

Co-Responder Programs/Teams



What is a co-responder team?

- The co-responder program provides an integrated approach for individuals living with a mental illness, intellectual disability, autism, and/or co-occurring disorder during law enforcement encounters, to prevent the situation from rising to the level of law enforcement custody. The main objective of the co-responder program is to provide an individual in crisis with the structure and coordination they need in order to minimize their contact with law enforcement and improve their ability to function successfully in the community.
- The team can provide effective responses and recommend appropriate services by incorporating both the expertise of the officer and the mental health professional. In most co-responder teams, the officer and crisis worker ride together in the same vehicle for an entire shift. In other agencies, the crisis worker meets officers at the scene and they handle the call together.
- Co-responder teams can respond throughout the entire jurisdiction, or they may work in areas with the greatest number of mental health calls.

What is the Goal of a Co-responder program?

- The goal of a co-responder program is to divert individuals with behavioral/mental health issues from the criminal justice system.
- The act of offering assistance fosters the individual's ability to remain connected to the community and continue being integrated in the future. In addition, the co-responder will be able to follow up with the individual, fostering community supports and ensuring compliance with treatment recommendations/goals.

Do all Co-Responder Programs Look the Same?

- No. Every county, state, police department, mental health provider may conduct their program differently in a way that meets the needs of the community in the most efficient way.
- Some programs may choose to have the co-responder assigned to one police department, while others may share the co-responder among various departments based on need.

How are these programs funded?

- Like many law enforcement related services, funding varies locally for co-responder programs. The source of funding is varied and can include police department funding, grants awarded to local police departments, the district attorney's office, or the county mental health department.



Websites:

- <https://www.prainc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/RespondingtoBHCrisisviaCRModels.pdf>
- <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc>
- <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/co-responder-programs>
- <https://www.pccd.pa.gov/training/Documents/Conferences%20and%20Training/Police%20and%20MH%20Collaboration%20-%20A%20Co-Responder%20Program.pdf>



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