

# Community Assisted Response and Engagement

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## Department Overview

The Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) department, formerly known as the Community Safety and Communications Center (CSCC), was established as a new department in 2021 to provide timely, accurate, and vital information to the City’s first responders, city service providers, and to the public. Ordinance 126237 transferred the primary 9-1-1 center from SPD to CARE, effective June 1, 2021. Since the transition, the department has continued working to establish itself as an independent city department and explore integrating non-uniformed and alternate resources for dispatch. CARE is home to the primary Seattle 9-1-1 call center and is the largest in the Pacific Northwest, both by staff size and volume of calls received, averaging almost 900,000 per year. The department employs 189 employees and is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The CARE department enhances public safety through CARE Response Teams that provide additional behavioral health professionals available to respond to people experiencing non-violent mental health crises or quality of life concerns. These unarmed community responders are currently dispatched to a small subset of person down and welfare check call types. CARE Response Teams are also requested by police officers and sometimes deal with “on view” incidents. In 2024, Seattle 9-1-1 data shows a response time consistently longer than one hour to these call types; the department seeks to reduce that response time and to support SPD's ability to respond to more urgent 9-1-1 calls swiftly. The vision for CARE Response Teams into the future is to expand to additional call types and primary dispatch without officers as appropriate.

## Budget Snapshot

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Adopted
<b>Department Support</b>				
General Fund Support	27,525,414	32,815,649	36,490,801	66,635,179
Other Funding - Operating	-	-	-	1,987,000
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>27,525,414</b>	<b>32,815,649</b>	<b>36,490,801</b>	<b>68,622,179</b>
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>27,525,414</b>	<b>32,815,649</b>	<b>36,490,801</b>	<b>68,622,179</b>
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	163.00	190.00	190.00	240.00

\* FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here

## Budget Overview

The 2026 Adopted Budget invests in CARE with an expansion of the Community Crisis Responders (CCR) Team, and increased staffing in the 9-1-1 call center, increasing the department's public safety response abilities. In total, the adopted budget invests a net of almost \$9 million in growing the department, a 20 percent growth above the 2026

## Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Endorsed Budget to bolster CARE's staffing and operations.

In 2025, the CCR Teams began dispatching across the city from district locations, and with the adopted budget those efforts will double citywide as an additional 24 CCRs will be added to the existing 24 current CCRs. Six CCRs supervisors are also added to support and manage responses, as well as making permanent a training manager position. One-time funding will provide vehicles and space needs to help with the department's growth.

CARE, the primary 9-1-1 call center in Seattle, operates 24/7, 365 days a year, and handled over 890,000 calls in 2024. Due to high turnover rates, the call center has sometimes relied heavily on overtime to adequately staff its operations. The adopted budget includes the addition of 12 call takers to provide more regular staff coverage and reduce the need for overtime. Moreover, there will be three training positions created to assist in hiring new dispatchers. Additionally, three temporary administrative positions in finance, human resources, and payroll will be made permanent.

The adopted budget includes revenues from the City's planned Public Safety Sales Tax, which is expected to generate \$39 million in 2026. These revenues are adopted to support the expansion of the CARE Community Crisis Responder teams, hiring additional 9-1-1 call takers, recruiting 20 new firefighters, further enhancing services through the Post Overdose Team in the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), increasing substance use treatment options, and stabilizing other CARE investments. Specifically in CARE, the adopted Public Safety Sales Tax provides \$15 million of base department funding, as well as \$9.5 million and 49 FTE to double the number of CCR teams, provide additional 9-1-1 call takers and fund needed department administrative support.

### City Council Changes to the Proposed Budget

The Council made three changes to the proposed budget. The first change will transfer LEAD, Co-LEAD, and Third Avenue Project contracts, funding and 1 FTE Senior Planner from HSD to CARE. The second change will increase funding by \$200,000 one-time in 2026 for software technology acquisitions and ongoing subscriptions to improve data visibility and coordination. The third change will provide \$579,000 for 911 call taker staffing to prioritize non-emergency calls with the intention to decrease non-emergency line wait times. In addition, Council has requested two Statement of Legislative Intents: one SLI requested CARE to provide a report describing status of the creation of an ongoing online dashboard, information describing the benefits that CARE CCR response and details of CARE's service integration and with partner agencies. Another SLI requested the department to report on its training practices and protocols for CARE Community Crisis Responder (CCR) team members to date.

# Community Assisted Response and Engagement

## Incremental Budget Changes

### Community Assisted Response and Engagement

	2026 Budget	FTE
<b>Total 2026 Endorsed Budget</b>	<b>36,490,801</b>	<b>190.00</b>
<b>Baseline</b>		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(270,795)	-
<b>Adopted Operating</b>		
Expansion of the Community Crisis Responder Team	6,900,001	31.00
Additional 9-1-1 Call Center Staffing and Department Administrative Support	2,632,192	18.00
<b>Adopted Technical</b>		
Bargained Annual Wage Adjustment to Base Budget	(299,366)	-
SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate Reduction	(19,453)	-
<b>Council</b>		
Transfer LEAD, Co-LEAD, and We Deliver Care Contracts from HSD to CARE	22,988,799	1.00
Software upgrades	200,000	-
<b>Council Provisos</b>		
Proviso CARE budget for 911 call takers to address non-emergency line wait times	-	-
<b>Total Incremental Changes</b>	<b>\$32,131,378</b>	<b>50.00</b>
<b>Total 2026 Adopted Budget</b>	<b>\$68,622,179</b>	<b>240.00</b>

## Description of Incremental Budget Changes

### Baseline

#### Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(270,795)

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare and other central cost factors. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

### Adopted Operating

#### Expansion of the Community Crisis Responder Team

Expenditures \$6,900,001  
 Position Allocation 31.00

## Community Assisted Response and Engagement

A \$6.9 million expansion of the CARE Community Crisis Responder (CCR) Team in the 2026 budget will double the number of response teams dispatched. Currently 24 CCR positions respond to calls throughout the city, and this item will add 24 positions (12 Community Crisis Responder I, and 12 Community Crisis Responder II) for a department total of 48 CCRs, as well as an additional 6 Community Crisis Responder Supervisors to support and manage response calls; overall doubling CCR coverage across the city. A training manager position (Strategic Advisor 2) will also be made permanent, providing needed ongoing training and other support to the department.

Of the \$6.9 million, \$1.97 million is one-time funding to support the significant expansion in CARE. One-time funding pays for additional vehicles, and space improvements and/or changes for the district dispatching locations, as well as for the department's headquarters.

The revenues for this expansion are from the adopted 0.1% increase in Public Safety Sales Tax.

### Additional 9-1-1 Call Center Staffing and Department Administrative Support

Expenditures	\$2,632,192
Position Allocation	18.00

This item adds \$2.63 million of ongoing funding for call center support and department administrative needs. To increase staffing in the 9-1-1 call center, this proposal includes 12 call takers (six - 9-1-1 Emergency Communication Dispatcher 1s, and six - 9-1-1 Emergency Communication Dispatcher 2s), which will increase the total number of call taker positions to 146. Significant turnover in the call center results in the use of overtime to cover shifts and to keep call answering times low, and the 12 additional positions will provide more regular staffing coverage. To further create call center capacity, the Adopted budget includes 3 trainers (911 Emergency Communication Analysts) are added to support the training needed for new hires.

To address CARE's administrative needs as the department has grown, the adopted 2026 budget turns some temporary positions into permanent positions. This includes the following three positions: 1 Strategic Advisor supporting finance, 1 Personnel Specialist, Senior supporting human resources, and 1 Payroll Supervisor supporting payroll. These permanent positions will ensure administrative capacity as the department continues to grow operationally.

The revenues for this expansion are from the Adopted 0.1% increase in Public Safety Sales Tax.

### Adopted Technical

#### Bargained Annual Wage Adjustment to Base Budget

Expenditures	\$(299,366)
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This centrally administered change adjusts base budget appropriations to reflect the proper Annual Wage Increase (AWI) increment for 2026, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of City Unions for personnel costs. AWI increments are determined based on the average change in the local Consumer Price Index (CPI). This change represents a true-up between the forecasted CPI assumption included in the Endorsed Budget and the actual CPI data.

#### SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate Reduction

Expenditures	\$(19,453)
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The City's employee retirement system, the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS) is a defined benefit pension program funded by a combination of salary-based employer (i.e., the City) and employee contributions, and investment earnings. Based on the updated actuarial valuation for 2025, this item reduces the employer contribution rate from the endorsed rate of 15.17% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 15.06%.

### Council

#### Transfer LEAD, Co-LEAD, and We Deliver Care Contracts from HSD to CARE

Expenditures	\$22,988,799
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# Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Position Allocation 1.00

This item transfers the LEAD, Co-LEAD, and We Deliver Care - Community Safety Response Initiative contracts and \$21 million of GF and \$2 million of PET funding from HSD to CARE. In addition, it will transfer 1.0 FTE Senior Planner position and \$176,000 in funding from HSD to CARE for policy and operational oversight of these investments. This change will align the LEAD, Co-LEAD, and TAP contracts with the CARE's mission and support public safety efforts throughout Seattle.

## Software upgrades

Expenditures \$200,000

This item provides one-time funding of \$200,000 in 2026 for software technology acquisitions and subscriptions to improve data visibility and coordination between CARE and other public safety entities in the City.

## Council Provisos

### **Proviso CARE budget for 911 call takers to address non-emergency line wait times**

Council imposed the following proviso:

"Of the appropriations in the Community Assisted Response and Engagement department's 2026 budget for the 911 Call Response Budget Summary Level (CARE-BO-CS-10000), \$579,000 is appropriated solely for 911 call taker staffing to prioritize non-emergency calls with the intention to decrease non-emergency line wait times, and may be spent for no other purpose."

## Community Assisted Response and Engagement

### Expenditure Overview

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Adopted
<b>Appropriations</b>				
<b>CS - BO-CS-10000 - 911 Call Response</b>				
00100 - General Fund	25,360,829	28,456,809	29,991,433	53,307,210
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	-	-	-	1,987,000
<b>Total for BSL: BO-CS-10000</b>	<b>25,360,829</b>	<b>28,456,809</b>	<b>29,991,433</b>	<b>55,294,210</b>
<b>CS - BO-CS-40000 - Community Assisted Response and Engagement</b>				
00100 - General Fund	2,164,585	4,358,840	6,499,368	13,327,968
<b>Total for BSL: BO-CS-40000</b>	<b>2,164,585</b>	<b>4,358,840</b>	<b>6,499,368</b>	<b>13,327,968</b>
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>27,525,414</b>	<b>32,815,649</b>	<b>36,490,801</b>	<b>68,622,179</b>
<b>Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*</b>	<b>163.00</b>	<b>190.00</b>	<b>190.00</b>	<b>240.00</b>

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### Budget Summary by Fund Community Assisted Response and Engagement

	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Adopted
00100 - General Fund	27,525,414	32,815,649	36,490,801	66,635,179
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	-	-	-	1,987,000
<b>Budget Totals for CS</b>	<b>27,525,414</b>	<b>32,815,649</b>	<b>36,490,801</b>	<b>68,622,179</b>

### Revenue Overview

#### 2026 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed	2026 Adopted
342900	Public Safety-Other Rev	4,779,491	4,398,435	4,398,435	4,851,853
<b>Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund</b>		<b>4,779,491</b>	<b>4,398,435</b>	<b>4,398,435</b>	<b>4,851,853</b>
<b>Total CS Resources</b>		<b>4,779,491</b>	<b>4,398,435</b>	<b>4,398,435</b>	<b>4,851,853</b>

## Community Assisted Response and Engagement

### Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

#### **CS - BO-CS-10000 - 911 Call Response**

The purpose of the 911 Call Response Budget Summary Level is to answer 911 calls, dispatch City public safety responses, facilitate reporting of minor incidents; and respond to community safety requests.

<b>Program Expenditures</b>	<b>2024 Actuals</b>	<b>2025 Adopted</b>	<b>2026 Endorsed</b>	<b>2026 Adopted</b>
Communications Center	25,360,829	28,456,809	29,991,433	55,294,210
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,360,829</b>	<b>28,456,809</b>	<b>29,991,433</b>	<b>55,294,210</b>
Full-time Equivalents Total*	153.00	158.00	158.00	176.00

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#### **CS - BO-CS-40000 - Community Assisted Response and Engagement**

The purpose of the Community Assisted Response and Engagement Budget Summary Level is to develop and implement programs that address behavioral issues and substance abuse, share information across departments, and respond to non-emergent, low-risk community calls for service.

<b>Program Expenditures</b>	<b>2024 Actuals</b>	<b>2025 Adopted</b>	<b>2026 Endorsed</b>	<b>2026 Adopted</b>
Dual Dispatch	2,164,585	4,358,840	6,499,368	13,327,968
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,164,585</b>	<b>4,358,840</b>	<b>6,499,368</b>	<b>13,327,968</b>
Full-time Equivalents Total*	10.00	32.00	32.00	64.00

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