

Subject: DHS-CAHOOTS Model for Crisis Response

**FY 2022 Proposed Budget
Budget Work Session Follow-up**

4/13/2021

The following information is provided in response to a request made by Mr. Dorsey at the work session on 3/9/2021, regarding the following question:

The CAHOOTS model, which we are implementing on a small scale in FY 22, is often cited as an antidote to police violence and a cost-effective alternative. Have we reviewed literature on its therapeutic efficacy from crisis response, institutional diversion, etc?

The CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets) model has been in the spotlight recently as our nation struggles to re-imagine public safety and was raised in Arlington County's Racial Equity town hall and featured in the Police Practices Group Mental Health Subcommittee's Community Learning Session on September 21, 2020.

CAHOOTS was developed 31 years ago as a community policing initiative in Eugene, Oregon. Initially, the program provided 40 hours a week of service but has since expanded to a 24-hour per day service. The program has grown from one crisis response van to four and currently employs approximately 50 individuals.

The CAHOOTS program mobilizes two-person teams consisting of a medic (a nurse, paramedic or EMT) and a crisis worker who has substantial training and experience in the mental health field. The CAHOOTS teams rely on trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques to deal with a wide range of mental health-related crises including welfare checks, suicide threats, substance abuse, conflict resolution, and more. They also handle non-emergent medical issues, avoiding costly ambulance transport and emergency room treatment. The most common types of calls diverted to CAHOOTS are public assistance (66.3%), transportation to services (34.8%), and welfare checks (32.5%). More than 60% of the clients are homeless, and 30% live with severe and persistent mental illness.

In 2019, CAHOOTS responded to 24,000 calls for assistance, approximately 20% of all calls for service; only 150 of those calls required police backup for a **99% diversion rate**. Eugene's 911 dispatchers are trained to recognize situations with a behavioral health component for which a uniformed police response is not necessary and route those calls appropriately.

The CAHOOTS annual budget of \$2.1 million which is approximately 2% of the Eugene Police Department's (EPD) budget, has a significant fiscal return on investment with:

- Average savings of \$8.5 million annually for the Eugene Police Department
- Emergency medical system savings of roughly \$14 million in 2019.

Subject: DHS-CAHOOTS Model for Crisis Response

No data or literature was found documenting the therapeutic efficacy of the CAHOOTS model. However, DHS consulted with Eugene's CAHOOTS staff in July 2020 as staff developed a "blue sky" proposal to enhance behavioral health crisis care. DHS is planning to replicate elements of the CAHOOTS model as it moves toward increased mobile response in collaboration with ACPD, Fire/EMS and the Emergency Call Center. Once DHS implements the model in Arlington, it will be incorporated into our performance management assessment program and a plan will be developed to document and report on the model's outcomes.