



Alternative Response Programs

City Manager's Office
City Council Study Session
May 19, 2026
Item 2

Focus Areas



Expand Homelessness Outreach

Expand the Homelessness Engagement and Alternatives Liaison (HEAL) Team to increase outreach to unhoused residents and support the health and safety of the entire city



Behavioral Health Crisis Response Team

Provide mental, behavioral, and homelessness crisis response without utilizing commissioned law-enforcement officers

Library Patron Crisis & De-escalation Team

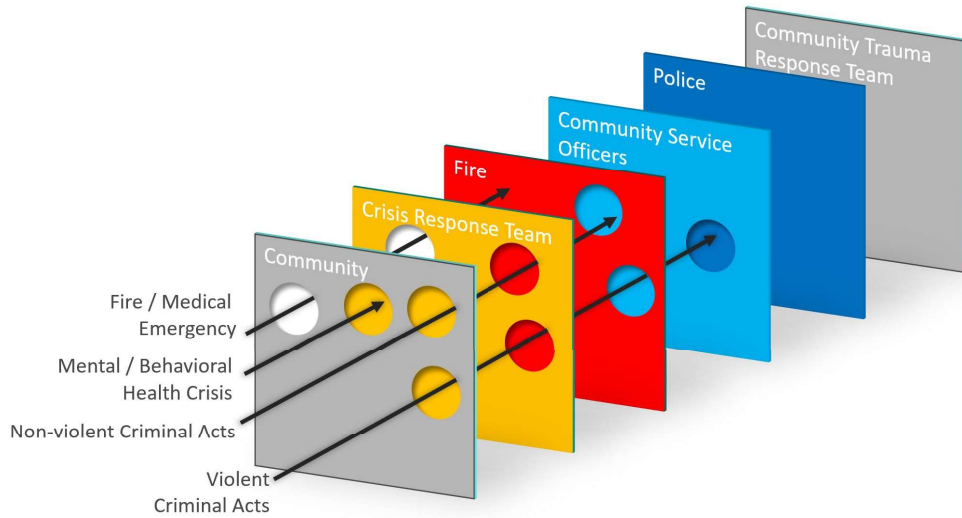
Connect patrons to resource providers and engage in trauma-informed conflict resolution and de-escalation



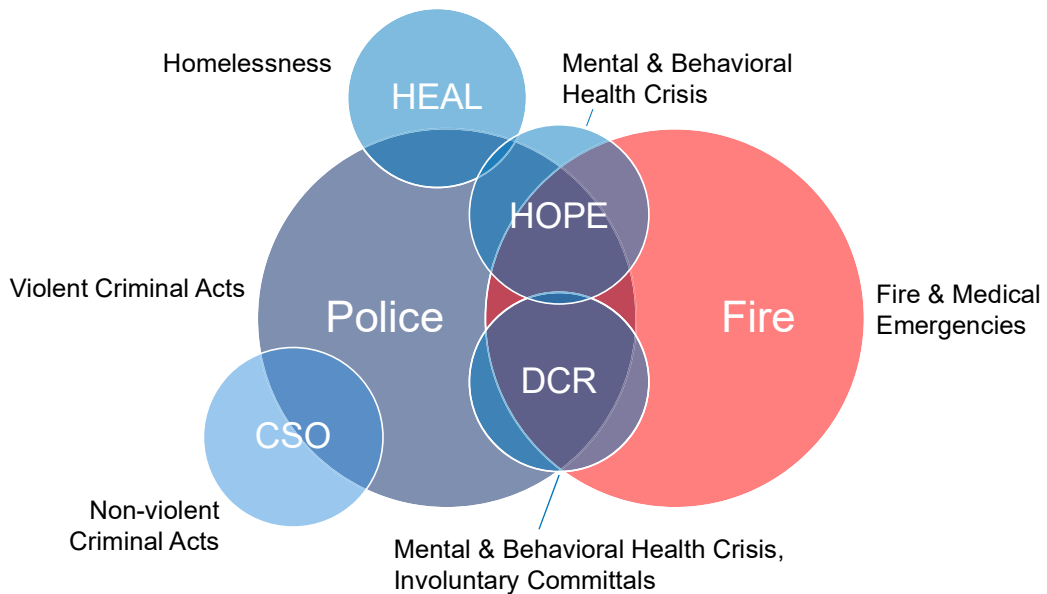
Community Service Officers

Redirect commissioned police response when there is no threat to life or property

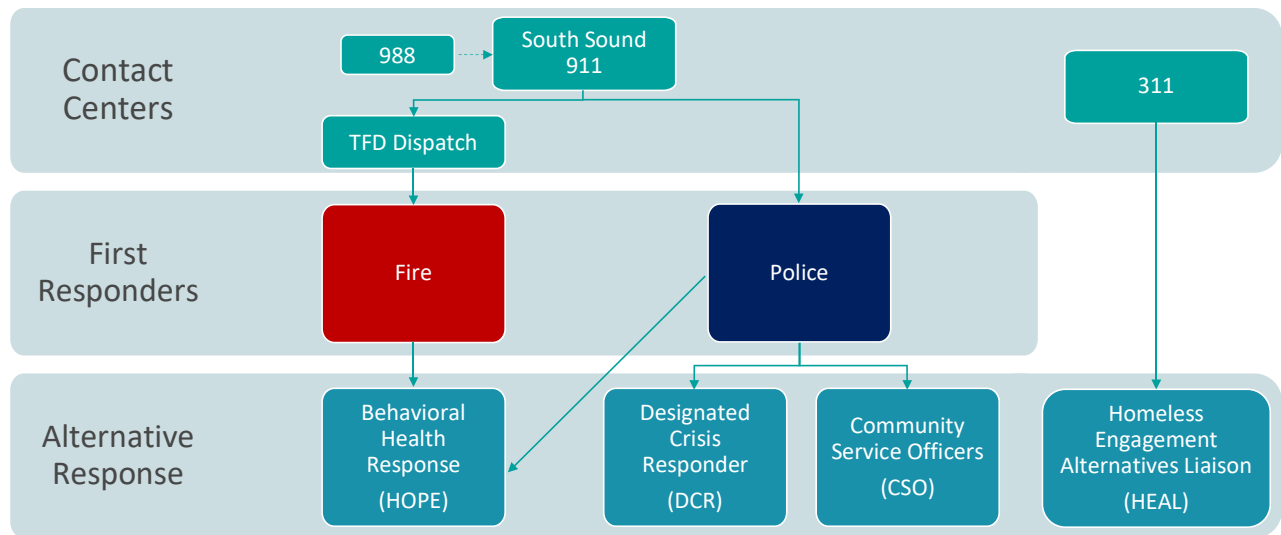
Original Vision for Alternative Response



Operating Reality



Service Model



HOPE

Mental and Behavioral Health Crisis Response

HOPE program overview and structure

HOPE's initial role

Provide a community-based response to behavioral health, mental health and substance use emergency crises through a dispatched field team staffed by civilians.

Start date

Case management: July 2023
Field response: Sept. 2023

(7 FTEs at start)

Staffing

Initial Plan	Current
8	6

Startup Considerations

- Behavioral health workforce shortages
- One-time and limited use funding sources
- Integration with South Sound 911, 988, TFD dispatch protocols
- Data collection and reporting system limitations

Annual Program Costs

Initial	Current
\$825k	\$1.34M



Origins of HOPE

Challenges to address

- Behavioral health and substance use crises frequently handled by police and fire/EMS.
- Emergency departments, jails, and 911 overused for needs better served by civilian mental and behavioral health care.
- Community advocacy and City policy work called for a dedicated civilian behavioral health response.

Intent of Program

- HOPE is voluntary and consent-based.
- Respond independently, in tandem, or in support of traditional first responders.
- Stabilization in the least restrictive environment with a warm handoff to service providers wherever possible.

Timeline

- **April 2023**
Co-managers hired; program development and recruitment began.
- **July 26, 2023**
HOPE case management services launched.
- **Sept. 7, 2023**
Field response officially went live.
- **Year 1 adjustments**
Solo-dispatch ends; operations shift to to tandem/secondary dispatch



HOPE Impacts through March 2026

4,405

PROGRAM CONTACTS
Since 7/26/2023

2,251

DISPATCHES
Since 9/7/2023

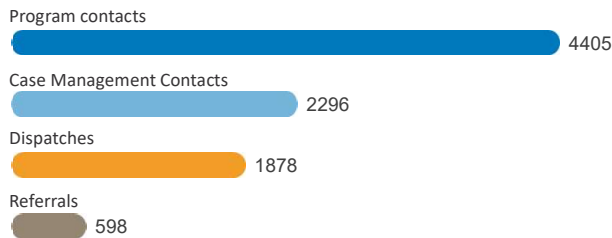
2,296

CASE MANAGEMENT CONTACTS
Since 7/26/2023

598

REFERRALS
Since 7/26/2023

Service Volume since 2023



About this data

Since HOPE's inception, the team has only had full field response staffing for three months. This occurred during program launch and was therefore impacted by dispatch/response limitations.

Data tracking is challenging under current system. Numbers shown here are conservative to account for this factor.



HOPE's lessons and evolution

2023 Model

Solo responding civilian team for mental health, behavioral health, and substance use crises.

Today

A civilian co-response team supporting traditional police and fire units with individuals experiencing MH/BH and substance use crisis.

BETTER OUTCOMES

HOPE provides individuals with alternatives to ER or Jail by facilitating warm handoffs to community providers or through safety planning at home when appropriate.

LIMITED AVAILABILITY

Daytime-only service hours leave unmet need during evenings and nights; referrals can experience delays when HOPE is offline.

FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY

Fully staffing HOPE to ensure maximum availability and service quality is a priority. Planned BHA licensure will provide additional funding/billing opportunities.





HEAL

Homelessness Engagement and Alternatives Liaison

HEAL program overview and structure

HEAL's Initial role

Connect those experiencing homelessness to services that help them transition to housing and clean, abate, and reclaim identified hot spots on public property.

Start date

In service since
2017
(1 FTE at start)

Staffing

Initial	Current
1	8

Startup Considerations

- Lack of trust among unhoused individuals and community members.
- Limited available shelter capacity and personal belonging storage
- Health and safety concerns

Annual Program Costs

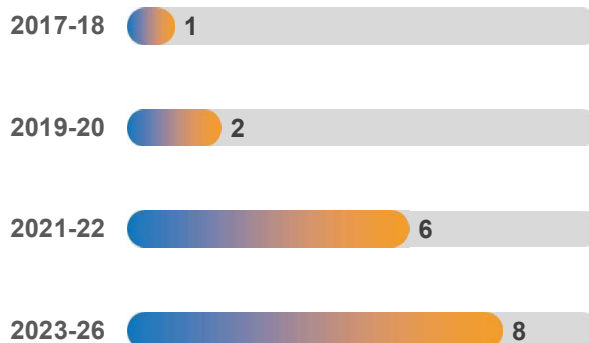
Initial	Current
\$120k	\$1.65M

HEAL program history

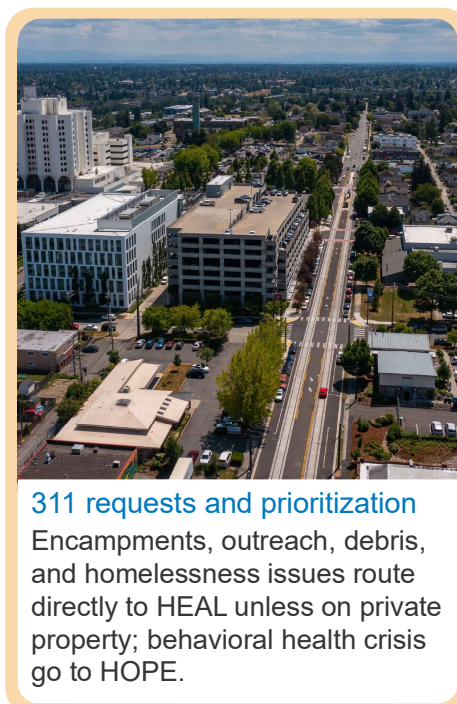
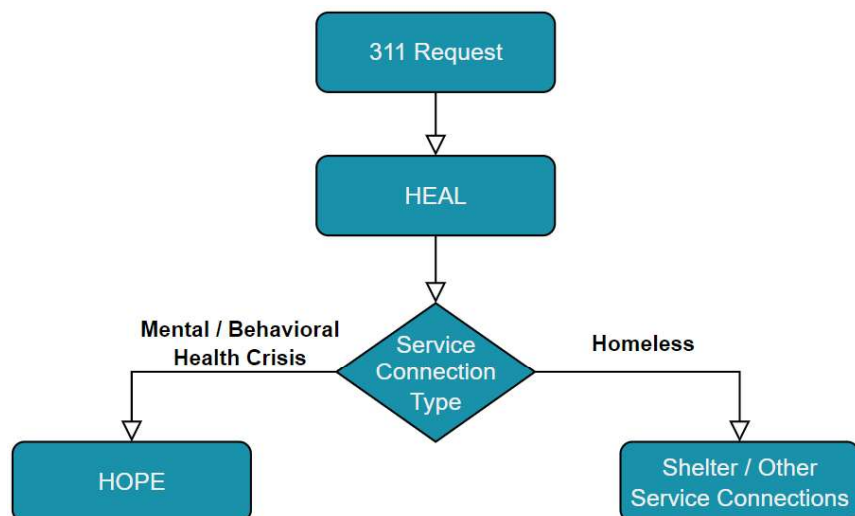
Timeline

- 2017 – Ordinance 28430**
 Declared a public health emergency. Initiated the Emergency Temporary Aid and Shelter Program with mitigation, Stability Site, and transitional housing components.
- 2021 – Resolution 40622 + Alternative Response Study**
 Formalized a stronger civilian homelessness outreach role and non-police responses when safe and appropriate.
- 2022 – Ordinance 28831**
 Camping restrictions around shelters and waterways came with reporting requirements on services offered, 311 activity, safety issues, HEAL staffing, and TPD enforcement.
- 2025 – Camping policy update**
 Prohibited camping around shelters, schools, parks, and libraries, reinforcing the need for consistent outreach operations.

FTE Growth



HEAL Service Model



HEAL Impacts through March 2026

311 REQUESTS

56,959

Homelessness-related requests since Nov. 2022

CONTACTS

7,943

HEAL outreach contacts since Nov. 2022.

INTERESTED IN SERVICES

4,318

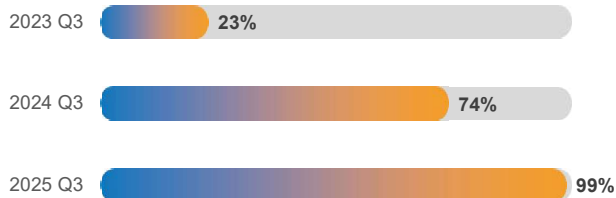
People expressed interest in shelter or services since 2022.

PLACED INTO SHELTER

850

Direct HEAL placements since 2022.

On-Time Request Closure Rate



ACTIVE REQUESTS

112

As of March 2026

CURRENT AVERAGE CLOSURE RATE

6.5 days

▼ from 11.9 days in 2024

SINCE 2024 DASHBOARD LAUNCH

HEAL has logged 2,939 contacts.

An average of just over 163 contacts per month.



HEAL's lessons and evolution

2017-19 Model

Encampment response as a limited, reactive function and minimal resources

Today

A scaled response program with coordinated cross-departmental support and resources

FLEXIBLE STAFFING

Cross-trained staff can cover each other's work easily, simplifying transport to shelter and encampment operations happening at the same time.

SYSTEM CAPACITY

Shelter and housing availability, funding, and provider capabilities continue to be limiting factors when it comes to HEAL's impact and capabilities.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE OUTREACH

Bilingual and diverse staff improve field responsiveness and enhance credibility with unsheltered residents.





Community Service Officers (CSO)

CSO program overview and structure

CSO's Initial role

Provide an unarmed response option for calls with no threat to life or property, to compliment TPD and TFD traditional responders and increase community perception of public safety.

Start date

In service since
June 2024

(3 FTEs at start)

Staffing

Initial Plan	Current
12	6

Startup Considerations

- Safety of unarmed responders to “low-risk” calls
- Call screening and dispatch process for CSO eligible calls
- Call volume and unit capacity alignment

Annual Program Costs

Initial	Current
\$2.2M	\$1.2M

CSO program history

Timeline

- **2021 – Resolution 40622 & Alternative Response Study**
Resolution 40622. Matrix Alternative Response Study identifies civilian response opportunities; 21CP recommendations reinforce alternative service delivery.
- **2022 – Implementation planning**
Budget and staffing needs are identified for what will become the Community Service Officer team.
- **2023 – Program initiation**
Bargaining, classification development, recruitment, onboarding, training, and field integration are sequenced as the implementation path.
- **2024-25 – CSO's operational**
CSOs are deployed, training is refined, and quarterly performance reporting begins to show call volumes and workload patterns.



CURRENT STRUCTURE

5 CSO's, last completed training in early March 2025.

CSO Sgt. manages dispatch and coordination of CSO units with South Sound 911.



CSO service model

Dispatch protocols

- Call is routine, not in progress.
- No suspect on scene and no likely return.
- No immediate or foreseeable threat to life or property.
- Low likelihood of hostile contact.

Examples of CSO-appropriate work

- Routine motor vehicle theft reports.
- Theft, vandalism, burglary, fraud, forgery reports.
- Assist community members at substations.
- Other low-priority calls identified by Matrix/TPD.

Unarmed

Distinct from sworn patrol

Limited commission

No arrest authority

Sergeant supervised

Call screening and coaching



CSO Impacts through March 2026

3,754

RESPONSES TO
DISPATCHED CALLS
since January 2024

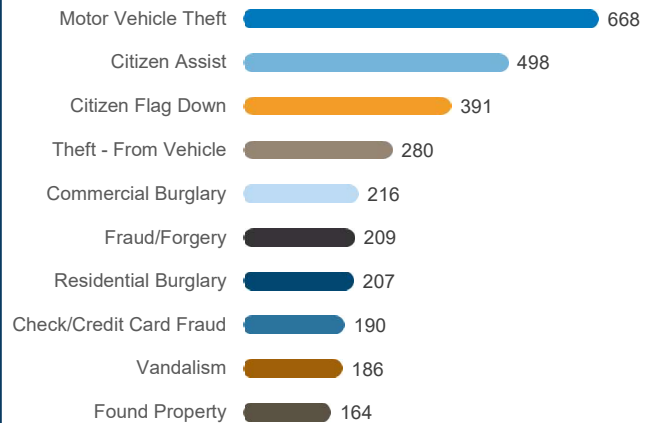
2,336

WRITTEN REPORTS
since January 2024

9.2

AVERAGE CALLS
PER DAY

Top 10 CSO Call Types



CSO lessons and evolution

2023 Concept

An unarmed response to calls with no threat to life or property, that will increase community perception of public safety and compliment commissioned officers.

Today

An unarmed response to approved, low-priority, no threat calls, community events, and substation staffing.

BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE

Community members have expressed positive feedback from CSO interactions and mentioned improved response times for low priority calls.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

CSO's have expressed feeling unsafe on certain calls and at night. CSO's have requested Electronic Control Tools as a result.

CSO'S AND CLO'S

Additional fully commissioned Community Liaison Officers may better meet the current needs of the community, complimenting existing CSO's and CLO's.





Library Patron Support Team

Patron Support program overview and structure

Patron Support Initial Role

- Serve patrons needing support accessing and navigating social services.
- Ensure a safe, welcoming environment for all patrons and staff.

Start date

In service since
February 2024

(2 FTEs at start)

Staffing

Initial Plan	Current
2	2

Startup Considerations

- Balancing traditional library functions with limited social service delivery.
- Service limitations due to branch hours and complexity of issues.
- Recognition that some situations will require 911 or HOPE

Annual Program Costs

Initial	Ongoing
\$280k	\$280k

Patron Support program history

Walk-in Patron Services

- Direct social services and crisis assistance and intervention
- Service connections to housing, transportation, employment, behavioral health, and more

Staff support and resources

- Non-physical de-escalation techniques
- Consistent incident reporting and dashboards
- Debriefing and support post-incident

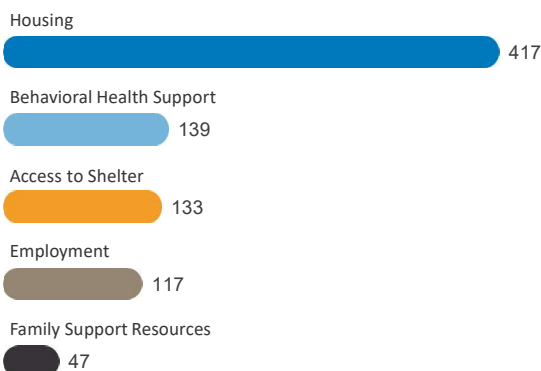
Timeline

- **December 2023**
Recruitment of initial program staff begins
- **February - March 2024**
Pilot phase as staff onboard
- **March 19, 2024**
Included as part of citywide Alternative Response programs.
- **September 2024**
Service begins at Main library



Patron Support Impacts through March

Service Volume since 2024



PATRON INTERACTIONS

719

Support interactions with library patrons since 2024

REFERRAL RATE

24%

Interactions leading to service connections since 2024

PATRON FEEDBACK

"I applaud the work that TPL has done to expand services and resources for people experiencing hardship and crisis in our community..."

ONSITE SUPPORT RATE

76%

Interactions with patron needs met onsite since 2024



Patron Support lessons and evolution

2024 Concept

Serve patrons needing support accessing and navigating social services. Ensure a safe, welcoming environment for all patrons and staff.

Today

A walk-in social service connector and resource provider for interested patrons. An internal partner for staff resiliency and safety.

IMPROVED STAFF MORALE

Staff are better able to manage interactions before they escalate, with training and resources to call upon when faced with unique situations or needs.

LIMITATIONS

Team is unable to provide services, or reduce property damage, camping, or illegal activities after hours.

HIGH UTILIZERS

Youth and individuals with co-occurring disorders, are time and resource intensive for the program to support.



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