



Joining Forces: How Police and Social Workers Can Partner for a Stronger, Healthier Community

August 26, 2020

Purpose: To understand existing partnerships between Cincinnati police and social workers and discuss ideas for expanding those partnerships using proven methods. This discussion will inform the implementation of a \$1M pilot program funded by City Council to provide a community-based response to emergencies involving public health, homelessness, mental health, domestic violence, and substance abuse.

Partnership Models:

1. QRT- Quick-Response Teams (Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition)
 - First responders (law enforcement, fire and EMS), clinicians and peer mentors visit the home of a person who recently overdosed and offer support services to the individual and their family. QRT members then follow up to encourage the person to seek treatment.
2. DVERT™- Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (Women Helping Women/CPD)
 - Trauma-focused crisis response team that responds with CPD to provide on-scene response to domestic violence survivors and connect victims and their families to supportive services.
3. CAHOOTS – Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets (Eugene, OR)
 - Mobile Crisis Intervention team made up of a social worker and a medic responds to non-life-threatening, non-violent 911 calls.

Opportunities:

- Accompany police and/or provide follow-up visits on calls involving mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, and homelessness on a 24/7 basis.
- Implement a mobile crisis response program in which social workers respond to 911 calls involving non-dangerous, non-life-threatening cases (CAHOOTS model).

Benefits of partnership:

- Frees up police to handle violent offenders and dangerous cases.
- Allows social workers to quickly and effectively respond to residents who are experiencing a crisis.
- Reduces repeat 911 calls.
- Provides a potential cost-savings by using social workers rather than police or EMS
- Reduces the number of people being incarcerated by diverting them to treatment or services, ultimately leading to better outcomes.
- Provides a more measurable, sustainable and trustworthy approach for interactions between African Americans and law enforcement for improved, equitable outcomes.

Potential obstacles/concerns:

- Ability of 911 call center to take on new responsibility of deciding whether to direct a call to CPD or a mobile response team in a CAHOOTS-style program.
- Funding will be needed beyond the \$1M allocated for a pilot to make these partnerships ongoing.

Next steps/Call to Action:

- HSC recommends that a working group be formed comprised of representatives of CPD and the human services sector to design a community safety response pilot program.