

2023-2024 PROPOSED MID-BIENNIAL BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS REVIEW

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Staff: Ann Gorman

	2023 Adopted	2024 Endorsed	2024 Proposed	% Change 2024 Endorsed to 2024 Proposed
Appropriations by BSL				
Operating				
Community Safety and Communications Center	\$20,552,661	\$21,682,645	n/a	n/a
Community Assisted Response and Engagement			\$2,419,334	n/a
911 Call Response			\$24,164,064	n/a
Operating Total	\$20,552,661	\$21,682,645	\$26,583,399	22.6%
Total Appropriations	\$20,552,661	\$21,682,645	\$26,583,399	22.6%
Total FTE	173.00	150.00	163.00	8.6%
Revenues				
General Fund	\$20,552,661	\$21,682,845	\$26,583,399	22.6%
Total Revenues	\$20,552,661	\$21,682,845	\$26,583,399	22.6%

I. Introduction

The 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments include changes that reflect the Executive’s vision for the gradual evolution of the Community Safety and Communications Center (CSCC) into the Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department, a third public safety department of equal standing to that of the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and the Seattle Fire Department (SFD).

Legislation submitted with the 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments would amend the Seattle Municipal Code to rename the department and significantly expand its operational purview. That legislation is discussed in Section C of this memo and included as Attachment 1. The table above reflects the department’s intended replacement of the single current Budget Summary Level (BSL) with two new BSLs, consistent with the intent of legislation. This change would be effective in 2024.

The CSCC’s 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments are higher than the 2024 Endorsed Budget by \$4.9 million, an increase of 22.6 percent. This increase is supported by a pronounced ongoing appropriation increase – from \$244,000 to \$4.3 million – in 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenue to support call taker position costs. It also includes a one-time use of \$900,000 in Excise Tax revenue account balance. Because 9-1-1 Excise Tax Revenues accrue to the General Fund, the table above does not differentiate revenues from that funding source. See Section B for a discussion of this funding source and its use in the 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments. 2023 costs associated with establishing a new team of Community Responders (see Section B) were funded from a one-time Finance General reserve, and in 2024 these costs are made ongoing in the department’s budget.

The CSCC's FTE level would also increase by 8.6 percent, from 150.0 to 163.0. In large part these increases would support ongoing staffing and costs associated with the Community Responders, who will respond to 9-1-1 crisis calls beginning on October 19, 2023 (see Contextual Budget Issue 1, below). That team is comprised of 7.0 FTE, and 2024 costs for its implementation and performance would be \$286,000 one-time and \$1.2 million ongoing. Staff identified an issue for the Council's consideration that is discussed in the next section.

II. Issue Identification

A. Issues and Options

1. Funding for department planning

The 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments include \$607,000 General Fund (one time), which would support the planned consolidation, in the CARE Department, of the City's non-police and community-based services that improve public health and safety services (see Section C below).

That City-led planning effort is currently underway. The Mayor's Office, with the participation of staff from various other departments, is leading an analysis of current service provision in this area. This work, which may also include evaluations of current programs, is anticipated to take approximately a year and to result in the identification of any adjacencies and redundancies among existing Citywide programming. Ultimately, it will provide the basis for the intended consolidation.

There has been no need identified to use this funding to support either the analysis of current service provision or the larger planning effort that would result in service consolidation in the CARE Department, but this need could arise in the future.

The 2022 Adopted Budget for the CSCC included \$150,000 for a planning study that would have helped the CSCC develop policies, identify gaps as an independent agency, and plan for the integration of civilian response and/or alternative dispatch methods. The Executive did not use the funding for this purpose.

Options:

- A. Provide this funding, requiring Council approval of a spending plan
- B. Redirect some or all of the funding to other Council priorities
- C. Create a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting a report on findings from the current planning effort, including an enumeration of any identified redundancies
- D. No change

B. Contextual Budget Issues

1. Funding to Support Dual Dispatch Program

On October 19 the City's dual dispatch pilot will launch. This pilot will allow for the dual dispatch of SPD officers and trained behavioral health specialists – CSCC Community Responders – to the scene of Person Down calls and to Welfare Check calls where forced entry is not required. (CSCC call takers assign these call types to incoming calls based on information provided by the caller.) The pilot will operate seven days per week from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. in the [Downtown Activation Plan area](#) (this includes downtown, Belltown, the stadium district, and the International District). Collectively, the Community Responders are 3.0 FTE Community Crisis Responder I (\$383,000) and 3.0 FTE Community Crisis Responder II (\$457,000). CSCC worked with the Seattle Department of Human Resources to develop these new class specifications.

The pilot is the realization of longtime Council interest in an ongoing City-funded service that provides an appropriate and helpful therapeutic response for people experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis. It is anticipated that the CSCC Community Responders will also alleviate strains on other public safety resources by responding to low-acuity calls that do not have a nexus to law enforcement, thus diverting people experiencing a crisis from being incarcerated or sent to the emergency room.

\$1.5 million (\$286,000 one-time, \$1.2 million ongoing) is included in the 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments to support the operations of the CARE Team, which includes the six responders and 1.0 FTE Manager 2 (\$180,000). These positions were included in the 2023 Mid-year Supplemental Ordinance (ORD 120618). Council established one-time funding for the implementation of the dual dispatch pilot in Council Budget Action (CBA) [CSCC-002-B-001-2023](#). At that time, the CSCC's 2024 costs associated with the responder team were projected to be \$1.6 million ongoing. The 2024 Proposed Budget refines and updates that assumption as noted here. The revision of ongoing costs reflects position and rent expenditures that were lower than projected. Initial assumptions also included ongoing technology costs that will instead be reflected in the department's base Seattle IT rates.

The 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments also include position costs for CSCC administrative positions that were not contemplated at the time the cost estimate for the dual dispatch pilot was developed. These positions, which the City Budget Office established on an emergency basis in March 2023 with sunset dates at the end of the year, are proposed to be made permanent. Those positions are 1.0 FTE Executive 2 (\$224,000), whose role is Deputy Director of Dual Dispatch; 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 1 (\$167,000), who will function as the department's public information officer; and 1.0 Executive Assistant (\$158,000).

2. Call Center Staffing

A consultant-led 2016 staffing study concluded that the 9-1-1 Call Center, which was then part of SPD, was significantly understaffed across call-taker and dispatcher positions¹ based on its then-current workload. The 2017 Proposed Budget added 3.0 call-taker FTE and Council added 6.0 FTE more.

CSCC was re-organized into an agency independent of SPD in 2021. The Council added 26 positions to the Call Center in the 2022 Adopted Budget and included \$879,000 in funding to support 13.0 FTE beginning in July 2022 (CBA [CSCC-001-B-1](#)). The CSCC did not fill any of the positions and the funding was used to balance the General Fund. The 2023 Proposed Budget abrogated all these positions and their funding. In the 2023 Adopted Budget, Council added 2.0 Call Center FTE (CBA [CSCC-600-A-1](#)).

Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) [CSCC-300-B-001](#) requested that the CSCC submit a report, with reporting dimensions to include recommendations for the appropriate FTE level for each job classification housed at the CSCC and a rationale for those recommendations; the SLI also requested an analysis of how current staffing levels affect staff well-being and morale. Councilmembers received the CSCC's response to that SLI on September 26. It recommended the addition of 33.0 FTE (for a total of 144.0 FTE) call takers and dispatchers to meet call-taking service metrics and fully support employees' wellness and their professional development needs.

The 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments would add 3.0 FTE Call Center staff serving in front-line roles, for a total of 114.0 FTE. At this level, staffing would remain far below the level recommended in the SLI response.

3. New Use of 9-1-1 Excise Tax Revenues to Expand CARE Department

The 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments include the use of \$4.3M ongoing in 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues, which support county emergency-service communication systems. These revenues are collected by the State of Washington via a tax on land telephone lines, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) lines, and cellular phone numbers. The King County E-911 Program Office has oversight of the individual escrow accounts for the 12 County Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), and it distributes revenue to these accounts on a quarterly basis. The CSCC is one of these PSAPs. 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues accrue to the General Fund but both the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) restrict the use of this funding source to technical, operational and staffing costs that directly support the delivery, receipt, and processing of 9-1-1 calls.

The 2024 Proposed Budget shifts \$4 million in current and proposed new costs from unrestricted General Fund to 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues on an ongoing basis. The Executive views this change not as the transfer of expenditures from one funding source to another but as the use of a previously underutilized funding source to create General Fund capacity that could be used to grow the CARE Department. Therefore, it is not possible to provide a list of the discrete expenditures that were funded by unrestricted General Fund in 2023 and are proposed to be

¹ "Call-taker" positions correspond to City job classifications Emergency Communications Dispatcher 1 and Emergency Communications Dispatcher 2. "Dispatcher" positions correspond to the Emergency Communications Dispatcher 3 classification.

funded by 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues in 2024. Beginning in 2024, these two funding sources will be combined and they will together comprise the department's budget.

The 2024 Proposed Budget also includes one-time use of \$900,000 from the balance in the CSCC's 9-1-1 Excise Tax Revenue account. This funding is available because in past years, the CSCC has not fully drawn down account balance. Its one-time use for an ongoing need reduces the General Fund's capacity to grow the CARE Department in future years.

As a point of reference for the scale of the ongoing shift, \$4 million is the CSCC's net position cost, including the current overtime requirement, to support approximately 32.5 FTE Communications Dispatcher I (this is 30% of all Call Taker positions). These costs are a permissible use of 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues, but prior to 2023 the CSCC did not programmatically use the revenues for this purpose. Council Budget Action [CSCC-600-A-001](#) (2023) added 2.0 FTE Emergency Communications Dispatcher II with ongoing funding from 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues. The 2024 Proposed Budget Adjustments would add an additional 1.0 FTE Communications Dispatcher I and 2.0 FTE Communications Dispatcher II (\$355,000).

As a point of reference for the scale of the one-time shift, \$900,000 is the CSCC's net position cost, including the current overtime requirement, to support approximately 7.25 FTE Communications Dispatcher I positions. These position costs will need to be supported by unrestricted General Fund beginning in 2025.

In 2023 the CSCC's allocated funding from 9-1-1 Excise Tax was \$4.3 million, and the 2024 allocation is forecast to be approximately the same amount. There is some risk to the long-term sustainability of this revenue due to the decreasing use of land telephone lines, but such decrease would be from an already low base and, because revenues are distributed quarterly, the City has the ability to track budgeted vs. actual revenues and revisit planning assumptions as needed.

Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) [CBO-600-A-001-2023](#) requested that the City Budget Office (CBO) report on the use of these revenues, policies around their use, and planned expenditures. On September 26, Councilmembers received a response to that SLI in which CBO expressed intent to use all annual revenues to the CSCC's escrow account to support call-taking operations beginning in 2024, although the SLI response did not make explicit that separate tracking of expenditures from 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues would be impossible. One outcome of designating the entirety of these revenues for the department's base budget will be a diminished ability, in the future, to absorb emergent costs for hardware, software, and training needs that support the call-taking function. Previously these costs have sometimes been funded by 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues on an ad hoc basis.

Because position costs typically increase annually and 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenues are static, in future years the CSCC will require an increasingly large increment of unrestricted General Fund to supplement the proposed aggregate 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenue investment described above. As an example, if the 2024 Adopted Budget includes all of the Executive's proposals for the use of these revenues and position-based costs increase 4% from 2024 to 2025, the department will require an additional \$171,000 from the General Fund to maintain the cost-shifted and new resources at their proposed 2024 levels. This increment is in addition to the \$900,000 that will be needed due to the one-time use of 9-1-1 Excise Tax revenue account balance in 2024.

Absent the identification of a new funding source, ongoing General Fund resources will be needed to support the CSCC's expansion as a department, including any increase in its crisis-response service level.

C. Budget Legislation

1. CARE Department

This legislation, which is included here as Attachment 1, would establish the CARE Department as a new City entity, amending Sections 3.15.060 and 3.15.062 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC). The legislation would:

- Rename the department, from the Community Safety and Communications Center (CSCC) to the Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department.
- Establish the department's mission as the improvement of public health and safety services, accomplished in part by consolidating non-police programs and services.
- Add new department functions, including:
 - Providing response to 9-1-1 calls identified as behavioral health, non-emergency, low-acuity, and low-risk.
 - Creating a new initiative to integrate the City's violence prevention programs, with its initial focus to include gun violence prevention interventions, community-based intervention programs including violence interrupters, and youth-focused programs.
- Change the title of the department head from "Director" to "Chief."

In terms of the legislation's proposed expanded public health purview, the City of Seattle and Public Health – Seattle King County (Public Health) are parties to an [interlocal agreement](#), which sets forth roles and responsibilities around the development and implementation of public health policies. HSD's 2023 Adopted Budget includes support for existing programs in Public Health that have a nexus to gun violence prevention and community-based intervention. Any assumption of public-health program oversight by the CARE Department should conform to the interlocal agreement or amend it as appropriate, take current City investments into account, and seek to avoid service duplication across the two agencies. In taking on the proposed new City role, CARE Department staff may also benefit from ongoing consultation with expert Public Health staff. The Executive did not seek the input of Public Health in developing the legislation.

As discussed above in Section A, the planning work associated with the future consolidation of programs and services in the CARE Department could identify redundancies, which may lead to reducing or moving existing positions and associated resources. It is unlikely that the CARE Department would be able to administer a consolidated group of programs or design a new initiative without the addition of new positions to perform the oversight, administrative, community-outreach and other functions that are typically associated with public health and non-police public safety programming. The net Citywide staffing and budgetary impacts of the proposed consolidation are unknown at this time.

The proposed title change for the head of the CARE Department, from "Director" to "Chief," is made on the basis of establishing parity among the CARE Department, SPD, and SFD. When Council developed the legislation that created the CSCC in 2021, it was important to Council both

that the new department be set apart from SPD and SFD as civilian led and that the public understand its role was not law enforcement. CSCC Community Responders, unlike SPD and SFD responders, will not be sworn staff. Although the title change would not preclude the service of a civilian as the department head, it may impact how the department, and its head, are perceived, and it may not align with the department's proposed expanded mission. Relatedly, a proposed SMC textual change would amend the department's service mission from the provision of "*civilian and community-based services and solutions*" to "*non-police and community-based services and solutions.*" The import of this change is not clear.

Options:

- A. Pass
- B. Amend the description of the CARE Department's mission and/or functions
- C. Restore the "Director" title for the department head
- D. Do not pass

Attachments

1. CARE Department ordinance

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL _____

..title

AN ORDINANCE relating to the organization of City government; renaming the Community Safety and Communications Center to the Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department; requesting that the Code Reviser revise the Seattle Municipal Code accordingly; and amending Sections 3.15.060 and 3.15.062 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

..body

WHEREAS, by adopting Ordinance 126233 the City created the Community Safety and Communications Center, effective January 1, 2021, including the 911 call answering and dispatch center; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council envisioned this new department to be responsible for 911 call answering and dispatch and also diversified response options to incidents when police officers are not needed; and

WHEREAS, the City will continue its efforts to build community-focused, trauma-informed approaches to low-acuity non-police public safety incidents; and

WHEREAS, the name Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) better reflects the purpose and responsibilities of the department; and

WHEREAS, CARE also embodies the City’s vision of aligning and unifying Seattle’s community-focused, non-police public safety programs to better serve the City; and

WHEREAS, associated sections of the Seattle Municipal Code must be updated to reflect this new name and additional areas of responsibility; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 3.15.060 of the Seattle Municipal Code, enacted by Ordinance 126233, is amended as follows:

1 **3.15.060 (~~Community Safety and Communications Center~~) Community Assisted**
2 **Response and Engagement Department**

3 There is created within the Executive Department a (~~Community Safety and Communications~~
4 ~~Center~~) Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department to provide timely,
5 accurate, and vital information to the City's first responders, (~~city~~) service providers, and the
6 public, and to provide (~~civilian~~) non-police and community-based services and solutions to
7 community safety challenges. The CARE Department's mission is to improve public health and
8 safety services by unifying and aligning the City's community-focused, non-police public safety
9 investments and services to address behavioral abuse, substance abuse, and non-emergent, low-
10 risk calls for service through diversified programs that are equitable, innovative, evidence-based,
11 compassionate, and effective. (~~A. Effective the earlier of June 1, 2021 or 30 days after the~~
12 ~~Executive receives the necessary Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) access permissions for the~~
13 ~~9-1-1 call center, the~~) The functions of the (~~Community Safety and Communications Center~~)
14 Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department are as follows:

15 (~~(+)~~) A. Act as the city's Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), providing 24-
16 hour public safety communication and dispatch services for 9-1-1 calls (~~originating~~) regarding
17 incidents in Seattle.

18 (~~(a-)~~) 1. Identify, triage, and dispatch public safety service requests to first
19 responders and other community resources most appropriate to quickly and safely respond and
20 resolve the requested need.

21 (~~(b-)~~) 2. Dispatch and provide continuous contact with responders, provide(~~s~~)
22 support functions for responding agencies, and coordinate(~~s~~) responses between city
23 departments and public safety agencies operating within Seattle.

1 ((e-)) 3. Notify City departments, City leaders, and other stakeholders of
2 emergency incidents.

3 ((e-)) 4. Provide information and service referrals to non-emergency callers.

4 5. Provide diversified community-focused responses to 911 calls identified as
5 behavioral health, non-emergent, low-acuity, and low-risk.

6 6. Create a new initiative to integrate the City’s violence intervention programs,
7 using research and evidence-based strategies to reduce violence, including identifying specific
8 and measurable outcomes. This initiative will focus initially on: (a) gun violence prevention
9 interventions; (b) community-based intervention programs, including violence interrupters; (c)
10 youth-focused programs; and use evidence-based public safety strategies to measure program
11 success and develop future solutions.

12 7. Improve public health and safety by unifying and aligning Seattle’s
13 community-focused, non-police public safety investments.

14 ((B. Effective June 1, 2021, the following function shall be added to the Community
15 Safety and Communications Center:

16 1. Provide parking enforcement to assist in the administration of traffic laws, to the extent
17 allowed by the commission of Parking Enforcement Officers as Special Police Officers and in
18 coordination with the Seattle Police Department and the Seattle Department of Transportation.))

19 Section 2. Section 3.15.062 of the Seattle Municipal Code, enacted by Ordinance 126233,
20 is amended as follows:

21 **3.15.062 ((Director)) Chief of the ((Community Safety and Communications Center))**

22 **Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department**

23 A. Appointment, term, and removal

1 The ~~((Director))~~ Chief of the ~~((Community Safety and Communications Center (CSCC)))~~
2 Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department shall be appointed by the
3 Mayor and subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the City Council. The ~~((Director))~~ Chief
4 shall be subject to reappointment and reconfirmation every four years and may be removed by
5 the Mayor upon filing a statement of reasons therefor with the City Council.

6 B. Duties

7 The ~~((Director))~~ Chief of ~~((CSCC))~~ the CARE Department shall be the head of ~~((CSCC))~~
8 the CARE Department, shall be responsible for the administration of the ~~((CSCC))~~ CARE
9 Department, and shall:

10 1. Develop and manage all functions and responsibilities of the ~~((CSCC))~~ CARE
11 Department;

12 2. Subject to the City's personnel ordinances and rules, appoint, assign, supervise,
13 control, and remove all officers and employees in the ~~((CSCC))~~ CARE Department;

14 3. Manage the preparation of the preliminary proposed budget for ~~((CSCC))~~ the
15 CARE Department, authorize necessary expenditures and enter into contracts for professional
16 and expert services in accordance with the adopted budget, develop and manage programs, and
17 undertake authorized activities;

18 4. Administer all ordinances pertaining to the ~~((CSCC))~~ CARE Department and
19 its functions;

20 5. Execute, administer, modify, and enforce such agreements and instruments as
21 the ~~((Director))~~ Chief shall deem reasonably necessary to implement city service dispatching
22 consistent with all applicable laws and ordinances, as the ~~((Director))~~ Chief shall deem

1 appropriate for carrying out the responsibilities, functions, and activities of ((CSCC)) the CARE
2 Department;

3 6. Apply for grants for departmental programs;

4 7. Coordinate with outside jurisdictions;

5 8. Serve, in conjunction with other pertinent members of the Mayor's Cabinet, as
6 the City's representative to intergovernmental and public-private boards, commissions,
7 organizations, and committees engaged in issues pertaining to emergency communications and
8 city service dispatching;

9 9. Provide input to the Mayor and City Council on the city's emergency
10 communications and recommend actions to better respond to calls for assistance from the public
11 and to better communicate with the public about dangerous situations and natural disasters;

12 10. Make periodic reports to the Mayor and City Council concerning the activities
13 of ((CSCC)) the CARE Department;

14 11. Promulgate and amend, in accordance with Chapter 3.02, rules and
15 regulations to carry out ((CSCC)) CARE Department activities;

16 12. Maintain city compliance with all national, state, and county laws, rules,
17 certifications, etc., as necessary for the efficient and robust city service response for all members
18 of the community; and

19 13. Exercise such other and further powers and duties as shall be prescribed by
20 ordinance.

21 Section 3. The City Council requests that the Code Reviser, pursuant to the authority
22 established by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.03.030, revise the Seattle Municipal Code to
23 replace references to “Community Safety and Communications Center” with “Community

- 1 Assisted Response and Engagement Department” and “Director of the Community Safety and
- 2 Communications Center” with “Chief of the Community Assisted Response and Engagement
- 3 Department.”

1 Section 4. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by
2 the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it
3 shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.

4 Passed by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2023,
5 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this _____ day of
6 _____, 2023.

7 _____
8 President _____ of the City Council

9 Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this ____ day of _____, 2023.

10 _____
11 Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

12 Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2023.

13 _____
14 Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

15 (Seal)