

Seattle CARE Department

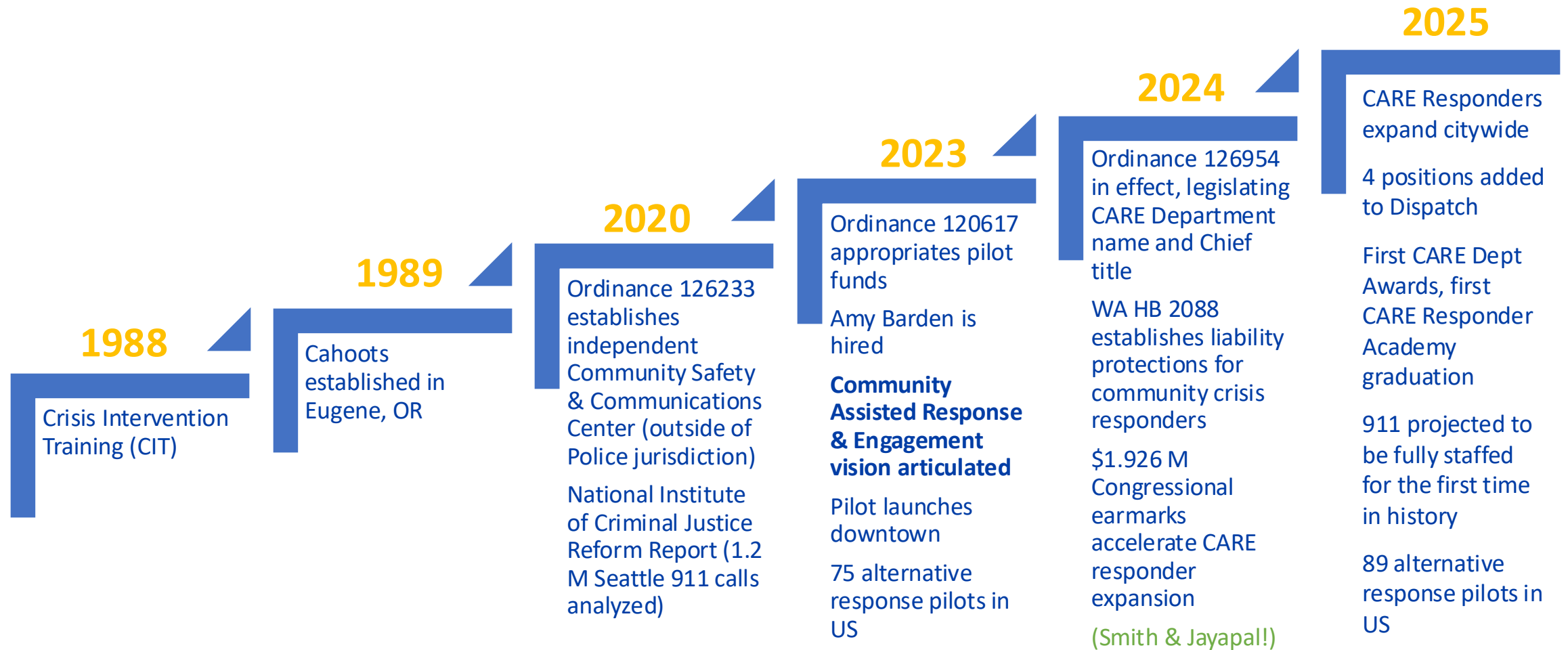
Dr. Amy Barden, Chief
March 11, 2025

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City of Seattle

Reimagining First Response





Every system is perfectly designed to get the result that it does.

W. Edwards Deming



City of Seattle



Seattle CARE is unique nationally because it houses 911, leveraging **Dispatch expertise** and analysis as central to design. The CARE Department is best positioned to rapidly identify gaps and overlaps in public safety and determine what constitutes the best first response.

Seattle 911



Collaboration

We believe that a **collaborative and coordinated approach** with Police, Fire & EMS services is essential to holistically meet the needs of community members.

We are committed to a robust and **transparent** environment, sharing, and considering a diversity of perspectives and ideas both internally and externally.

Adaptability

We believe the community's needs are **complex and varied**, requiring diverse skill sets, perspectives, and resources.

We are **adaptive and responsive to emerging trends** and needs.

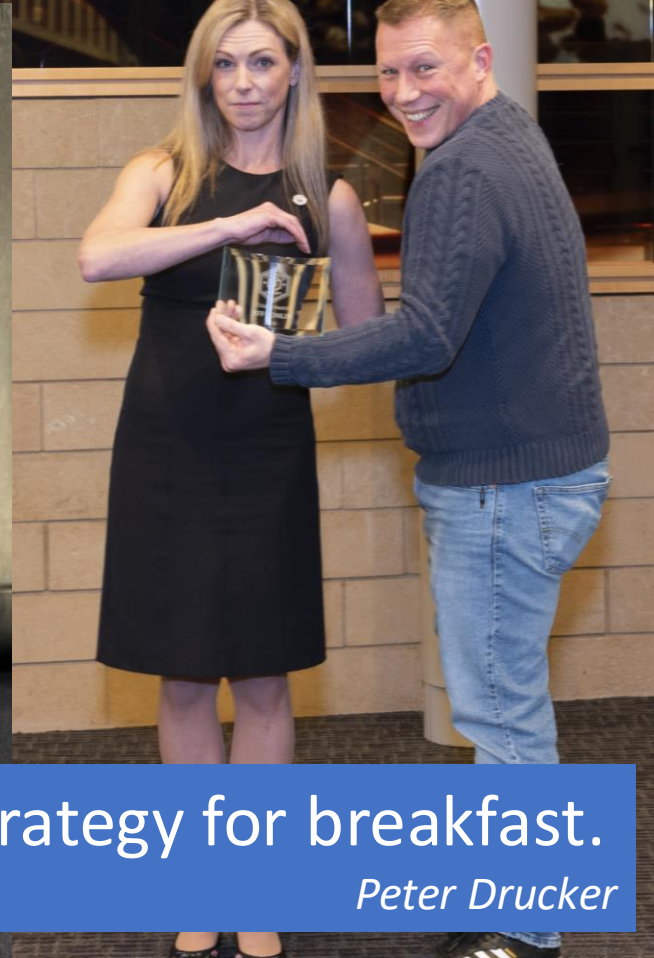
Responsibility

We believe prevention and diversion are essential to minimizing the need for coercion. We believe in **balancing compassion** with the broader needs of community.

Empathy

We believe people can change and acknowledge that every life has equal value. We advocate for an unbiased system designed to heal and rehabilitate.





Culture eats strategy for breakfast.
Peter Drucker

Seattle 911: The FIRST first response

Why did retention improve?

- Emphasis on Department mission, identity, and culture
- Training re-design; learning organization; de-militarization
- Investment in Peer Support and focus on well-being

Separation Rate (this includes D1,D2,D3,SPV,MGR and PCA positions)					
Year	Number of Positions	New Hires	Separations	Separation Rate	Net Change
2020	139	18	17	12.23%	+1
2021	139	23	34	24.46%	-11
2022	139	44	30	21.58%	+14
2023	141	45	51	36.17%	-6
2024	144	40	27	18.75%	+13
2025 YTD	148	8	3	2.02%	+5

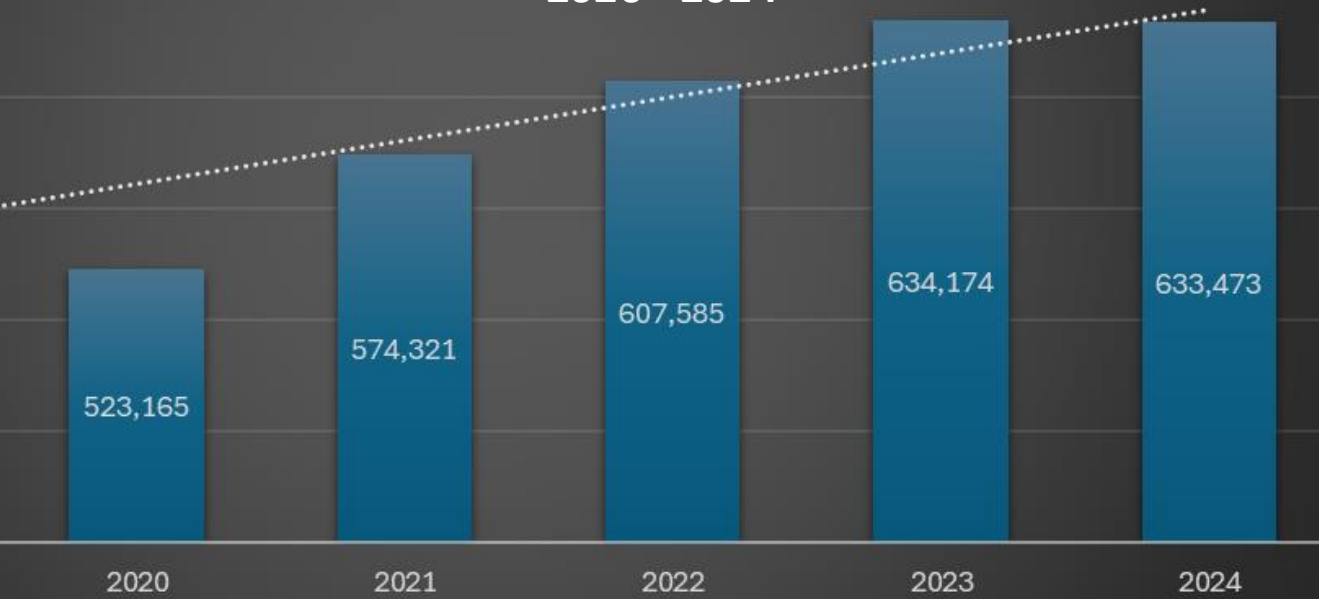


Call trends

2024 All Calls
911 calls: 633,473
Text to 911: 7,911
583 line: 61,658
Non-emergency: 187,583
Total calls: 890,576



**911 Emergency Phone Calls Only
2020 - 2024**



Priority Trends

Priority 1, 2, and 3 Dispatch Times

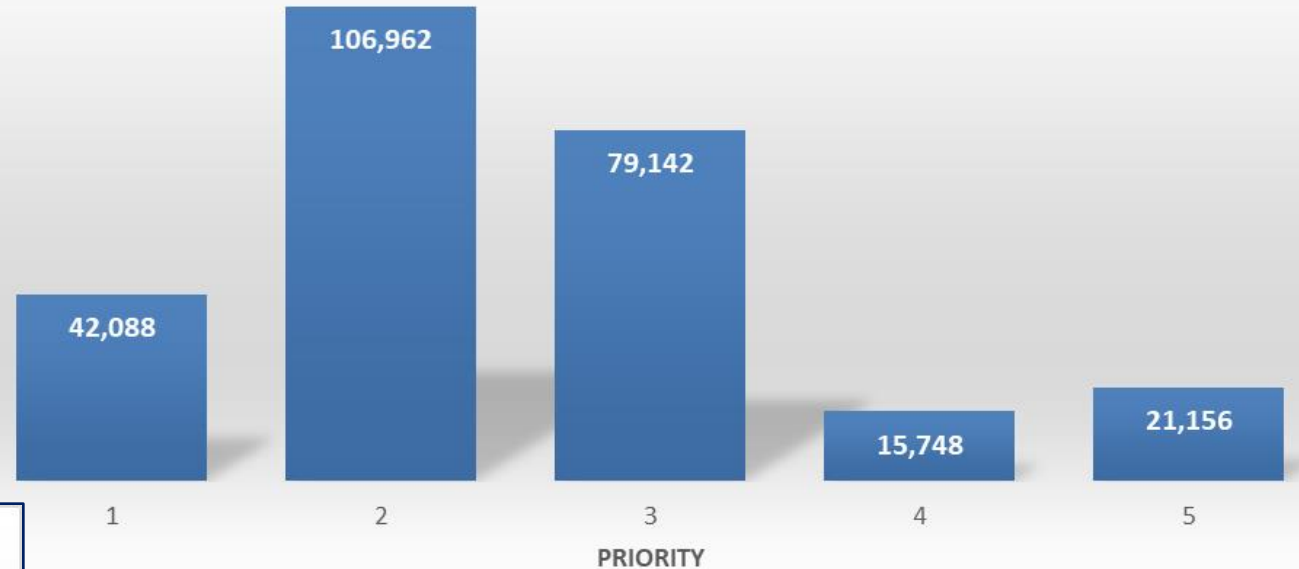
Calculated from time the call is queued to time the call is dispatched

Priority 1: 00:01 (urgent threat to life)

Priority 2: 01:13 (urgent, could become life threatening)

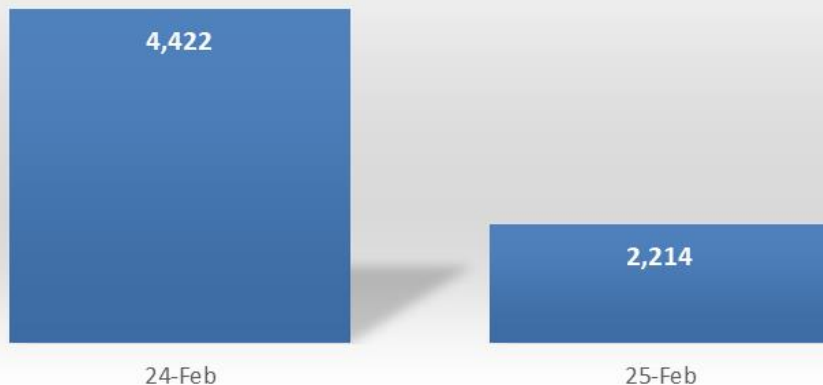
Priority 3: 02:39 (Public safety or health concern, lacks evidence of emergent threats)

2024 CAD Event Counts by Priority



Priority 1 CAD Events

February 2024 vs February 2025



Priority 1 calls **cut in half** year over a year as a result of a rigorous call prioritization redesign led by SPD Deputy Chief Eric Barden and CARE Deputy Chief Charlotte Joseph in 2024, with support and from SFD Chief Harold Scoggins.



CARE Community Crisis Responders

CARE response to date (from inception)

- 1,648 total events CCRs handled or assisted on
- Close to **50 different call types** responded to secondarily
- 57.58% of calls requested by police
- SPD backup requested 3 times (.002% of calls)
- CARE response saves at least 40% cost on average per call versus dispatching police



What's next

Citywide expansion complete this month. 24 responders, 3 supervisors, 1 manager, 1 training manager
Co-location in police precincts; some satellite locations
Public disclosure exemption in legislative process (HB 1816)
Community engagement and educational partnerships; CARE tightly coordinated with nonprofits
Proactive, place-based intervention, deflection, and diversion strategies

2025

CARE as a Learning Organization

- Criteria-based dispatch
- Professional development; UW BH Core; CARE Responder Academy
- Study groups/communities of practice
- Contributing to the national innovation conversation

CARE as a Research Hub and Local/State/National Resource

- Aggregating trend data to illuminate gaps and overlaps
- Operational, legal, fiscal, policy, and political considerations to advance the movement
- 911 buy-in imperative

CARE as a Center of Tech Innovation

- Integration of Real Time Crime Center; machine learning
- Improved non-emergency answering system
- Automatic translation and transcription module



Research and National Trend Data

Forthcoming Seattle University Year One Evaluation

- Perceptions of utility in first response
- Issues around role confusion
- Impacts to response time and first responder capacity
- Community perceptions and desire

Council of State Governments Commission on Expanding First Response

- Community Responders as First Responders
- Operational, legal, fiscal, and political strategies to advance the work
- 911 buy-in imperative

Georgetown CICS Alternative Response Research Collective

- Albuquerque Community Safety approaches 100,000 calls (first responders)
- Integrating prevention, diversion, first response, reentry
- Public Health/Public Safety



Ordinance 126954

The functions of the Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department are as follows:

- **Act as the city's Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)** (*emergency and non-emergency calls*)
- Provide **diversified community-focused responses** to 911 calls identified as behavioral health, non-emergent, low-acuity, and low-risk.
- Create a new initiative to **integrate the City's violence intervention programs**, using research and evidence-based strategies to reduce violence, including identifying specific and measurable outcomes.
- Improve health and safety by **unifying and aligning Seattle's community-focused, non-police public safety investments**.

Signed by Mayor Bruce Harrell Dec 1, 2023



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Discussion

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