

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 911 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 911 call center and is the largest in the Pacific Northwest, both by staff size and volume of calls received, averaging over 800,000 per year. The department employs 186 employees and is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The CARE department seeks to enhance public safety through CARE Response Teams that will 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 dual-dispatched with police 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 2022, Seattle 911 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 911 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

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	22,114,049	26,343,050	32,815,649	36,490,801
Total Operations	22,114,049	26,343,050	32,815,649	36,490,801
Total Appropriations	22,114,049	26,343,050	32,815,649	36,490,801
Full-Time Equivalent Total*	149.00	163.00	190.00	190.00

* 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 City of Seattle continues to maintain its commitments to public safety investments in the budget. In 2024, the CARE department’s 911 Center has been focused on responding to emergency calls. While the department has begun to see improvements in recruitment and retention, it is close to full staffing of its 137 designated call taker, dispatcher, and supervisor positions. Overall, the 911 Center continues to see improvements in call response metrics including improving answering time for the non-emergency line.

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CARE continues implementing the Mayor's Office and City Council's vision of diversified response by expanding the CARE Response Teams with 21 additional staff members available to respond to emerging community concerns. In 2025, the department will be adding two positions, one focused on public disclosure and one focused on the coordinating City's Restoration work. Due to the City's economic forecast, CARE strives to control spending while maintaining the best services for residents. CARE's budget recognizes vacancy savings to meet reduction targets and to align resources with their forecasted staffing.

City Council Changes to the Proposed Budget

The Council made one change to the proposed budget. Council added 4.0 FTE 911 Emergency Communications Dispatcher I to improve the department's ability to answer the City's 911 Emergency line and better enable the CARE department to maintain call-answering standards.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	Dollars	FTE
2024 Adopted Budget	26,343,050	163.00
Baseline		
Bargained Annual Wage and Market Wage Increases to Base Budget	3,584,889	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	523,930	-
Proposed Operating		
Add Public Disclosure Officer	199,271	1.00
Add Seattle Restoration Director	215,760	1.00
Aligning CARE Budget to Vacancy Rate	(296,300)	-
Proposed Technical		
CARE Team Expansion	1,500,000	-
Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation	-	21.00
Final Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	332,049	-
Council		
Add 4.0 FTE 911 Emergency Communications Dispatcher I	413,000	4.00
Total Incremental Changes	\$6,472,600	27.00
Total 2025 Adopted Budget	\$32,815,649	190.00

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Bargained Annual Wage and Market Wage Increases to Base Budget

Expenditures \$3,584,889

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect the Annual Wage Increases and Market Adjustments, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of Unions or other standalone Unions, for personnel costs included in this department’s baseline budget. This includes increases to salary, FICA, Medicare, retirement, overtime and temporary labor.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$523,930

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, retirement, and industrial insurance charges for the department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget

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process.

Proposed Operating

Add Public Disclosure Officer

Expenditures	\$199,271
Position Allocation	1.00

This item adds \$199,270 and adds 1 FTE Strategic Advisor 2 as a Public Disclosure Officer. This position will have a wide range of responsibilities and will focus on public disclosure requests (PDR's) as the sole Public Disclosure Officer for CARE. As the department continues to expand as the City's third public safety department, CARE will see an increase in PDR's and a position is needed to primarily focus on this large workload.

Add Seattle Restoration Director

Expenditures	\$215,760
Position Allocation	1.00

This item adds \$215,760 and adds 1 FTE Strategic Advisor 3 position to serve as the Seattle Restoration Director. This position will focus on bringing together departments in addressing placed-based public safety concerns, similar to how the existing Unified Care Team effectively and systematically addresses unsheltered persons living in encampments. The team administered by the Seattle Restoration Director will coordinate short- and long-term public safety interventions, the connection of individuals to services to address underlying needs and reduce criminal conduct, and environmental changes and activation strategies. The Seattle Restoration Director will closely coordinate with law enforcement, City departments, service providers, and community, business, and City stakeholders.

Aligning CARE Budget to Vacancy Rate

Expenditures	\$(296,300)
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This item decreases appropriation by \$296,300 in 2025 and \$306,900 in 2026 to align CARE department's budget with its anticipated vacancy rate. The department has improved recruitment and retention rates since 2022 but continues to maintain a vacancy rate due to natural rate of attrition. This change will not impact hiring but will ensure the department's budget is aligned with vacancy rate.

Proposed Technical

CARE Team Expansion

Expenditures	\$1,500,000
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This item increases appropriation authority by \$1,500,000 in 2025 and \$3,533,832 in 2026 to support the ongoing expansion costs of the CARE Response Teams added in mid-2024. CARE Response Teams have already been assisting with 911 calls through prioritization and dispatching them to the incident. This expansion will allow the CARE team to offer city-wide coverage, increased hours of service of the program, and to better focus first response resources on the situations where they are most needed.

In August 2024, funding was appropriated in Ordinance 127068 for CARE Response Team expansion, covering the costs of facilities, vehicles, and personnel. This item makes that funding ongoing for 21 full-time positions, (9 Community Crisis Responder 1's, 9 Community Crisis Responder 2's, and 3 Community Crisis Responder Supervisors). This also includes ongoing funding to cover the additional nine vehicles (eight Ford Explorer PIU's, one ADA Van), equipment such as radios, uniforms, computers, facilities, supplies for distribution, and other on-going costs. The position pockets are part of the Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation change request listed below.

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Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation

Position Allocation	21.00
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This change includes ongoing position changes resulting from current year legislation in 2024, including the Year End Supplemental Ordinance. These positions were appropriated in Ordinance 127068 for the expansion in 2024 of CARE Response Teams. This item adds 21.0 FTEs, (9 Community Crisis Responder 1's, 9 Community Crisis Responder 2's, and 3 Community Crisis Responder Supervisors). The funding for these positions is appropriated in CARE Team expansion.

Final Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures	\$332,049
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Citywide technical adjustments made in the proposed 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 for the department. These adjustments reflect final decisions about these costs made during the Proposed Phase of the budget process.

Council

Add 4.0 FTE 911 Emergency Communications Dispatcher I

Expenditures	\$413,000
Position Allocation	4.00

This Council Budget Action increases appropriations to CARE by \$413,000 GF in 2025 and \$549,000 GF in 2026 and adds 4.0 FTE 911 Emergency Communications Dispatcher I. Funding for additional call takers will improve the City's ability to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergency and non-emergency calls.

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Expenditure Overview

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
Appropriations				
CS - BO-CS-10000 - 911 Call Response				
00100 - General Fund	22,114,049	24,033,277	28,456,809	29,991,433
Total for BSL: BO-CS-10000	22,114,049	24,033,277	28,456,809	29,991,433
CS - BO-CS-40000 - Community Assisted Response and Engagement				
00100 - General Fund	-	2,309,773	4,358,840	6,499,368
Total for BSL: BO-CS-40000	-	2,309,773	4,358,840	6,499,368
Department Total	22,114,049	26,343,050	32,815,649	36,490,801
Department Full-Time Equivalent Total*	149.00	163.00	190.00	190.00

** 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 Summary by Fund Community Assisted Response and Engagement

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
00100 - General Fund	22,114,049	26,343,050	32,815,649	36,490,801
Budget Totals for CS	22,114,049	26,343,050	32,815,649	36,490,801

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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.

Program Expenditures	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
Communications Center	22,114,049	24,033,277	28,456,809	29,991,433
Total	22,114,049	24,033,277	28,456,809	29,991,433
Full-time Equivalents Total*	149.00	153.00	158.00	158.00

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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.

Program Expenditures	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Adopted	2026 Endorsed
Dual Dispatch	-	2,309,773	4,358,840	6,499,368
Total	-	2,309,773	4,358,840	6,499,368
Full-time Equivalents Total*	-	10.00	32.00	32.00

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