, build relationships, and offer connections to valuable resources. Community responders develop this expertise through [specialized training](#) in de-escalation, mediation, conflict resolution, harm reduction, and behavioral health, in-depth knowledge of local service providers, and daily practice that allows them to build relationships. Community responders can always summon police for assistance, but they rarely need to rely on police to resolve situations.

2c. Liability

Liability was another concern that emerged during stakeholder interviews. City stakeholders inquired whether individuals might sue the city for dispatching

community responders instead of police. We are unaware of any lawsuits related to the actions of community responders. While it is impossible to definitively predict how every civil court would rule, we attempted to assess potential sources and likelihood of liability by reviewing Illinois statutes and case law.

We identified several Illinois statutes that govern when courts can hold cities civilly liable for harm related to 9-1-1 response. We found the following statutes relevant to community responders: the Illinois Local Government and Employees Immunities Act, the Illinois Emergency Telephone System Act, the Illinois Good Samaritan Act, and the Illinois Domestic Violence Act.

The Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act (Tort Immunity Act) shields city agencies and employees from a wide variety of lawsuits. Article II of the Tort Immunity Act provides absolute immunity for harm caused by city staff setting flawed policy.³ Articles II and IV provide absolute immunity for public employees who cause harm by failing to enforce laws, make arrests, or prevent harmful actions by third parties.⁴ As a result, even if dispatch sent community responders to a high-risk call and someone on scene committed a violent crime before the responders were able to summon police, the Tort Immunity Act should protect the city from legal liability.⁵

The Tort Immunity Act also provides limited immunity for vehicle accidents. Article V immunizes public employees against claims that they operated a motor vehicle negligently while responding to an emergency call unless the injured party can demonstrate “willful or wanton conduct.”⁶

³ 745 ILCS 10/2-201.

⁴ 745 ILCS [10/2-103](#), [106](#), [201-5](#) and [10/4-102,107](#). The Tort Immunity Act actually provides stronger protection for harm caused by failing to enforce the law than for harm caused by enforcing the law, since 10/2-202 only provides limited immunity for harm caused by enforcement of the law, which does not cover willful or wanton misconduct. For caselaw demonstrating absolute immunity for failure to make an arrest, see *Rodriguez v. Vill. of Park Forest*, 2021 IL App 201269-U, ¶ 23 (Ill. App. Ct. 2021).

⁵ The Tort Immunity Act also provides absolute immunity for misdiagnosis of mental health disorders – see 745 ILCS 10/6-106 and *Willis v. Khatkhate*, 373 Ill.App.3d 495 (Ill. App. Ct. 2007). Courts have found that the Tort Immunity Act also establishes absolute immunity for harm caused by protective mental health detentions. See *Turner v. City of Champaign*, 979 F.3d 563, 571 (7th Cir. 2020) and *Payne v. City of Chicago*, 2014 IL App 123010, ¶ 30 (Ill. App. Ct. 2014).

⁶ 745 ILCS 10/5-106. The Illinois Supreme Court established in *Harris v. Thompson* that in the case of public employees providing emergency response, this section of the Tort Immunity Act prevails over sections 11-205 and 11-907 of the Illinois Vehicle Code. *Harris v. Thompson*, 2012 IL 112525, ¶ 25 (2012).

Other statutes conflict with the absolute immunity granted by the Tort Immunity Act in the case of specific actors and circumstances. The Illinois Supreme Court has found that when the Tort Immunity Act would grant absolute immunity but a more specific statute would grant only limited liability, the specific statute prevails over the Tort Immunity Act.⁷

The Illinois Emergency Telephone System Act (ETS Act) clarifies liability specifically for 9-1-1 call centers and their employees. Section 15.1(a) of the ETS Act grants immunity from civil liability, except for acts or omissions constituting gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct.⁸ In *Schultz v. St. Clair County*, the Illinois Supreme Court found that a dispatcher could be held liable under the ETS Act for “intentional[] or reckless[] refus[al] to dispatch vital emergency services,” but only if their conduct was the proximate cause of the harm.⁹ The court identified the proximate cause of the harm to be the criminal act itself, not the city’s failure to prevent that act, and it dismissed the case.¹⁰ Even if the injured party can prove that the city’s call center staff acted recklessly or maliciously, the ETS Act should protect them from liability for failing to prevent harm.

The Illinois Good Samaritan Act immunizes those who provide medical care in good faith. The Good Samaritan Act exempts from civil liability any person certified in first aid who provides emergency care, so long as their actions do not constitute willful or wanton misconduct.¹¹ We recommend that community responders receive such training to ensure that if they provide emergency medical care, this statute protects them from lawsuits. The Good Samaritan Act provides the same immunity if a dispatcher delivers emergency medical care instructions to a community responder.¹²

Finally, the Illinois Domestic Violence Act provides requirements and immunities for police response to calls involving domestic violence. It requires any officer investigating an incident of domestic abuse, neglect, or exploitation to file a written report.¹³ If police fail to file a report, it would allow an injured party to hold police

⁷ See [Schultz v. St. Clair Cnty.](#), 2022 IL 126856, ¶ 29 (2022) and [Moore v. Green](#), 219 Ill. 2d 470, 480 (2006).

⁸ 50 ILCS 750/[15.1](#).

⁹ *Schultz v. St. Clair Cnty.*, 2022 IL 126856, ¶ 34 (2022).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ 745 ILCS 49/[67](#). The statute specifies that they should be currently certified by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or the National Safety Council.

¹² 745 ILCS 49/[5](#).

¹³ 750 ILCS 60/[303](#).

civily liable if they could demonstrate willful or wanton misconduct.¹⁴ Even though the Domestic Violence Act only mentions sworn law enforcement, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled in *Schultz* that the legislature also intended it to apply to dispatch center staff.¹⁵ As a result, injured parties could potentially hold the city liable if they could show that the dispatch center *willfully or wantonly* caused harm by sending community responders instead of police to a call involving domestic violence.

Considering these Acts together, Illinois law grants the city limited immunity if public employees cause an accident on the way to an emergency call, fail to report domestic violence, or fail to provide emergency medical care. Limited immunity covers ordinary negligence but does not cover willful or wanton conduct, which the Illinois Supreme Court has interpreted to mean either intentional harm or “utter indifference to or conscious disregard for a person's own safety or the safety or property of others.”¹⁶ Plaintiffs can rarely demonstrate that the defendant caused harm intentionally or displayed *utter* indifference or *conscious* disregard, which the Illinois Supreme Court has termed “quasi-intentional.”¹⁷ As a result, courts have dismissed allegations involving reckless ambulance drivers and 9-1-1 call-takers.¹⁸ Still, in cases that verge on willful or wanton conduct, the decision may be in the hands of the jury.

When it comes to the most common liability concern we hear from city officials, Illinois law would grant cities absolute immunity. City officials recognize that community responders are not responsible for using force or providing emergency medical care. Instead, they often raise the concern of liability if community responders fail to stop someone from causing harm. In such a case, the responders should receive absolute immunity under the Tort Immunity Act.¹⁹ Even if the dispatch center staff recklessly disregarded the caller's safety by sending community responders, the city should prevail in court because the perpetrator rather than the dispatch center was the proximate cause of the harm.²⁰ If an injured party attempted to fault the city for its policies on sending community responders, the city would also enjoy absolute immunity.²¹

¹⁴ 750 ILCS 60/305.

¹⁵ *Schultz v. St. Clair Cnty.*, 2022 IL 126856, ¶ 32 (2022).

¹⁶ *Pfister v. Shusta*, 167 Ill. 2d 417, 421-22 (1995).

¹⁷ *Murray v. Chicago Youth Center*, 224 Ill. 2d 213, 237 (2007).

¹⁸ Respectively, see *Harris v. Thompson*, 2012 IL 112525, ¶ 41-6 (2012) and *American National Bank Trust Co. v. City of Chicago*, 192 Ill. 2d 274 (2000).

¹⁹ 745 ILCS 10/2-204.

²⁰ *Schultz v. St. Clair Cnty.*, 2022 IL 126856, ¶ 34 (2022).

²¹ 745 ILCS 10/2-201.

Finally, we compare the liability for dispatching community responders to that of dispatching police. Like community responders, police are unlikely to face liability when driving to a scene or failing to prevent a third party from causing harm. However, police sometimes cause direct harm since they use force and carry weapons. Illinois courts have occasionally found them liable for willful or wanton misconduct in responding to 9-1-1 calls.²² Police have also been found liable in federal court for using excessive force in violation of the federal civil rights statute 42 U.S.C. § 1983.²³ Over the last ten years, such lawsuits have cost the nation's 25 largest law enforcement agencies over \$3 billion.²⁴

In sum, we believe that state law contains strong immunities to protect Evanston and its employees against lawsuits over the community responder program. The city should weigh the liability risk of dispatching community responders against the liability risk of dispatching police. If either failed to prevent a third party from causing harm, the city should be shielded by absolute immunity. If either caused direct harm, the city faces limited liability under both state and federal law. Since community responders do not use force or carry weapons, they are significantly less likely to cause direct harm than police, and thus less likely to cause the city lawsuits.

Should specific concerns arise, we recommend that Evanston's Corporation Counsel review the relevant statutes to provide authoritative guidance.

2d. Safety Ambassadors

The Evanston Mayor's Office recently hired a fellow to research an additional public safety innovation – safety ambassadors. Cities including [San Francisco](#) and [West Hollywood](#) hire and train unarmed safety ambassador teams to patrol downtown

²² See for example *Burke v. 12 Rothschild's Liquor Mart, Inc.* (1992), 148 Ill.2d 429 and *Poole v. City of Rolling Meadows* 167 Ill. 2d 41 (1995).

²³ Police have “qualified immunity” against section 1983 claims, which immunizes them unless the court determines that their actions followed a pattern of facts that the Seventh Circuit had already “clearly established” as a constitutional violation. In *Strand v. Minchuk*, for example, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the qualified immunity defense because previous cases had clearly established that when a suspect no longer poses a threat to an officer, they have a constitutional right not to be shot or otherwise “seized with deadly force.” *Strand v. Minchuk*, 910 F.3d 909, 918 (7th Cir. 2018).

²⁴ “Repeated police misconduct cost taxpayers \$1.5 billion in settlements.” 9 Mar. 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/police-misconduct-repeated-settlements/>. Accessed 14 Jun. 2023.

districts, preventing crime by providing a uniformed presence and proactively intervening to head off disturbances. They collaborate closely with law enforcement, local organizations, businesses, and residents to build trust and identify community concerns.

There are a few key differences between safety ambassadors and community responders. First, safety ambassadors typically conduct proactive patrols, rather than being dispatched as first responders for 9-1-1 calls. Second, safety ambassadors are usually stationed only in downtown areas or business districts, whereas community responders handle issues citywide. Third, safety ambassadors undergo shorter and less rigorous training compared to community responders, who are trained to resolve complex situations involving mental health, substance use, and conflict resolution.

With sufficient staffing, a community responder program can largely fill the role of safety ambassadors. As discussed later, when community responders are between calls, they engage in proactive patrols of hot spot areas to address concerns before they become 9-1-1 calls. If the city staffs enough teams for them to have significant time left over for proactive engagement, community responders can effectively address the types of situations handled by safety ambassadors.

2e. Community Service Officers (CSOs)

City stakeholders also brought up the idea of creating a Community Service Officer (CSO) program as a substitute for community responders.²⁵ CSOs are civilian staff rather than sworn officers who assist the police department in many activities that do not require a sworn officer. For instance, neighboring Skokie has four CSOs who may assist with anything from enforcing parking ordinances to processing detainees, staffing the front desk, or providing traffic assistance at traffic crash scenes and special events. Similar CSO programs exist in other Illinois jurisdictions such as Orland Park, Bolingbrook, Winnetka, Rolling Meadows and Warrenville.

Many cities dispatch CSOs as solo first responders for certain types of low-risk police calls for service. In Skokie, they are trained to handle loose animals and abandoned vehicles. Other cities like Camden, NJ send CSOs to take reports for thefts and non-injury traffic accidents.

While community responders also handle low-risk police calls for service, they handle different types of calls with little overlap. While CSOs may file theft reports

²⁵ In some cities, CSO stands for Community Support Officer.

and write parking citations, community responders take great pains to be distinct from the police department and do not handle police administrative matters. Instead, community responders address conflicts and behavioral health issues, from noise complaints and verbal disputes to well-being checks, trespassing, vagrancy, and mental health-related calls. Also, police departments generally have a small number of CSOs, utilizing them to fill gaps rather than relying on them to consistently handle certain types of calls.

As a result, CSOs and community responders also receive very different training. CSO training covers police operations, administrative systems, and specific duties such as handling animals and directing traffic. Community responder training focuses on de-escalation, behavioral health, conflict resolution, and mediation.

Perhaps the greatest distinction between CSOs and community responders is in their public perception. CSOs are often seen as "junior police officers," because they are supervised by the police, they wear uniforms that identify them as part of the police department, and they often appear in public assisting officers and representing the department. Many CSOs go on to become police officers. By contrast, community responders are not supervised by police, they wear uniforms that deliberately distinguish them from the police, and they inform the public that they are not involved in enforcing laws. Community responders often need to earn the trust of people who have had negative experiences with the police, so cities often hire community responders with lived experience with behavioral health issues, conflict, and incarceration.

2f. Police Social Workers

City stakeholders also asked LEAP about police social worker programs.

Police Social Workers (PSWs) are clinicians who work for a police department, for example in [Bloomington, Indiana](#) and [Lexington, Kentucky](#). The social workers do not provide first responses to 9-1-1 calls in place of police officers. Instead, when officers respond to a 9-1-1 call and identify an individual who would benefit from the PSW's assistance, they summon the PSW to follow up. The PSW can counsel the person and connect them with relevant local services.

PSWs spend most of their time responding to officer referrals to assist people experiencing mental health issues or other chronic challenges who are likely to require emergency services again soon if they do not receive effective follow-up.

PSWs also serve violent crime survivors and their families. They collaborate closely with the Crisis Negotiations Team during critical incidents. Finally, PSWs engage in proactive outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness, participate in community events, and provide training to the community.

While PSWs provide clear value to police departments, they are a complement rather than a substitute for community responders. While both conduct some proactive outreach, PSWs do not provide first responses to 9-1-1 calls for service, which is the primary role of community responders. At the same time, community responder programs have recognized the need for follow-up with individuals repeatedly involved in calls. Several community responder programs have created follow-up services similar to PSWs – [Olympia's CRU team](#) makes referrals to the Familiar Faces program, [Durham's Care Navigation team](#) follows up with individuals seen by its CRT community responders, and [Chicago's CARE team](#) conducts their own "second response" at 1, 7, and 30 days.

2g. Co-Responders

City stakeholders also suggested the possibility of creating a co-responder program rather than a community responder program. Co-responder programs pair behavioral health clinicians with police officers to respond to calls together. The clinicians bring a specialized skill set that can help their teams achieve better outcomes for community members than police alone.

Community responder and co-responder programs are not mutually exclusive. Years before Denver launched the STAR community responder program, they pioneered a co-responder program. Now, Denver has both the STAR program and a co-responder program. The 9-1-1 call center sends co-responders to handle behavioral health calls that involve weapons or violence. If a call does not involve weapons or violence, the call center sends the STAR team. Tucson, Arizona, Cincinnati, Ohio, and other cities also have both community responder and co-responder teams.

Cities do not benefit from relying on co-responder teams to handle calls that are eligible for community responders. First, since co-responder teams include an officer, they do not fully address the objective of freeing up police resources to deal with more serious crimes. Because they pair officers with clinicians, these teams are expensive and challenging to staff. Second, when an officer's presence is not necessary due to safety concerns, their presence can escalate tensions. Since many

of the people involved in calls have prior negative experiences with law enforcement, teams that do not involve armed officers can find it easier to build trust and achieve resolution.

Finally, co-responder teams do not cover the majority of community responder calls. Since co-responder teams involve behavioral health clinicians, they focus on mental health-related incidents. As discussed in the [Responder Qualifications section](#), most of the calls handled by community responders are not mental health calls. The majority of calls on their plate relate to conflict resolution, from disturbances and nuisance complaints to trespassing and panhandling calls.

Community responder and co-responder programs can complement each other in the same jurisdiction, but co-responders are not substitutes for community responders.

Figure 2: Alternative Response Comparison

Feature	Community Responders	Safety Ambassadors	CSOs	Police Social Workers	Co-Responders
Accessed via 9-1-1	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Civilian	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
First response	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Receive specialized training to handle both conflict resolution and behavioral health calls	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

3. Local Initiatives

When speaking to Evanston stakeholders, LEAP sought information about existing initiatives and programs within the city that could potentially overlap with a community responder program. By identifying these programs, we can more effectively design a community responder program tailored to the city.

Evanston residents can already receive professional assistance for a person experiencing a mental health crisis by calling Trilogy Behavioral Healthcare's hotline at 800-322-8400. Trained clinicians resolve many situations over the phone, and they can also dispatch clinician responders, known as the First-response Alternative Crisis Team (FACT). Hotline clinicians dispatch FACT when they see the need for an in-person response, for example to make a safety plan with someone experiencing suicidal ideation. Callers who dial 9-1-1 cannot currently be transferred to the Trilogy hotline phone clinicians or receive a FACT Team response directly.

When an individual calls 9-1-1 rather than the Trilogy hotline about a mental health issue, once an officer responds to the scene, the officer can request that the FACT team come to the location. Officers can also request that FACT assist a community member with a wellness check.

Evanston has developed multiple strategies for responding to mental health calls that involve a weapon or threat of violence on scene, requiring a police response. First, if someone calls the Trilogy hotline, but the call-taker cannot send the FACT team alone due to risk factors, they can arrange for police to escort FACT to the location. Second, EPD has made it a priority to train all officers in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) during the police academy. CIT is a nationally standardized, specialized training to equip police officers with advanced skills and knowledge to effectively respond to individuals experiencing behavioral health issues.

EPD has also developed the innovative Community Policing Unit, which oversees the School Resource Officers (SROs) as well as Problem Solving Team (PST) officers and

Foot Patrol Officers. The PST conducts proactive outreach to establish personal connections with both residents and businesses. PST officers also attend neighborhood meetings to hear resident concerns, provide security assessments, and deliver safety presentations. In a similar vein to community responders, the 9-1-1 call center attempts to dispatch CPU officers to handle quality of life issues and public assistance requests, so they can build on the relationships they have forged proactively.

The Evanston Health Department provides response services related to domestic violence via its Victim Services Advocates. Advocates review police reports about local cases of domestic violence and reach out to the victims to provide services such as crisis intervention counseling, medical advocacy for abuse cases, safety planning and shelter referrals, information on financial support, and referrals to legal assistance. The advocates spend the majority of their time on court advocacy, which includes attending court hearings in lieu of victims, filling out orders of protection, and assisting in writing victim impact statements.

The Evanston Parks and Recreation Department runs a response program to interrupt violence through its Youth Engagement Division's [Evanston Outreach](#) program. Evanston Outreach hires and trains "credible messengers," often individuals who have lived experience with violence and the criminal justice system, who can connect effectively with young people likely to be involved in violence. The program receives a list of individuals at high risk identified by EPD officers. The program then sends credible messengers to engage the individuals and their families, from connecting them with wraparound city support services to providing mentoring. When credible messengers learn of a conflict, either from the youth directly, or from their families, community members, or EPD, they engage the involved parties to de-escalate the situation, and they can initiate restorative justice circles to achieve long-term resolution. As of April 2023, the Division has seen a 40% increase in services, including client referrals, requests for violence interruption services, wraparound meetings, restorative justice circles, and community engagement plans.²⁶

While not currently active, the Fire Department's Evanston Community Health Outreach (ECHO) program until recently provided ongoing support to individuals likely to require first response services. The ECHO program identified individuals at high risk of hospital readmission and proactively offered them free in-home medical visits, health education, social service referrals, home safety inspections, and other support resources. The program used fire department personnel to teach individuals how to recognize true medical emergencies, access care outside of the emergency

²⁶ Evanston Outreach is only one component of the Youth Engagement Division. The Division also engages young people proactively to prevent violence via the My City, Your City, Our City Initiative, which hosts "safe summer" programming like block parties, gun violence prevention workshops, and community center events around the city.

room, and maintain and fill prescriptions, as well as conducting home safety inspections to identify hazards.

Many of the programs listed above would complement a community responder program, though none of them fill the role of a community responder program. Three key features of a community responder program include:

1. Accessed via 9-1-1: Callers can reach community responders by calling 9-1-1.²⁷
2. First Response: Community responders serve as the initial responders to most calls, rather than only responding in tandem with police or after police have already visited the scene.
3. Civilian Staff: Community responder teams are composed entirely of civilian personnel, unlike co-responder teams that combine civilians and law enforcement.

In order to provide an effective first response to 9-1-1 calls without officer assistance, community responders receive distinct training. Their training emphasizes key skills such as de-escalation, mediation, and cultural competency, and responding to mental health and substance use issues. Community responders are also specifically trained in connecting people to appropriate services to resolve root issues, from mediation to social services, housing, and mental health and substance use case management.

[Figure 3](#) highlights distinctions between community responders and current Evanston programs.

These programs provide a spectrum of services to the public in Evanston, from proactive prevention services to crisis intervention, mental health support, victim services, and health care follow-up. They would continue to serve as valuable resources alongside a community responder program in Evanston.

If implemented, community responders would serve as a valuable tool for enhancing public safety, even in a jurisdiction like Evanston that has already developed a variety of public safety innovations. It would allow the police department to focus their capacity on preventing and solving serious crime, while providing the public with responders whose training focuses primarily on seeking long-term solutions to low-risk situations.

²⁷ It is important for CRs to be accessible through 9-1-1, since even after cities publicize an alternative phone number, most people continue to call 9-1-1, including for low-risk situations.

Figure 3: Comparison of Programs

Feature	Community Responders	CPU	CIT Officers	Victim Services	Evanston Outreach	ECHO	FACT
Accessed via 9-1-1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Civilian	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
First response	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Receive specialized training to handle both conflict resolution and behavioral health calls	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

4. Dispatch Process

Community responders receive the majority of their calls from the 9-1-1 call center. Since each city has a unique process of dispatching calls, we examined Evanston's process and compared it to that of cities with existing community responder programs.

When a caller dials 9-1-1 in Evanston, a call-taker picks up the call and opens a digital call file in the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. As they ask the caller questions, they select a call type²⁸ and begin typing "call narrative" notes into the call file. If they identify the call as a police call type, the call file appears on screen for the police dispatcher. The dispatcher reviews the call file, assigns an available police unit by selecting their unit number in the CAD system, and announces the assignment over the police radio system.

When a caller dials the police non-emergency number, the police desk receives the call instead, and if it merits a response, they forward it to the same set of 9-1-1 call-takers. The call-taker creates a new call file, inputs the caller information, and follows the same process as for a 9-1-1 call.

LEAP interviewed program directors and dispatch supervisors for a range of existing community responder programs in order to recommend the best dispatch process

²⁸ Cities use a variety of names for "call types," including "nature codes" and "incident types." Evanston calls them "nature codes," but we use "call types" in this report to aid readers unfamiliar with CAD systems.

for Evanston. [Figure 4](#) below distinguishes between three general categories of community responder dispatch models.

Figure 4: Dispatch Models

Dispatch Method	Dispatch Definition	City
9-1-1 Call Center Led-Dispatch	This model relies on the same 9-1-1 call-taker and dispatcher roles as police. When a 9-1-1 call-taker identifies a call as appropriate for community responders (no violence or weapons), they make a note in the call file for the police dispatcher. The police dispatcher then dispatches a community responder team to the call as if the team were another police unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albuquerque, NM • Denver, CO • Eugene, OR • Olympia, WA • Durham, NC • Cincinnati, OH • San Francisco, CA
Embedded Professional-Led Dispatch	This model involves embedding specially trained professionals into the 9-1-1 call center, sitting next to the police dispatchers. The embedded professionals often have specialized skills in behavioral health and de-escalation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin, TX • Louisville, KY
External Hotline-Led Dispatch	This model involves forwarding calls to an external hotline, which handles both the call-taking and dispatch of community responders. These external hotlines include Behavioral Health Crisis Lines, social service lines, and hotlines run by external local service providers. All of these separate call centers have the capacity to handle the transferred calls from 9-1-1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlanta, GA (311) • Baltimore, MD (crisis line)

In interviews with our team, Albuquerque, Durham, Denver, and Eugene reported several benefits of the 9-1-1 Call Center led-Dispatch model. First, this model allows cities to utilize the 9-1-1 call center's existing infrastructure and expertise, rather than having to hire and train embedded clinicians or having to set up an external call

center that does not currently have the technology, capacity, or training to receive 9-1-1 calls. The model also allows community responders to most rapidly summon police backup and better understand and communicate with police. Finally, it allows the city to most rapidly and efficiently dispatch calls to community responders.

Our recommendation is that community responders in Evanston use the traditional 9-1-1 Call Center-led dispatch process. In speaking with multiple branches of Evanston first responders as well as Evanston’s Communications Supervisor, we became confident that the 9-1-1 call center has the skill and capacity to effectively design a screening process, train call-takers, make CAD system adjustments, and handle the daily call-taking and dispatch for community responders.

4a. Call Screening

As in every city, Evanston call-takers already screen incoming calls to judge the urgency and flag any warning signs for responding officers. In addition to the call type, they record notes in the call narrative.²⁹

In order to recommend how Evanston call-takers could screen calls for community responders, we interviewed dispatch supervisors in cities with community responder programs, including Eugene, Durham, Cincinnati, San Francisco, and Denver. They agreed that after call-takers became familiar with the community responder option, it did not significantly change the time necessary for call-takers to screen calls.

In their screening processes, call-takers look for any of four key “disqualifiers”:

1. Weapons,
2. Credible threat of violence,
3. Emergency medical needs, or
4. Need for a police-only action: entering a residence or vehicle without consent, filing a police report,³⁰ or looking up license plate information or other protected data.

²⁹ Fire and EMS call-takers use the PowerPhone EMD protocol, which provides a decision tree to divide calls into specific call types. Since we did not analyze fire and EMS calls, we do not discuss this system in the report. However, cities from Rochester to Baltimore have begun diverting select psychiatric calls (such as 25A02) and other low-urgency calls (such as Transport and Lift Assist) from EMS to community responders.

³⁰ Many police reports can be filed online using Evanston’s [online incident reporting system](#).

If the call-taker does not identify a disqualifier, they would note in the CAD call file that the call is eligible for community responders.³¹ Dispatch would view the call file and notify community responders both via 9-1-1 radio and via CAD system. By carrying police communication equipment, the community responder team would also be able to call for immediate backup if necessary.³²

The team would carry a CAD-enabled tablet, on which they could view their call waiting queue and see call information while en route, including call narrative, address, and phone number. Time permitting, they could dial the caller while en route to gather additional information.

After arriving at the scene, community responders would be able to keep the dispatcher updated on the evolution and completion of the call via 9-1-1 radio, and they could potentially add notes or disposition codes directly to CAD using the tablet.

We provide a flow chart illustrating the call screening and dispatch process in [Figure 5](#).

We recommend that the 9-1-1 call center work with Evanston's community responder program manager to create a simple screening protocol. For reference, we have linked to dispatch protocols from [Denver STAR](#), [Eugene CAHOOTS](#), and [Albuquerque ACS](#).

Every city with an existing program mentioned the importance of developing not only a protocol but also extensive training for both responders and call center staff. Call center staff have spent decades sending these calls to police. In other cities, staff have struggled with the idea of suddenly sending the calls to unarmed community responders. Those cities recommended conducting situation-based dispatch training, helping call-takers to become comfortable carrying out the new screening protocol and identify and discuss any gray areas or liability concerns.

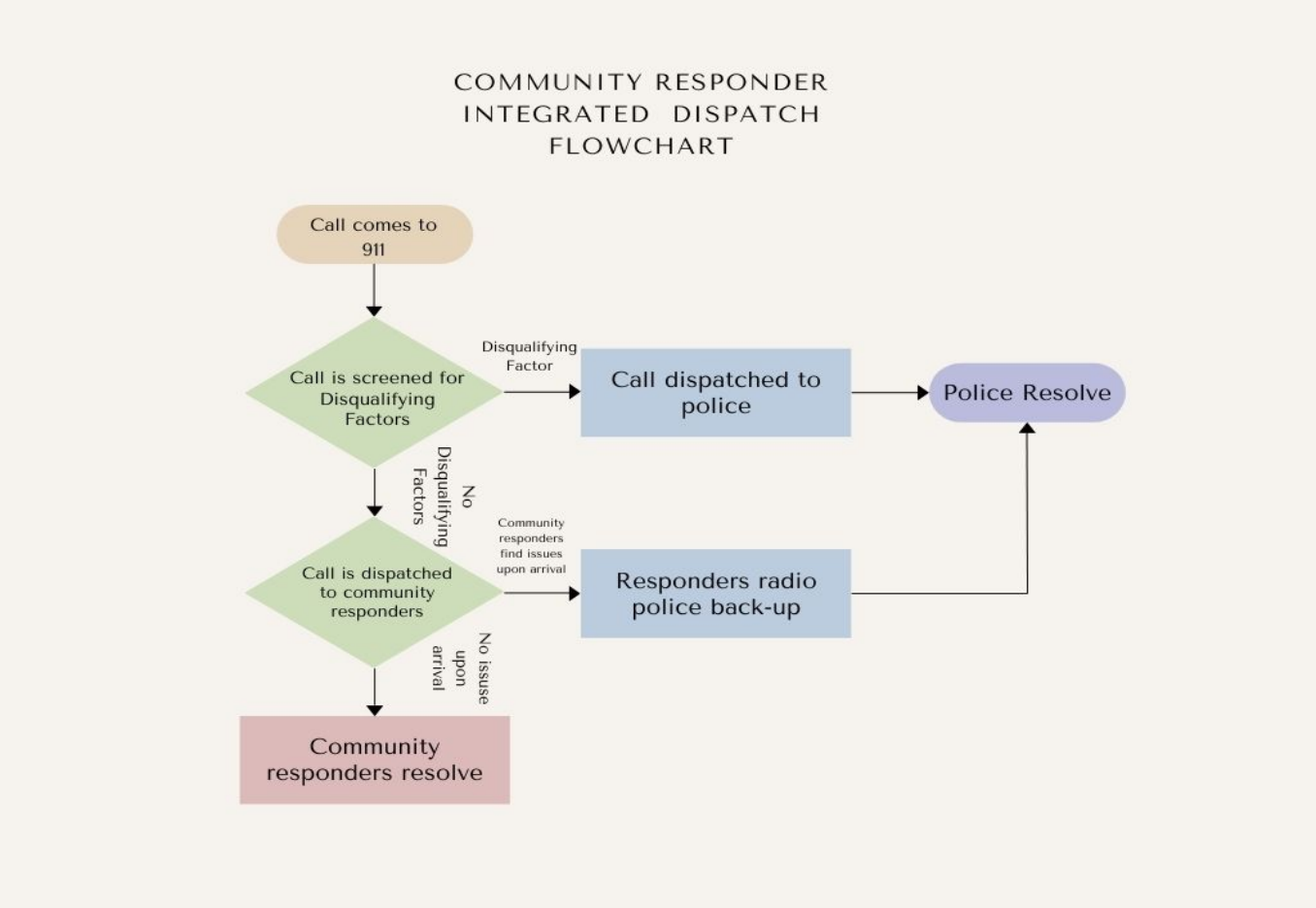
Other cities also recommended that the training introduce call-takers to the community responders themselves. In Dayton, 9-1-1 call center staff began sending significantly more calls to the MRU program after joining them for ride-alongs. Call

³¹ Denver and other cities have created "short codes" and "slash codes" so that call-takers can make a consistent shorthand notation in the call narrative that will be clear to dispatchers and allows for robust CAD data analysis after the fact. Eugene created separate call types for community responders.

³² Evanston already equips a range of other employees with 9-1-1 radios, including the animal warden for Animal Complaints and lifeguards in case they need emergency medical assistance.

center staff become more comfortable as they understand that community responders can achieve remarkable outcomes on these calls, that they are already handling tens of thousands of calls across the country every year in other cities, and that they have an unimpeachable safety record. Joint training will allow community responder and call center staff to begin to establish a collaborative and trusting relationship.

Figure 5: Dispatch Flowchart



5. Call Types

When a city launches a community responder program, its call-takers do not simply begin screening every police call for the four disqualifiers. Since most calls are not eligible for community responders, it would be inefficient for call-takers to add a community responder screening to every call. Other cities have found it most efficient for call-takers to first consider whether the call falls within a range of eligible call types. If the call falls within an eligible type, then they screen the call for the four disqualifiers.

In order to help Evanston compile a list of eligible call types, LEAP conducted internet research and interviews to document the call types that existing community responder programs handle. We divide these call types into four categories: behavioral health, spatial challenge, conflict resolution, and suspicious person ([Figure 6](#)).

Figure 6: Call Types Program Comparison

Call Type Category	Call Types*	Cities Where CRs Handle These Calls
Behavioral Health - when someone is experiencing or creating challenges due to mental health or substance use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check Well Being ● Mental Subject ● Involuntary Committal ● Voluntary Committal ● Lost Confused Person ● Indecent Exposure ● Drug Related Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Albuquerque, NM ● Chicago, IL ● Austin, TX ● Denver, CO ● Durham, NC ● Olympia, WA ● Eugene, OR

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Madison, WI ● St. Petersburg, FL ● Louisville, KY ● San Francisco, CA ● Cincinnati, OH
<p>Spatial Challenge - when someone is occupying private or public space in a problematic way</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City Ordinance Violation** ● Unwanted Person ● Trespassing ● Premise Check** ● Panhandler ● Vagrant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dayton, OH ● Denver, CO ● Durham, NC ● Olympia, WA ● St. Petersburg, FL ● San Francisco, CA
<p>Conflict Resolution - when two individuals are in verbal conflict</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nuisance Complaint ● Disturbance ● Leaf Blower Violation ● Civil Matter ● Landlord/Tenant Dispute ● Ungovernable Youth ● Standby Assist To Public ● Disorderly Conduct ● Domestic Related ● Animal Complaint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dayton, OH ● Durham, NC ● Albuquerque, NM ● Cincinnati, OH ● St. Petersburg, FL
<p>Suspicious Person - when a bystander suspects someone is planning criminal activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Premise Check** ● City Ordinance Violation** ● Susp Incident ● Suspicious Vehicle ● Suspicious Person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Albuquerque, NM

* Since each city uses different call types, we list the corresponding call types for Evanston.

** These call types contain substantial quantities of calls that fit in two categories, so we list them twice.

As mentioned in the [Call Screening section](#), community responders do not handle all calls in these call types. In each jurisdiction above, the call-taker will screen each call for the four disqualifiers. If the call-taker encounters a disqualifier, they will notify the dispatcher to send police or EMS instead.

LEAP investigated Evanston’s call types by analyzing CAD data on all police calls for service in the calendar year 2021. Evanston used about 100 police call types in 2021, but by skimming the data we were able to quickly narrow the list to about 30 call types possibly relevant to community responders. For each call type, we reviewed a

random sample of call narratives – the notes recorded by the call-taker during the initial call. See [Figure 7](#) for a sample of actual Evanston call narratives).

Figure 7: Sample Call Narratives

Call Type	Call Narrative - Initial Call ³³	Call Narrative - Outcome of the call
Premise Check	“caller/witness hears yelling coming from the location”	“spoke with homeowner advised me that his mother has Alzheimer's, an alert for residence was already placed into the cads system. no further assistance.”
Check Well Being	“just east of location there's a man or woman in a dark shirt with a stripe who seems to be yelling at no one and seems underdressed for the weather”	“subject lives at location and returned to his residence upon officers arrival”
Check Well Being	“male in a gray hoodie black pants hunched over. caller believes the subject is in pain”	“spoke to [] who stated he was fine. stated he just took some routine medication that upsets his stomach. refused”
Nuisance Complaint	“loud music/ bass north side of street, 2 houses east of intersection”	“no music heard at location or within 1 block of location in all directions”
Nuisance Complaint	“there is an event at james park and the music is beyond loud...too loud”	“there was an outdoor church service. It will conclude in the next few minutes.”
Disturbance	“citizen reported disturbance at location”	“group leaving the football game dispersed - no fight”

³³ We edited the narratives to clarify shorthand abbreviations that call-takers used.

Disturbance	"approx 6-7 subjects arguing in front of building"	"spoke with a group of minors who were allegedly involved in the argument. all subjects denied any argument and eventually left the center"
Disorderly Conduct	"reporting loud argument between several people coming from the intersection"	"Just a loud group leaving the barber shop. no argument and the group is gone on arrival."
Disorderly Conduct	"2 teens climbing fences in an alley. caller not sure what they are doing"	"I made contact with the juveniles. They were playing hide and seek. They were advised and they complied."
Unwanted Person	"intoxicated male refusing to leave. on benches at the exterior of the building. yelling at customers and staff."	"subject left the area"
Unwanted Person	"irate customer. female black 5ft4 black jacket black pants. arguing with staff over refund. no weapons seen"	"subject left prior to arrival"
Panhandler	"Male white last seen walking gray winter hat, green jacket in the street asking for money"	"subject advised to stay out of the street"
Panhandler	"male white, white hat black jacket outside aggressively panhandling and drinking"	"The officer was unable to make contact with the caller. officer did locate the described unidentified male and informed him of the complaint"
Vagrant	"main floor elevator lobby. male is sleeping on the"	"subject awake and on his way to the shelter"

	northwest side of building. staff wants him moved along”	
Misc. Public Service	“try to make contact with staff - resident has been ringing for a nurse and no response - tried calling and just kept ringing”	“made contact with staff who was tending to the patient immediately, no issues.”

By reading a given call narrative, we assessed if the call appeared to contain a disqualifier, or if it would likely have been eligible for community responders. We then calculated the percentage of calls in our sample that appeared eligible for that call type. We extrapolated that percentage to estimate the total volume of calls in that type eligible for community responders. Readers should regard our analysis as only a rough estimate of the potential call volume eligible for community responders, because call-takers do not always document every detail in the call narrative, and because call volumes may have changed since 2021.

“At some point along this effort it would be great to see a comprehensive list of the types of calls community responders would respond to versus police.”

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSE

Based on our analysis, we recommend that Evanston dispatch community responders to calls that pass the screening in the call types listed in [Figure 8](#). We conclude that each year, responders could be dispatched to roughly 9,900 calls for service currently handled by police.

As [Figure 6](#) indicated, we only identified one community responder program, Albuquerque’s ACS, currently responding to calls in the suspicious person category. However, in analyzing suspicious person calls in Evanston and several similar cities, we found that many of those calls meet the eligibility criteria for community responders, and that a disproportionate number of these calls involve African-Americans and other people of color. We know that these calls can lead to negative interactions with law enforcement. We recommend that Evanston help

reduce the number of negative interactions between people of color and law enforcement by sending community responders to suspicious person calls with no disqualifiers

Figure 8: Evanston Community Responder Eligible Calls

Nature Code	Total Calls in 2021	% CR-eligible	# CR-eligible	% of total calls
All calls	27,181			100.0%
Total in these call types	13,541	72.8%	9,853	36.2%
Nuisance Complaint	1,729	97.4%	1,685	6.2%
Check Well Being	1,805	86.7%	1,564	5.8%
Premise Check	2,012	50.0%	1,006	3.7%
Disorderly Conduct	1,128	78.3%	883	3.2%
Unwanted Person	653	95.8%	626	2.3%
Disturbance	1,135	50.0%	568	2.1%
Domestic Related	728	48.1%	350	1.3%
Panhandler	409	100.0%	409	1.5%
Vagrant	397	100.0%	397	1.5%
Leaf Blower Violation	396	100.0%	396	1.5%
Fireworks	312	86.8%	271	1.0%
Animal Complaint	620	39.5%	245	0.9%
City Ordinance Violation	214	93.3%	200	0.7%
Trespassing	264	60.4%	159	0.6%
Involuntary Committal	187	68.9%	129	0.5%
Miscellaneous Public Service	269	52.4%	141	0.5%
Voluntary Committal	184	73.3%	135	0.5%
Standby Assist To Public	115	87.2%	100	0.4%
Mental Subject	101	88.4%	89	0.3%
Suspicious Person	133	55.6%	74	0.3%
Drug Related Activity	139	51.2%	71	0.3%

Civil Matter	144	43.2%	62	0.2%
Landlord/Tenant Dispute	69	77.1%	53	0.2%
Ungovernable Youth	59	88.4%	52	0.2%
Suspicious Vehicle	70	74.5%	52	0.2%
Susp Incident	153	31.1%	48	0.2%
Indecent Exposure	62	56.1%	35	0.1%
Lost Confused Person	28	100.0%	28	0.1%
Soliciting Complaint	26	96.2%	25	0.1%

**Note: Evanston already has an animal warden who handles loose animal calls during normal business hours, so we excluded loose animals and similar calls from the analysis. If community responders received loose animal training from the animal warden, they could handle additional calls that come in when the animal warden is unavailable.*

5a. Increased 9-1-1 Calls

As Evanston launches a community responder program and the public becomes aware of it, we expect the call center to experience a gradual increase in call volume. Some individuals who avoid the police entirely will be more comfortable reaching out for community responders. Other individuals currently refrain from calling when they consider an issue too minor or inappropriate for police, but they will not consider them too minor or inappropriate for community responders. While these calls place an additional burden on call-takers, they enable the city to better prevent crises before they escalate, rather than discovering them only after they have spiraled out of control.

To provide a rough estimate of the potential number of extra calls Evanston may receive in the long term, we examined data from the well-established CAHOOTS program. In Eugene, the public is familiar with CAHOOTS because it has been in operation since 1989. By examining data on CAHOOTS call types provided by the Eugene Police Department, we estimate that for every 100 calls the 9-1-1 call center diverts from the police to send to CAHOOTS, the center receives at least another 32 calls that would not come in if CAHOOTS did not exist.³⁴ While many calls are minor

³⁴ We count the Transport call type as extra calls, and the Check Welfare and Assist Public - Police calls as diverted from police. Eugene call-takers have noted that some of the latter two

welfare checks and requests for assistance, these calls enable CAHOOTS to build relationships with individuals and help stabilize their situations, reducing the likelihood of future emergency calls. We estimate that over a period of several years, Evanston would grow to see 32 extra calls for every 100 that the community responder program diverted from the police, eventually constituting about 3,100 extra calls per year.

call types should also be considered extra calls. As a result, we consider our estimate to be a conservative “lower bound.”

Eugene Police Department Crime Analysis Unit, "CAHOOTS Program Analysis, p.6, accessed at <https://www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/56717/CAHOOTS-Program-Analysis>.

6. Program Impact

6a. Additional Call Initiation Methods

In addition to traditional dispatch, we recommend that Evanston's community responder team also initiate calls through two additional methods:

- Officer referral: If an officer witnesses a situation that can be handled by community responders, they can radio dispatch to deploy the team.
- Self-initiated: If a community responder happens upon a situation that requires their intervention, they can radio dispatch to indicate that they are self-initiating a call.

6b. Officer Referral

Every city with a community responder program allows officers to summon community responders to take over in appropriate situations. Sometimes, call-takers may screen out a call because the caller mentioned disqualifiers, and then the responding officer may recognize that the call is eligible for community responders. Officers also become aware of situations while out in the community on patrol (“on view”) that they want to refer to community responders. In both cases, they can radio dispatch to notify the community responder team. If necessary, officers can remain on scene until the community responders arrive.

Officer referral is an important source of community responder calls. In Denver, the STAR team originally received about 40% of their calls from officer referral. The share of officer referrals has declined over time, as call center staff become more comfortable dispatching calls directly to community responders. For every 100 calls

they take off the shoulders of police, CAHOOTS handles about 20 calls where officers arrive first.³⁵ Applied to Evanston, this ratio would yield 2,000 officer referrals per year. However, the actual number will depend on program implementation, since police only refer calls to community responders if the program has earned their confidence.

Cities can increase referrals by providing police with a simple protocol, as well as training and opportunities for officers to become comfortable with the community responder staff. Dayton's Mediation Response Unit attributed the success of their program to having engaged police, fire, and 9-1-1 call center staff in the planning stages of their work. By involving them early on, the MRU was able to communicate how community responders could benefit other first responders by addressing the root issues behind repeat 9-1-1 calls, allowing police to focus on serious crime. Some Dayton police officers have become champions for the program, helping to educate their peers about its benefits.

Officers need to receive a clear protocol or "cheat sheet" describing the disqualifiers and the types of situations appropriate for community responders, so they do not try to refer ineligible situations and then become frustrated at the program.

6c. Self-Initiation

Community responders should also self-initiate calls, also known as "on view" or proactive encounters. Responders self-initiate a call when they come across an appropriate situation out on the street, similar to a self-initiated activity by police patrol. In cities with existing programs, community responders actively seek out situations in the community that may require their services. In Eugene, for every 100 calls that the call center dispatches to CAHOOTS that would otherwise have gone to the police, we estimate that CAHOOTS self-initiates about 28 "on view" encounters within the community.³⁶ Applying the same rate to Evanston, we estimate that community responders would initiate an additional 2,800 proactive calls per year.

³⁵ Calculated from Eugene Police Department Crime Analysis Unit, "CAHOOTS Program Analysis," p.3-4, accessed at <https://www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/56717/CAHOOTS-Program-Analysis>.

³⁶ To make this estimate, we compare EPD and CAHOOTS data. We approximate self-initiated calls as the difference between total interactions reported by CAHOOTS and interactions associated with CAHOOTS in the CAD system. For total CAHOOTS interactions, see White Bird Clinic, "What is CAHOOTS?" 29 Oct. 2020, accessed at <https://whitebirdclinic.org/what-is-cahoots/>. For CAHOOTS records in the CAD system, see Eugene Police Department Crime Analysis Unit, "CAHOOTS Program Analysis," p.6, accessed at <https://www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/56717/CAHOOTS-Program-Analysis>.

However, the actual volume will depend on factors such as how much spare time responders have between calls to identify opportunities for proactive encounters. As with police, if responders are racing from one call to the next, they will not self-initiate as many calls.

These proactive encounters play a vital role in preventing situations from escalating into emergencies. They provide crucial opportunities to offer resources and connect community members to services before situations reach crisis levels.

Community responders can also proactively dedicate time to educate community members about the program. They can engage with community organizations, schools, businesses, and community health agencies and providers. Staff from Olympia's CRU team has credited personal outreach and community engagement by responders with significantly increasing referrals from both community members and officers.

Community responders can also follow up with individuals they have assisted in the past, with their permission, and maintain contact. As mentioned in the [Police Social Worker section](#), Chicago's CARE team follows up at 1, 7, and 30 days, and Olympia and Durham have created separate teams to conduct case management for individuals who frequently come into contact with first responders. Since a large percentage of 9-1-1 calls involve a small number of individuals, cities can improve health outcomes and reduce call volumes by investing in "second response."

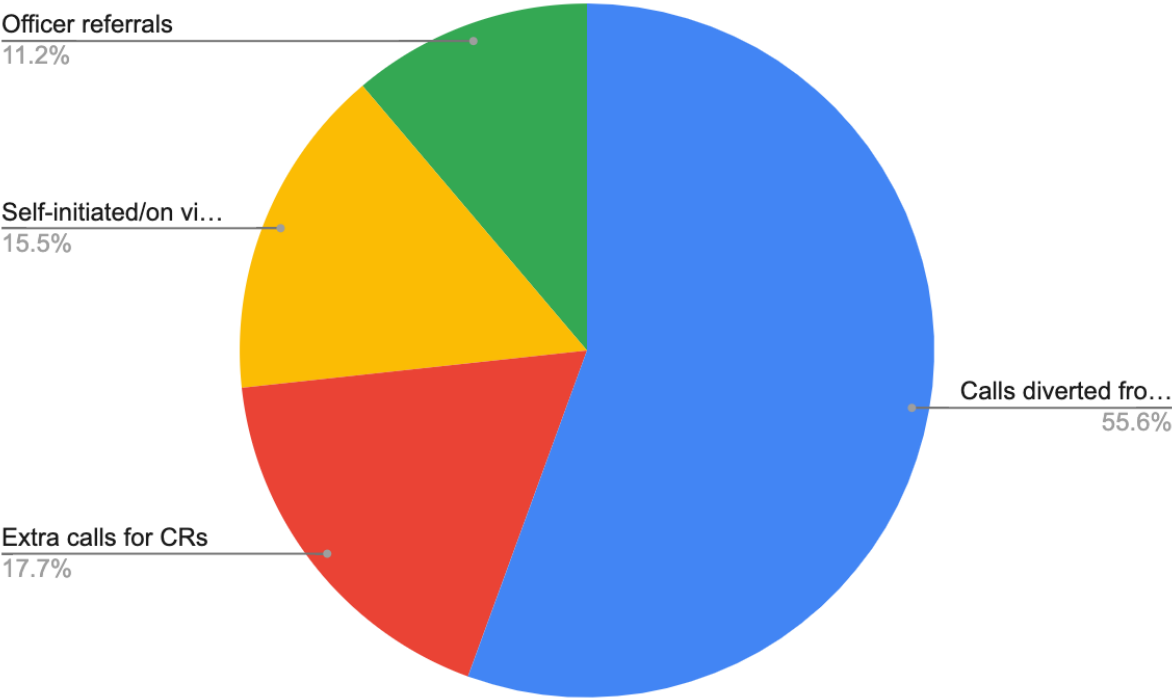
6d. Calls For Service Impact

We estimate that a community responder program in Evanston has the potential to handle approximately 17,700 calls per year, once it is fully staffed and it has won the confidence of both officers and members of the public. This figure includes 9,800 calls currently on the police's shoulders, 3,100 new calls, 2,800 proactive encounters, and 2,000 officer referrals ([Figure 9](#)). These estimates assume that Evanston invests in building awareness and trust in the community responder program among dispatchers, officers, other agencies and service providers, and community members. Evanston will only reach this potential if the program is able to earn widespread confidence, as CAHOOTS has in Eugene.

This response volume would constitute a significant share of Evanston's calls for service. The 9,800 calls diverted from police comprise 36% percent of all citizen-initiated police calls for service. In the long run, those calls diverted from

police would make up 56% of the total activity for community responders, with the rest of their time spent on new calls to the 9-1-1 center, self-initiated activities, and officer referrals.

Figure 9: Breakdown of Potential Future Call Sources



6e. Police Time Impact

Since community responders handle calls that would otherwise go to police, we assessed how much time their operations could save police. Using the same 2021 CAD data, we calculated the average time that police spent traveling to and remaining on scene for each call type. As shown in [Figure 10](#), police spent an average of 31 minutes driving to and handling calls in these types, ranging from 15 minutes for fireworks calls to 89 minutes for involuntary committal calls. By combining the police time spent per call with the volume of community responder-eligible calls in each call type, we estimate that a community responder program could save EPD over 5,000 hours each year.

Figure 10: Total Police Time by Call Type

Nature Code	Total Police Time (mean, in min)	Number of CR-eligible Calls	Police Hours Per Year
Total	31	9,853	5,128
Nuisance Complaint	24	1,685	674
Check Well Being	32	1,564	845
Premise Check	21	1,006	345
Disorderly Conduct	37	883	537
Unwanted Person	25	626	262
Disturbance	68	568	639
Domestic Related	28	350	166
Panhandler	28	409	187
Vagrant	17	397	112
Leaf Blower Violation	22	396	145
Fireworks	22	271	100
Animal Complaint	15	245	60
City Ordinance Violation	25	200	83
Trespassing	41	159	108
Involuntary Committal	29	129	62
Miscellaneous Public Service	89	141	209
Voluntary Committal	65	135	146
Standby Assist To Public	39	100	65
Mental Subject	31	89	46
Suspicious Person	28	74	34
Drug Related Activity	36	71	42
Civil Matter	58	62	60
Landlord/Tenant Dispute	53	53	47
Ungovernable Youth	27	52	24
Suspicious Vehicle	53	52	46

Susp Incident	46	48	37
Indecent Exposure	40	35	23
Lost Confused Person	33	28	15
Soliciting Complaint	21	25	9

6f. Arrest Impact

Currently, a small fraction of the calls we recommend diverting to community responders result in arrests and other police reports. In 2021, roughly 0.6 percent of the community-responder eligible calls ended in arrest and 17 percent concluded with a report ([Figure 11](#)). Arrests can have significant consequences on individuals' lives, including job loss, inability to pay rent or purchase medication, and eviction. Arrests also require considerable time and resources from officers, and they can impact community trust in the police.

Community responders will use skills including de-escalation, conflict resolution, and mediation to resolve situations without making arrests or issuing citations. Community responders may not prevent all cases of arrest, since they may need to radio for police back-up, and police may end up making an arrest. However, as discussed in the [Responder Safety section](#), we expect community responders to rarely radio for back-up, perhaps on 0.2 percent of calls.

Figure 11: Current Outcome of CR-Eligible Calls

Nature Code	No Arrest or Report	Report Taken (no arrest)	Arrest made
Total	81.6%	16.9%	0.6%
Nuisance Complaint	98.1%	1.5%	0.0%
Check Well Being	83.9%	15.3%	0.2%
Premise Check	94.1%	4.6%	0.0%
Disorderly Conduct	84.4%	14.9%	0.2%
Unwanted Person	91.0%	8.1%	0.6%
Disturbance	70.5%	27.3%	1.8%

Domestic Related	1.8%	89.3%	8.1%
Panhandler	98.8%	1.2%	0.0%
Vagrant	94.2%	5.5%	0.0%
Leaf Blower Violation	98.0%	1.5%	0.0%
Fireworks	98.7%	1.0%	0.0%
Animal Complaint	91.1%	7.7%	0.0%
City Ordinance Violation	83.6%	7.0%	0.5%
Trespassing	56.8%	37.1%	5.7%
Involuntary Committal	1.6%	96.3%	1.6%
Miscellaneous Public Service	94.8%	2.6%	0.0%
Voluntary Committal	0.5%	98.9%	0.0%
Standby Assist To Public	48.7%	49.6%	0.0%
Mental Subject	44.6%	55.4%	0.0%
Suspicious Person	19.5%	78.2%	0.0%
Drug Related Activity	84.2%	11.5%	0.7%
Civil Matter	73.6%	24.3%	0.0%
Landlord/Tenant Dispute	20.3%	78.3%	0.0%
Ungovernable Youth	54.2%	42.4%	0.0%
Suspicious Vehicle	62.9%	35.7%	0.0%
Susp Incident	16.3%	81.7%	0.7%
Indecent Exposure	48.4%	41.9%	8.1%
Lost Confused Person	92.9%	7.1%	0.0%
Soliciting Complaint	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

6g. Other Impacts

Community responder programs can also have long-term benefits beyond responding to calls for service. When community responders effectively use mediation and restorative justice practices, they help to reach long term resolution of ongoing conflicts and stabilize relationships between community members. Community responders can also assist individuals with accessing the long term

mental health and substance use treatment needed to help prevent or reduce future mental health episodes or substance use relapses. This program can bring generational benefits to Evanston families.

7. Responder Qualifications, Hiring, & Training

Existing community responder programs have faced challenges in hiring responders with diverse racial and lived experience backgrounds because they have required mental health and medical credentials. CAHOOTS's two-person teams, for example, include one behavioral health clinician and an EMT or nurse. Similarly, STAR employs a clinician and a paramedic, while CRU and EMCOT staff two behavioral health clinicians or counselors. As a result, these cities have often struggled to find clinicians who are well-suited for the community responder role, let alone those whose race and lived experience matches the communities they serve.

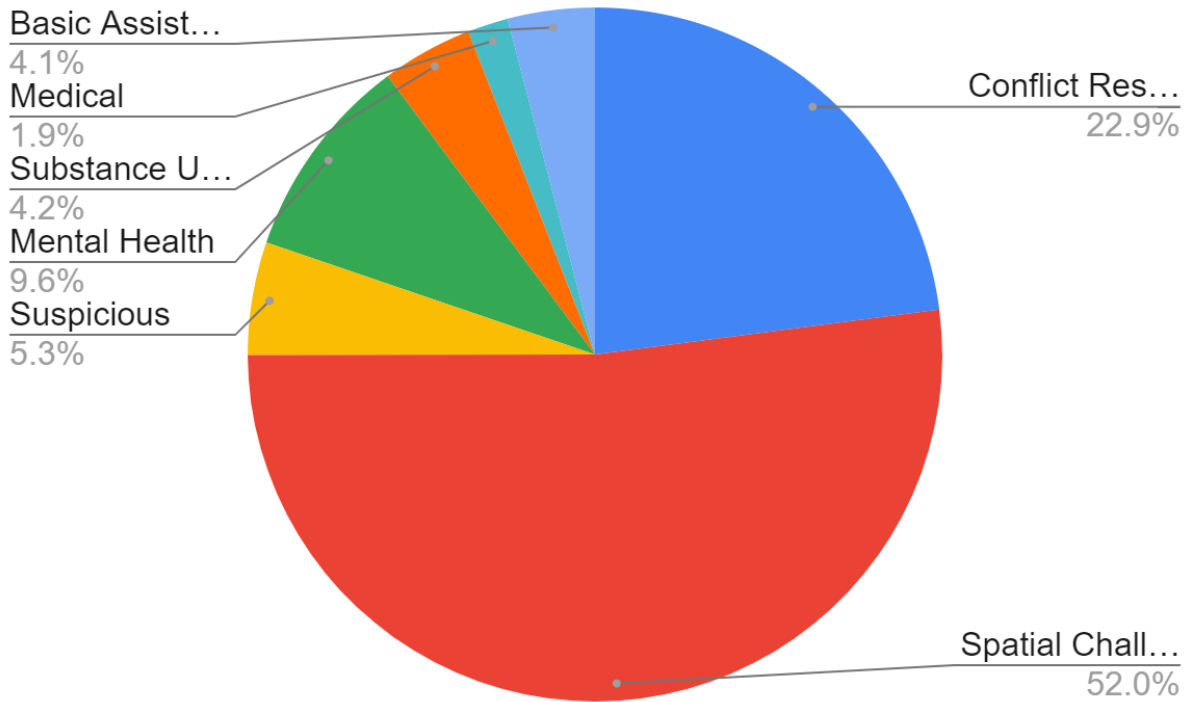
Community responder programs benefit when they hire a diverse group of responders with lived experience and strong community ties. The Olympia CRU program, for instance, attributes much of its success to the peer navigators who work alongside responders to engage with individuals who are typically harder to reach. Peers, having "walked in the shoes" of those they serve, can connect and establish trust far better than other responders. Police often face an automatic disadvantage because their sirens, uniforms, and guns alone can escalate a situation. By contrast, a responder who shares a respondent's background can gain an instant advantage.

Furthermore, Evanston's calls for service data suggests that responders would not benefit significantly from formal mental health or medical credentials. LEAP analyzed the call narrative for each community responder-eligible call in our sample to identify whether the responder would primarily benefit from skill in mental health, substance use, medical care, medical issues, or conflict resolution.

We separated conflict calls into three subcategories, since they each required slightly different skills: conflict resolution, spatial challenges, and suspicious persons. We labeled calls as "conflict resolution" when they involved two or more parties engaged in a verbal dispute, whether neighbors, strangers, or family members. We labeled calls as "spatial challenges" when there was no active dispute, but one person's behavior was causing a challenge for those around them, such as panhandling aggressively, sleeping in front of a business, or playing excessively loud music. We labeled calls as "suspicious persons" when the caller suspected that a third party was planning to commit a crime.

We found that approximately 52% of all calls eligible for community responders primarily involved spatial challenges. Another 23% required conflict resolution as the key skill needed for successful resolution. Calls primarily requiring mental health and substance use skills accounted for 9% and 4%, respectively, as indicated in [Figure 12](#).

Figure 12: Primary Responder Expertise Required



As a result of this information, we recommend not requiring any specific credentials when hiring responders. Responders would be handling mostly conflict resolution and spatial challenge situations, and for both of these types of situations, they would not benefit from having any specific credentials. Existing programs that primarily handle conflict resolution and spatial challenges, such as Dayton’s MRU, have kept degree requirements out of the job description to attract a strong array of applicants. In the hiring process, they look for applicants who possess a natural ability to de-escalate situations, connect with people from diverse backgrounds, and problem-solve in the moment. They have found that these applicants prove most successful out on the street as responders.

While Evanston does not need to write the job description to focus on the 16% of calls primarily involving mental health, substance use, or medical issues, responders do need to be prepared for these calls. First, we recommend training all responders in these areas. For example, responders should be able to effectively identify the signs and symptoms of a mental health crisis (see [Responder Training](#) section). Second, while Dayton did not require any formal credentials, many of the individuals they hired did possess behavioral health or medical experience. They pair responders

strategically so that, whenever possible, one person on each team brings a greater level of experience with these issues.

Finally, Evanston should look to hire a racially diverse group of responders who possess lived experience relevant to the situations they will handle and if possible social capital within the community. Again, the program can pair responders so that each team can best reflect the demographics of the community they will serve.

7a. Responder Training

We recommend community responders in Evanston undergo training in two modules. Operational training teaches specific skills, while field training allows responders to put those skills into practice.

Operational training should include the following topics:

1. **Technology operations**, such as record keeping in the data management system.
2. **Public safety radio communication**: It is crucial that responders receive significant training on how to effectively communicate over the 9-1-1 radio, from jargon and normal procedures to calling for emergency backup. Other community responder teams have experienced a steep learning curve, so the trainers should allocate ample time to ensure responders understand and feel comfortable speaking up on the radio.
3. **Vehicle operations**, such as defensive driving, vehicle maintenance, sharing vehicles, parking, and safe transport.
4. **Understanding of the first response system**: Responders need to be knowledgeable about the first response system, including how calls come in and are screened and identified for a given branch of first responders. They should understand how police, fire, and EMS handle a range of call types. They should also be familiar with relevant legal processes and have an introductory understanding of the law to respect people's legal rights and their own legal obligations as first responders.
5. **Safe arrival**: To initiate safe and effective interactions, responders should receive extensive training on a safe arrival protocol, including confirming the location with dispatch, maintaining situational awareness, recognizing warning signs, and using natural barriers for separation when approaching the

scene. They should also be trained in personal safety and threat assessment techniques.

6. **De-escalation:** Responders should learn both verbal interventions, such as clear and respectful instructions, as well as nonverbal interventions involving body language and personal space. They should be trained to maintain composure, recognize signs of escalation, establish rapport, and use non-threatening communication. They should extensively practice role-playing these techniques to calm individuals in crisis, defuse conflict between multiple parties, and prevent retaliation.
7. **Conflict resolution:** Responders should be trained to address and resolve conflicts in a constructive manner. They should learn to apply active listening, effective communication, problem-solving, and negotiation to help parties feel heard, understand and empathize with the opposing perspective, identify common goals, and develop new strategies to achieve those goals.
8. **Mediation** is a specific approach within conflict resolution, in which a neutral third party facilitates communication and negotiation between conflicting parties. Responders should be trained as mediators to assist in fostering dialogue, clarifying perspectives, and identifying common ground to reach a resolution that satisfies all parties involved.
9. **Motivational interviewing:** Existing programs have found that responders greatly benefit from extensive training in motivational interviewing, in which counselors use open questions to motivate change by resolving ambivalence.
10. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy:** Responders should learn and practice other basic counseling principles, including cognitive behavioral therapy.
11. **Mental health:** Responders should be taught to recognize various mental health conditions, understand dual relationships, and maintain professional boundaries. Training should include crisis intervention and suicide prevention protocols. It should provide an understanding of the intersection of mental health, race, culture, and stigma.
12. **Substance use:** Responders should learn to recognize key signs of intoxication and withdrawal from a variety of common substances and practice distinguishing intoxication from mental health crises. They should learn and practice how to implement harm reduction principles.
13. **Medical:** Trainers should provide basic medical instruction, including Basic Life Support, CPR, and clearing airway obstructions. Responders should be taught to recognize signs of overdose, administer naloxone, and ensure appropriate follow-up care.
14. **Cultural competency:** Trainers should give particular attention to cultural competency to ensure responders understand marginalized groups, implicit bias, sexism, and anti-black racism. Training should cover immigration status,

language barriers, and cultural taboos. Responders should learn anti-oppressive practices.

15. **Trauma and domestic violence:** Responders should be trained to recognize signs of trauma and domestic violence and provide trauma-informed care. They should receive training on "special cases," such as the elderly, youth, and families involved in custody disputes. They should understand mandatory reporting, transition-aged youth, and identifying signs of child abuse and human trafficking.
16. **Vicarious trauma:** Responders should be trained to recognize and seek help and cope with vicarious trauma.
17. **Resource connections:** Responders should be trained to connect community members in need with key resources related to mental health, substance use, medical needs, housing, domestic violence and sexual assault services, and other resources available in the community. They should be familiar with the requirements and processes to successfully refer individuals to these services. They should be introduced to the services, goals, and challenges of each city agency.

Existing programs recommended several key principles on how to structure operational training. Whenever possible, the program manager should select trainers who have lived experience with the topic. The manager can also consult with local super utilizers with lived experience to identify highly skilled local service providers. Each trainer should address how their topic intersects with race. Responders should spend time each day role-playing to put classroom lessons into practice. For key skills, they should receive refresher training and practice sessions periodically. In the interest of transparency and trust-building, the city could open training sessions to the public.

Managers should also receive specific training on practicing equitable hiring, supporting responders, supervising staff, and creating a supportive schedule. Managers should be trained to recognize and assist responders in coping with vicarious trauma.

In the field training module, community responders should participate in "ride-alongs" with police patrol, CPU officers, fire, Trilogy's FACT team mental health responders, harm reduction and homeless services outreach workers, and Evanston Outreach youth workers. Responders should observe 9-1-1 call-takers and dispatchers in action. Existing community responder teams recommend at least three weeks of shadowing experienced workers. New York's B-HEARD team conducts nearly

full-time field training for five weeks, while field training for Olympia's CRU team spans a full three months.

While ride-alongs allow responders to observe real-life scenarios and first responder techniques, to practice these skills they need scenario-based training and a "soft launch." When community responders ride along with police, for example, they look on while police take action. In order to practice taking action themselves, responders need scenario-based training. By role-playing a large number of scenarios, they can translate what they learn in the classroom into instinct and second nature. As they make missteps, they will correct misconceptions and confront unconscious biases. Dayton MRU and other programs began with a "soft launch" so that responders can start with a lower volume of calls that allows time to debrief and retrain.

After the program launches, new hires can shadow existing teams, but we still recommend they continue to shadow police, 9-1-1 call-takers, and other responders as well. Observing these professionals in action will be beneficial, not only for the community responders but also for building trust and understanding between them, the police, dispatch, and other agencies in Evanston.

Whenever feasible, the program should attempt to hire local trainers. Local trainers are familiar with the local environment and existing resources. By serving as trainers, they also gain confidence in the community responder program and become local champions for the program.

7b. Responder Public Image

Responders should have a distinct uniform that not only identifies them as public servants and city employees but also distinguishes them from the police. Existing programs, such as Dayton's MRU and Eugene's CAHOOTS have opted for polo or T-shirts with program insignia and khaki pants. In line with this, we recommend that Evanston responders also have a uniform that easily identifies them as responders, including having the program logo prominently displayed on their shirts. Additionally, it is crucial that responder vehicles in Evanston be distinctly different from other responder vehicles and clearly distinguishable from police vehicles. Taking inspiration from successful programs, we suggest that Evanston responder vehicles feature identifiable insignia and design elements that clearly set them apart from police vehicles, ensuring the program's distinct identity and fostering trust within the community.

7c. Responder Supplies

To ensure a fully operational Evanston community responders program, beyond acquiring police communications equipment, cell phones, and CAD-equipped tablets, the primary challenge lies in acquiring a suitable vehicle or vehicles. Many existing programs have chosen to acquire large vans, such as Sprinter vans, since they are large enough to accommodate a wheelchair and sizable luggage, and a significant portion of their work involves unhoused individuals. A van offers ample space for carrying essential supplies. Other programs, including Dayton's MRU and Durham's CRT, have opted for SUVs and minivans because they are easier to maneuver and easier and cheaper to acquire.

We recommend each mediation responder team to carry emergency medical supplies like naloxone (Narcan) and EpiPens, along with comfort items such as water, granola bars, blankets, feminine hygiene products, and socks. Equipped with these supplies and basic medical training, community responders can effectively prevent the need for some medical responses.

To create a comfortable environment for all community members, Evanston should ensure that community responders' appearance does not resemble that of the police. Their uniform, logo, and vehicle should distinctly differ from that of law enforcement. Specific details concerning appearance and supplies should be determined based on feedback from the community.

8. Responder Staffing

In order to handle over 12,000 calls every year in the short term and close to 18,000 calls in the long term, Evanston will need to hire a considerable number of responders and support staff. To estimate the number of responders needed to handle 12,000 calls per year, we calculate the average number of calls per shift handled by existing community responder teams in other cities. Austin's EMCOT and Durham's HEART report spending 45 minutes and 35 minutes per call, respectively. Eugene's CAHOOTS averages over 20 calls per 12-hour shift, and Denver's STAR averages 6 calls per 8-hour shift, leading to an average of 9.4 calls per 8-hour shift. We adjust these numbers to account for days lost to vacation, sick leave, and training, as well as hours spent on call documentation, shift transitions, and debriefing.

In order to recommend a minimum number of community responder teams, we compare the average weekly need for responses with the approximate weekly response capacity per team. Converting [Figure 8](#) from annual figures to weekly figures, we estimate that Evanston receives an average of 190 calls per week eligible for community responders. Using the calculation in the [Self-initiation](#) section, we estimate that responders would self-initiate roughly 53 “on view” calls per week if time permits. With five or six teams of responders working full-time, we project that the program could handle 213 or 255 calls per week, respectively. According to these estimates, the Evanston community responder program could handle 88% of the short-term need with five teams, or just over 100% with six teams ([Figure 13](#)).

Figure 13: Comparison of 5 and 6 teams

Number of teams	Response Capacity (per week)	Call Volume (per week)	Additional Short-term Need	Short-term % Covered	Additional Long-term Need	Long-term % Covered
5 teams	213	190	53	88%	99	62%
6 teams	255	190	53	105%	99	75%

As the program builds confidence with the general public and within the police department, as discussed in the [Additional Call Initiation](#) section above, we expect the public to place more calls for assistance, and we expect the police to refer more calls to the new responders. As a result, in the longer term, we project that demand for responders could increase from 243 to 342 responses per week. If demand does increase, Evanston would need to hire additional responders.

In practice, responders will not be able to attain the coverage percentages in Figure 15, because calls ebb and flow rather than coming in at a constant rate. Calls are relatively evenly distributed across days of the week (see [Figure 14](#)) but vary considerably across hours of the day (see [Figure 15](#)). In the peak hours of 3pm and 9pm, calls come in more than four times faster than in the quiet hours between 3 and 6am. Call volume remains close to the peak between noon and 11pm. During the quiet hours, a single team of responders would experience lag time between calls. During peak hours, Evanston would need two teams of responders on the street in order to handle all calls ([Figure 16](#)). There is no perfect shift schedule that would allow responders to handle all calls without excess capacity.

Figure 14: Share of CR-eligible calls per day of week

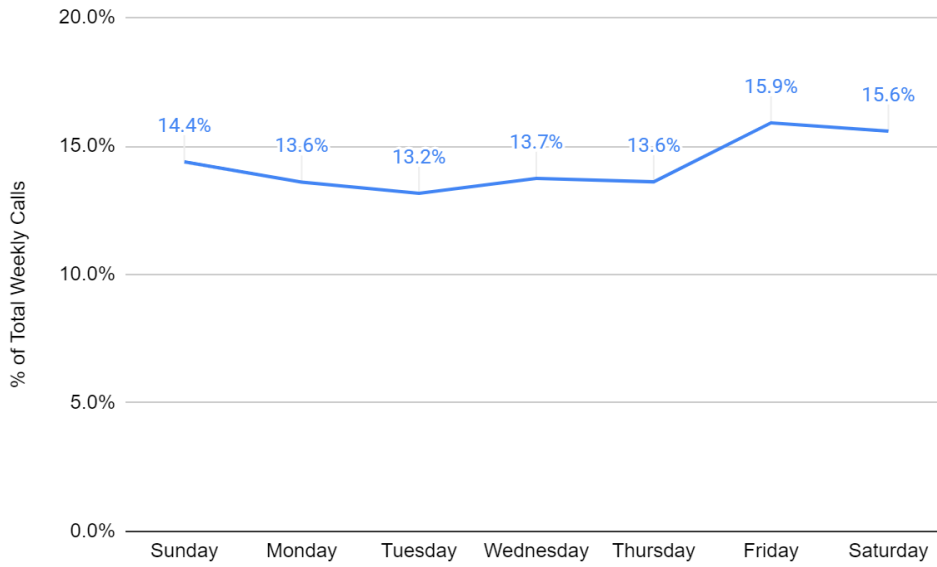


Figure 15: Average CR-eligible calls per hour of the day

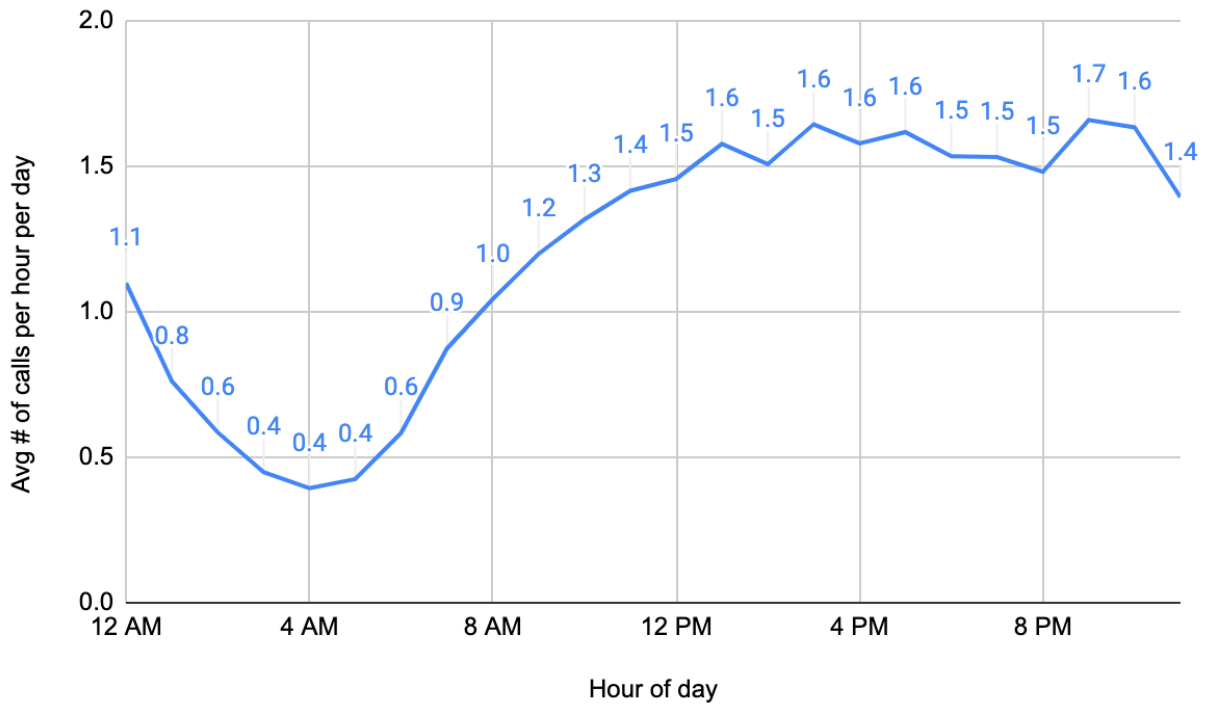
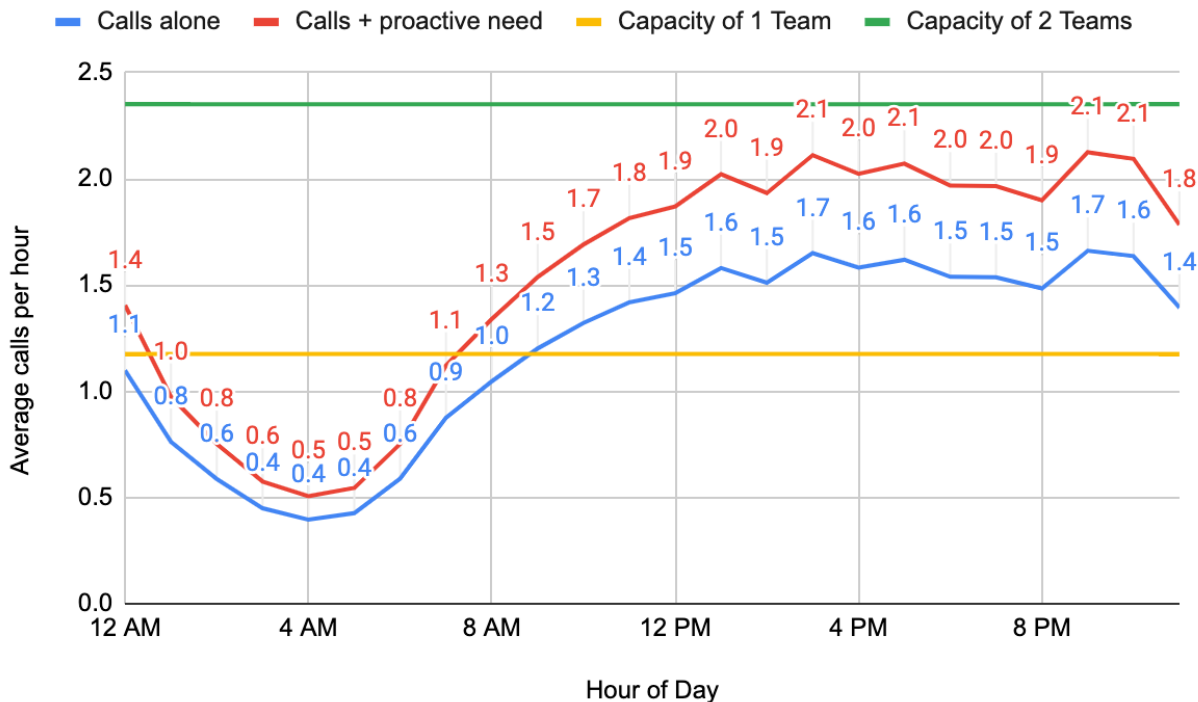


Figure 16: Need for and Capacity of Responders by Hour



In choosing how many teams to hire initially and which hours they should work, Evanston can consider several factors. First, when we interviewed police and dispatch in several cities, including Evanston, a number of individuals stressed the importance of consistency. When dispatch and police can only reach a program during limited hours, they rely on it less. In Eugene and other cities, police officers themselves advocated for expanding community responder programs to 24/7 so that they could truly depend on it.

Second, Evanston would benefit from having multiple teams on the street during peak hours. Evanston needs more responses than a single team could provide from 9am to midnight, and particularly from 1 to 11pm.

Evanston also needs to decide on a length of shift. Existing community responder programs operate on 8-, 10-, and 12-hour shifts. We recommend 8-hour shifts for safety. Consistent exposure to trauma and stress in 12-hour shifts can lead to fatigue, decreased focus, and negatively impact decision-making skills. At the same time, Evanston and many other police departments operate on 12-hour shifts. Some community responder teams choose to work 12-hour shifts in order to match police hours.

In order to meet the actual need hour by hour, depending on shift timing, the program would need seven or eight teams. It would require five teams just to cover 24/7 service. To address the excess call volume during peak hours, it would need two or three additional teams, depending on which hours the shifts covered.

If the program began by hiring only five or six responder teams, it could maximize impact in one of two ways. First, the program could double up shifts during peak hours but offer phone-only assistance during the quietest hours from 3 to 7am, although police and dispatch prefer consistent 24/7 service. Second, the program could offer in-person 24/7 service but meet only a portion of the calls during peak hours. For example, the program could initially exclude certain call types, such as “suspicious person” calls. Although those calls disproportionately target people of color, most community responder programs outside Albuquerque do not yet handle them. By making either of these changes, the program could begin with five or six teams.

9. Operating Agency

As cities across the country have launched community responder programs, they have each chosen different agencies to house and operate their programs. Cities have found it critical to place the program in the right agency in order to fully utilize the program and ensure that it meets the needs of the community it is intended to serve.

We conducted research to learn where each of the established programs is housed and who manages their operations. It is challenging to identify one operating agency for each individual program. For example, some programs are technically housed within a city agency, but an external agency manages hiring, training, and daily operations. Some programs staff a clinician and a paramedic, who are hired and overseen by separate agencies. All programs have developed unique arrangements to work closely with police, 9-1-1 dispatch, and other city stakeholders.

In Figure 17, for each established community program, we identify the agency that primarily manages program operations.

Figure 17: Operating Agency Program Comparison

Operating Agency	Program	City
Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Olympia’s CRU team operates out of their Police Department and is staffed by civilian city employees• Bloomington’s CSS, which also handles taking police reports, operates out of the Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Olympia, WA• Bloomington, IN

New City Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) is housed in their new Community Safety Department Durham's Community Response Team is housed in their new Community Safety Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albuquerque, NM Durham, NC
Recreation and Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rochester's PIC team is operated by the City's Department of Recreation and Human Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rochester, NY
Mediation Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dayton's MRU team operates out of the Dayton Mediation Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dayton, OH
9-1-1 Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cincinnati's ARC team Emergency Communications Center Denver STAR is staffed by an outside agency (WellPower) contracted through the health department and operated by the 9-1-1 center Seattle's CARE department houses the 9-1-1 center and community responder program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cincinnati, OH Denver, CO Seattle, WA
Health Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albany's County Crisis Officials Responding and Diverting team is housed in their County Mental Health Department Chicago's Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement unit is housed in the Chicago Department of Public Health Houston's Holistic Assistance Response Team is housed in the Houston County Public Health Department San Francisco's Street Crisis Response Team is housed in their Department of Public Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albany, NY Chicago, IL Houston, TX San Francisco, CA
Fire Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madison's CARES program operates out of their Fire Department Be-HEARD NYC operates out of their Fire Department Portland's Street Response Team is a program within their Fire and Rescue Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madison, WI NYC, NY Portland, OR

<p>Outside Agency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin contracts with Integral Care to staff and run EMCOT • 9-1-1 Diversion Baltimore is staffed and run by Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc. (BCRI) • Eugene contracts with the White Bird Clinic to staff and run CAHOOTS • Louisville’s Deflection program is staffed by Seven Counties Services • Orlando’s Community Response Team (CRT) is led by Orlando’s Police Department in partnership with Aspire Health Partners • St. Petersburg’s CALL program is staffed and run by Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin, TX • Baltimore, MD • Eugene, OR • Louisville, KY • Orlando, FL • St. Petersburg, FL
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Based on the experiences of existing programs, we recommend that Evanston house its community responder program within an existing city agency. Outsourced programs have experienced high staff turnover because outside agencies generally offer less competitive salaries and benefits and a less secure contract compared to city agencies. In addition, cities only choose outside agencies when there is an existing outside agency with experience in offering similar services. We were unable to identify any outside agency in Evanston specializing in responders who are trained in both behavioral health and conflict resolution. While Trilogy specializes in mental health response, it is bound by its current funding structure to provide mental health response, rather than conflict resolution, and is not comfortable going outside of that boundary. Though Trilogy does arrange tandem responses with the police department, Trilogy does not currently handle any 9-1-1 calls for service as a first responder.

We interviewed numerous stakeholders about potential locations for a community responder program in Evanston. We also reviewed the existing programs operated by each of these agencies to identify which already operate programs that most closely align with the work of community responders.

We recommend Evanston’s community responder program be housed in the Parks and Recreation Department. The agency currently operates the Youth and Young Adult Division, which offers a variety of education, training, and employment programs targeting at-risk, gang-involved youth and young adults. Its Evanston Outreach program trains and manages outreach workers who actively engage

community members at risk of violence, work to lower tensions, and offer wraparound services. This program demonstrates that the department can train and maintain a staff of responders equipped to de-escalate short-term conflict and guide people into services to address long-term issues. The program currently receives referrals from the police department, showing that it can work alongside the police while maintaining a separate identity to build trust among those who avoid the police.

10. Key Service Connections

In interviews, directors of existing community responder programs emphasized that after responders assist a member of the public, they must also be able to effectively connect that person to necessary follow-up services. In the Evanston area, a community responder program could refer people to numerous service providers and valuable resources. For instance, community responders can link individuals struggling with addiction to [Peer Services](#) for personalized follow-up and case management. In cases of domestic disputes, responders can connect individuals with the Health Department's [Victim Services](#).

To ensure that community responders are well-informed about local resources, the program should involve as many of these groups as possible in responder training. Responders should not only know what services exist and how to reach them but also understand their eligibility requirements and intake process. To capture key information on frequently needed services, community responders should be provided with “cheat sheets.”

The program may want to collaborate with certain service providers to customize a unique intake process for community responders. Below, we highlight specific services that have proven instrumental for other community responder programs and merit special attention in Evanston.

10a. Crisis Intervention

When EPD officers encounter a person in a mental health crisis, they can radio dispatch to request a follow-up response by Trilogy's FACT mental health responders. When community responders encounter a mental health crisis situation, we recommend that they also have the option to radio dispatch and request in-person assistance from the FACT team.

10b. Drop Off Locations

Many existing programs report that their responders rely heavily on a "drop-off stabilization center," where they can bring someone voluntarily who is not safe in their current surroundings, so they have an alternative to an emergency room or psychiatric facility.

In Evanston, Albany Care and other intermediate care facilities provide crisis intervention and assessments as part of their admission services. Notably, the State of Illinois is currently transitioning intermediate care facilities into a more treatment- and recovery-oriented model known as Specialized Mental Health Rehabilitation Facilities (SMHRF). These revamped facilities will include stabilization units, which should provide effective drop-off options for community responders.

Connections for the Homeless offers many alternatives for unhoused individuals who need a warm place to shelter and connect to other services. The program also operates a continuum of housing programs to help people move from homelessness to housing as quickly as possible. Connections' short-term housing programs actively support individuals and families by providing housing assistance and case management. These programs focus on enhancing skills and increasing income, empowering households to achieve housing stability independently. The agency's permanent housing programs offer rental subsidies and intensive support services.

10c. High-Utilization

Existing community responder programs also underscore the importance of high-utilizer case management. Responders identify individuals who are frequently involved in calls due to mental health, addiction, and homelessness, and the programs then assign them case managers. Each person's case manager works with them on an ongoing basis to build a relationship and improve their situation.

For instance, when Olympia's CRU team interacts multiple times with a specific individual, they can refer them to the Familiar Faces program for long-term case management. The Familiar Faces team employs Peer Navigators to establish relationships with these individuals, stabilizing their situations and significantly reducing negative interactions with citizens, police, and EMS. Community responders work hand-in-hand with similar case management programs in San Francisco and Durham.

In Evanston, the ECHO program proactively offered free in-home medical visits, health education, social service referrals, home safety inspections, and other support resources to individuals at high risk of hospital readmission. The program utilized fire department personnel to teach individuals how to recognize true medical emergencies, access care outside of the emergency room, and maintain and fill prescriptions. Additionally, the fire department personnel conducted home safety inspections to identify hazards.

We recommend ensuring that the ECHO program is funded and functional, so that community responders can refer community members who would benefit from ECHO's services. Working together, they can enhance support and care for high-utilizers, addressing their specific needs before they become involved in further 9-1-1 calls, emergency room visits, or other crises.

10d. Restorative Justice

Since almost one quarter of calls require conflict resolution, community responders would also benefit from the option to refer individuals to a restorative justice program. Restorative justice focuses on repairing harm to the victim and offers an alternative model of justice. For example, if a teenager throws rocks through a neighbor's windows, if the teenager is willing to take responsibility and the neighbor gives consent, instead of charging the teenager with a crime, trained professionals can arrange a restorative justice conference. The conference would bring both parties and their families together to address the situation, allowing the teenager to take responsibility, the neighbor to explain how it affected them, and both to decide how to make things right.

Restorative justice conferences have proven to be effective alternatives to the traditional criminal justice system. These conferences provide victims the chance to be heard and offenders to understand the harm they caused. Around [95 percent of victim-offender](#) mediations reach a consensus on appropriate resolutions. As victims

are often more concerned with stopping future offenses and ensuring accountability, restorative conferences [increase victim satisfaction](#).

Fortunately, experienced restorative justice facilitators are already operating in Evanston within and in partnership with city agencies. The [Moran Center for Youth Advocacy](#) partners with Youth and Young Adult Services to run a diversion program for youth who have committed city violations. The city incentivizes youth to participate by offering to waive their fines. Similarly, the [Health and Human Services Department](#) offers victim-offender conferencing, which includes hosting a family meeting and developing a plan to prevent recurrence. It offers offenders a chance to take responsibility for their actions, while offering victims or survivors the opportunity to have their questions answered and to communicate the impact of the offense on their lives. The dialogue is entirely voluntary, and either party can terminate the process at any time.

We recommend that the community responder program establishes an agreement with the Moran Center, Health and Human Services, or other local restorative justice facilitators so that responders can guide people involved in conflict into a restorative justice process.

10e. Mediation

For conflicts that have not led to significant harm, community responders may also benefit from referring individuals to mediation. For instance, neighbors might have ongoing disagreements over a barking dog or loud music. Evanston residents often call for help in such situations, with 23% of calls requiring conflict resolution and 52% involving spatial challenges. The traditional criminal justice system lacks the capacity to effectively resolve such disputes, as police officers are not professionally trained mediators, and their primary tools of arrest and citation do not address the underlying conflict. Mediation involves a structured process led by trained mediators who assist disputing parties in finding a resolution. Similar to the restorative justice model above, mediators conduct conferences with the parties to negotiate mutually satisfactory terms.

In other cities, organizations like the [New Orleans PeaceKeepers \(NOPK\)](#) and [Newark Community Street Team](#) have successfully utilized mediation to resolve disputes between community members over the years, without requiring police involvement.

In Evanston, [Health and Human Services](#) offers Peace Circles, which provide mediation for youth, family, and community conflicts.

We recommend that the community responder program collaborate with the Peace Circle program or other local mediators to establish a process for referring appropriate disputes to mediation services. By doing so, community responders can provide not only short-term but also long-term conflict resolution within the community.

11. Community Engagement

As discussed above, the city has already presented the community responder idea to numerous local audiences, soliciting feedback at those meetings and via the survey. We recommend that the city continue to actively gather public input to shape the plans for the community responder team. Once the city agrees to move forward and hire a program manager, the program manager can lead listening sessions and develop another community survey. They can solicit feedback on meaningful choices in the program's design, for example which resources community responders should refer people to, what design to use for responder uniforms and vehicles, how best to publicize and explain the program, and how to measure the success of the program.


Community engagement also allows the program manager to educate the community about the purpose of the community responder team, eligible call types, and anticipated benefits such as service connections and avoiding arrests. The program manager can present information on current Evanston police calls for service to community members, including concrete examples of calls that fall into the community responder-eligible call types (see [Figure 7](#)). This information would help community members understand the scale and nature of the Evanston community's needs, as well as the scope and potential impact of the program. It would better inform members of the public so that when they call 9-1-1 for assistance in the future, they already understand the community responder option, lessening the burden on the call-taker.

Existing programs have emphasized the importance of educating frequent callers, including staff and neighbors of transit centers, libraries, mental health facilities, shelters, group homes, rehabilitation centers, and businesses. Community responders should actively seek community input on publicizing the program and put considerable effort into raising awareness about the benefits it can bring to the community.

Existing programs have also begun creating videos to better engage a wider audience. Durham recently created a documentary film to illustrate the program's operations and impact. Dayton has published several [videos on YouTube](#) to present its MRU program to a [variety of audiences](#).



Q & A on the Dayton Mediation Response Unit

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Chief Tom Thompson interviews Raven Cruz-Loaiza about Dayton's Mediation Response Unit, [available on YouTube](#).

12. Documentation and Impact Evaluation

The community responder program in Evanston can continue to improve the quality of service by properly documenting and reviewing what occurs during calls. Political leaders and the media will closely monitor the program's impact as a pioneering model for Illinois and other jurisdictions nationwide. In order to demonstrate its positive impact on the community, the program will need a carefully structured documentation system.

Programs track many statistics about each call in order to demonstrate their impact. In cities using 9-1-1 call center-led dispatch, call center staff already capture most of the key information for each call in the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, including the call type, call narrative, responding unit number, location, call outcome, and time of call, dispatch, arrival, and completion. The city can use CAD information to evaluate various aspects of the program's performance – see specific indicators of interest in [Figure 18](#).

Several existing community responder programs are sharing key data directly with the public in real time. [Durham](#), [Cincinnati](#), and [Chicago](#) have created data dashboards where the public can see automatically-updated statistics on community responder impact, including call volume, call types, response time, time on scene, and call outcome.

Programs are also partnering with academic centers to conduct rigorous impact evaluations. [Portland](#) and [Louisville](#) commissioned local universities to create reports on their first year of operation. In [Denver](#), city agencies put together their own impact report, but they also brought in Stanford University researchers to publish a [peer-reviewed article in Science Advances](#) documenting STAR's impact on crime. Durham's CRT and other programs are currently participating in similar evaluation studies.

Figure 18: CAD-Stored Data and Evaluation Questions

Data Stored in CAD	Community Responder Evaluation Questions
First Unit Dispatched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which calls were handled by Community Responders?
Nature Code Description [Call type]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What volume and percent of each call type is Community Responders handling?
Notes [from call-taker/responder]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If call-takers are screening out unexpectedly high or low percentages of calls in certain call types, why is that occurring? If any inappropriate calls were sent to community responders, why weren't they screened out? What percent of calls in each type appeared to involve behavioral health, conflict resolution, substance use, and other types of issues?
How Call Was Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What volume and percent of each call type comes in through 9-1-1 versus non-emergency line? Did the volume of calls to either line increase after the community responder program launched?
Full Street Address, Geo X/Y coordinates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What recurring issues are causing repeat calls from the same locations? How concentrated are calls in common locations? Which frequent callers are reaching the program through 9-1-1 versus the community responder dispatch line?
Date/time: Call Received, First Dispatch, First Enroute, First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does call volume change during each community responder shift? How quickly did the responders arrive on scene? How did responder time on scene vary across different call

Arrival, Last Clear	types?
Closing disposition or cancel code	• Did any community responder calls lead to police making an arrest, giving a citation, or taking an incident report?
Incident ID	• Unique call identifier number allows analyst to merge CAD and record management system (RMS) entries to answer additional questions.

The community responder program will need a record management system (RMS) to track more detailed call information. First, the CAD system offers limited options for recording, viewing, and summarizing data. Customizing new data fields, views, and reports can be difficult and expensive. Second, police and dispatch can view all CAD data. Just as police use a separate system for citations and reports, existing community responder programs use their own RMS to record, view, and report their own customizable statistics and notes for each incident. For each call, Olympia's CRU team records root causes such as substance use or the unhoused, and Portland's PSR team records referrals and connections to other services.

When selecting an RMS system, community responders should consider one that integrates easily with the CAD system. This integration allows program managers to merge the CAD and RMS information on the same call without needing case-by-case assistance from evaluators or the IT Department. If the city already has an existing RMS contract, a community responder-specific service can be added to that system, streamlining integration with the CAD system and facilitating responses to community responder-related public records requests in Illinois. Merging RMS and CAD is essential as it reduces the need for responders to duplicate information entry in the RMS when it already exists in the CAD entry. If necessary, responders can manually link the entries by recording the unique CAD incident ID number in the RMS system for each call.

The RMS system should be designed for both efficiency and impact evaluation. The program manager should work with researchers to create multiple-choice fields with pre-set answer choices that allow responders to rapidly capture key information that will be useful in evaluating the program's impact. In addition, responders should record free-form notes for each call to enable responders to follow up with key individuals and review information later for calls that result in complaints or other challenges. The program manager should have the technological capacity to easily analyze the merged CAD and RMS information to develop insights to improve the

program's performance – see sample evaluation questions based on RMS data in [Figure 19](#).

We recommend that Evanston contract with an academic institution to assess the program’s impact. That institution should be involved in setting up the RMS recording process for responders, to make sure that call-takers and responders are tracking the information that evaluators will need to properly demonstrate the program’s key performance indicators. Once the system has collected the correct information, city data analysts can directly calculate some outcomes – such as the volume of calls in each call type, or the response time. For other outcomes, the evaluator should create a robust experimental design, for example to assess if community responders reduced citations, arrests, or low-level offenses as in Denver.

Figure 19: RMS-Stored Data and Evaluation Questions

Data Stored in RMS	Community Responder Evaluation Questions
Incident number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows analysts to merge CAD and RMS entries.
Backup or Followup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many calls required immediate police backup for safety? • How many calls required follow-up by police or fire?
Notes from responder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case a call needs review – if a complaint is filed, a related incident occurs, or the call should have been screened out – what occurred during the incident? • What percent of calls in each type involved behavioral health, family or neighbor conflict resolution, substance use, and other types of root issues? • If any calls led to police or other agency involvement, why did that occur?
Final Call Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well did the call type chosen by the call-taker match the actual nature of the call?
Root cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What portion of calls in each call type are related to which underlying issue? • (poverty, housing, mental health, substance use, family dispute, other conflict)
Referral type, agency, notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many referrals to services are responders making? • Are they making warm handoffs or just providing referral information?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long is it taking for responders to conduct referrals?
Call involves a known high utilizer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What share of calls involves known high utilizers? • Is high-utilizer case management resulting in a decrease in calls for service?
Subject gender, race, and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the demographics of people involved in community responder calls, both callers and subjects?
Contact information and permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were responders successful in reaching people who agreed to follow-up? • Did follow-ups lead to additional referrals or reduced calls for service?
Outcome/disposition of incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific outcomes did responders achieve?
Follow-up with other service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percent of referrals led to treatment uptake and long-term success? • Have high utilizer individuals improved health and safety outcomes? • Why were some referral efforts unsuccessful?

13. Implementation Plan

In Evanston, preparation for the launch of the community responder program will likely require at least six months. Staff should identify and prioritize the steps that may become bottlenecks, such as hiring new city employees. We recommend thinking of program implementation in two phases: program development and training.

13a. Program Development Phase

To begin the Program Development Phase, Evanston should take steps to hire a program manager. The program manager is responsible for project-managing the creation of the program, so that the burden does not fall on other city staff with already full plates. To find a candidate who has the vision and attention to detail to establish a brand-new program, as well as effectively build community trust, the city should invest in attracting a diverse pool of qualified candidates.

Once the program manager begins work, they should begin a constant process of soliciting input on all aspects of program development by meeting with community members. They should also establish regular meetings to receive advice from and build relationships with system partners, including police, fire, and dispatch.

In the program development phase, the program manager should initially focus on the following likely bottlenecks:

1. Budget: If the entire implementation budget is not immediately available, they should compare the timeline of funds availability to the implementation timeline in order to ensure that they will have access to the funds necessary to complete each step in the process.
2. Responder hiring: They should initiate the process of responder hiring, developing job descriptions and securing city approval to begin hiring.
3. Trainer availability: They should identify trainers in order to begin blocking out future time in their schedules.
4. Technology acquisition: They should identify technology needs to determine which items will require significant time to research or pre-order, such as a record management system, vehicle, tablets, and radios.

The program manager should begin developing operational guidelines, particularly those that involve other agencies, including:

1. Dispatch: Work with dispatch to create protocols for the [call-taker to screen the call](#), for the dispatcher to send eligible calls to responders, and for the responders to maintain communication with the dispatch center until the call is completed and closed in the CAD system.
2. Safety: Work with police and dispatch to create protocols for [protecting responder safety on scene](#), including approaching the scene safely, recognizing warning signs, and calling for police assistance.
3. Officer referral: Work with police and dispatch to create guidelines for [officers to refer eligible situations](#) to the responders.
4. Warm handoffs: Build relationships to understand local resources and create intake processes with local agencies and service providers including the Department of Health and Human Services, Trilogy, Connections for the Homeless, restorative justice and mediation providers, and Child Protective Services (CPS).
5. Documentation: Work with dispatch to create instructions for documenting calls in the CAD system, and work with program evaluators to create instructions for documenting calls in the RMS system.

Throughout this phase, the program manager will need to dedicate a significant portion of their time to [hiring responders](#) and [planning the training](#).

We estimate that once the city hires and onboards the program manager, they will need 3-4 months to complete the program development phase.

13b. Training Phase

Once the responders are hired, the program begins the training phase. Costs ramp up as the city begins paying their salaries, in addition to training costs. The program manager should identify and address bottlenecks before this phase begins, so that the city does not begin paying responder salaries until the program manager is prepared to begin training.

The training phase involves the following components:

1. Providing responders with operational and field training, as discussed in the [training section](#).
2. Ordering and preparing all technology and supplies, ensuring that they are ready before they are necessary in training or testing.
3. Conducting extensive community engagement: involving community members in training, presenting the program to a variety of audiences, introducing staff to the community stakeholders involved in the program development, and informally discussing the program through public outreach. In all community outreach, program staff should provide the public with clear methods of contributing feedback and input.
4. Conducting “dry run” tests including answering calls, documenting them in the CAD and RMS systems, and role-playing scenarios to stress-test all protocols and proactively identify the blind spots.

The training phase should last approximately two months.

13c. Operations

The program officially launches when the call center begins dispatching 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls to responders. The city should plan extensive publicity around the program launch to raise public awareness. Responders can continue to conduct public outreach to promote the program and encourage feedback during lag time in between calls for service.

The program manager should continue to meet with community and system stakeholders in order to address feedback, revise protocols, and continually improve operations. The evaluator should monitor data collection in order to correct errors that could interfere with program evaluation.

14. Funding

In order to create a new branch of the first response system, Evanston will need to dedicate significant, sustainable funding for the foreseeable future. LEAP recognizes the challenge in identifying and protecting sufficient funds. We researched where cities with existing programs are finding their funding and how much they are spending.

14a. Budget Source

As [Figure 20](#) shows, most existing programs rely primarily on general funds allocated by the city. They also often secure partial funding from a diverse range of sources, including federal grants, Medicaid reimbursement, private funding, and property tax levies.

Figure 20: Funding Source Program Comparison

Funding Type	City
General Fund (sustainable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ACS - Albuquerque, NM ● EMCOT - Austin, TX ● STAR - Denver, CO ● CAHOOTS - Eugene, OR ● CCD - Houston, TX ● PSR - Portland, OR ● Be-Heard - NYC, NY ● CALL - St. Petersburg, FL ● SCRT - San Francisco, CA

Property Tax Levy (sustainable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● STAR - Denver, CO ● SCRT - San Francisco, CA ● CRU - Olympia, WA
Medicaid Reimbursements (sustainable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CAHOOTS - Eugene, OR receives Medicaid reimbursement for CAHOOTS calls involving crisis assessment and stabilization because they are a federally registered behavioral health agency in an area of need.
State/Federal Grants (temporary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9-1-1 Diversion - Baltimore, MD received a grant under the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program and created the 988 Trust Fund to help fund the 988 hotline. ● CRU - Olympia, WA received a grant through the state association of police chiefs and sheriffs. ● MRU - Dayton, OH was awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the Ohio Criminal Justice Services, a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, to establish a new Crisis Response Unit alongside their Mediation Response Unit.
Private Funding (temporary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SCRT - San Francisco, CA received private funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Because the program would handle a significant share of 9-1-1 calls on an ongoing basis, we recommend that Evanston begin by funding the program out of its general fund, as the city does for other first responders and as other cities do for community responders. We also recommend exploring opportunities to leverage the sustainable funding sources listed above.

While the city should not rely on temporary funding sources, it should monitor and seek out grant funding opportunities. We expect this program to be eligible for a growing range of state and federal grants. The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) is providing Grants for Community-Based Funding for Local Behavioral Health Disorders and Substance Use Disorder Services. This program has allocated [\\$50 million](#) in grants for state and local governments and nonprofits to address behavioral health needs following the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional [\\$30 million](#) is accessible to support harm reduction services for individuals with substance use disorders. The [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022](#) appropriated large sums of money for states to distribute in support of mental health and violence interruption services. The particulars of these opportunities, the process of obtaining the funds, and the stipulations concerning expenditure are still pending.

14b. Budget Size

LEAP also examined the budget sizes of existing community responder programs. As shown in [Figure 21](#), budgets vary significantly depending on the size and needs of the city, as well as the scale and impact of the program.

Figure 21: Budget Size Program Comparison

Budget Size	City	City population
\$100,000 - \$1,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amherst - \$621,520 St. Petersburg - \$850,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39,263 261,256
\$1,000,000 - \$3,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dayton - \$1.2 million Olympia - \$2.0 million Eugene - \$2.1 million Los Angeles - \$ 2.2 million Albuquerque - \$ 2.2 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 137,644 55,669 177,923 3,898,747 561,008
\$3,000,000 - 5,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Austin - \$4 million Portland - \$4.8 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 961,855 652,503
\$5 million and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Francisco - \$13 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 873,965

Based on conversations with these cities about their principal budget line items, we constructed two approximate budgets for Evanston. The first budget allows for five teams handling 85% of the potential calls for service, while the second allows for six teams handling 100% of calls for service. For both program sizes, we include both a six-month implementation budget as the program manager prepares the program for launch and an annual operating budget once the program launches ([Figure 22](#)). The lion’s share of both budgets goes to staff salaries. The implementation budget also includes significant upfront vehicle and training costs.

[Figure 23](#) compares the size of these two budgets to the existing programs listed above.

Figure 22: Budget Estimate

	6 Months Pre-Launch		First Year of Operation	
	5 teams 85% of calls	6 teams 100% of calls	5 teams 85% of calls	6 teams 100% of calls
Total cost	\$348,000	\$442,800	\$958,000	\$1,158,800
Personnel cost	\$267,000	\$320,400	\$929,000	\$1,114,800
Responder cost	\$197,500	\$237,000	\$790,000	\$948,000
Management cost	\$69,500	\$83,400	\$139,000	\$166,800
Equipment cost	\$47,000	\$87,400	\$25,000	\$40,000
Office space	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$30,000
Vehicle purchase	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$0	\$0
Vehicle gas/maintenance	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Technology purchase	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$0	\$0
Uniforms	\$1,000	\$1,200	\$0	\$0
Misc. Supplies	\$1,000	\$1,200	\$5,000	\$6,000
Training cost	\$34,000	\$35,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Training space	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$0	\$0
External trainer cost	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Internal trainer cost	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$0	\$0
Training supplies	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$0

Figure 23: Comparison of Annual Operations Budgets

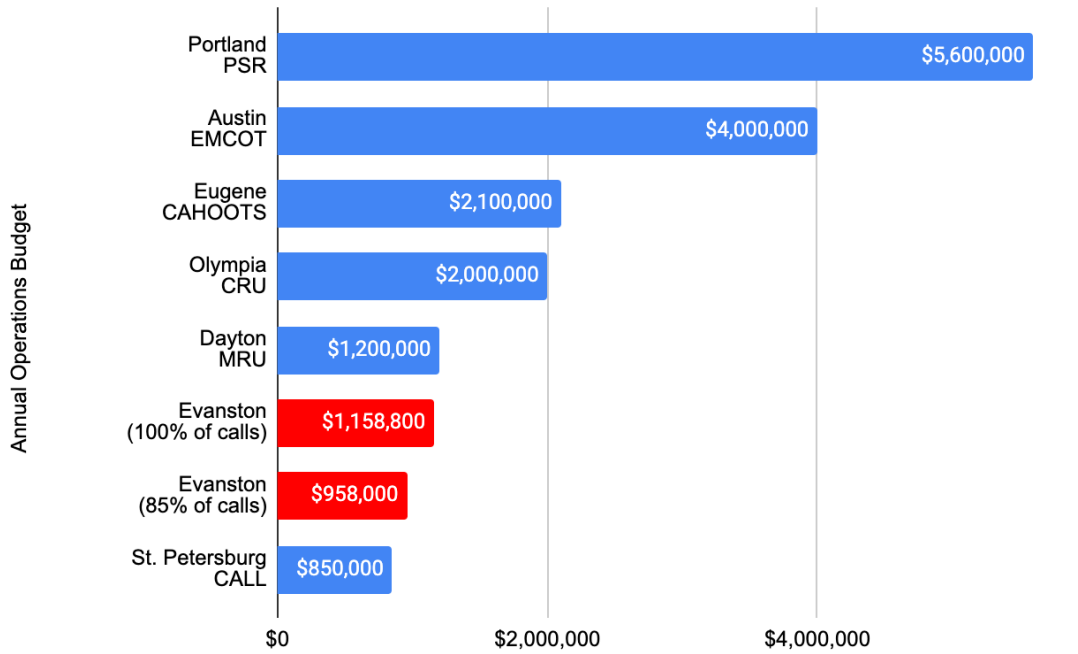


Figure 24: Budget Breakdown: 6 months pre-launch

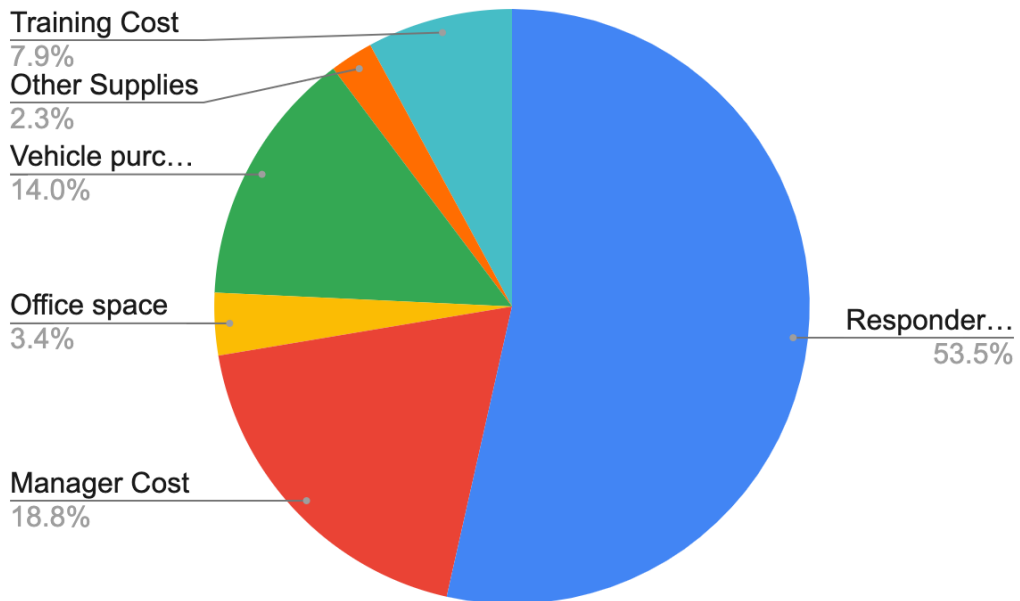
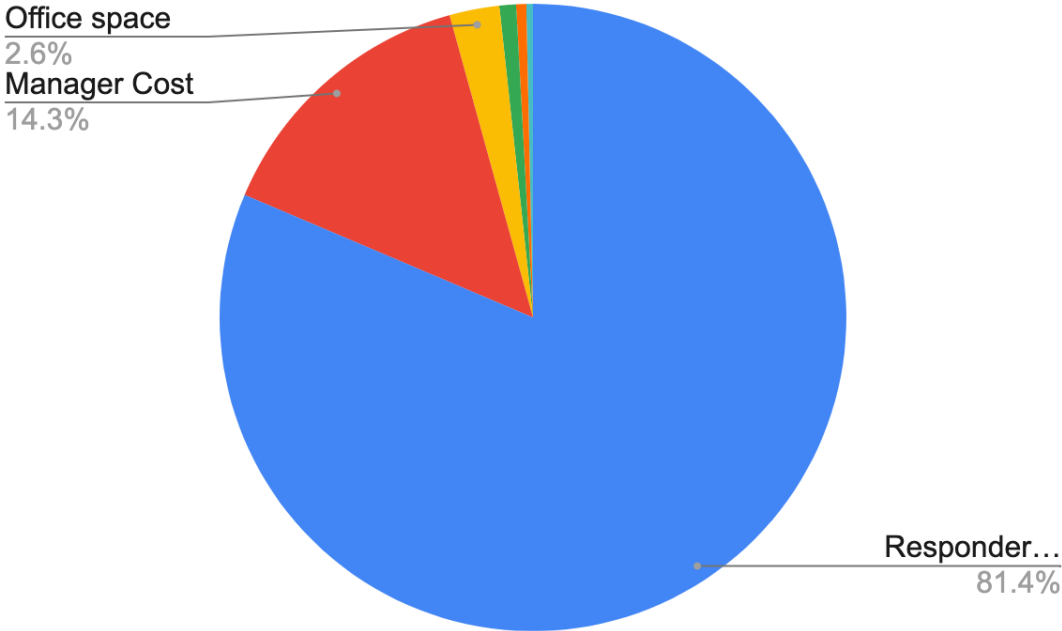


Figure 25: Budget Breakdown: Annual Operating Budget



15. Conclusion

In this report, we recommend a design and implementation process for Evanston to create a community responder program - teams of two trained civilians dispatched as first responders to handle low-risk 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls. We estimate that a fully staffed community responder program could take over 9,800 calls for service off of the plate of the police, which constitutes about 36% of Evanston's total citizen-initiated police calls for service ([Figure 26](#)). As the public and officers become familiar with the program, we estimate that Evanston's community responders could see the need rise to almost 18,000 calls per year: 9,800 calls currently burdening the police, 3,100 new calls, 2,800 proactive encounters on the street, and 2,000 officer referrals ([Figure 27](#)). By proactively addressing situations before they become emergencies, community responders can improve public health and safety, prevent negative interactions with law enforcement, increase positive outcomes for people in need of immediate and long-term services, and build trust with people of color.

Moreover, beyond the benefits to Evanston and its residents, we believe that the program would quickly become a pioneer in the first response field. Cities nationwide are increasingly recognizing the need to address calls not only related to behavioral health but also conflict resolution. Evanston has the opportunity to become a model for how cities can effectively address a wide range of calls through a locally-tailored design. We expect that other cities will quickly come to look to Evanston for guidance. The program holds tremendous potential. With careful implementation, it can not only benefit the local community but also inspire and lead communities throughout the country.

Figure 26: Future Handling of Today's Police Calls for Service

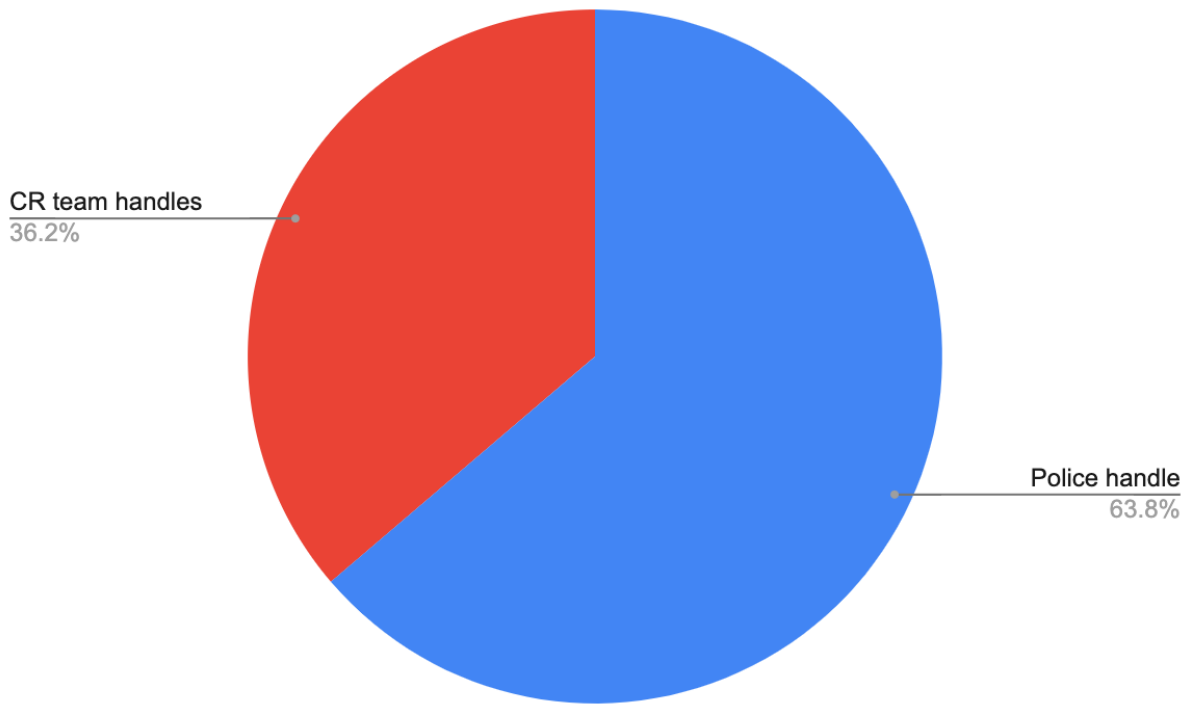


Figure 27: Estimate of Potential Future Call Sources

Call Category	Calls Per Year
Calls diverted from police	9,853
Self-initiated/on view CR calls	2,753
<i>Short-term total</i>	<i>12,606</i>
Extra calls for CRs	3,141
Officer referrals	1,983
<i>Long-term total</i>	<i>17,730</i>

Appendix 1: Call Type Categories

Nature Code	# of citizen-initiated calls (2021)	Priority Level	Category
Premise Check	2,012	5	Suspicious
Parking Complaint	1,061	6	Report-taking calls
Check Well Being	1,805	2	Behavioral health needs
Nuisance Complaint	1,729	4	Minor disputes
Traffic Accident	1,426	1	Report-taking calls
Burglar Alarm	1,357	P	Alarm
Theft	1,274	3	Report-taking calls
Disturbance	1,135	1	Minor disputes
Disorderly Conduct	1,128	3	Minor disputes
Deceptive Practice	907	2	Police
Domestic Related	728	1	Minor disputes
Unwanted Person	653	1	Minor disputes
Animal Complaint	620	5	Minor disputes

Hit And Run	477	P	Report-taking calls
Harassment	437	5	Police
Panhandler	409	5	Behavioral health needs
Miscellaneous Investigation	394	4	Police
Vagrant	397	5	Behavioral health needs
Leaf Blower Violation	396	5	Minor disputes
Reckless Driver	82	5	Police
Criminal Damage To Property	357	2	Report-taking calls
Traffic Miscellaneous	314	4	Report-taking calls
Found/Confiscated Property	317	6	Report-taking calls
Fireworks	312	5	Minor disputes
Assist Other Agency	298	2	Rapid assistance
Miscellaneous Public Service	269	5	Behavioral health needs
Missing Person-Adult	259	2	Police
Trespassing	264	2	Minor disputes
Battery	257	1	Police
City Ordinance Violation	214	5	Suspicious
Assist Outside Police Agency	203	3	Police
Missing Person-Juvenile	204	2	Police
Hazardous Situation	188	2	Report-taking calls
Burglary To Vehicle	194	2	Report-taking calls
Lost Property	191	7	Report-taking calls
Involuntary Committal	187	1	Behavioral health needs
Voluntary Committal	184	2	Behavioral health needs
Burglary	173	2	Police
Assault	162	2	Police
Towed Vehicle	161	9	Report-taking calls
Hold Up Panic Alarm	160	P	Alarm
Susp Incident	153	9	Suspicious

Juvenile Investigation	147	2	Police
Civil Matter	144	7	Minor disputes
Graffiti	148	6	Report-taking calls
Auto Theft	145	2	Police
Drug Related Activity	139	2	Behavioral health needs
Shots Fired	137	P	Police
Accidental Damage Property	138	2	Report-taking calls
Assist Evanston Agency	131	2	Rapid assistance
Suspicious Person	133	1	Suspicious
Accident With Injuries	127	1	Rapid assistance
Standby Assist To Public	115	4	Minor disputes
Repossessed Vehicle	114	9	Report-taking calls
Death Investigation	105	P	Police
Sex Offense Investigation	104	P	Police
Mental Subject	101	1	Behavioral health needs
Violation Of Order Of Protect	72	1	Police
Suspicious Vehicle	70	2	Suspicious
Vehicle Alarm	61	1	Alarm
Landlord/Tenant Dispute	69	3	Minor disputes
Tobacco Compliance Check	66	9	Police
Child Custody Investigation	63	2	Police
Indecent Exposure	62	2	Behavioral health needs
Ungovernable Youth	59	4	Minor disputes
Turned In/Confiscated Weapon	57	5	Police
Robbery	55	1	Police
Public Fall	56	5	Report-taking calls
Dumping Complaint	44	6	Report-taking calls
Man With A Gun	42	P	Police
Traffic Control	35	8	Police

Follow Up	35	8	Police
Driving Under The Influence	31	1	Police
Lost Confused Person	28	4	Behavioral health needs
Animal Bite	26	5	Rapid assistance
Soliciting Complaint	26	4	Minor disputes
Driving Without Owners Consent	26	5	Police
Attempt Suicide	24	P	Rapid assistance
Outside Stolen Vehicle	24	3	Police
Text A Tip	15	9	Police
Investigation	21	8	Police
Referred To Other Agency	21	2	Police
Attempt Theft	20	3	Report-taking calls
Drug Overdose	20	P	Rapid assistance
Attempt Burglary	19	3	Report-taking calls
Theft Of Service	16	2	Report-taking calls
Abandoned Vehicle	8	9	Report-taking calls
Animal Cruelty	10	5	Police
Arson	6	2	Police
Person Shot	6	P	Police
Weapons Offense	5	1	Police
Outside Missing Person	5	5	Police
Suicide	4	P	Police
Fire Explosion Disaster	4	2	Rapid assistance
Attempt Auto Theft	4	3	Report-taking calls
Homicide	3	P	Police
Gang Related Activty	1	2	Police
Criminal Sexual Assault	1	1	Police

Appendix 2: Survey Results

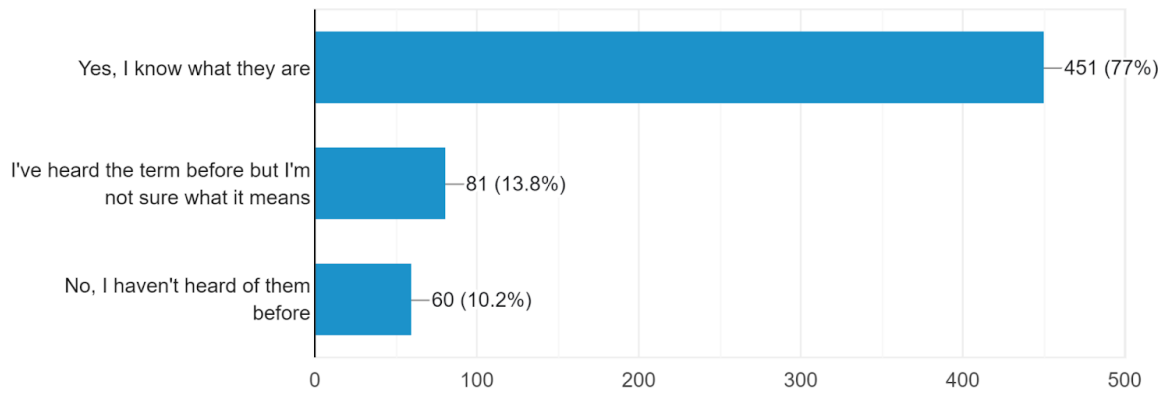
LEAP collaborated with Evanston's Reimagining Public Safety Administrator, Rachel Williams, to solicit feedback from the citizens of Evanston regarding a community responder program. Ms. Williams participated in ward meetings held in wards 2, 4, 5, 8, and 9, and also presented the concept at a town hall meeting. She collected feedback at all meetings. To further engage the community, LEAP designed a survey, which Ms. Williams distributed at in-person meetings, via the city's website, and through various social media platforms.

LEAP used the survey results to inform the content of this report. In the interest of transparency, we present the full results in this appendix. While 586 respondents took the survey, we cannot assume that they represent a random sample of Evanston's population. The survey did not require respondents to provide their name or address, so we also cannot verify that they all live or work in Evanston. As a result, we did not assume that the results accurately reflected the views of the Evanston community.

The first survey question aimed to assess Evanston residents' familiarity with the concept of community responders. Out of the 586 respondents, a significant majority of 451 individuals, accounting for 77%, indicated that they were familiar with community responders. This result suggests that within the Evanston community, many people are aware of the concept of a community responder program.

Have you heard of the term "Community Responders" before?

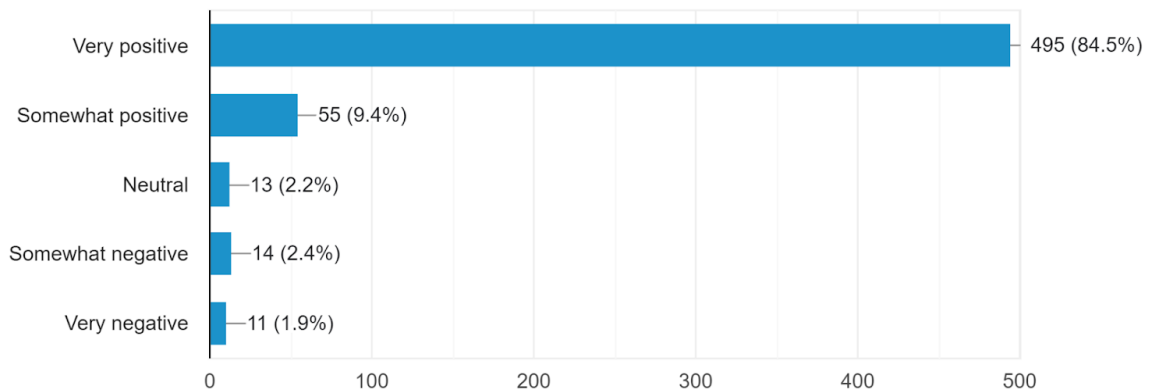
586 responses



The second survey question sought to gauge the level of support in Evanston for community responders handling low-level calls for service. Out of the 586 respondents, 84.5% expressed a "very positive" feeling about the idea. This data suggests that strong support exists within the Evanston community for involving community responders in addressing low-level calls.

How do you feel about the idea of community responders answering low-level calls for service, such as noise complaints or barking dogs?

586 responses

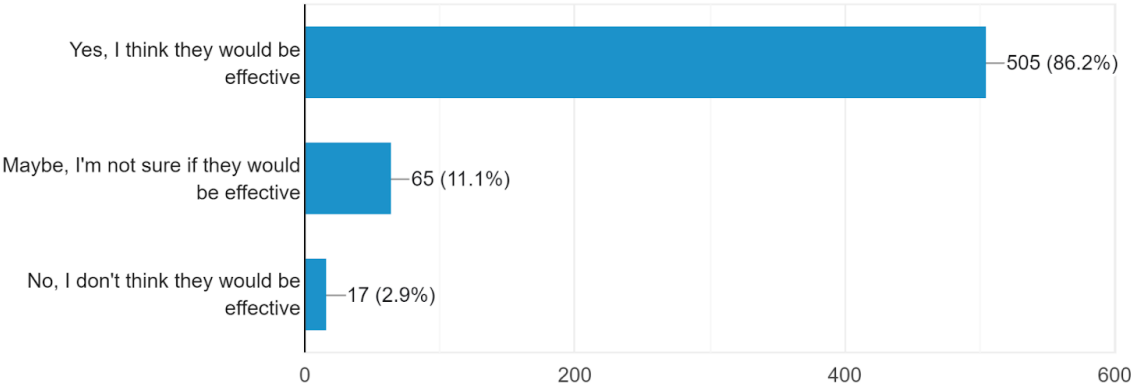


The third question aimed to evaluate whether the residents of Evanston believed that community responders would be effective in handling these calls. Out of 586 responses, 86.2% indicated that they believed community responders would indeed

be effective at addressing low-level calls. This represents 86.2% of the total respondents, indicating a high level of confidence in the program’s potential effectiveness.

Do you think community responders would be effective at addressing low-level calls for service in your community?

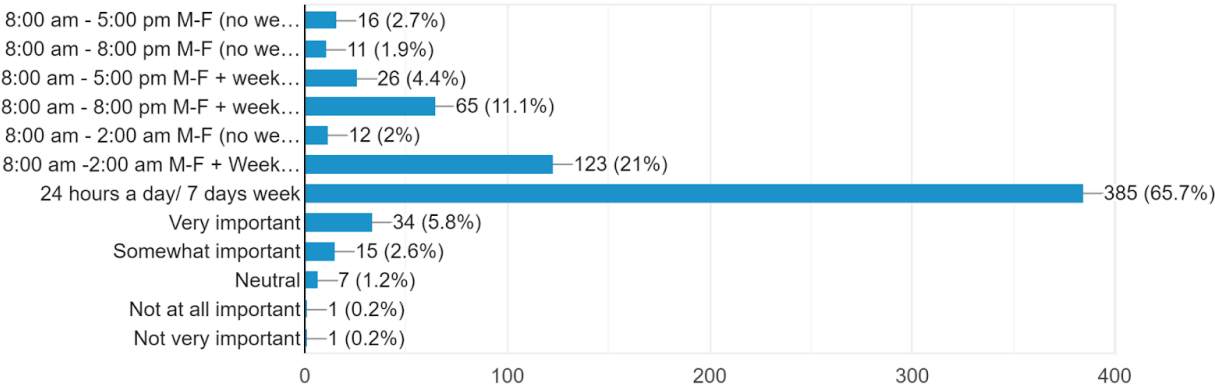
586 responses



The fourth question asked respondents to weigh in on the hours during which the program should be available. 65.7% of the respondents selected the option for 24/7 service, suggesting that Evanston community members see value in providing reliable service at all hours.

What hours should the community responder be available?

586 responses

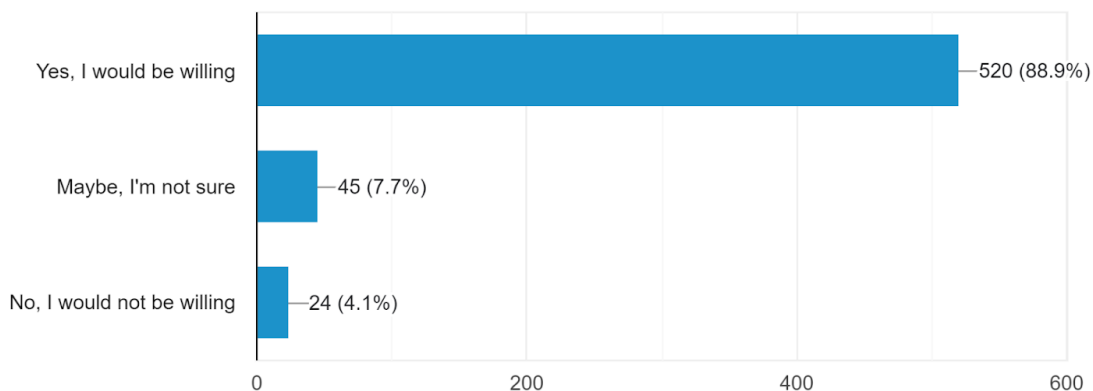


The fifth question assessed respondents’ willingness to have a community responder handle a low-level call in their own neighborhood. 88.9% of respondents stated that

they would be willing, which is slightly higher than the percent that believe community responders would be effective at handling such calls. We believe this discrepancy suggests that even some Evanstonians who are unsure of community responders' effectiveness are willing to try this new approach.

Would you be willing to have a community responder respond to a low-level call for service in your neighborhood instead of a police officer?

585 responses



Survey Comments

The final question on the survey allowed respondents to provide open-ended comments. We reviewed all comments to ensure that our report addressed all questions and concerns. In order to pay particular attention to views shared by many respondents, we identified recurring themes.

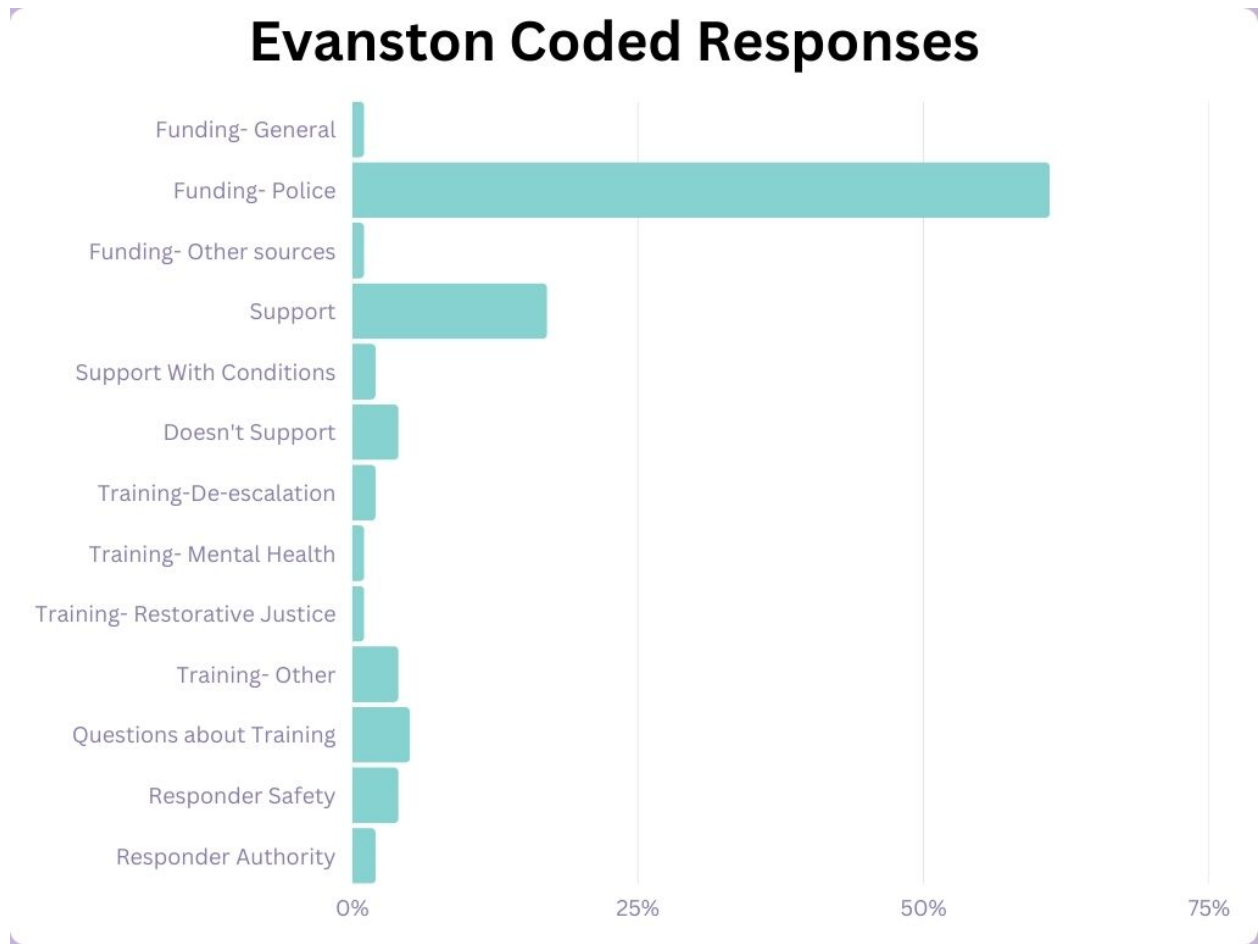
We grouped themes into the following distinct thematic clusters:

1. "Support" (expressing endorsement for the program)
2. "Support with conditions" (expressing conditional support based on specific prerequisites)
3. "Doesn't Support" (expressing reservations about the program's viability)
4. "Training-De-escalation" (urging responder training in de-escalation tactics)
5. "Training-Mental Health" (emphasizing responder training in mental health interventions)
6. "Training-Restorative Justice" (advocating for responder training in restorative justice strategies)
7. "Training-Other" (proposing other training components, such as cultural awareness)

- 8. "Training-Questions" (raising inquiries about responder training)
- 9. "Funding" (advocating for program funding from general city funds)
- 10. "Funding-Police" (proposing reallocation of funding from the police budget)
- 11. "Funding-Other Sources" (suggesting obtaining funds through alternative means)
- 12. "Responder Safety" (expressing concerns about responder well-being and safety)
- 13. "Responder Authority" (expressing concerns about responders' ability to compel compliance)

After identifying these thematic clusters, we created a code for each one, and then systematically reviewed and coded all comments. If a comment encompassed multiple themes, we added codes for each relevant theme. A subset of 50 comments did not include any recurring theme.

The recurring themes are captured in chart form below.



Over half of all comments advocated for the city to fund the community responder program by reallocating funding from the Evanston Police Department. LEAP did not make this recommendation in the report. If city officials would like to assess overall community support for this funding source, we recommend conducting a survey with a representative sample of Evanstonians. The second-largest group of comments reiterated support for the program. Another significant share of comments included suggestions, questions, and concerns related to responder training. LEAP attempted to address as many of the comments as possible in the body of the report.

Appendix 3: Calls by Ward

LEAP prepared additional data tables outlining the share of calls in each CR-eligible type that occurred in each ward. Below, we include several figures to visualize the breakdown of calls by ward.

Figure 28: Community Responder-Eligible Calls by Ward

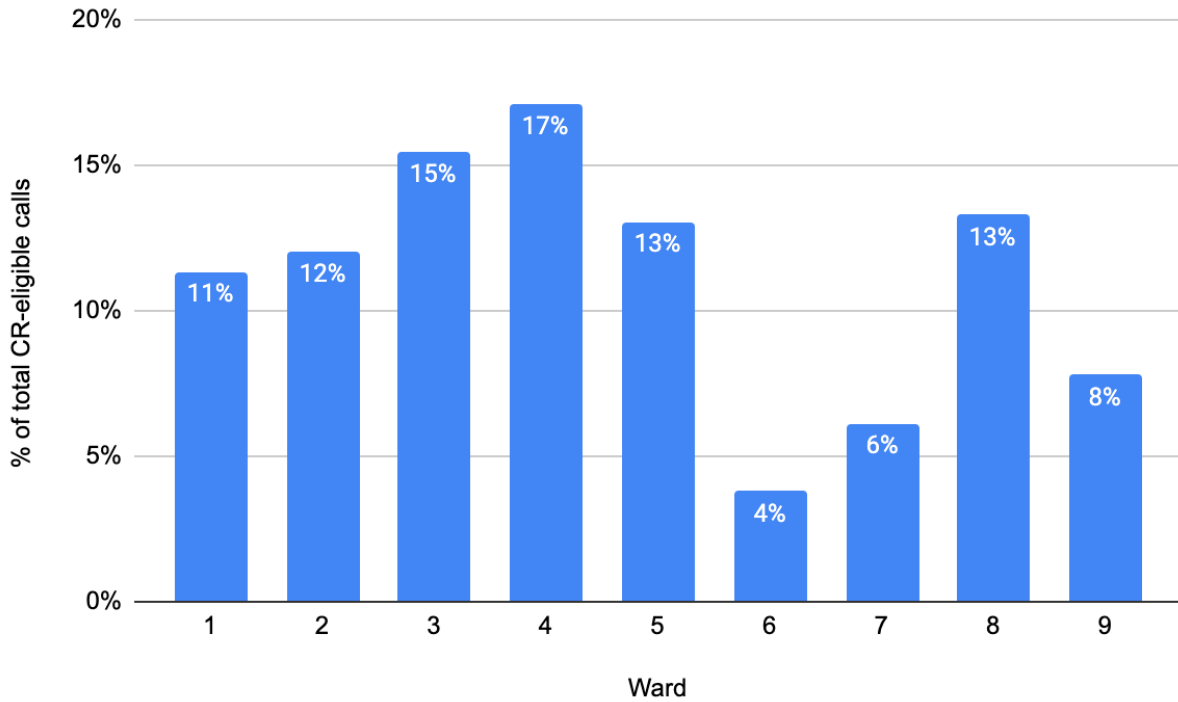


Figure 29: Community Responder-Eligible Calls by Ward and Call Type

Nature Code	Ward								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	11%	12%	15%	17%	13%	4%	6%	13%	8%
Nuisance Complaint	9%	13%	13%	16%	14%	5%	8%	13%	9%
Check Well Being	10%	11%	16%	18%	9%	3%	7%	14%	11%
Premise Check	11%	15%	12%	11%	24%	3%	5%	14%	5%
Disorderly Conduct	10%	14%	10%	22%	16%	2%	3%	19%	6%
Unwanted Person	18%	11%	15%	28%	7%	2%	4%	10%	3%
Disturbance	3%	15%	10%	9%	24%	2%	4%	23%	10%

Domestic Related	19%	10%	16%	18%	9%	0%	5%	20%	3%
Panhandler	5%	17%	17%	11%	16%	7%	9%	9%	8%
Vagrant	14%	8%	47%	11%	1%	0%	0%	4%	14%
Leaf Blower Violation	35%	5%	18%	25%	3%	1%	2%	8%	3%
Fireworks	4%	12%	27%	8%	4%	19%	13%	5%	7%
Animal Complaint	4%	11%	11%	7%	26%	7%	13%	14%	7%
City Ordinance Violation	9%	7%	7%	21%	22%	2%	9%	17%	6%
Trespassing	23%	7%	29%	15%	9%	2%	3%	9%	3%
Involuntary Committal	16%	11%	14%	21%	11%	4%	7%	10%	5%
Miscellaneous Public Service	7%	5%	13%	23%	14%	5%	5%	13%	14%
Voluntary Committal	9%	14%	14%	24%	13%	2%	5%	13%	7%
Standby Assist To Public	10%	10%	12%	11%	14%	8%	12%	14%	8%
Mental Subject	8%	22%	6%	17%	14%	2%	2%	21%	8%
Suspicious Person	6%	10%	9%	24%	8%	2%	7%	23%	11%
Drug Related Activity	10%	11%	14%	15%	17%	6%	5%	14%	9%
Civil Matter	3%	14%	3%	10%	36%	1%	4%	17%	12%
Landlord/Tenant Dispute	8%	10%	18%	20%	11%	3%	8%	13%	10%
Ungovernable Youth	3%	11%	3%	9%	19%	11%	10%	23%	11%
Suspicious Vehicle	1%	12%	4%	1%	57%	1%	0%	13%	10%
Susp Incident	7%	5%	26%	30%	3%	3%	7%	15%	5%

Indecent Exposure	5%	12%	2%	31%	7%	5%	3%	17%	19%
Lost Confused Person	7%	7%	14%	11%	11%	14%	7%	14%	14%
Soliciting Complaint	19%	12%	12%	8%	4%	12%	4%	19%	12%

Thank you for helping to improve community safety and address racial justice in Evanston.

We would love to hear your feedback, questions, concerns, and ideas.

CONTACT US

CONTACT INFORMATION

Law Enforcement Action Partnership
Lionel King, Ph.D.
CommunityResponders@LawEnforcementAction.org
www.LawEnforcementAction.org





**MEMORANDUM FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
TO THE URBANA CITY COUNCIL**

Meeting: June 16, 2025, Committee Meeting
Subject: Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Summary

Action Requested

City Council is asked to approve a Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Brief Background

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded initiative that helps low-income households pay for heating and cooling costs. In Urbana and across Champaign County, LIHEAP is administered by the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), which delivers energy assistance to thousands of eligible residents annually.

In Program Year 2025 alone, 2,296 Urbana households received \$1,697,870 in utility assistance through LIHEAP. The program is especially critical for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families with young children, offering essential protection from extreme cold or heat and helping maintain safe and livable home environments.

Due to ongoing inflation and increasing energy costs, the need for this assistance remains high.

Relationship to City Services and Priorities

Impact on Core Services

Should federal funding for LIHEAP be reduced or eliminated, many Urbana residents would face energy insecurity, increasing the likelihood of utility shut-offs, unsafe living conditions, and even homelessness. These outcomes would, in turn, place additional strain on the City's public health infrastructure, emergency services, and local housing assistance programs.

Without LIHEAP, the City could see:

- Increased calls for emergency shelter or warming/cooling center services;
- Greater demand for crisis intervention and case management through local human service providers;
- Elevated risks of health emergencies related to inadequate heating or cooling;
- Higher financial burdens on nonprofit and governmental aid systems already stretched thin.

Supporting full federal funding for LIHEAP is a proactive step that protects vulnerable residents and helps stabilize demand on City services.

Strategic Goals & Plans N/A
Previous Council Actions N/A

Discussion

Recommendation

City Council is asked to approve a Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Next Steps

If approved, the Office of the Mayor will send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation, and all relevant federal agencies and appropriations committees.

Originated by: Kate Levy, Executive Coordinator
Reviewed: DeShawn Williams, Mayor
Approved: Elizabeth Hannan, Interim City Administrator

RESOLUTION NO. _____**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FULL FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)**

WHEREAS, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a vital federal program designed to assist low-income households with their home energy bills, providing support for heating and cooling costs and helping to ensure access to safe and livable home environments; and

WHEREAS, in the City of Urbana and throughout Champaign County, LIHEAP is administered by the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, which delivers critical energy assistance to thousands of eligible households annually; and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP protects vulnerable community members – particularly seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families with young children – from energy insecurity and unsafe conditions during periods of extreme cold or heat; and

WHEREAS, the demand for LIHEAP remains high due to ongoing inflation and rising energy prices; and

WHEREAS, in Program Year 2025, 2,296 City of Urbana households received utility assistance through LIHEAP totaling \$1,697,870 in benefits; and

WHEREAS, reduction or elimination of federal funding for LIHEAP would undermine the health, safety, and economic stability of Urbana residents and could result in higher public health and emergency services costs; and

WHEREAS, investing in LIHEAP supports not only public welfare but also economic resilience by helping residents stay current on utility bills, reducing homelessness risk, and preventing avoidable crises;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council, of the City of Urbana, Illinois, urges the United States Congress to fully and adequately fund the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, in order to meet the needs of eligible households in Urbana and across the country;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Urbana affirms its support of LIHEAP as a critical program that promotes energy, equity, public health, and social justice for low-income individuals and families;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the President of the United States, members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation, and all relevant federal agencies and appropriations committees.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL this Date day of Month, Year.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

Darcy E. Sandefur, City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR this Date day of Month, Year.

DeShawn B. Williams, Mayor



**MEMORANDUM FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
TO THE URBANA CITY COUNCIL**

Meeting: June 16, 2025, Committee Meeting
Subject: Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for Head Start

Summary

Action Requested

City Council is asked to approve a Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for Head Start.

Brief Background

Head Start is a nationally recognized, federally funded early childhood education program that promotes school readiness for children from low-income families. Through a comprehensive approach that includes education, health, nutrition, and family engagement services, Head Start supports both children and their families in achieving long-term success.

In Urbana and throughout Champaign County, Head Start and Early Head Start programs are administered by the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). These programs serve over 500 children and families each year through both center-based and home-based services. In the 2022–2023 program year, 101 children in Champaign County successfully transitioned from Head Start to kindergarten. In the 2023–2024 program year, 79% of enrolled parents were fully employed, and 20% were pursuing job training, certificates, or licenses. As of Spring 2025, 82% of children preparing for kindergarten were meeting school readiness goals.

The Head Start program in Champaign County receives over \$8.6 million in federal support annually, which is vital to maintaining high-quality services and equitable access for eligible families.

Relationship to City Services and Priorities

Impact on Core Services

A reduction or elimination of federal funding for Head Start would significantly impact children, families, and service providers in Urbana. The consequences would extend beyond early education, affecting family stability, workforce readiness, and public health. Without this essential support, the City could experience:

- Increased demand for early intervention and special education services in local schools;
- Higher levels of food insecurity and unmet health needs among low-income families;
- Disruptions to employment for parents who rely on consistent childcare and early education;
- Greater difficulty for local providers in retaining qualified staff and maintaining service levels.

Head Start is a critical investment in long-term educational equity, economic stability, and community well-being. Supporting full federal funding for Head Start ensures that Urbana families continue to have access to the tools and resources they need to thrive from the very beginning.

Strategic Goals & Plans N/A

Previous Council Actions N/A

Discussion

Recommendation

City Council is asked to approve a Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for Head Start.

Next Steps

If approved, the Office of the Mayor will send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation, and all relevant federal agencies and appropriations committees.

Originated by: Kate Levy, Executive Coordinator

Reviewed: DeShawn Williams, Mayor

Approved: Elizabeth Hannan, Interim City Administrator

RESOLUTION NO. _____**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FULL FEDERAL FUNDING FOR HEAD START**

WHEREAS, Head Start is a nationally recognized, federally funded early childhood education program that promotes school readiness for children from low-income families through education, health, nutrition, and family engagement services; and

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana is served by the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, which administers Head Start and Early Head Start programs for more than 500 children and families annually through high-quality, developmentally appropriate, center-based and home-based services in Champaign County; and

WHEREAS, Head Start programs in Urbana provide vital services such as developmental screenings, mental health support, and access to nutritional meals, while also empowering parents as their children's first and most important teachers; and

WHEREAS, in the 2022-2023 program year, 101 children in Champaign County successfully transitioned from Head Start to kindergarten, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in preparing children for academic success and long-term achievement; and

WHEREAS, in the 2023-2024 program year, 79 percent of the parents enrolled in the Head Start program in Champaign County were fully employed; and

WHEREAS, in the 2023-2024 program year, 20 percent of the parents enrolled in the program in Champaign County were in job training programs or working towards certificates or licenses; and

WHEREAS, according to Spring 2025 checkpoints, 82 percent of kindergarten-bound children meet school readiness goals; and

WHEREAS, the Head Start program in Champaign County is funded primarily by the federal government, with over \$8.6 million in federal support making these services possible for eligible families in our community; and

WHEREAS, reduction or elimination of federal funding jeopardizes not only access to early education but also family stability and the ability of local providers to retain quality staff and deliver consistent care; and

WHEREAS, full and sustained federal funding for Head Start is necessary to meet current and future needs and ensures access to high-quality early childhood education for all children, regardless of income;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council, of the City of Urbana, Illinois, strongly urges the United States Congress to provide full and stable federal funding for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Urbana affirms its support of Head Start as a foundational community investment that fosters school readiness and promotes family and community well being;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the President of the United States, members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation, and all relevant federal agencies and appropriations committees.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL this Date day of Month, Year.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

Darcy E. Sandefur, City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR this Date day of Month, Year.

DeShawn B. Williams, Mayor



MEMORANDUM TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Meeting: June 16, 2025 Committee of the Whole
Subject: Ordinances Approving the FY2026 Annual Budget, Revising the FY2025 Annual Budget, and Amending the City Code to Add a Municipal Grocery Retailer's Occupation Tax and Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax

Summary

Staff recommends that Council forward the Ordinances adopting the FY2026 budget, amending the FY2025 budget, and adding a grocery tax for approval at the June 23, 2025 City Council meeting. The budget amendment requires six of eight affirmative votes, including the Mayor, in order to pass.

Relationship to City Services and Priorities

Impact on Core Services

The budget lays out the plan for how the City will serve its residents in the coming year. Additional staffing in the Police Department will help to stabilize basic staffing levels and free up capacity to launch more community-centered efforts, such as the Community Engagement Team. Additional reserves will ensure that we can best serve our residents in the face of likely reduction or elimination of federal funding for various programs. These and other recommendations are described in more detail in the [FY2026 Proposed Budget](#).

The continuation of the grocery tax provides a stable source of locally controlled revenue that supports the City's General Fund, which funds core services such as Police, Fire, and Public Works. Maintaining this revenue stream helps protect essential service levels, prevents potential budget shortfalls, and supports long-term financial planning. Without it, the City could face a reduction in General Fund revenues, which may require cuts to core services, delays in infrastructure or equipment investments, or shifts to other revenue sources that could be less equitable or more difficult to implement.

Strategic Goals & Plans

This budget reflects the Mayor/Council Strategic Goals for 2024-2025, which target the following Strategic Areas:

- Public Safety and Well-Being
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Economic Recovery/Development

Previous Council Actions

The City Council approved [FY2025 Annual Budget](#) on June 24, 2024 and the [Capital Improvement Plan for FY2026-FY2030](#) on June 2, 2025.

Discussion

Additional Background Information

FY2026 Annual Budget: The Ordinance approving the Annual Budget includes a detailed listing of changes from the proposed budget provided to the City Council. Some of these changes are housekeeping items, such as changes in the timing of expenditures. Changes include:

General Operating Fund (100):

- City Clerk: Due to a staff input error, some of the accounts in the City Clerk's budget were entered incorrectly. This ordinance corrects those errors, resulting in a \$2,197 difference between the Proposed and Adopted Budget
- Digital Forensics Equipment: A piece of equipment was originally budgeted under the Travel, Education, and Training line item. This ordinance moves the expense to the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Fund (VERF) to more accurately reflect the nature of the purchase.
- Community Development: In the Proposed Budget, the 0.65 FTE position for the Economic Development and Planning Manager was fully budgeted in the Economic Development division. This ordinance will correct the allocation by splitting the 0.65 FTE between the Economic Development budget (10050501) and the Planning budget (10050510).

Vehicle & Equipment Replacement (VERF) Fund (300)

- Unspent funds totaling \$1,024,360 will be carried forward to FY2026 for vehicles and equipment that were not purchased in FY2025 as planned. This carryforward will allow staff to complete those purchases in FY2026.

If additional revisions are required before the budget is approved, staff will provide a revised exhibit.

FY2025 Annual Budget Amendment: This Ordinance amends the FY2025 budget to conform to estimates provided in the proposed budget, with changes detailed on the attachment. Again, all changes are housekeeping items, such as changes in the timing of expenditures. Some changes that reflect timing differences, are discussed above under FY2026 Annual Budget.

Continuation of Grocery Tax: In 2024, the legislature repealed the statewide grocery tax effective January 1, 2026. This change would reduce revenues in the City of Urbana by about \$1 million. The legislation also allows Illinois municipalities to implement a locally imposed 1% grocery tax. As of mid-May, 212 Illinois municipalities had adopted a grocery tax to replace lost revenue.

While low-income households spend a greater share of their income on groceries, purchases made through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which supports many low-income families, are exempt from the tax. A 2024 [report by the Institute of Government and Public Affairs](#) at the University of Illinois found that, after accounting for SNAP benefits, households in the lowest 20% income bracket paid approximately \$1.64 annually in grocery tax, while the annual cost for higher income households ranges from \$29.63 to \$85.23. Grocery tax as a share of income was just 0.01% for the lowest income households.

Continuing the grocery tax would allow the City to maintain current services and expand some services, as described in the Mayor's budget message. This tax would be collected and distributed by the State, so it does not create an administrative burden for City staff.

Policy or Statutory Impacts

This budget complies with the City's financial policies by maintaining a General Fund balance of at least 25% of recurring expenditures and limiting recurring expenditures to no more than 98.5% of recurring revenues. The grocery tax would be incorporated into the Urbana City Code.

Fiscal and Budget Impact

The projected ending fund balance in the General Operating Fund, before any additional changes, is \$17,727,754, or 37.11% of recurring expenditures. After excluding \$3.1 million reserved for the CDBG and HOME programs (to sustain them for four years if funding is lost), \$1.5 million to address other unmet housing needs in the community, and \$873,000 for the second and third years of the Community Engagement Team pilot program, the remaining fund balance would be \$12,254,754, or 25.65% of recurring expenditures.

Recommendation

Forward the Ordinances adopting the FY2026 budget, amending the FY2025 budget, and adding a grocery tax for approval at the June 23, 2025 City Council meeting.

Next Steps

If the proposed adjustments mentioned above are approved, the revisions included in the exhibits will be made to the FY2026 Annual Budget and the FY2025 Annual Budget. The Ordinance related to the grocery tax would be filed with the Illinois Department of Revenue by the first of October to ensure that it is implemented January 1, 2026, when the statewide grocery tax is eliminated.

Attachments

1. An Ordinance Adopting the FY2026 Annual Budget
2. An Ordinance Revising the FY2025 Annual Budget
3. An Ordinance Amending City Code Chapter 22 (Taxation) by Adding Article X (Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax and Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax)

Originated by: Don Ho, Senior Financial Analyst / Budget Coordinator

Approved: Elizabeth Hannan, HR & Finance Director / CFO, Interim City Administrator

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 ANNUAL BUDGET

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana (“City”) is a home rule unit of local government pursuant to Article VII, Section 6, of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, and may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its governmental business and affairs, and the passage of this Ordinance constitutes an exercise of the City’s home rule powers and functions as granted by the Illinois Constitution of 1970; and

WHEREAS, the Finance Director acting as Budget Director pursuant to Urbana City Code Sections 2-129 and 2-130 has compiled a proposed annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026, in accordance with 65 ILCS 5/8-2-9.1 through and including 65 ILCS 5/8-2-9.9 and Urbana City Code Chapter 2, Article VI, Division 2; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor has made the proposed annual budget ordinance conveniently available for public inspection by publication in pamphlet form and by posting it on the City’s website at least 14 days prior to a public hearing on such ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a public hearing on the proposed annual budget ordinance at 7:00 p.m., June 16, 2025 after due and proper notice of the availability for inspection of such ordinance and notice of such public hearing having been given by publication in *The News-Gazette*, a newspaper having general circulation within the City of Urbana, which date was at least 14 days prior to the time of the public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the City Council and the Mayor, being the corporate authorities, find that it is in the best interests of the City to approve the proposed annual budget ordinance as heretofore further changed, modified, and amended.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council and the Mayor, of the City of Urbana, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1.

The City of Urbana Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget, a true and correct copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof as if set forth herein, be and the same is hereby passed, approved, and adopted as the annual budget ordinance of and for the City of Urbana for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026, including changes listed on the Exhibit attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2.

The Finance Director acting as the Budget Director is hereby authorized to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget to increase expenditures by the amount of encumbrances outstanding as of June 30, 2025.

Section 3.

The City Clerk is directed to publish this Ordinance in pamphlet form by authority of the corporate authorities, and this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication in accordance with Section 1-2-4 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/1-2-4).

This Ordinance is hereby passed by the affirmative vote, the “ayes” and “nays” being called, of a majority of the corporate authorities (5 of 8 votes) of the City of Urbana, Illinois, at a duly noticed and convened meeting of the said corporate authorities.

PASSED BY THE CORPORATE AUTHORITIES this__ day of_____, 20_.

AYES: _____

NAYS:_____

ABSTENTIONS: _____

Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR this__ day of_____, 20_.

DeShawn B. Williams, Mayor

Budget Ordinance FY2025/26 - Exhibit - Revised

General Ledger Code	Project Ledger Code	Description	Proposed Budget	Adopted Budget	Difference	Notes	Page Reference
GENERAL OPERATING FUND							
10005140-51100		CITY CLERK: OFFICE SUPPLIES	1,844	2,398	554	Technical Correction	64
10005140-51200		CITY CLERK: PUBLICATIONS	7,552	8,163	611	Technical Correction	64
10005140-52600		CITY CLERK: UTILITIES	-	198	198	Technical Correction	64
10005140-52999		CITY CLERK: OTHER CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	-	834	834	Technical Correction	64
10020202-52320		POLICE INVESTIGATIONS: TRAVEL, EDUCATION & TRAINING	66,395	59,895	(6,500)	Digital Forensics Equipment (1x) - Correct Line Item	86 & 159
10020202-59300		POLICE INVESTIGATIONS: TFR TO VERF	30,413	36,913	6,500	Digital Forensics Equipment (1x) - Correct Line Item	86 & 159
10050501-50110		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: SALARY - REGULAR EMPLOYEES	114,670	69,947	(44,723)	Correct Salary Allocation - ED & Planning Manager	123 & 125
10050501-50210		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: INSURANCE	11,571	7,613	(3,958)	Correct Salary Allocation - ED & Planning Manager	123 & 125
10050501-50220		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: FICA & MEDICARE	8,770	5,350	(3,420)	Correct Salary Allocation - ED & Planning Manager	123 & 125
10050501-50251		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: IMRF & SURS	8,426	5,253	(3,173)	Correct Salary Allocation - ED & Planning Manager	123 & 125
10050510-50110		PLANNING: SALARY - REGULAR EMPLOYEES	385,215	429,938	44,723	Correct Salary Allocation - ED & Planning Manager	123 & 125
10050510-50210		PLANNING: INSURANCE	8,886	12,844	3,958	Correct Salary Allocation - ED & Planning Manager	123 & 125
10050510-50220		PLANNING: FICA & MEDICARE	67,611	71,031	3,420	Correct Salary Allocation - ED & Planning Manager	123 & 125
10050510-50251		PLANNING: IMRF & SURS	29,414	32,587	3,173	Correct Salary Allocation - ED & Planning Manager	123 & 125
		TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>55,109,699</u>	<u>55,111,896</u>	<u>2,197</u>		
		ENDING FUND BALANCE	<u>17,729,951</u>	<u>17,727,754</u>	<u>(2,197)</u>		
VEHICLE & EQUIPM REPLCMNT FUND (300)							
300-49100		TFR FROM GENERAL FUND		6,500	6,500	Digital Forensics Equipment (1x) - Correct Line Item	158
		TOTAL REVENUE		<u>6,500</u>	<u>6,500</u>		
30060600-53420	VERF-FIN-206	PE15	204,184	236,212	32,028	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-FIN-207	PE16	236,212	268,240	32,028	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-132	PD 60 - SQUADS	268,240	294,611	26,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-133	PD 61 - SQUADS	294,611	341,982	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-134	PD 62 - SQUADS	341,982	389,353	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-135	PD 63 - SQUADS	389,353	436,724	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-136	PD 64 - SQUADS	436,724	484,095	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-137	PD 65 - SQUADS	484,095	531,466	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-138	PD 66 - SQUADS	531,466	578,838	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-139	PD 67 - SQUADS	578,838	626,209	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-140	PD 68 - SQUADS	626,209	673,580	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-141	PD 70 - SQUADS	673,580	720,951	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-142	PD 71 - SQUADS	720,951	768,322	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-143	PD 72 - SQUADS	768,322	815,693	47,371	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PW-065	PW29 - CHIPPER TRUCK	815,693	1,060,693	245,000	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53440	VERF-FD-244	SPECIAL OPERATIONS EQUIPMENT	182,508	315,248	132,740	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53440	VERF-PD-128	RADAR UNITS	315,248	323,104	7,855	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53440	VERF-FD-170	CITYWIDE DEFIBRILATORS	323,104	350,360	27,256	VERF changes - rolled forward from FY25	159
30060600-53440	VERF-PD-267	DIGITAL FORENSICS EQUIPMENT (1x)	350,360	356,860	6,500	Digital Forensics Equipment (1x) - Correct Line Item	159
		TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>486,400</u>	<u>1,517,260</u>	<u>1,030,860</u>		
		ENDING FUND BALANCE	<u>10,992,082</u>	<u>10,992,082</u>	<u>-</u>		

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE REVISING THE ANNUAL BUDGET ORDINANCE

(Budget Amendment #10 – Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Estimates)

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana (“City”) is a home rule unit of local government pursuant to Article VII, Section 6, of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, and may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its governmental business and affairs, and the passage of this Ordinance constitutes an exercise of the City’s home rule powers and functions as granted by the Illinois Constitution of 1970; and

WHEREAS, the corporate authorities of the City heretofore did approve the annual budget ordinance of and for the City of Urbana for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the said corporate authorities find that revising the annual budget ordinance by deleting, adding to, changing, or creating sub-classes within object classes and object classes themselves is in the best interests of the residents of the City and is desirable for the welfare of the City’s government and affairs; and

WHEREAS, funds are available to effectuate the purpose of such revision; and

WHEREAS, the Budget Director may not make such revision under the authority so delegated to the Budget Director pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/8-2-9.6 or Urbana City Code Section 2-133.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council and the Mayor, of the City of Urbana, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1.

The annual budget ordinance shall be and the same is hereby revised as set forth in the column labeled “FY25 Estimate” in the proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget document, including changes listed on the Exhibit attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication in accordance with Section 1-2-4 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/1-2-4).

This Ordinance is hereby passed by the affirmative vote, the “ayes” and “nays” being called, of two-thirds of the corporate authorities then holding office (6 of 8 votes) of the City of Urbana, Illinois, at a duly noticed and convened meeting of the said corporate authorities.

PASSED BY THE CORPORATE AUTHORITIES this__ Day of_____, 20_.

AYES: _____

NAYS:_____

ABSTENTIONS: _____

Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR this__ Day of_____, 20_.

DeShawn B. Williams, Mayor

Budget Amendment 2024/25 - #10 - Exhibit

General Ledger Code	Project String	Description	Original Estimate	Updated Estimate	Difference	Notes	Page Reference
VERF Fund (300)							
30060600-53420	VERF-FIN-206	PE15	1,578,379	1,546,351	(32,028)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-FIN-207	PE16	1,546,351	1,514,323	(32,028)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-132	PD 60 - SQUADS	1,514,323	1,487,952	(26,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-133	PD 61 - SQUADS	1,487,952	1,440,581	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-134	PD 62 - SQUADS	1,440,581	1,393,210	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-135	PD 63 - SQUADS	1,393,210	1,345,839	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-136	PD 64 - SQUADS	1,345,839	1,298,468	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-137	PD 65 - SQUADS	1,298,468	1,251,097	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-138	PD 66 - SQUADS	1,251,097	1,203,725	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-139	PD 67 - SQUADS	1,203,725	1,156,354	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-140	PD 68 - SQUADS	1,156,354	1,108,983	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-141	PD 70 - SQUADS	1,108,983	1,061,612	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-142	PD 71 - SQUADS	1,061,612	1,014,241	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PD-143	PD 72 - SQUADS	1,014,241	966,870	(47,371)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53420	VERF-PW-065	PW29 - CHIPPER TRUCK	966,870	721,870	(245,000)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53440	VERF-FD-244	SPECIAL OPERATIONS EQUIPMENT	879,407	746,667	(132,740)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53440	VERF-PD-128	RADAR UNITS	746,667	738,812	(7,855)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
30060600-53440	VERF-FD-170	CITYWIDE DEFIBRILATORS	738,812	711,556	(27,256)	VERF changes - rolled forward to FY26	159
		TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>3,101,913</u>	<u>2,077,553</u>	<u>(1,024,360)</u>		
		ENDING FUND BALANCE	<u>9,037,227</u>	<u>10,061,587</u>	<u>1,024,360</u>		

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY CODE CHAPTER 22 (TAXATION) BY ADDING ARTICLE X (MUNICIPAL GROCERY RETAILERS' OCCUPATION TAX AND MUNICIPAL GROCERY SERVICE OCCUPATION TAX)

WHEREAS, the Illinois Municipal Code, 65 ILCS 5/1-2-1, provides that the corporate authorities of each municipality may pass all ordinances and make all rules and regulations proper or necessary to carry into effect the powers granted to municipalities, with such fines or penalties as may be deemed proper; and

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana is a Home Rule Illinois municipality pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Illinois of 1970, as amended; and

WHEREAS, Section 8-11-24 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24) provides that, beginning on January 1, 2026, all Illinois municipalities may impose a tax “upon all persons engaged in the business of selling groceries at retail in the municipality” (the “Municipal Grocery Tax”) (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24); and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax may be imposed “at the rate of 1% of the gross receipts from these sales” (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24); and

WHEREAS, any Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax shall be administered, collected and enforced by the Illinois Department of Revenue; and

WHEREAS, Section 8-11-24 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24) requires any municipality imposing a Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax under Section 8-11-24 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24) to also impose a Service Occupation Tax at the same rate, “upon all persons engaged, in the municipality, in the business of making sales of service, who, as an incident to making those sales of service, transfer groceries” as “an incident to a sale of service” (the “Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax”) (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24); and

WHEREAS, any Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax shall be administered, collected and enforced by the Illinois Department of Revenue; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Urbana believe that it is appropriate, necessary, and in the best interests of the City and its residents, that the City levy a Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax as permitted by Section 8-11-24 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24); and,

WHEREAS, the City Council believe that it is appropriate, necessary and in the best interests of the City and its residents, that the City levy a Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax as permitted by Section 8-11-24 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1. Urbana City Code Chapter 22, "Taxation," is hereby amended by adding Article X, "Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax and Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax," and shall read as follows:

"ARTICLE X. – MUNICIPAL RETAILERS' OCCUPATION TAX AND MUNICIPAL GROCERY SERVICE OCCUPATION TAX

Sec. 22-161. Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax Imposed.

A tax is hereby imposed upon all persons engaged in the business of selling groceries at retail in this municipality at the rate of 1% of the gross receipts from such sales made in the course of such business while this Ordinance is in effect. The imposition of this tax is in accordance with and subject to the provisions of Section 8-11-24 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24).

Sec. 22-162. Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax.

A tax is hereby imposed upon all persons engaged in this municipality in the business of making sales of service, who, as an incident to making those sales of service, transfer groceries as an incident to a sale of service. The rate of this tax shall be the same rate identified in Sec. 22-161, above. The imposition of this tax is in accordance with and subject to the provisions of Section 8-11-24 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24).

Sec. 22-163. Collection and Enforcement.

The taxes hereby imposed, and all civil penalties that may be assessed as an incident thereto, shall be collected and enforced by the Department of Revenue of the State of Illinois. The Illinois Department of Revenue shall have full power to administer and enforce the provisions of this Ordinance.

Secs. 22-164 – 22-170. Reserved.”

Section 2. As required under Section 8-11-24 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-11-24), the Clerk is hereby directed to file a certified copy of this Ordinance with the Illinois Department of Revenue on or before October 1, 2025.

Section 3. The taxes imposed by this Ordinance shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

Section 4. All Ordinances, resolutions, and policies or parts thereof, in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are, to the extent of the conflict, expressly repealed on the effective date of this Ordinance.

Section 5. If any provision of this Ordinance or application thereof to any person or circumstances is ruled unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid application or provision, and each invalid provision or invalid application of this Ordinance is severable.

Section 6. The City Clerk is directed by the corporate authorities to publish this Ordinance in pamphlet form. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its passage and publication in accordance with 65 ILCS 5/1-2-4.

Section 7. That the Mayor of the City of Urbana, Illinois, be and the same is hereby authorized to execute and deliver and the City Clerk of the City of Urbana, Illinois, be and the same is authorized to attest to said execution of said Assignment and Estoppel Certificate as so authorized and approved for and on behalf of the City of Urbana, Illinois.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL this date day of Month, Year.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

Darcy E. Sandefur, City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR this this date day of Month, Year.

DeShawn B. Willaims, Mayor



City of Urbana
400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801
www.urbanaininois.us

MEMORANDUM FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Meeting: June 23, 2025, City Council Meeting
Subject: Staff Appointment

Summary

Action Requested

City Council is asked to approve Vincent (Vince) Gustafson as Interim Public Works Director until a new, regular appointment is made to the Public Works Director position, or until June 30, 2026, whichever is sooner.

Brief Background

The attached summary of job responsibilities and information on the appointee is provided to the City Council as information to support the Mayor's recommended appointment.

Former Public Works Director Timothy Cowan vacated the position of Public Works Director on June 6, 2025.

Relationship to City Services and Priorities

Impact on Core Services

Appointments made by the Mayor and approved by Council ensure that qualified individuals are placed in key leadership and operational roles, supporting effective governance, accountability, and continuity in the delivery of municipal services in line with community needs and policy goals.

Strategic Goals & Plans

N/A

Previous Council Actions

N/A

Discussion

Recommendation

City Council is asked to approve Vince Gustafson as Interim Public Works Director until a new, regular appointment is made to the Public Works Director position, or until June 30, 2026, whichever is sooner.

Attachments

1. Mayoral Appointment Incumbent Information

Originated by: Kate Levy, Executive Coordinator

Reviewed by: Elizabeth Hannan, Interim City Administrator

Approved: DeShawn Williams, Mayor

Public Works Department

Interim Public Works Director

VINCENT (VINCE) GUSTAFSON

Job Summary

The Public Works Director provides strategic management and leadership for the Public Works Department including all public works services and public improvements. Public Works services include engineering, infrastructure maintenance, fleet maintenance, recycling programs, and the Landscape Recycling Center (LRC). This work includes establishing long-range plans, developing policies and procedures, preparing budgets, and reporting on activities to the City Council.

Vincent (Vince) Gustafson has been with the City since June 2004. He started as a Building Maintenance Worker, was promoted to Public Facilities Supervisor in 2012, and was appointed to his current role as Deputy Public Works Director for Operations in 2019. His previous experience includes more than seven years in rental property maintenance. He has a bachelor's degree in forestry.



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MEMORANDUM FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR TO THE URBANA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting: June 23, 2025, Council Meeting
Subject: Board and Commission Appointment

Summary

Action Requested

City Council is asked to approve the appointment of Kristine Francisco to the Police Pension Fund Board for a term ending June 30, 2027.

Brief Background

In the City of Urbana, the members of the Police Pension Fund Board of Trustees are partly appointed by the Mayor. Under the Illinois Pension Code (40 ILCS 5/3-101), the Police Pension Fund Board consists of five members;

- Three members are elected from active and retired police officers
- Two members are appointed by the Mayor

These mayoral appointments are part of the municipality's role in overseeing the pension fund, though the elected members ensure that police representatives also have a voice on the board.

Kristine Francisco, a City of Urbana employee for over 30 years, currently serving as the Finance Manager, brings a wealth of experience from her long tenure with the City which will be valuable in overseeing the pension fund's operations. This appointment is consistent with the City's tradition of selecting current or former employees associated with the Finance Department to serve on the board, given their substantial financial knowledge and municipal experience.

Relationship to City Services and Priorities

Impact on Core Services

The local Police Pension Fund Board oversees the pension fund for municipal police officers. Its core responsibilities include administering retirement, disability, and death benefits and ensuring compliance with the Illinois Pension Code. The board also determines benefit eligibility, maintains financial records, conducts audits, and works with actuaries to set contribution rates for officers and the municipality—ensuring the fund's sound management and financial security.

Strategic Goals & Plans N/A

Previous Council Actions N/A

Discussion

Recommendation

City Council is asked to approve the appointment of Kristine Francisco to the Police Pension Fund for a term ending June 30, 2027.

Next Steps

If approved, the Office of the Mayor will notify Kristine Francisco of her appointment to the Police Pension Fund and Open Meetings Act requirements.

Originated by: Mindy Hewkin, Administrative Assistant

Reviewed: Kate Levy, Executive Coordinator

Approved: DeShawn Williams, Mayor



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MEMORANDUM FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR TO THE URBANA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting: June 23, 2025, Council Meeting
Subject: Board and Commission Reappointments

Summary

Action Requested

City Council is asked to approve the reappointments of Elizabeth Hannan and Kristine Francisco to the Firemen's Pension Fund Board of Trustees for terms ending June 30, 2028.

Brief Background

In the City of Urbana, the members of the Firemen's Pension Fund Board of Trustees are partly appointed by the Mayor. Under the Illinois Pension Code (40 ILCS 5/4-121), the Firemen's Pension Fund Board of Trustees consists of five members;

- Two active firefighters elected by the active members of the pension fund.
- One retired firefighter who is a beneficiary of the fund, elected by the retired firefighters.
- Two members are appointed by the mayor.

These mayoral appointments are part of the municipality's role in overseeing the pension fund, though the elected members ensure that firefighter representatives also have a voice on the board.

These appointments are consistent with the City's tradition of selecting current or former employees associated with the Finance Department to serve on the board, given their substantial financial knowledge and municipal experience.

Elizabeth Hannan, the current Interim City Administrator and Human Resources and Finance Director/CFO, has been with the City since October 2014.

Kristine Francisco, a City of Urbana employee for over 30 years, currently serves as the Finance Manager.

Both bring a wealth of experience from their long tenures with the City which will be valuable in overseeing the pension fund's operations.

Relationship to City Services and Priorities

Impact on Core Services

The local Firemen's Pension Fund Board of Trustees is responsible for managing and overseeing the pension fund for firefighters within a municipality. Their key duties include administering retirement, disability, and death benefits to eligible members and beneficiaries and ensuring compliance with the Illinois Pension Code and local laws. The board also determines benefit eligibility, maintains accurate financial records, conducts regular audits, and collaborates with actuaries to set contribution rates for both firefighters and the municipality. Overall, the board ensures the fund's proper management and financial security for its members

Strategic Goals & Plans N/A

Previous Council Actions N/A

Discussion

Recommendation

City Council is asked to approve the reappointments of Elizabeth Hannan and Kristine Francisco to the Firemen's Pension Fund Board of Trustees for terms ending June 30, 2028.

Next Steps

If approved, the Office of the Mayor will notify Elizabeth Hannan and Kristine Francisco of their reappointments to the Firemen's Pension Fund Board of Trustees.

Originated by: Mindy Hewkin, Administrative Assistant

Reviewed: Kate Levy, Executive Coordinator

Approved: DeShawn Williams, Mayor



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**MEMORANDUM FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
TO THE URBANA CITY COUNCIL**

Meeting: June 23, 2025, Council Meeting
Subject: Board and Commission Reappointments

Summary

Action Requested

City Council is asked to approve the following City board and commission reappointments.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Bruce Michelson— term ending **June 30, 2028** (*original appointment January 10, 2022*)

I think the record will show that my contributions over the past three years have been constructive; and because a BPAC subcommittee I serve on, engaging issues related to e-bike rentals in CU, has unfinished business, I feel a need to stay in those dialogues.

Susan Jones— term ending **June 30, 2028** (*original appointment January 1, 2006*)

I want to see Urbana continue to become a thriving community with safe and efficient ways for people to get around, whether walking, biking, scootering, driving, taking the bus... and whatever new ideas come up!

Civil Service Commission

Bill Gray – term ending **June 30, 2028** (*original appointment August 8, 2022*)

I would be glad to serve on the Civil Service Commission for another term. I believe my years of service as a department head is valuable in the review, approval and orderliness of commission business.

Community Development Commission

Chris Diana – term ending **June 30, 2028** (*original appointment October 20, 1997*)

I have enjoyed my years of service on the Commission, and believe that over that time our collective input has helped to improve the quality of life for the residents in the areas we serve, and provided valuable input for the Council and Mayor. I also believe that my continued involvement in community activities, regional commercial real estate and County

government still makes me a valuable resource as a member of the Commission, and I would be proud to serve in that capacity for another term.

Design Review Board

Travis Schiess – term ending June 30, 2028 (*original appointment January 13, 2020*)

I would like to express my interest in continuing my service on the Design Review Board for another term. I am passionate about the growth of Urbana that respects the contextual character of Urbana and its surrounding buildings. I'm happy to serve as the board's licensed Architect and provide my design and construction insight for the continuous improvement of the city of Urbana.

Historic Preservation Commission

Dennis Roberts – term ending June 30, 2028 (*original appointment July 11, 2022*)

I request reappointment to the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission with an interest to continue promoting Urbana's unique history and culture. I hope to do so under the partnership of the Mayor and HPC Commission members, in part through adoption of design guidelines within the newly created Downtown Urbana Historic District, and the continued development of the Joseph W. Royer Arts and Architecture District as a tourism destination and community educational amenity.

Andrew Weiss– term ending June 30, 2028 (*original appointment March 28, 2002*)

Since joining the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission in March of 2022 I've enjoyed working with and learning from fellow Commissioners, exceptional City Staff, as well as the greater historic preservation community. Over the last few years the UHPC has started a few worthwhile projects and initiatives, and I'm seeking reappointment to continue this rewarding work.

Sustainability Advisory Commission

Jessica Lehmkuhl – term ending June 30, 2028 (*original appointment October 12, 2020*)

I would love to be reappointed to my position on the Sustainability Advisory Commission. It has been a meaningful learning experience, and I hope to continue to grow in this capacity and serve our community in lasting ways so that we can be a model of sustainability for other communities during this transformative and difficult time for our Earth.

The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees**Beth Shied– term ending June 30, 2028** *(original appointment June 1, 2000)*

I would love to continue serving as a trustee of The Urbana Free Library. I value devoting time to this important community institution and look forward to being part of its continual growth and success. Having served for many years, I have a wealth of institutional knowledge that has been beneficial to share with new board members, new library administrative staff and during discussions involving past history.

Julia Pollack– term ending June 30, 2028 *(original appointment August 26, 2024)*

I am interested in continuing to serve on the Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees, to continue engaging with and serving the Urbana Free library, and in turn the community that engages with the library. As a former librarian and a part of a family of avid readers and library supporters, I wish to continue helping to support the library in its path to support the public.

Shirese Hursey– term ending June 30, 2028 *(original appointment April 1, 2018)*

I would like to continue serving on the Library Board because I support the important work staff do in the community, and I understand the importance of public libraries in ensuring the voices of all community members are represented.

Urbana Arts & Culture Commission**Barbara Hedlund– term ending June 30, 2028** *(original appointment April 21, 2008)*

I am willing to continue my service on the commission if granted permission to do so. As founding member of the original Arts Commission, I have a strong interest in seeing the commission continue and flourish.

Zoning Board of Appeals**Harvey Welch– term ending June 30, 2030** *(original appointment October 16, 1995)*

As a long time resident of our city, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the governance of the community. Citizen involvement is vital to the growth and development of Urbana. I would be honored to continue serve my city.

Nancy Uchtmann – term ending June 30, 2030 *(original appointment October 18, 2004)*

I would like to be reappointed and continue to serve on the Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals. I have served for many years and believe I understand the need for appropriate and fair zoning in Urbana. If reappointed, I intend to attend meetings when I am available and study each request for a variance before each meeting.

Relationship to City Services and Priorities*Impact on Core Services*

City of Urbana Board and Commission members play a crucial role in helping City leaders address specific issues, offering professional expertise, involving the community in decision-making, and connecting residents, City staff, and Council.

Strategic Goals & Plans N/A

Previous Council Actions N/A

Discussion*Recommendation*

City Council is asked to approve the reappointments of all current board and commission members listed in this memo.

Next Steps

If approved, the Office of the Mayor will notify all members of their reappointments and thank them for their continuing service.

Originated by: Mindy Hewkin, Administrative Assistant

Reviewed: Kate Levy, Executive Coordinator

Approved: DeShawn Williams, Mayor