

The City of Seattle

Ordinance _____

Council Bill _____

..title

An ordinance relating to the operations of the Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department; describing the duties of the Community Crisis Responder team; amending Section 3.15.060 of the Seattle Municipal Code; and adding a new Section 3.15.064 to the Seattle Municipal Code.

..body

Recitals:

The City of Seattle (City) reaffirms its belief in the importance of providing a diversified public safety response that appropriately allocates City personnel and resources to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of persons in crisis and others requiring assistance.

The Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department, established by the City via Ordinance 126954, is a vital part of the City's public safety response, alongside the Seattle Police Department and Seattle Fire Department.

The CARE Department supports Seattle's public safety response system in two primary ways: 1) operation of the 9-1-1 Communications Center, which fields all 9-1-1 and non-emergency line calls within the City and coordinates dispatch of relevant responding agencies; and 2) fielding the Community Crisis Responder (CCR)

team, qualified behavioral health professionals trained to provide support and resources to persons experiencing crisis.

The City has made significant investments in the CARE CCR team in recent years, including through the 2026 Adopted Budget, to properly resource and staff the department for expanded citywide availability of the CCR team.

As the CARE Department has grown since its creation in 2023, and the CCR team has continued to expand, it is necessary to update the Seattle Municipal Code to reflect the investments and commitment of the City to a public safety response involving the CCR team as an integral component. Therefore,

Be it ordained by The City of Seattle as follows:

Section 1. Section 3.15.060 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126954, is amended as follows:

3.15.060 Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department

There is created within the Executive Department a Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department to provide timely, accurate, and vital information to the City's first responders, service providers, and the public, and to provide non-police and community-based services and solutions to community safety challenges. The CARE Department's mission is to improve health and safety services by unifying and aligning the City's community-focused, non-police public safety investments and services to address behavioral abuse, substance abuse, and non-emergent, low-risk calls for service through diversified programs that are equitable, innovative, evidence-based, ~~((compassionate, and))~~ effective, and accountable and that conform to any interlocal agreement and/or applicable contract in effect between The City of Seattle

and King County regarding public health. The functions of the Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department are as follows:

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

1. Identify, triage, and dispatch public safety service requests to first responders and other community resources most appropriate to quickly and safely respond and resolve the requested need.

2. Dispatch and provide continuous contact with responders, provide support functions for responding agencies, and coordinate responses between city departments and public safety agencies operating within Seattle.

3. Notify City departments, City leaders, and other stakeholders of emergency incidents.

4. Provide information and service referrals to non-emergency callers.

~~((5))~~ B. Provide diversified community-focused responses to ~~((911-calls))~~ incidents identified via 9-1-1 calls or other mechanisms as behavioral health, non-emergent, low-acuity, and low-risk.

1. Maintain a Community Crisis Responder team to serve as first responders supporting the City's response to persons experiencing clinical crisis and/or behavioral health challenges.

~~((6))~~ 2. 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. This initiative will focus initially on: (a)

gun violence prevention interventions; (b) community-based intervention programs, including violence interrupters; (c) youth-focused programs; and use evidence-based public safety strategies to measure program success and develop future solutions.

~~((7))~~3. Improve health and safety by unifying and aligning Seattle's community-focused, non-police public safety investments. This alignment shall include the provision of oversight, monitoring, and accountability for City contracts related to diversion and reentry services for those involved, or at risk of involvement, with the criminal justice system.

4. For all King County programs and initiatives related to clinical crisis and/or behavioral health challenges, serve as the City's point of contact for identifying, documenting, and planning to address the potential and actual public safety impacts of such programs and initiatives.

Section 2. A new Section 3.15.064 is added to the Seattle Municipal Code as follows:

3.15.064 Community Crisis Responder (CCR) team

A. CCRs shall be qualified behavioral health professionals possessing the requisite educational background and training to provide support and resources to people experiencing clinical crisis and/or behavioral health challenges in situations where there is no active threat of violence or medical emergency.

B. CCRs may respond to relevant incidents through dispatch via 9-1-1 call, requests initiated by the Seattle Police Department or the Seattle Fire Department, or other mechanisms approved by the Chief of the CARE Department.

C. CCRs may not engage in the enforcement of criminal law or issue citations of any kind.

D. CCRs may assist in the post-release coordination of care of people released from the King County Jail to clinical and/or behavioral service providers, including the direct introduction of a person to such provider or providers in real time.

This ordinance shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Sections 1.04.020 and 1.04.070.

Passed by the City Council and signed in open session in authentication of its passage on _____.

President _____ of the City Council

_____ on _____.

Katie B. Wilson, Mayor

Attested on _____.

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

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