



From the Desk of Chief Darrell Lowe  
Redmond Police Department  
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July 19, 2024

## **ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE PROPOSAL**

The City of Redmond and the Redmond Police Department continue exploring the benefit of establishing a dedicated non-law enforcement response team responsible for responding to and addressing calls for service that do not need to be handled by police officers. Presently, officers are dispatched to calls involving subjects suffering from behavioral health issues and alcohol/drug abuse that do not involve criminal conduct. Every day multiple calls involving people suffering from an emotional crisis, welfare checks, unwanted persons, and non-eminent suicide threats, to name a few. A dedicated response team composed of non-law enforcement staff has the capability of being the first responders to many of these calls. A facet of the police reimagining conversation asks the question of whether police officers are the best resource for these contacts based on their limited training and experience in the arena of behavioral health.

The police department instituted a co-responder model in 2018, a program that has an MHP embedded in the patrol division. This position is currently unfilled, and an active recruitment is underway. This proposal will have no impact on the co-responder model currently deployed. The non-law enforcement response team would provide an additional resource in a tiered response to address the varying social needs of the community. This will be an additional rung of the tiered Community Health response which include the City's homeless outreach specialist, and mobile integrated health (MIH) and the recently staffed Community Care Coordinators (CCC)

The non-law enforcement response team will ideally be composed of a (dual) certified MHP, EMT/RN, crisis/social worker, and peer counselor. The team will be trained in conflict resolution, capable of responding to specific calls in lieu of a uniformed police officer. They will be better trained to recognize various behavioral health situations and provide necessary resources. The team could provide referrals to the homeless outreach specialist or MIH, CCC based on the circumstance. This resource would connect people with the most appropriate, non-uniformed specialists while keeping officers available for handling other police matters.

Logistically, the non-law enforcement response team will be based within the police department and dispatched to calls by the Redmond Communications Center. Communications call-takers will triage the calls coming in on the 9-1-1 and non-emergency lines, using the Denver STAR call triage model determining if the calls are appropriate for this team's response. During the hours the team is operational, they will respond to the scene of these appropriately screened calls. They will have a police radio and MDC, allowing them immediate access to additional resources, including a police or fire department response.

Based on the call type, the non-law enforcement response team may respond directly to calls involving people in crisis, intoxicated persons, re-occurring suicide threats, 9-1-1 call abusers, welfare checks, trespass/unwanted persons, etc. They will not respond to calls involving criminal activity, weapons, fights or disturbances, threats, injuries, etc.

There may also be an option of this team being able to triage calls from their mobile unit, allowing for greater and more consistent visibility and service to the community. This option is based on the concept of a crisis specialist being embedded in our dispatch center a proof-of-concept that is being evaluated at Valley Comm-911 currently. Initial evaluation suggests an embedded MHP in our dispatch center while a tremendous resource given our call volume their utilization will be less optimal.

The estimated cost to fund the creation of this program as proposed will be approximately \$720,000 for a budget cycle. With salaries for a completely staffed team estimated at approximately \$285,000 annually.

Grant funds for programs like this may be available through the Washington State Health Department, and Federal funded programs.

Formation of this program as outlined above, will provide the intersection and cross functionality of the Community Care Coordinators, Mobile Integrated Health and co-response program; and will represent the vision of a comprehensive Community Health program.

If approved, creation of job descriptions and identification of funding sources will begin. Followed by introducing the call triage protocols during our annual In-service dispatcher training. Once funds are identified and secured active recruitment for the positions and acquisition of needed equipment will begin.

Sincerely,

*Darrell Lowe*

Darrell Lowe, Chief of Police  
Redmond Police Department