Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Amy Barden, Chief
(206) 684-8640

https://www.seattle.gov/care

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 240 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 trained community responders are currently dispatched to a non-emergency mental health or similar crisis calls 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. Beginning in 2026, CCR teams gained the ability to solo dispatch to certain calls, the department has also expanded hours of operations from 10 hours to over 18 hours per day providing citywide coverage from 6:30 AM to 1:00 AM.

Budget Snapshot

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	34,387,551	66,635,179	70,484,151	71,045,629
Other Funding - Operating	0	1,987,000	1,987,000	1,987,000
Total Operations	**34,387,551**	**68,622,179**	**72,471,151**	**73,032,629**
Total Appropriations	**34,387,551**	**68,622,179**	**72,471,151**	**73,032,629**
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	190.00	240.00	242.00	242.00

** 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.*

Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Budget Overview

The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget continues to support the CARE department while aligning ongoing resources with current staffing levels, program implementation, and available funding. The proposed budget totals approximately $72.6 million and includes a net increase in the department of approximately $4 million from the 2026 Adopted Budget. The budget maintains CARE's core alternative response and emergency communications functions while expanding focus to include community gun violence intervention.

The proposed budget includes an increase of $1.6 million of ongoing funding for the Co-LEAD program, supporting the City's continued commitment to providing dedicated housing capacity and services for individuals identified through the City's prioritized Co-LEAD program. This funding supports the ongoing lease and operations of a housing site, which provides dedicated housing capacity for Co-LEAD participants and specialized populations with behavioral health and substance abuse issues. The investment preserves continuity of services and is a key component of the City's alternative response and public safety strategy. In addition, the proposed budget includes $758,000 in ongoing funding to provide contract inflation adjustments. This will support CARE's ability to maintain service levels and account for inflationary increases in contracts to support the departments programs and services.

The proposed budget also transfers $5.1 million in ongoing General Fund resources and 11 existing contracts for Community Violence Intervention (CVI) services from the Human Services Department (HSD) to CARE. Consolidating these services within CARE will align community violence intervention activities with the department's broader public safety responsibilities and support the development of the coordinated Mayor’s Gun Violence Plan (MGVP). In addition, the budget transfers $1.2 million in 2027, and $1.1 million in 2028 to support the development and implementation of the new MGVP.

The budget adjusts CARE's staffing levels to reflect current vacancies with available resources, and the timing of program implementation. Funding for 14 vacant Community Crisis Responder positions is reduced, resulting in a net reduction of approximately $2.3 million, while maintaining funding for 34 Crisis Responders. This adjustment allows CARE to continue operating its alternative response program while providing the department with resources to implement and sustain the program at its current staffing level. The budget also reduces the funding for eight vacant 9-1-1 call taker positions.

Incremental Budget Changes

Community Assisted Response and Engagement

	Dollars	FTE
2026 Adopted Budget	**68,622,178**	**240.00**
Baseline		
Remove Temporary Positions	-	(2.00)
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	1,125,036	-
Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate	(365,640)	-
Remove One-Time Budget Items	(2,170,000)	-
Proposed Operating		
Transfer Community Violence Intervention (CVI) services contracts from HSD to CARE	5,081,435	-
Transfer $1.2 million from HSD to support Mayor’s Gun Violence Plan (MGVP)	1,200,000	2.00
Increase $1.6 million ongoing funding in Co-LEAD contract	1,585,632	-
Adjust Call Taker Staffing with available resources	(1,104,072)	-
Adjust Crisis Responder Staffing with available resources	(2,261,049)	-
Proposed Technical		
Contract Inflation Adjustment	757,631	-
Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation	-	2.00
Chartfield Corrections	-	-
Total Incremental Changes	**$3,848,974**	**2.00**
Total 2027 Proposed Budget	**$72,471,151**	**242.00**

Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Remove Temporary Positions

Position Allocation	(2.00)

This item eliminates 2 grant funded FTEs. These temporary positions are no longer needed since the work has commenced.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures	$1,125,036

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.

Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate

Expenditures	$(365,640)

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 2026, this item reduces the employer contribution rate from the endorsed rate of 15.06% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 13.48% for 2027 and 13.52% for 2028.

Remove One-Time Budget options

Expenditures	$(2,170,000)

This item removes $2.17 million in one-time adds from the 2027 baseline budget. The reduction includes $1.8 million that was provided on a one-time basis for the purchase of vehicles for the CARE division, $200,000 for IT project that has been completed, and $170,000 for supplies that have been purchased. Because these funds were intended for one-time expenditures they are removed from the ongoing 2027 baseline.

Proposed Operating

Transfer Community Violence Intervention (CVI) services contracts from HSD to CARE

Expenditures	$5,081,435

This item transfers $5,081,435 in ongoing general fund resources from HSD to CARE effective January 2027, to support community violence intervention services. Eleven existing HSD contracts for hospital-based intervention, place-based intervention, and intensive individual services. This transfer will consolidate violence intervention services within CARE and align these contracts with the proposed Gun Violence Plan.

Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Transfer $1.2 million from HSD to support the Mayor's Gun Violence Plan (MGVP)

Expenditures	$1,200,000
Position Allocation	2.00

This item transfers $1.2 million in 2027 and $1.1 million in 2028 from the Human Services Department and adds 1.0 FTE Gun Violence Plan Coordinator and 1 FTE Senior Grants positions to support the development of a new Mayor's Gun Violence Plan (MGVP). This investment will support immediate actions to address gun violence that expands on and complements the City's current investments in violence prevention and intervention. CARE will be the leading department in partnership with other key stakeholders such as the Mayor's Office, SPD, King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, HSD and others.

Increase $1.6 million ongoing funding in Co-LEAD contract

Expenditures	$1,585,632

This item adds $1.6 million in ongoing funding to support and lease housing sites, which provides dedicated housing capacity for the City's Co-Lead program. All 60 available units at the building are currently dedicated to Co-LEAD participants, specialized population with behavioral health and substance abuse issues.

The ongoing funding will maintain this dedicated housing capacity and support continuity of services for individuals identified through the City's prioritized Co-LEAD program. This investment preserves a key component of the City's alternative response and public safety continuum.

Adjust Call Taker Staffing with available resources

Expenditures	$(1,104,072)

This item reduces $1.1 million in ongoing funding for eight vacant 9-1-1 call taker positions to align CARE's budget with the fiscal realities of the General Fund. All eight of the positions are vacant; the reduction recognizes current vacancy levels while allowing CARE to maintain call answering and continue providing emergency response services.

Adjust Crisis Responder Staffing with available resources

Expenditures	$(2,261,049)

This item reduces funding for 14 vacant Community Crisis Responder (CCR) positions to align CARE's current staffing approach with the City's budget constraints. The 2026 Adopted Budget added 24 FTE, 10 of which have been filled bringing the total Crisis Responder staffing level to 34 FTEs. CARE will continue expanding geographically and increase hours by adjusting their approach to overall staffing by creating a three-shift system with an early and late shift that overlaps a CCR heavily staffed middle shift. The adjustment allows CARE to continue expanding its alternative response capacity while aligning the timing and pace of implementation with available resources. As the City continues to invest in and refine its alternative response continuum, the Crisis Responders will remain a core component.

Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Proposed Technical

Contract Inflation Adjustment

Expenditures	$757,631

This item adds $757,631 in ongoing funding to CARE to provide contract inflation for public safety contracts that were transferred in the Adopted 2026 Budget and continue in Proposed 2027 and 2028 Budget.

Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation

Position Allocation	2.00

This change includes ongoing position changes resulting from current year legislation in 2026, including the Second Quarter Supplemental Ordinance and the Year End Supplemental Ordinance. This item transfers 1.0 FTE 911 Communications Analyst from SPD to CARE. In addition, this item adds 1.0 FTE Assistant Director of Gun Violence Intervention to lead citywide coordination. Funding for this position is included in the transfer of funds from HSD above item titled “Transfer $1.2 million from HSD to Support Mayor’s Gun Violence Plan (MGVP).”

Chartfield Corrections

Expenditures

This change makes adjustments to correct budget program, project, and account details for items in the 2026 Adopted Budget.

Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
CARE - BO-CS-10000 - 911 Call Response				
00100 - General Fund	28,126,428	53,307,210	61,563,367	61,864,494
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	-	1,987,000	1,987,000	1,987,000
Total for BSL: BO-CS-10000	**28,126,428**	**55,294,210**	**63,550,367**	**63,851,494**
CARE - BO-CS-40000 - Community Assisted Response and Engagement				
00100 - General Fund	6,261,123	13,327,968	9,097,138	9,181,135
Total for BSL: BO-CS-40000	**6,261,123**	**13,327,968**	**9,097,138**	**9,181,135**
Department Total	**34,387,551**	**68,622,179**	**72,647,505**	**73,032,629**
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	**190.00**	**240.00**	**242.00**	**242.00**

** 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

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	34,387,551	66,635,179	70,660,505	71,045,629
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	-	1,987,000	1,987,000	1,987,000
Budget Totals for CARE	**34,387,551**	**68,622,179**	**72,647,505**	**73,032,629**

Revenue Overview

2027 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
331110	Direct Fed Grants	2,094,039	-	-	-
334010	State Grants	233,000	-	-	-
342900	Public Safety-Other Rev	5,670,140	4,851,853	4,924,539	4,924,539
360290	Parking Fees	(182)	-	-	-
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		**7,996,996**	**4,851,853**	**4,924,539**	**4,924,539**
Total CARE Resources		**7,996,996**	**4,851,853**	**4,924,539**	**4,924,539**

Community Assisted Response and Engagement

Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

CARE - 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	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Communications Center	28,126,428	55,294,210	63,550,367	63,851,494
Total	**28,126,428**	**55,294,210**	**63,550,367**	**63,851,494**
Full-time Equivalents Total*	158.00	176.00	178.00	178.00

**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.*

CARE - 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	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Dual Dispatch	6,261,123	13,327,968	9,097,138	9,181,135
Total	**6,261,123**	**13,327,968**	**9,097,138**	**9,181,135**
Full-time Equivalents Total*	32.00	64.00	64.00	64.00

**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.*