

**NOVEMBER 2021**

# **AMHERST COMMUNITY RESPONDER REPORT**

**Law Enforcement  
Action Partnership**

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# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Be Patient, nobody has it all figured out
- Be Inclusive, make sure all stakeholders are at the table
- Be Amherst, no two programs are exactly alike
- Be Innovative, leveraging existing and new partners
- Be Aware of your opportunity to make a difference

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## Executive Summary

Cities across the country are building civilian first responder teams to ensure that they can send the right responder to each 911 call, rather than having to send an armed police officer by default. Existing programs have demonstrated that these “community responder” teams can safely take many calls off the shoulders of police -- calls that do not require an armed officer, that involve issues better handled by connections to services than by the criminal justice system, and that can be escalated by the presence of a uniformed officer with a gun and a badge. Community responder teams are specially trained and equipped for these calls, so they can de-escalate crises and conflicts in the short term and connect people to services to prevent more serious issues in the long term. Their work helps build community trust and allows police to focus on preventing and investigating serious crime.

After the death of George Floyd, the Town of Amherst made several resolutions to address racial justice, including the creation of a civilian first responder model known as Community Responders for Equity, Safety, and Service (CRESS). To recommend a design for Amherst’s community responder model, the Town contracted with the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP). LEAP is a nonprofit group of current and former police and prosecutors who seek to improve safety by transforming the justice system to address the root causes of crime, confront racial disparities, and restore community trust.

LEAP developed our recommendations by conducting research on existing community responder models, analyzing the Town’s calls for service data, and interviewing a broad range of stakeholders.

We recommend the following process for a CRESS response: when a member of the public calls 911 or a non-emergency line about a low-risk situation, the call-taker would screen the call for potential red flags and the dispatcher would radio the CRESS team to respond. The CRESS team would be trained to inspect the scene for safety, de-escalate the situation, and connect people to appropriate services for long-term resolution of the underlying issues. The CRESS team would primarily handle eleven call types, from mental health-related disturbances to verbal disputes and suspicious vehicles.

We recommend the following structure for the CRESS program: the Town of Amherst would hire a Program Director and at least four teams of two CRESS responders as Town of Amherst employees. In hiring responders, rather than requiring advanced degrees, the Town would consider racial and ethnic diversity, lived experience with key issues, and skill in de-escalating crisis and resolving conflict. CRESS teams would be available every day from 9 am until 2 am, covering 87% of the anticipated call volume, and for the remaining seven hours a CRESS responder would be on-call for phone response.

The Town also asked us to estimate the CRESS program’s potential impact on calls for service. Our detailed call analysis concludes that each year, CRESS has the potential to handle about 4,400 total incidents in Amherst. CRESS would respond to about 2,600 calls for service currently being handled by police, or about 36% of total citizen-initiated police calls for service ([Figure 24](#)). Based on data from currently operating programs, we estimate that over the entire year, about 30 of these calls would lead to a subsequent police response, and about three calls would require emergency police backup. Due to

proper screening and training, community responders across the country have handled hundreds of thousands of calls without any reported casualties or injuries. We estimate that CRESS responders would self-initiate about 800 calls per year based on situations they observe while out in the community. If the Town invests appropriate time and effort in raising awareness of and building trust in the CRESS program, CRESS has the potential to handle an additional 1,000 calls every year, which would include new calls from community members and referrals from officers. These additional calls would help Amherst prevent smaller issues from escalating into more serious situations, which would improve community safety over the long term.

To achieve this long-term improvement in health and safety, CRESS would connect, refer, and transport people to key services that address the root causes of these crises and conflicts. We identify four key service connections in Amherst: 24-hour crisis stabilization, housing, restorative justice, and mediation. We recommend that the Town direct funding to the current gaps in these services. CRESS will need their support to achieve a long-term reduction in crises and conflict.

We believe that in addition to benefiting Amherst, the CRESS program would attract attention from jurisdictions around the country and from the media for its unique features. Most existing programs are focused primarily on issues related to mental health, addiction, and homelessness. Cities across the country are realizing that a significant share of calls for service relates to low-level disputes in need of conflict resolution and mediation. Amherst's program would be the first to handle a more comprehensive range of calls, the first in Massachusetts, and the first in a town well outside a major city.

We also recommend that Amherst consider new phone alternatives to reduce unnecessary demands on officers to assist with insurance claims. Most minor car accidents with no injuries can be handled without an officer response through public education, phone screening, and pre-recorded instructions. Most minor criminal damage with no suspects or evidence -- including minor vandalism and theft from a vehicle -- can be screened and documented via phone with no in-person response. We estimate that these phone alternatives could redirect roughly 452 calls every year, or 6.1 percent of all citizen-initiated police calls for service.

Finally, we recommend examining Amherst's current policies and procedures to identify phone alternatives to reduce police responses for commercial and residential alarms and 911 hang-up calls. While these calls can represent serious situations, Amherst police responded to 550 of these calls in 2019, making up 7.4 percent of all police citizen-initiated calls for service, and all 550 appeared to be false alarms. The Town should review and consider adopting best practices that have helped other jurisdictions greatly reduce unnecessary responses to false alarms. These phone alternatives would reduce overreliance on police while maintaining effective service.

In sum, we conclude that CRESS responders and phone alternatives would be critical assets for the Town of Amherst in conserving police resources, effectively de-escalating crisis and conflict, resolving long-standing issues through referral to other services, addressing root causes to prevent future crime, and preventing negative or even dangerous interactions between officers and community members.



# CRESS Responders

## Introduction

The death of George Floyd caused cities across the country to re-examine policing practices and analyze the roles that structural and institutional racism plays in police interaction with community members. The Town of Amherst adopted a resolution affirming its commitment to “end structural racism and achieve racial equity for black residents.” The Community Safety Working Group (CSWG) was created as a step in the Town’s progress to achieve racial equity.

The CSWG was charged with “mak[ing] a recommendation on alternative ways of providing public safety services to the community and mak[ing] recommendations on reforms to the current organizations and oversight structures of the Amherst Police Department.” Essential to this charge was finding and investigating existing alternative public safety models.

One of the CSWG’s principal recommendations was for the city to develop a civilian first responder model to handle calls for service that do not require an armed police response but that are currently handled by police. The civilian responder program would reduce negative police interactions and justice system involvement for people of color, improve connections to services to address root causes of crime, avoid escalating situations with a gun and a uniform, and enable an alternative response for people who do not want to summon the police. The Town resolved to establish a civilian first responder model known as Community Responders for Equity, Safety, and Service (CRESS).

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) was contracted to recommend a design for the Town of Amherst’s CRESS civilian first responder team based on research on existing models, calls for service data analysis, and stakeholder interviews. The CRESS team would be dispatched when someone calls 911, the police non-emergency line, or a CRESS-specific line about a low-risk issue that does not need an armed police response.

We began exploring the opportunities for alternative response systems in Amherst by examining calls for service data provided by the Amherst Police Department (APD). We focused on data from calendar year 2019, since the COVID-19 pandemic made 2020 and 2021 call data exceptional.

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) data provided by APD shows that Amherst police received 15,244 calls for service in 2019, of which 7,424 were citizen-initiated and 7,820 were initiated by APD officers or other agencies. Of the citizen-initiated calls, police responded to 6,602. About 37 percent are low- or medium-priority calls that stem from minor disputes, service needs, mental health, substance use, or homelessness-related issues. About 14 percent are administrative issues that the caller primarily wants to document for insurance purposes. Nine percent relate to suspicious persons, and seven percent are alarm calls, the vast majority of which are false alarms. About 18 percent are calls for rapid assistance, to either assist the Amherst Fire Department (AFD) or to divert traffic around a road hazard. Calls that require an armed police response -- either to provide security or to attempt to stop or investigate a

serious crime -- make up the final 15 percent ([Figure 1](#)). For a full listing of call types in each general category, see Appendix 1.

**Figure 1: Amherst Police Citizen-Initiated Calls by General Category, 2019**

Category	Number of Calls	% of Calls
Total	7424	100.0%
Minor disturbances/needs/disputes	2742	36.9%
Report-taking calls	1033	13.9%
Suspicious	685	9.2%
Alarm	540	7.3%
Rapid assistance	1330	17.9%
Armed Response	1094	14.7%

Amherst's results are similar to the eight cities we investigated in our [Community Responder report](#). A substantial portion of 911 calls involve quality of life issues and other low-priority incidents for which the presence of armed officers is unnecessary, may lead to negative police-community interactions, and may not lead to resolving the root issues behind the incidents.

Our report estimated that between 23 and 37 percent of police calls for service in each city could be handled instead by what we call "community responders." Instead of dispatching an armed officer to the scene, cities around the country are implementing models that send trained civilian first responders with lived experience and behavioral health skills, particularly for lower-risk 911 calls involving mental health, addiction, and homelessness. Community responders effectively lighten the load for law enforcement by handling low-priority calls so that police can spend more time preventing and investigating serious crime. Since community responders are trained in addressing root causes through connections to community resources, they can reduce repeat interactions and effectively resolve issues without having to engage the legal system.

We researched existing community responder teams to recommend a potential model for Amherst. Community responder programs are valuable even in jurisdictions with professional and forward-thinking police departments such as APD, which should be commended for its diversion programs and extensive training related to mediation, restorative justice, substance use, mental health, and domestic violence. In fact, the leading community responder models across the country were founded by pioneering police leaders, beginning with the CAHOOTS program in Eugene, Oregon, which launched in 1989.

CAHOOTS provides a team of specialists in medical and crisis intervention services to provide a

specialized civilian response to 911 calls related to behavioral health and social service needs. This model has proven to be safe and a cost-effective way to respond to individuals in crisis. The program costs \$2.1 million annually. CAHOOTS diverts about 15% of the call volume that would otherwise be handled by Eugene's police department. Only 0.2% of these calls require emergency police backup, and in over 30 years, CAHOOTS has never reported a critical incident resulting in death or injury of a responder. CAHOOTS saves the city of Eugene an estimated \$8.5 million per year.

Following CAHOOTS, Olympia, Washington created the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) and Denver, Colorado created the Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program. Both CRU and STAR have demonstrated their value -- Olympia has doubled the size of the CRU program and converted its responders from contractors to city employees, while Denver is doubling STAR's budget and expanding it from a limited-area pilot to a full-scale program across the city.

In the last year, a handful of other cities from Rochester, New York to Austin, Texas have begun operating community responder programs, and many more are preparing for launch.

We recommend that the Town of Amherst establish a CRESS "community responder" program in which appropriate police calls for service are handled by teams composed of two civilians who have experience in de-escalation, behavioral health, and mediation. Employing specially trained responders could be a critical asset in saving police resources, effectively de-escalating conflict, resolving long-standing issues through referral to mediation, behavioral health, and other services, and preventing negative or even dangerous interactions between officers and community members.

## Responder Safety

One immediate concern with a new first responder program is safety. Existing programs have shown that community responders can be implemented safely, thanks to careful responder training and call screening. In Eugene, Oregon, CAHOOTS handled over [15,000 dispatched calls for service](#) in 2019, which includes about 8,300 calls diverted from police, or 15 percent of police calls for service. [About 2.2 percent of calls for service](#) to which CAHOOTS arrived required a subsequent police response, equivalent to about 32 calls per year in Amherst. The calls that required police assistance did not put responders in danger -- about 0.2% of calls required emergency police backup, equivalent to about three calls per year in Amherst. In over three decades, the program has never had a responder casualty, and police and program staff are unable to remember an injury or close call. Denver's STAR program has only operated for a year and a half, but so far [no calls](#) have required police backup or resulted in arrest.

Civilians already respond to a large range of calls. In many cities, including [Baltimore](#) and [Salt Lake City](#), some people who call a mental health crisis line receive an in-person response from a civilian mobile crisis team -- the Baltimore program has been operating for over a decade. Most people are not familiar with the crisis line, so they call 911 instead, and the police are sent to handle identical calls -- until Baltimore finally started diverting those calls to the mobile crisis team in spring 2021. In the Amherst

region, Clinical Support Options (CSO) has responded to thousands of mental health crisis calls over the past few years, with no assaults or injuries.

In every city, public employees and other civilians handle interactions with upset residents that could potentially involve risk and liability. These civilian roles include child protective services investigating treatment of a child, companies repossessing or towing cars, utility workers shutting off power or water, social and mental health case workers visiting families, code enforcement officers inspecting homes, outreach workers engaging with homeless people, and even violence interruptors trying to build relationships with people involved in violence. Employees are often trained in conflict resolution and threat assessment, and they rarely sustain injuries from these interactions.

Cities across the country have seen that risk is not a one-sided issue -- there is risk of harm to the responder, and there is also risk that a police response that involves force can cause harm to people, damage community trust in police, and create liability for the city. Cities with community responder programs -- which now include Austin, Albuquerque, Portland, San Francisco, Eugene, Denver, Olympia, Atlanta, Rochester, and New York City -- have significantly higher violent crime rates than Amherst, so they are quite familiar with both risk to responders and liability for police use of force.

By developing a CRESS program that focuses its training and screening on responder safety, Amherst can work on balancing these risks.

## **Dispatch Process**

One common road-block for jurisdictions interested in community responder models is designing the process by which a 911 call can be dispatched to the responders. The process must be secure, ensuring the responder's safety, transferring all the information each step of the way, and providing an appropriate and timely response to each caller. The process must be locally tailored, matching the structure and technology of the emergency response system -- which is different in virtually every city.

CRESS team requests could come from one of four sources:

1. When the Amherst Emergency Communications Center ("dispatch center") receives a call to 911 or the police non-emergency line, the call-taker or dispatcher could determine that it is appropriate for the CRESS team, and the dispatcher would dispatch the CRESS team instead of police patrol.
2. For callers who know they want to reach CRESS, the dispatch center could establish a new "CRESS dispatch line" phone number that leads to the dispatch center just like the police non-emergency line. The call-taker would see that the call came in to the CRESS dispatch number and know that the caller wanted a CRESS response.

3. For people who do not feel comfortable calling the CRESS dispatch line because they are worried about calling the dispatch center, the CRESS program could give out the responders' cell phone number as a "CRESS responder line." The responders would take the call if possible or quickly return the call.
4. When an officer observes a situation that would be appropriate for a CRESS response -- whether the call was dispatched or "on view" -- the officer could notify dispatch over the radio to dispatch the CRESS team.

### Dispatch through the Dispatch Center (Sources 1-2)

Inside the Town's dispatch center, each call is received by the call-taker, who selects a call type and priority level and enters call notes in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. The dispatcher then assigns a police unit to respond to the call by broadcasting the call information over the police radio system.

We recommend that CRESS use the radio dispatch process of existing community responder programs, including CAHOOTS in Eugene, Oregon, CRU in Olympia, Washington, and STAR in Denver, Colorado. In those cities, after call-takers enter the call in the CAD system, the dispatchers relay all the information over police radio. They can assign a call to the community responder team, who carry a police radio, just as they would assign it to a particular patrol unit. The community responder team can also request to take calls that are relayed over the radio even if the call is not the default call type that they normally handle, for example if they recognized and had a rapport with the individuals involved.

To gather additional details, CRESS responders could dial the caller back while en route to the location. This is a technique already practiced by [innovative police officers](#) across the country to speed up the response, gather better information, and ensure safety.

### Call Screening

The dispatch center's 911 call-takers already ask screening questions for all incoming calls to determine the urgency of response and flag any warning signs of danger to responding officers. They record this information in the call notes and can adjust the priority level and call type accordingly.

Existing community responder programs all depend on call-taker screening to ensure that responders are not sent into unsafe situations. The Eugene call-takers screen for CAHOOTS response by asking if there has been physical harm to persons, if there is an immediate threat of physical harm to persons, and if any weapons are present or likely to be present. If the answer to any of the screening questions is yes, they dispatch police. If a serious injury has occurred, they dispatch EMS. These are similar to the questions that call-takers anywhere would ask prior to dispatching first responders.

We recommend that CRESS work with the dispatch center to develop a simple screening protocol for CRESS call types. In addition to screening for weapons, the presence or threat of violence, and the need for medical attention, the dispatcher should screen to see if there is a flag on the address related to prior issues. We developed two draft protocols that could be utilized by call-takers to screen calls for CRESS. First, [here](#) is a draft protocol for calls that come directly to the CRESS dispatch line, meaning that the callers are seeking a CRESS response. Second, [here](#) is a draft protocol for calls that come into the 911 or police non-emergency line and that may be appropriate for CRESS. The Town can use these drafts to develop clear screening protocols to guide call-takers and dispatchers.

In addition to the screening protocol, call-takers should receive a practical guide that breaks down the types of calls that are and are not appropriate for CRESS. Like many jurisdictions, Amherst categorizes calls for service into specific “call types,” but some call types are quite general. Some call types are mostly CRESS-appropriate but contain subtypes that would not be appropriate. For example, the “Suspicious” call type contains appropriate subtypes, such as a person loitering outside a business, but also CRESS-inappropriate subtypes, like a “hidden mystery” call from someone who heard screams or saw an open door that is not supposed to be ajar. We have developed a draft practical guide that outlines these subtypes for discussion with the Implementation Committee, dispatch center, and APD.

In addition to developing a clear screening protocol and guide to subtypes, Amherst will need to develop situation-based training. Existing programs have struggled to change decades of practice in sending police to these calls. In addition to practical training on differentiating calls, call-takers should be introduced to the CRESS responders themselves and the benefits of CRESS in assisting the community. A collaborative and trusting relationship between dispatch center staff and CRESS responders, along with discussion of the purpose of CRESS, will ensure that the CRESS team receives the calls for which they are well-suited.

### **Liability for Call Screening**

One natural concern is whether the Town or dispatch center could be held liable for dispatching a call to CRESS rather than the police. While it is impossible to definitively predict the viewpoint of every civil court judge, there is little reason to believe that the Town would face liability for staff making a reasonable decision to dispatch CRESS. The Town is more likely to face liability for sending an armed responder to the scene.

Liability is created when there is a legal obligation to do, or not do, something. A government agency may be held liable in cases of [negligence, wrongful acts, or omissions](#). In order to be found liable for those reasons, a person bringing a lawsuit would have to prove that the Town had a duty to that person, that the Town failed in that duty, and that the Town’s failure to act caused the person to suffer damages. In 911 dispatch, negligence would be something extreme like refusing to answer a 911 call. It would not be considered negligence if staff make a reasonable judgment call to send CRESS based on available

information and established protocol, since it does not violate the law. Call-takers can perform call screening and make guided determinations to send an alternative responder rather than police without creating liability concerns for the Town.

In general, law enforcement agencies have broad discretion to respond to incidents according to their own judgment. The primary statute that requires a police response is [General Laws Part II Title III Chapter 209A Section 6](#), which dictates that police take specific actions “whenever any law officer has reason to believe that a family or household member has been abused or is in danger of being abused.” We do not anticipate the Town violating this obligation by dispatching CRESS, since the call-taker would screen out any call they believed to involve the presence or threat of violence.

Dispatch centers also have broad discretion in handling calls. There are obligations in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations Title 560 Section 5 that dictate call handling specifics such as how call-takers must greet callers, where they can forward calls, and how they should forward calls. It does not contain legal obligations for dispatchers to send a specific type of responder based on information provided in the call. In particular, if a caller provides information that suggests that a minor crime has been committed, we do not find a legal obligation that would require the dispatcher to send the police.

For example, if a person calls 911 to report that their neighbors are being loud, the dispatch center may choose to send CRESS. CRESS could arrive on scene to find a large gathering of heavily intoxicated people who seem like they are about to fight, at which point CRESS would realize that they are not equipped to handle the situation and would radio dispatch for APD assistance. In the short window of time before APD arrived, fights could begin to break out and cause injury or property damage. Still, there is little reason to believe that the Town would face any legal liability, because sending CRESS was a reasonable response based on the original information provided to the call-taker, and because the harm was caused not by the Town but rather by the people involved in the fight.

We recommend that the Town attorney review the relevant statutes in order to provide authoritative guidance on this issue to Town staff.

### **Responder Arrival Screening**

After the dispatcher has notified CRESS and CRESS travels to the scene, there is another round of screening -- the responders are trained to arrive, approach, and engage only if it is safe. CRESS should develop a safe arrival protocol for CRESS responders to follow when arriving on scene and provide extensive practical training. The protocol should also cover when to call for help from other first responders. As in the dispatch screening protocol, potential for violence should lead the responder to back away and summon the police, while injuries should lead the responder to summon AFD. The protocol can also cover special circumstances -- for example, if CRESS believes someone behind a locked

door may be in distress. While such situations are rare, proper protocols and training can ensure safety for responders and community members alike.

## Call Types

Call-takers categorize police calls for service into different “call types” in every jurisdiction. Eugene’s community responder program, CAHOOTS, is the most comprehensive. It answers calls for public assistance (minor disputes or anything noncriminal), transport requests, suicidal subjects, housing crises, counseling and mediation, welfare checks, and emergency messages (providing notification to families on death or hospitalization). For other call types, including intoxicated persons, dispatchers can send CAHOOTS at their discretion.

We examined Amherst’s police call types to identify which types could potentially be handled by the CRESS team. We then scrutinized those call types by reviewing dozens of actual call records for each type, including the priority levels, modifying circumstances, dispositions, and most importantly the call notes taken by the call-taker. We discussed these call narratives with law enforcement to review safety concerns.

Based on our review of individual examples of calls for service, the following call types could be appropriate for first response by CRESS team, after appropriate call screening (in order of frequency): suspicious, well being check, noise complaint, assist citizen, disturbance, medical / mental, domestic, assist business / agency, animal complaint, suspicious motor vehicle, and citizen transport.

Some of these calls in these categories would be inappropriate for CRESS and screened out by call-takers due to weapons, violence, threats, or injury. To ensure that calls that passed the screening would be appropriate for CRESS, we reviewed the information that the caller provided to the call-taker for a sample of individual calls in each call type. We use the percentage of calls screened as appropriate in the sample to estimate the total number of calls that could be sent to CRESS ([Figure 2](#)).

We recognize that the Domestic call type may not appear appropriate for CRESS, since it would be inappropriate for all concerned if CRESS were dispatched to active situations of intimate partner violence. However, in Amherst, call-takers use the Domestic call type for not just intimate partner violence but also purely verbal disputes between partners, children, and other family members. If a call involves violence, threats, or weapons, call-takers would screen it out and send the police. If a call involves a verbal-only dispute between family members, call-takers would send CRESS. By individually reviewing the call narratives for a sample of Domestic calls, we estimate that about 40 percent would be appropriate for CRESS.

It is important to send CRESS rather than police to appropriate verbal family disputes. These calls cause frustration for officers, who respond to the same addresses over and over, only to have people refuse to speak with them or complain about the limitations of criminal justice approaches to family disputes. Trained CRESS responders can provide new tools to people in these situations and prevent these situations from escalating into violence over the long term. As discussed in the [call screening liability](#)



[section](#), the law does not require a police response to Domestic calls unless they involve abuse or violation of a protection order.

In sum, we estimate about 2,400 calls per year would be appropriate for CRESS within these call types.

**Figure 2: Total and CRESS-appropriate Call Volume in CRESS Call Types, 2019**

Call Type	Total # of calls	# CRESS-appropriate	% Mediation CRESS	% Clinician CRESS	% of call type CRESS-appropriate	CRESS as % of total police calls
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,330</b>	<b>2,420</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Suspicious	586	352	46%	14%	60%	5%
Well Being Check	529	499	3%	91%	94%	7%
Noise Complaint	522	430	79%	3%	82%	6%
Assist Citizen	404	261	50%	15%	65%	4%
Disturbance	386	311	58%	23%	81%	4%
Medical / Mental	317	317	3%	97%	100%	4%
Domestic	182	76	33%	8%	42%	1%
Assist Business / Agency	162	71	31%	13%	44%	1%
Animal Complaint	155	47	31%	0%	31%	1%
Suspicious MV	82	53	64%	0%	64%	1%
Citizen Transport	5	3	31%	33%	64%	0%

### Joint AFD Response

The number one most frequent citizen-initiated police call type is Medical Assist. These calls are jointly handled by the police and Amherst Fire Department (AFD). Police are dispatched alongside AFD to the scene of medical service calls related to true medical emergencies in which every second counts, since police usually have the most available units and the fastest response time. Police are also jointly dispatched if AFD is tied up on other calls or otherwise not available, or if the call involves safety concerns for AFD, suspected overdose, suicide, or trauma.

We recommend that for specific types of Medical Assist calls, the dispatch center should send CRESS instead of police. Dispatch should continue to send police for the true medical emergencies to ensure the fastest possible response -- these often include heart attacks, strokes, seizures, injuries with heavy

bleeding, and medical alarms. Police should also be sent to urgent medical issues if AFD is not immediately available. Dispatch should screen the remaining calls for weapons and credible risk of violence and send police if flagged by the screening. If the remaining calls pass the screening, dispatchers should send CRESS instead of police. These CRESS calls relate to individuals who have overdosed, are intoxicated or unresponsive, have attempted suicide or suffered trauma, or are noncompliant with AFD instructions. These individuals, many of whom have special needs relating to substance use and mental health and past negative experiences with law enforcement, would be particularly well-served by CRESS team expertise and CRESS referral to resources, in conjunction with AFD medical attention.

We estimate the percent of CRESS-appropriate Medical Assist calls by reviewing a sample of individual calls from 2019. Since the urgency of the call is an important factor, we predict separate percentages of CRESS-appropriate calls for the portion of calls that came in to 911 versus the calls that came in to the non-emergency line. Among the calls in our sample, we judge that CRESS would be appropriate for 28 percent of 911 calls, 63 percent of non-emergency line calls, and 67 percent of other agency-initiated calls. As a result, we predict that CRESS could handle 232 Medical Assist calls per year, which constitute 3.1 percent of total citizen-initiated police calls for service ([Figure 3](#)).

We also recommend that the Town review if AFD needs more staff to improve response time. If police are being routinely dispatched to Medical Assist calls mainly because AFD is not rapidly available, then the Town should consider increasing AFD staffing. The Town should ensure that emergency medical needs are being handled as often as possible by responders with medical training.

**Figure 3: Total and CRESS-appropriate Medical Assist calls, 2019**

Call Source	# of Calls	# CRESS-appropriate	% CRESS-appropriate
Total	683	232	33.9%
911	571	161	28.3%
Non-Emergency Line	101	63	62.5%
Other agency-initiated	11	7	66.7%

Finally, we recommend that the CRESS program consider developing a joint response protocol with the police for situations that CRESS cannot handle alone due to weapons or risk of violence. Many other jurisdictions have recognized that even if police need to be on scene to ensure safety, community responders can help de-escalate, persuade people to follow instructions, and provide appropriate referrals. Joint response would require significant training to ensure that police and CRESS are able to work effectively and safely together. Having CRESS available to respond jointly with APD may lead to better outcomes for community members who could otherwise have more negative interactions with police working alone.

## Officer Referral

Existing community responder programs all allow officers to use their discretion to refer appropriate calls for service to community responders. Since 911 call-takers are operating on limited information from a single person's perspective, they often send police to calls that turn out to be appropriate for community responders. Officers also stumble upon situations "on view" that they want to refer. In both cases, they can call over the radio to engage responders. Officer referral is an important source of community responder calls. In Denver, the STAR team receives 40% of their calls from officer referral.

We recommend that Amherst's CRESS program also allow for officer referral. If an officer responds to a call and wants to refer it to mediation responders, they could ask the dispatcher over the radio to send the CRESS team. The officer could then remain on scene to wait for CRESS if the person on scene requests the officer to stay, or if there is an imminent threat to safety. Otherwise, the officer could leave the scene without waiting for CRESS's arrival.

Officer referral would allow CRESS to handle calls that do not pass the screening for CRESS first response. For example, often the caller reports a possible weapon or other risk factor that turns out to be false. In other cases, the situation has calmed down by the time the officer arrives, or the officer is able to calm it down to the point where it is safe for CRESS to take over. Referral can be especially effective for calls like Domestic Violence that call-takers initially screen out due to safety concerns but that officers determine to be safe and more beneficial for CRESS after arrival on scene.

We provide only a very rough estimate of the potential volume of officer referrals to CRESS. Officer referrals would primarily come from officer-initiated calls, when they observed a situation on view that would be more appropriate for CRESS, rather than from citizen-initiated calls, when officers were dispatched to the scene and then decided upon arrival that the call was better-suited for CRESS. While we did not conduct a detailed analysis of officer-initiated calls, in 2019, officers tallied 802 officer-initiated calls in the categories most likely to be relevant for referral to CRESS: Citizen Transport, Medical/Mental, Well Being Check, and Disturbance. If officers referred to CRESS in a fifth of these instances, it would add 160 calls every year to CRESS's total.

Officer referral will only be successful if officers become familiar and comfortable with the CRESS program. Existing programs like CAHOOTS and CRU saw gradual increases in referrals as officers gained trust through firsthand experience with the programs. In the beginning, officers generally only refer a small minority of eligible calls, because it is difficult to change decades of police culture and practice. They refer more calls when they receive clear guidelines on the types of calls that would be good for referral, including the screening questions and guide to call subtypes. Officers should also receive information on the benefits of the program, though written materials rarely change minds. One important way to increase understanding of CRESS within APD is to involve the police department early

on in the development of CRESS responder training. CRESS can also conduct conversations with APD to discuss the benefits both to officers and to the community. The experience of other jurisdictions has shown that as officers become more familiar with community responders, and as they witness them handling calls on the street, some will become “champions” within the department. These champions play a crucial role in encouraging other officers to use their discretion to refer calls to the community responders.

As the CRESS program becomes established in Amherst, the Program Director and APD may agree that some situations would benefit from joint call-outs, so that both CRESS and police could respond to the same scene. Depending on the situation, CRESS responders could either take the lead, with police staying out of sight for backup, or police could take the lead to secure the scene so that CRESS can safely take over.

### **Direct Line**

Community members have voiced an important concern: some callers are so worried about triggering a police response that they will not call 911 or the police non-emergency line. People who have had negative police interactions in their past still need a safe option to address urgent situations and receive help. Even if they know that the call center is equipped to send the CRESS team, and that they can explicitly request CRESS, they may fear that the call center will send the police. Indeed, if the caller requests CRESS, but the call-taker determines that the call does not meet screening criteria and dispatches a police response instead, it would cause the caller to lose trust in the program.

For this reason, several jurisdictions offer a “direct line” number that callers can use to summon community responders with no potential for police response. In Denver, anyone can dial a direct number (720-913-STAR). The call is received by the same call-taker in the emergency call center who handles 911 and police non-emergency calls, but that call-taker can see that the call came in via the STAR direct line, and they will not send the police. Fortunately, Amherst call-takers have the same capability to see if a caller reached them by dialing a ten-digit number instead of 911.

We recommend that Amherst establish a “CRESS dispatch” number that anyone can call to request a CRESS team response. Amherst should publicize this number extensively, along with the purpose and benefits of the CRESS program, so that callers are informed about CRESS before reaching the call-takers. Call-takers should expect to send “CRESS dispatch” line calls to CRESS unless the calls are screened out according to the protocol. CRESS should work with the dispatch center to develop a specific protocol for the rare situations in which the call-taker is not comfortable sending the call to CRESS due to public safety concerns. Since the caller is trying to avoid a police response by dialing the CRESS dispatch number, the call-taker should not inform the police unless there is an imminent threat to human life. If there is no imminent threat, the call-taker should only send police or other responders with the caller’s

permission. If CRESS is unavailable, the call-taker could offer CRESS follow-up at a later time in addition to an immediate police or other response.

We also recommend that Amherst establish a different “CRESS responder” number that anyone can call to reach the CRESS responder’s cell phone directly. In Olympia, the community responders give out their cell phone number, and a small but significant number of calls come in directly to them rather than to the call center.

The Town should be clear that people should only call this number if they are not comfortable calling Town dispatch, since these calls can be inconvenient for responders. They require responders to juggle handling an incident with hearing calls both over the radio and on their cell phone. If someone calls the CRESS responder line at an inconvenient time, the responders can encourage them to call the CRESS dispatch line if they are comfortable, or to get their number for a call-back. The Town can reevaluate this CRESS responder line if the volume of calls is interfering with the quality of service.

These new dispatch options, and community awareness of the potential benefits of CRESS responses, will increase the volume of calls for service. Some new calls will come from people who are not comfortable summoning the police but feel comfortable summoning CRESS. Other calls will come from people who are comfortable summoning the police in general but who consider the issue at hand to be better suited for CRESS response and resolution. People are already making an effort to dial a number other than 911 -- 62 percent of the calls in the CRESS-appropriate types are already coming in to the police non-emergency number rather than 911 ([Figure 4](#)). The majority of callers are taking the trouble to look up the non-emergency number to avoid calling 911.

**Figure 4: Percent of Calls to 911 Versus Non-emergency Line, 2019**

Call Type	Calls to 911	Calls to Non-emergency Line	% of Calls to 911
Total	942	2451	37.6%
Suspicious	165	421	28.2%
Well Being Check	119	410	22.5%
Noise Complaint	41	481	7.9%
Assist Citizen	92	312	22.8%
Disturbance	176	210	45.6%
Medical / Mental	151	166	47.6%
Domestic	130	52	71.4%

Assist Business / Agency	13	149	8.0%
Animal Complaint	27	128	17.4%
Suspicious MV	18	64	22.0%
Trespass	9	29	23.7%
Party Registration	0	23	0.0%
Citizen Transport	1	6	14.3%

In Eugene, because people are familiar with CAHOOTS, they are more likely to call for help. This allows Eugene to prevent crises before they occur, rather than having to wait to respond after the fact. To estimate how much more likely people are to call, we compared the percent of calls that warrant a police response in Amherst with the [percent of Eugene's calls](#) that Eugene dispatchers estimated would warrant a police response if CAHOOTS did not exist. We project that for Well Being Check calls, the addition of the CRESS team could add an additional 20 percent of new calls. For Assist Citizen calls, it could add an additional 29 percent. These call types alone could see an increased 177 calls per year. To estimate increases in other CRESS-appropriate call types, we assigned them the same percentage as their most similar call type ([Figure 5](#)). We conservatively assumed that Suspicious, Suspicious Motor Vehicle, and Noise Complaint calls would not increase at all, since they are less likely to be called in by people seeking CRESS assistance.

The Citizen Transport call type is a special case. A [quarter of CAHOOTS calls](#) are Citizen Transport calls -- often to help someone seeking mental health or addiction treatment. These calls allow CAHOOTS to build relationships with these individuals and to help stabilize their situation to prevent future emergency calls. Currently, Amherst call-takers rarely record citizen-initiated Citizen Transports, though many calls initially categorized as other call types end up as transports.<sup>1</sup> If CRESS provides Citizen Transports, we estimate based on the ratio of Eugene to Amherst call volumes that Amherst could receive up to 470 new Citizen Transport calls per year.

In total, we estimate that the Town could receive an additional 816 calls per year as a result of establishing CRESS, on top of the calls diverted from police. In other words, for every 100 calls CRESS diverts from police, the Town would receive another 34 new calls that aren't currently coming in. These calls allow Amherst to prevent crises before they occur, improving public safety and reducing health and

<sup>1</sup> Amherst only recorded 5 citizen-initiated Citizen Transport calls in 2019. This number is deceptively low; Amherst police provided 232 Citizen Transports in 2019. In some cases, officers stumbled upon people in need of transport out in the community. In other cases, officers were summoned to calls that call-takers initiated with a different call type but that ended as a transport.

safety costs in the long run. They also allow the Town to build trust with people of color and others who currently are not willing to call for help because they do not want a police response.

This estimate comes with two caveats. First, while most community responder programs offer a direct line, CAHOOTS does not. Eugene is still missing out on calls that might come from those who are unwilling to speak to 911 dispatchers for fear that they might send the police. Amherst’s direct CRESS responder line will likely attract additional calls.

Second, this call increase will not happen immediately. Calls will only rise as the Amherst community becomes aware of and begins to trust CRESS. CAHOOTS has been in operation since the 1980s, so the program has had decades to build community awareness and trust. Still, Amherst can invest strategically to quickly spread the word about CRESS (see [Community Engagement](#)).

**Figure 5: Projected New Calls by Call Type**

Call Type	Police Diverted Calls	% New Calls Added	# New calls
Total	2,420	33.7%	816
Suspicious	352	0%	0
Well Being Check	499	20%	101
Noise Complaint	430	0%	0
Assist Citizen	261	29%	76
Disturbance	311	20%	63
Medical / Mental	317	20%	64
Domestic	76	29%	22
Assist Business / Agency	71	29%	20
Animal Complaint	47	0%	0
Suspicious MV	53	0%	0
Citizen Transport	3	*	470

\* Note: Citizen Transport calls projected based on CAHOOTS ratio of Well Being Check to Citizen Transport calls and Amherst volume of Well Being Check calls.

## Proactive Encounters

CRESS responders will handle one final category of calls: “on view” situations that responders encounter while out on the street. In Amherst and every jurisdiction, a significant percentage of police activity is initiated by officers rather than by a community member’s phone call, because between calls, those officers are out in the community looking for opportunities to proactively identify and handle issues. The same is true for community responder programs. In Eugene, for every 100 calls that CAHOOTS diverts from police, CAHOOTS handles 34 “on view” situations that they identify in the community. At this rate, CRESS would self-initiate an additional 823 proactive calls per year.

These proactive encounters can be crucial opportunities for CRESS to identify issues before they boil over as conflicts, crises, or relapses, creating significant health savings. In the event of a slow shift with few calls, CRESS can take time between calls to personally educate key frequent-caller agencies, businesses, and police about their services, or to check in on referrals. CRU staff in Olympia have found this personal outreach to be crucial in increasing community and officer referrals. CRESS can also follow up with individuals whom they or service provider partners have assisted in the past and received permission to contact again. These actions will allow CRESS to prevent some crisis calls from ever coming in to dispatch.

## CRESS Impact

### Calls For Service Impact

We estimate that when fully deployed, the program will handle approximately 4,400 calls per year: 2,420 calls currently on the shoulders of police, 816 new calls, 823 proactive encounters on the street, 160 officer referrals, and 200 Medical Assist calls ( [Figure 6](#)). These estimates assume that Amherst invests in building awareness and trust in CRESS among dispatchers, officers, other agencies and service providers, and the Amherst community. Amherst will only reach this potential if the program is able to earn widespread confidence, as CAHOOTS has in Eugene.

This response volume would constitute a significant share of Amherst calls for service. The 2,400 calls diverted from police comprise 17 percent of all 2019 police CAD entries and 33 percent of all citizen-initiated police calls for service (the majority of police CAD entries were officer-initiated or came from other agencies).



**Figure 6: Estimated Potential CRESS Call Volume**

Call Category	CRESS Potential	% of Total Police Calls
Total CRESS	4,450	
Diverted from Police	2,420	32.6%
New calls	816	
Proactive encounters	823	
Officer referrals	160	
Medical Assist calls	232	
<i>Police Citizen-initiated Calls</i>	<i>7,424</i>	
<i>Total Police Calls</i>	<i>15,244</i>	

### Arrest and Citation Impact

Currently, when police respond to calls that we recommend diverting to CRESS, a small fraction of these calls end in arrests, citations, and other police reports. Across CRESS call types, 3.3 percent of calls end in arrest and 2.7 percent end in summons ([Figure 7](#)). These outcomes range from zero arrests in the Assist Citizen call type to 22 percent resulting in arrest in the Domestic call type. These outcomes can destabilize people's lives, from losing employment to becoming unable to pay rent or buy medication. They also require officers to expend significant time and resources and can impact community trust in police.

CRESS will not make arrests or write citations but rather use an entirely different set of tools. If CRESS can safely resolve these calls, the calls will not end in arrests or citations, improving outcomes for community members and reducing the burden on police and other criminal justice system resources. CRESS will not prevent all cases of arrest and summons in [Figure 7](#), since many of the calls that led to arrest involved violence and would not have been sent to CRESS -- particularly in the Domestic call type.

To estimate the number of arrests CRESS could potentially prevent, we individually reviewed the call narratives for all calls in CRESS call types that led to arrest. We assessed whether or not the call-taker would have sent each call to CRESS based on initial information provided. We estimate that out of 110 total arrests across these call types in 2019, CRESS would likely have been dispatched to 52 calls, or just less than half ([Figure 8](#)). We cannot be sure which of these calls would have been resolved by CRESS and which would have required police assistance and still ended in arrest. While existing community responder programs have extremely low rates of seeking police assistance, we can only conclude that up to 52 arrests could have been prevented by CRESS in 2019.

Figure 7: Percent of Calls Leading to Arrest, Summons, and Report

Call Type	% Led to Incident Report	% Led to Arrest	% Led to Summons	% Handled by CRESS
Total	2.7%	3.3%	2.7%	72.0%
Suspicious	3.7%	1.0%	0.8%	60.0%
Well Being Check	1.1%	1.7%	0.7%	94.3%
Noise Complaint	0.0%	1.7%	3.4%	82.4%
Assist Citizen	3.0%	0.0%	0.2%	64.7%
Disturbance	1.6%	8.3%	2.8%	80.6%
Medical / Mental	3.8%	5.0%	11.6%	100.0%
Domestic	10.3%	22.2%	7.6%	41.7%
Assist Business / Agency	2.3%	0.6%	1.2%	43.6%
Animal Complaint	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%	30.6%
Suspicious MV	1.2%	2.4%	0.0%	64.4%

Figure 8: Share of Arrest Calls that were CRESS-Appropriate

	# Arrests	# CRESS-appropriate	% CRESS-appropriate
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>47.3%</b>
Domestic	42	5	11.9%
Disturbance	32	18	56.3%
Medical / Mental	16	14	87.5%
Noise Complaint	9	8	88.9%
Well Being Check	8	6	75.0%
Suspicious	6	5	83.3%
Suspicious MV	2	1	50.0%
Assist Business / Agency	1	1	100.0%

## Other Impacts

CRESS responders bring long-term benefits beyond handling calls for service and avoiding arrests and summonses. In particular, CRESS can help to permanently resolve ongoing conflicts between neighbors, within families, between landlords and tenants, and between business owners and unhoused individuals. By stabilizing these relationships, CRESS can prevent future calls for service and criminal offenses. CRESS will also be able to connect people to both short and long term resources in order to address underlying issues and stabilize their health and safety. This program is an investment in Amherst's future.

## Responder Team Details

### Responder Background and Hiring

Existing community responder programs have struggled to achieve diversity of race and lived experience due to their focus on mental health and medical credentials. With two responder spots per team, CAHOOTS chooses one behavioral health clinician and an EMT or nurse, and STAR employs a clinician and a paramedic. CRU and EMCOT staff two behavioral health clinicians or counselors. SCRT in San Francisco squeezes three staff onto each team so that they can include a peer support specialist alongside a clinician and community paramedic. It is already a challenge to find clinicians who are well-suited to the community responder role, much less clinicians who have a diverse background in terms of race, lived experience, and other factors.

Yet community response programs benefit enormously from including those with lived experience and community ties. Staff of the Olympia CRU program credit much of their success to peer navigators, who work alongside them to engage difficult-to-reach individuals. By having "walked in the shoes" of those they serve, peers can understand and connect where other responders would give up. Just as police start out at a great disadvantage simply because their sirens, badges, and guns can set off people's emotional triggers, a responder who shares background and lived experience with a respondent will start out with an instant advantage.

In addition, Amherst's calls for service data does not support the idea of staffing teams with two responders with formal mental health or medical credentials. As shown in [Figure 2](#), we estimate that 32 percent of the calls in the "CRESS-related" call types would benefit from a CRESS response focused on mental health, substance use, and homelessness expertise, while 40 percent would benefit from a CRESS response focused on conflict resolution and mediation. The majority of CRESS-appropriate calls would benefit from conflict resolution and mediation rather than behavioral health expertise, though of course many calls would benefit from both.

As a result of both the need for a diverse group of responders and the frequency of calls related to conflict resolution, we recommend that each responder team include one person with a background in behavioral health response and one person with a background in conflict resolution and mediation. We also recommend that, in selecting these individuals, Amherst looks for responders who reflect racial

diversity and who have lived experience with the types of situations they would be asked to handle, rather than requiring higher education and hiring the individual with the most advanced credentials. Amherst can open the hiring pool to community members who would have been shut out of the pool for other community responder programs.

In the course of meeting with community stakeholders, we have developed a list of specific individuals and groups who can help publicize the job postings to attract strong candidates. We recommend looking at existing resources within the Town to facilitate racially diverse hiring, such as utilizing the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District's process.

### **Responder Agency**

Existing community responder programs are housed within a variety of city agencies and external service providers. Externally run programs include CAHOOTS in Eugene, which is run by the White Bird Clinic; STAR in Denver, staffed by the Mental Health Center of Denver; and EMCOT in Austin, which is run by Integral Care. Responders can only be housed within an external service provider if there is a provider comfortable with the range of skill sets that would be practiced by the responders. In other jurisdictions, external providers leading mental health-focused programs have not been willing to expand to calls related to unfamiliar skills like mediation.

The CRU responders in Olympia recently transitioned to become city employees in order to retain staff and improve collaboration with city agencies. In Rochester, the FACIT team recently moved from the Police Department to the Department of Recreation and Youth Services. Albuquerque and Ithaca are building entirely new Community Safety Departments to house these programs. Several existing programs have suggested that hiring responders as city employees improves retention and relationships with other city agencies, which is critical to the success of the program.

For multiple reasons, we recommend that the CRESS team be housed within the Town of Amherst rather than contracted through a local service provider. First, as with police and fire, Town employment is more stable and likely to retain good employees. Second, since the team would include both behavioral health and mediation responders, there is no local organization equipped to house both. Third, Town employment gives the Town control over hiring, which allows the Town to appropriately value diversity of responders. Finally, housing CRESS within the Town allows program staff to more effectively interact and problem-solve with police, dispatch, public works, and other Town agencies, leading to better outcomes for the community.

### **Responder Training**

Training is essential because it ensures that CRESS responders will protect both their own safety and that of the public. Since the community responder role is new to the region, no new hire will come in with all of the required skills. Training will allow the responders to learn to develop the wide range of skill sets they will need to handle a broad range of calls.

After speaking to service providers across the region, we believe that the Amherst region has the providers necessary to lead these trainings. We make initial recommendations below on the important components of a training program. The program director should work with key stakeholders, including community members, to build on and customize our list of training components. They can find trainers to handle each aspect of training, ideally local service providers and organizations, in order to benefit from their understanding of the local landscape and to build their trust in and familiarity with the CRESS program. We can recommend specific local service providers to take on specific roles.

We recommend training CRESS responders in two modules: operational and field. Operational training aims to teach specific skills, while field training gives responders a chance to witness and participate in unpredictable real-life scenarios.

Operational training should include technology skills, including data management systems, record keeping, and other technology operations. In particular, we recommend trainers allot significant time to teaching responders how to talk over the police radio, including the use of 'code' language and how to call for back-up. The CRU team reported a steep learning curve in understanding and feeling comfortable speaking up on police radio. If responders do not receive sufficient training, they are likely to either stay silent and miss out on calls or even fail to call for police assistance. They may also cause conflict with dispatchers and police by breaking unwritten rules, so they should be given practical training on the nuances and customs of Amherst radio usage. This training should also include vehicle operations, from defensive driving, vehicle maintenance, sharing vehicles, parking, and safe transport.

CRESS responders will also need to be knowledgeable about other parts of the first response system. They should understand how calls come in through different phone numbers, how call-takers screen those calls, and the information they provide when dispatching to those calls. They should understand how EMS, fire, and police officers assess a scene upon arrival. They should be able to explain relevant legal processes to the general public, such as protection and trespassing orders and involuntary commitment. They should also be given introductory legal education in order to understand and respect people's legal rights when they interact with them and their own legal obligations as first responders.

Responders should receive significant operational training on how to begin safe and effective interactions. They should be trained on a safe arrival protocol, which would cover confirming the location with dispatch, situational awareness, recognizing red flags, using natural barriers and maintaining separation when approaching the scene, and announcing one's presence. This training should include practical instruction in personal safety, threat assessment, and basic self-defense. It should also include de-escalation training, with a focus on making individuals feel heard, seen, and understood. Responders should be instructed on verbal interventions -- including clear, direct, and respectful ways to instruct an individual in crisis -- as well as nonverbal interventions involving body language and personal space. Responders should also learn the technique of motivational interviewing. They should practice all of these skills extensively through scenario-based training.

We recommend extensive mental health training, since CRESS responders will come in with differing levels of mental health expertise, and many calls are connected to mental health ([Figure 9](#)). They should

be taught to recognize the symptoms of mental illnesses. Since Amherst is a small world, they should learn about dual relationships -- when the individual is a friend, family member, or otherwise known to the responder. They should learn professional boundaries (setting limits for safe and professional standards in a social care environment), role clarity (expectations and responsibilities of each responder), and role flexibility (the ability to adapt and contribute to a fluid situation). They should be trained on crisis intervention and suicide prevention, such as the Applied Suicide Prevention or Zero Suicide programs. They should also be trained in the intersection of mental health, race, culture, and stigma, because mental health issues are taboo for many members of the Amherst community.

We also recommend training on substance use, since many calls involve individuals who are under the influence of substances or dealing with addiction ([Figure 9](#)). Responders should learn to recognize the signs of substance use and intoxication and to de-escalate situations involving intoxication. Responders should be taught to engage people dealing with substance use disorders through a harm reduction philosophy, which emphasizes meeting people where they are at and not leaving them there.

The training should also include basic medical instruction. Responders should receive practical training in Basic Life Support, including CPR, clearing an airway obstruction, checking for a pulse and for signs of overdose, and administering Naloxone to reverse an overdose.

Responders should receive extensive training on conflict resolution. They should learn both mediation and restorative justice skills, though they would not perform traditional mediation or restorative justice conferences out in the field, since those require significant preparation. Still, they would learn principles that apply to first-response situations -- including social justice mediation -- as well as how to recognize and refer appropriate situations for the appropriate resolution process.

We also recommend allocating a large portion of the operational training to cultural competency. Responders should be trained to understand marginalized groups, including sex workers, individuals with autism spectrum disorders, BIPOC, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Further training should include implicit bias, deconstructing anti-black racism, and anti-oppressive training. The training should give special instruction relating to immigration status as well as language barriers and cultural taboos.

Responders should also learn skills to help break cycles of violence. These techniques include recognizing the signs of trauma and domestic violence, providing trauma-informed care to victims and witnesses in the aftermath of a violent act, and preventing retaliation.

The operational module should also address “special cases” such as the elderly, youth, and families involved in custody disputes. This module should cover mandatory reporting and working with transition-aged youth. CRESS responders should be trained to identify the difference in the presentation of trauma, mental illness, substance abuse, and suicidality in youth as opposed to in adults. They should learn to engage family members of people in crisis or dealing with addiction. Responders should also learn to identify the signs of child abuse and human trafficking.

Responders should learn how to connect community members in need with key community resources. These resources include “drop-off locations” related to mental health, substance use, and medical needs,

housing, women and children's shelters, recovery coaches, mental health involuntary commitment and other services, food and clothing, domestic violence and sexual assault services, and other educational resources.

Lastly, the operational module should give special consideration to managers and peer workers. Managers should learn how to support workers, supervise both front line and administrative staff, create a supportive schedule including vacation and mental health days, and the best practices of equitable hiring. Peer workers should have access to peer-specific training, and their entire training process should be accessible and flexible. Responders should receive wellness support to deal with vicarious trauma, both through initial training, ongoing in-service training, and accessible wellness services.

The field training module should include ride-alongs with police, 911 call-takers, mental health responders, and harm reduction peer response teams. This portion of the training should be extensive. Many existing community responder teams reported at least three weeks of shadowing a more experienced worker. The New York team reported conducting nearly full-time field training for five weeks, and Olympia held a full three months of field training. Field training is important because it allows new hires to gain real experience in putting their first response skills into practice. Once the CRESS program launches, new responders can shadow existing responders, but we still recommend that the responders shadow police, 911 call-takers, and other responders. Not only will they benefit from seeing these other professionals in action, Amherst will benefit from building trust and understanding between CRESS, the police, dispatch, and other agencies.

Training costs should be covered in large part by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health grant mentioned below. The grant specifically mentions that it covers training in de-escalation and mental health, as well as development of alternative response models.

**Figure 9: Share of Calls Related to Behavioral Health**

Call Type	Total Calls	Behavioral Health-Related Calls	% Behavioral Health-Related
Total	3,336	979	29.3%
Suspicious	587	179	30.5%
Well Being Check	529	249	47.1%
Noise Complaint	522	50	9.6%
Assist Citizen	404	98	24.3%
Disturbance	386	109	28.2%
Medical / Mental	317	184	58.0%
Domestic	182	45	24.7%

Assist Business / Agency	165	31	18.8%
Animal Complaint	155	19	12.3%
Suspicious MV	82	15	18.3%
Citizen Transport	7	0	0.0%

### Responder Supplies

Beyond the purchase and licensing of police radio, cell phones, and mobile data terminals, the primary concern is acquiring a vehicle or vehicles. Existing CR programs acquire vans that are large enough to fit a wheelchair and sizable luggage (such as a Sprinter van), since a large part of their work involves unhoused people.

A van would also allow the team enough room to carry supplies. We recommend that each mediation responder team carry emergency medical supplies such as naloxone (Narcan) and EpiPens, as well as comfort items like water, granola bars, blankets, feminine hygiene products, and socks. With these supplies and basic medical training, CRESS can prevent the need for some medical responses.

In order to make all community members feel as comfortable as possible, Amherst should ensure that CRESS responders do not look like police. Their uniform should not look like a police uniform, and their logo should not look like a badge. Their vehicle should not look like a police vehicle. More details about appearance and supplies can be determined based on feedback from the community.

### Responder Staffing

Existing community responder programs operate on a first responder schedule. CAHOOTS responders, for example, work 12-hour shifts. Unlike CAHOOTS, we recommend 8.5-hour shifts. 8.5-hour shifts are considered safer than 12-hour shifts as consistent exposure to trauma and stress can lead to fatigue, decrease focus, and negatively impact decision making skills.

In order to recommend which hours the program should cover, we examined the volume of calls for service across days of the week and hours of the day. Saturday sees almost twice as many calls as Monday, but otherwise calls are relatively consistent across days of the week ([Figure 10](#)). Calls vary much more across hours of the day ([Figure 11](#)). For every call that comes in during the quietest hour, 6 - 7am, more than seven calls come in during the peak hour, 12 - 1am. As a result, if responders work two 8.5-hour shifts per day, covering peak hours from 9am to 2am, they would cover more than 87 percent of all calls per service, despite only working 71 percent of the hours in a day.

In order to keep the CRESS responder line option available 24/7, we recommend that between 2am and 9am, one responder be “on call” to handle the responder cell phone. This on-call approach is used by the Newark Community Street Team to handle overnight calls. If someone calls either the CRESS



dispatch line or the CRESS responder line, they could speak to the responder on call. The responder would not respond in person. This arrangement would still leave CRESS with 1.14 hours of staff time hours available per hour of shift time, providing flex time for in-service training, meetings, vacation, and sick days ([Figure 12](#)).

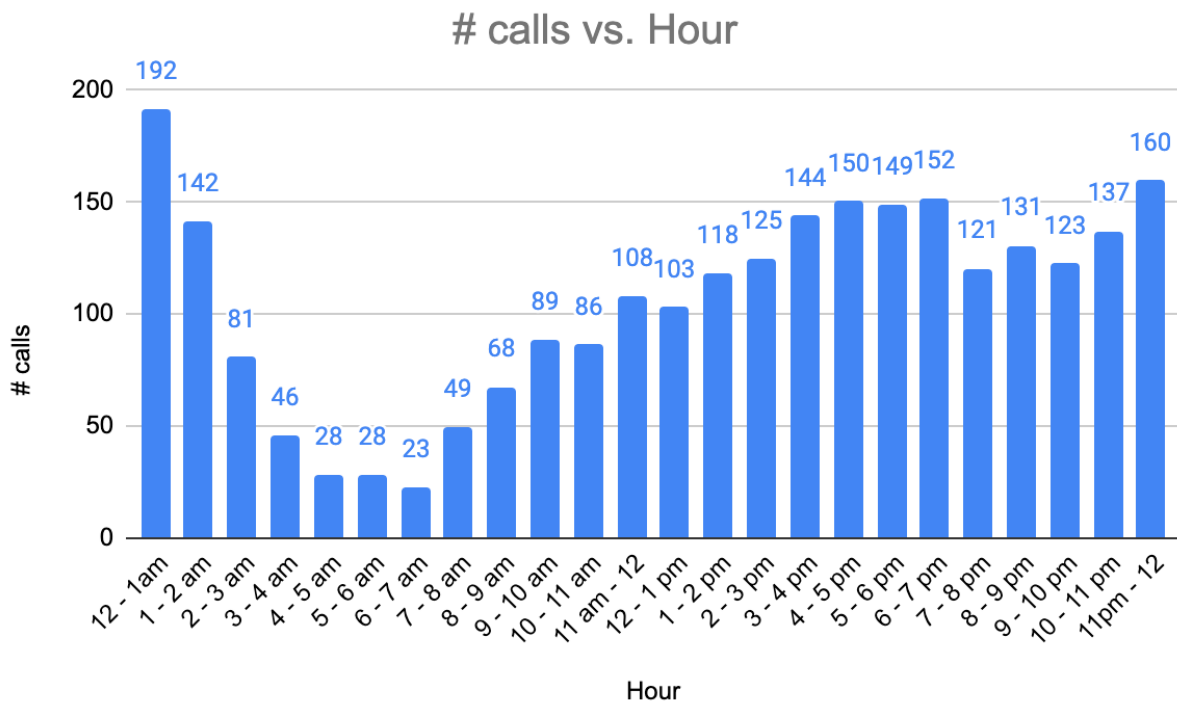
**Figure 10: Day-of-week analysis for CRESS responder calls.**

Day	CRESS-appropriate calls	% of calls
Sun	386	15.1%
Mon	294	11.5%
Tue	331	13.0%
Wed	313	12.3%
Thu	314	12.3%
Fri	423	16.6%
Sat	489	19.2%

**Figure 11: Time-of-day analysis for CRESS responder calls.**

Hour	CRESS-appropriate calls	% of calls
12 - 1 am	192	7.5%
1 - 2 am	142	5.6%
2 - 3 am	81	3.2%
3 - 4 am	46	1.8%
4 - 5 am	28	1.1%
5 - 6 am	28	1.1%
6 - 7 am	23	0.9%
7 - 8 am	49	1.9%
8 - 9 am	68	2.6%
9 - 10 am	89	3.5%

10 - 11 am	86	3.4%
11 am - 12	108	4.2%
12 - 1 pm	103	4.0%
1 - 2 pm	118	4.6%
2 - 3 pm	125	4.9%
3 - 4 pm	144	5.6%
4 - 5 pm	150	5.9%
5 - 6 pm	149	5.8%
6 - 7 pm	152	5.9%
7 - 8 pm	121	4.7%
8 - 9 pm	131	5.1%
9 - 10 pm	123	4.8%
10 - 11 pm	137	5.4%
11 pm - 12	160	6.3%



**Figure 12: Volume for CRESS responder calls by shift**

Shift length	Hours	% of calls	% of hours	Shift Constant
Two 8-hour shifts	10am - 2am	83.9%	66.7%	1.14
Two 8.5-hour shifts	9am - 2am	87.4%	70.8%	1.11
Two 9-hour shifts	9am - 3am	90.5%	75.0%	1.09
Two 9.5-hour shifts	8am - 3am	93.2%	79.2%	1.06
Two 10-hour shifts	7am - 3am	95.1%	83.3%	1.04

### Call Geography

Calls in CRESS-appropriate types are spread across Amherst's neighborhoods and police patrol sectors. (Figures 13-16). Given the relatively small area of the Town and the concentration of calls in the downtown area, CRESS travel time to respond to calls should be extremely short.

Figure 13: Incident Map of CRESS-Appropriate Call Types

CR-Appropriate 911 Incidents in Amherst (2019)

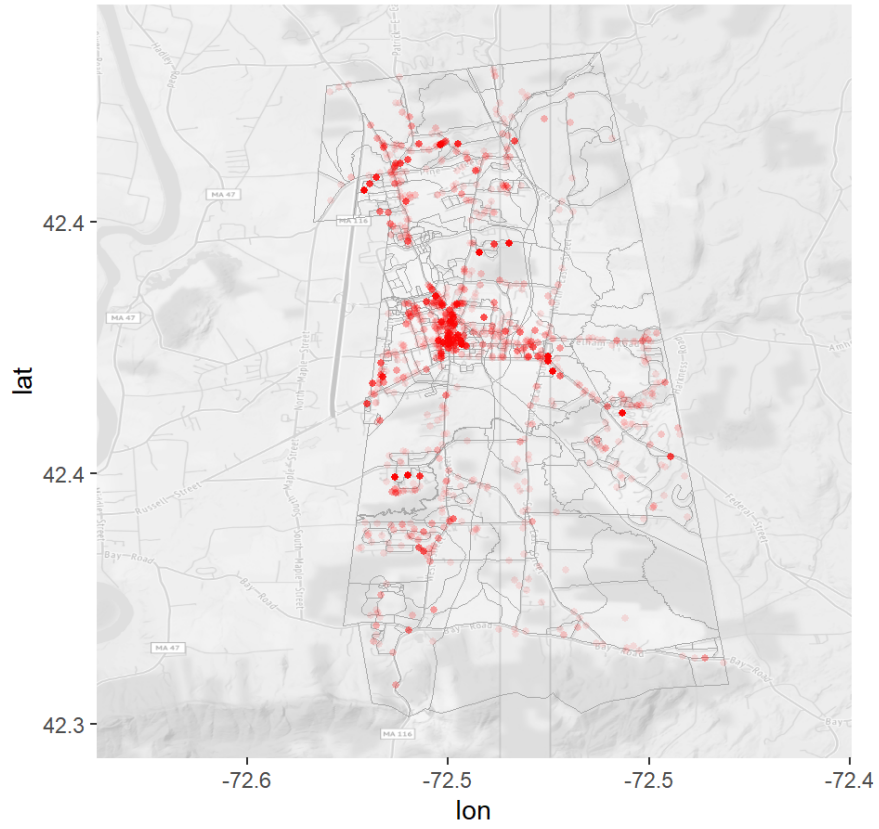


Figure 14: Heat Map of CRESS-Appropriate Call Types

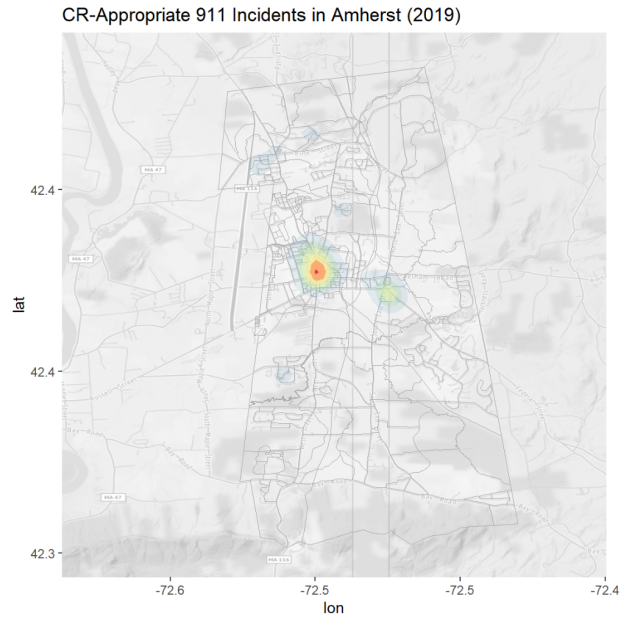
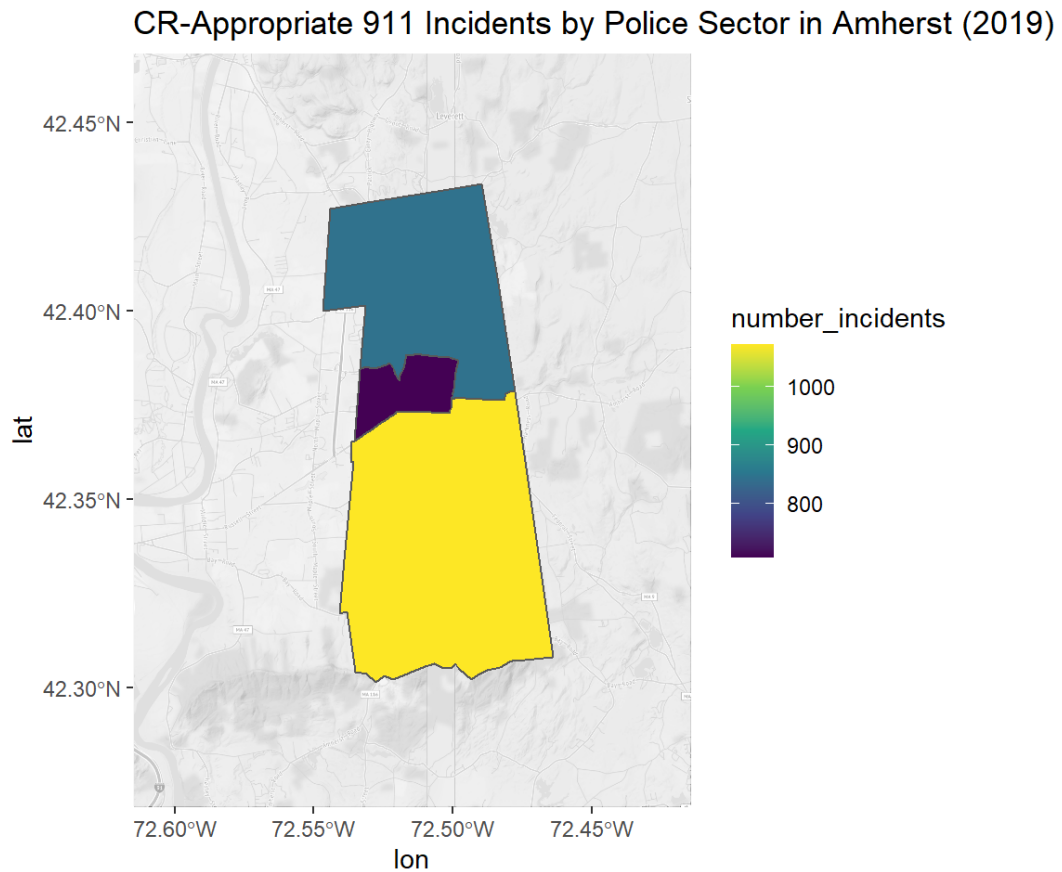


Figure 15: Calls in CRESS Types by Police Patrol Sector

Patrol Sector	# of Calls	% of Calls
Center	1132	32.2%
South	864	24.6%
North	723	20.6%
Unknown	794	22.6%

**Figure 16: Heat Map of CRESS-Appropriate Call Types by Police Patrol Sector**

## Key service connections

Existing community responder programs report that they are only effective when their responders can connect people to effective services. The Amherst area already contains many effective service providers and other resources that will prove invaluable for the CRESS team. CRESS responder training should bring in as many of these groups as possible, in order to ensure that CRESS responders are familiar with the local resources. And the reverse is equally important, so that local groups are comfortable with CRESS and know when it is appropriate to call them and how they can help stabilize issues and conflicts in the community.

Below, we highlight a few resources that have proven crucial for community responder and diversion programs in other communities, and that need additional attention in Amherst.

## Drop-Off Locations

In the short term, one crucial resource is a drop-off location for individuals who are not safe in their current location. Community responder teams in other jurisdictions report that they depend on having a

“dropoff stabilization center,” so that they have a place to bring someone voluntarily rather than relying on an emergency room, psychiatric facility, or jail.

Some individuals who need a warm place to shelter and connect to other services may simply benefit from being brought to the Amherst Survival Center. The Survival Center offers on-site case management to connect individuals to community services. In addition, the Survival Center provides free meals, clothing, and houseware to community members. The Survival Center also offers a variety of activities including cooking, sewing, and movie nights. Bus drivers have already found the Survival Center to be a helpful drop-off location for individuals who ride the bus just to have a quiet, warm place to sit. However, the Center does not have the capacity to support people who need shelter outside their business hours or who disrupt their activities due to intoxication or other issues.

For people who need shelter for the night, including those who may be in a somewhat disruptive state due to intoxication or mental health issues, Craig’s Doors is a crucial service provider. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Craig’s Doors operated a seasonal, night-time cot shelter that was closed during the day and during the warmer half of the year. During the pandemic, it has expanded to house people in hotel rooms, which means that people do not have to leave the shelter during the day or during the summer. Craig’s Doors is a low-barrier shelter, meaning that it will serve people who are intoxicated or otherwise struggling to stabilize themselves, as long as they do not pose a threat to other people. We strongly recommend that Amherst ensure that Craig’s Doors continues to operate around the clock and year-round, so that the CRESS team can connect individuals in need with a low-barrier shelter.

For people who need a longer-term stay and who are not welcome in other shelters due to mental health issues, one valuable resource could be the Afiya Respite Center in Northampton. The Afiya Respite Center offers three single rooms which gives residents privacy and a more homelike environment. The center offers training for individuals with lived experience who are looking to build facilitation skills. The training is also open to anyone looking to develop peer support skills to engage conversations involving suicidal ideation, auditory hallucinations, and a range of other interrelated topics. The responder could call Afiya to make sure they have an available room, and then put the person in need on the phone to see if Afiya is the right fit.

Similarly, the CRESS team could potentially bring individuals to the Living Room in Springfield. The Living Room connects those in crisis with peer mentors to help avoid an emergency room or hospitalization. The Living Room is a recovery model that draws from a strength-based approach and is provided at no cost. The Living Room is open to walk-ins daily from 7:30 am to 7 pm, and those needing more assistance are screened by a Living Room supervisor and may stay the night. However, since it would take responders a significant amount of time to drive someone to and from Springfield, ideally a similar crisis stabilization setup could be developed locally by existing service providers.

We recommend that the Town consider using mental health funds from the Department of Public Health grant to improve Amherst’s resources for stabilization. A significant portion of the grant is earmarked for a community-based mental health service partner who can fill gaps in current service, particularly in

terms of hours. These funds could help provide a place for CRESS responders -- and police -- to bring individuals who need to stabilize themselves from a crisis or intoxication rather than be brought to an emergency room, psychiatric facility, or jail. Based on our call volume analysis, Amherst has a significant volume of calls between midnight and 3am, so the Town should ensure that a stabilization center is open 24/7.

### **High-utilizer case management**

Because prevention is always better than response, one key service for existing community responder programs is case management for high utilizers. Calls related to mental health, addiction, and homelessness often involve the same repeat callers or subjects. While it is a positive step to send community responders to handle these calls rather than police, cities have benefited greatly by setting up programs dedicated to serving high utilizers. When Olympia's CRU team interacts multiple times with a specific individual, they can refer them to the Familiar Faces program for long-term case management. The Familiar Faces team employs Peer Navigators who conduct long-term follow-up with specific high utilizers. They build relationships with their clients to stabilize their situation and dramatically reduce negative interactions with citizens and police, as well as 911 calls. San Francisco and other cities run similar programs, receiving referrals from the community responders.

Amherst has taken one step in this direction already thanks to the DPH grant, which includes funding for a Transitional Assistance Coordinator. The TAC can ask the CRESS team to refer high-utilizer individuals who are frequently involved in their calls for service. They can then regularly follow up with those individuals to ensure that they are receiving the support they need. The TAC will also be able to help inform the responders about helpful service connections and spread the word to those connections about CRESS.

### **Restorative Justice**

Another helpful resource for the CRESS team would be a restorative justice program. Restorative Justice is a model of justice that focuses on repairing harm to the victim. For example, if a teenager throws rocks through a neighbor's windows, the traditional criminal justice approach of arrest and conviction might not be beneficial for either the teenager or the neighbor. Instead, if the teenager is willing to accept responsibility for their actions and the neighbor gives consent, a facilitator can bring both of them and their families together for a restorative justice conference. This conference provides a structured opportunity for the teenager to take responsibility, for the neighbor to explain how much it hurt and to understand why the teenager threw the rocks, and for them both to decide how the teenager can make things right.

Restorative justice conferences have proven to be an effective alternative to the traditional criminal justice system for many cases. The restorative justice model allows victims to feel heard and offenders to understand the harm they caused. Approximately [95 percent of victim-offender mediations](#) reach consensus on the appropriate punishment. Since [victims are most concerned](#) with stopping the



perpetrator from reoffending and ensuring that they take responsibility for the harm they caused, restorative conferences also [improve victim satisfaction](#).

We expect that a restorative justice conference would be a useful long-term process to help resolve a significant portion of CRESS incidents, and experienced facilitators are already working in the Amherst area. The nonprofit Communities For Restorative Justice (C4RJ) receives referrals from local police and prosecutors to conduct conferences to resolve issues using the restorative justice model. We commend Amherst police and prosecutors for participating in this referral process. The Amherst Regional Public Schools use restorative justice for internal school discipline. We recommend that CRESS develop an agreement with C4RJ, ARPS, or other local restorative justice facilitators to guide appropriate CRESS calls into a restorative justice process.

## Mediation

Disputes between community members often do not require police involvement. For example, neighbors may have a long running dispute over a barking dog. The traditional criminal justice response model is ill-equipped to resolve these types of disputes. Police officers are not professionally trained mediators, and arrests or citations will not resolve the conflict. APD should be applauded for recognizing the limitations of the traditional justice system and already arranging mediations on a case-by-case basis.

When CRESS responds to a call involving a dispute, they will often benefit from being able to connect the disputing parties to mediation. Mediation is a structured process in which a trained mediator assists disputing parties with finding resolution to their conflict. Much like the restorative justice model, mediators conference with disputing parties to negotiate terms that will satisfy each party. Mediation has been used as a way of solving disputes between community members by organizations such as the New Orleans PeaceKeepers (NOPK). In the last several years, the NOPK have successfully resolved dozens of community conflicts without police involvement.

Quabbin Mediation is already training facilitators in Amherst and the surrounding region. Mediators can receive cases referred from police and the courts. CRESS should work with local mediators to develop a process for identifying and referring appropriate disputes to mediation processes.

## Community Engagement

The CSWG has worked hard to build CRESS team plans based on input from the Amherst community. The CSWG held two public forums where members of the community shared their experiences, perspectives, and recommendations. In addition, the CSWG conducted an online survey and invited all members of the public to participate. The CSWG met with the Chamber of Commerce, business people, social service providers, and other community leaders. The CSWG published their findings in a [report](#) released in May 2021.

The CSWG also contracted with a local consulting firm, 7 Generations Movement Collective (7GenMC), to gather feedback from marginalized populations about their experiences with the Amherst Police Department through virtual focus groups and interviews. 7GenMC published their own [report](#) in May 2021.

We recommend that the successor body to the CSWG, the Community Safety and Social Justice Committee, continue to gather public input to inform CRESS plans. For example, once the Town agrees on key points of the model, this body can develop a community survey that explains the purpose and general structure of the program while gathering input on relevant questions. Questions should cover meaningful yet realistic choices in the program's design. Potential questions could include:

1. What community resources should CRESS responders be familiar with?
2. For each of the CRESS-appropriate call types, should callers be able to “opt out” of a CRESS response in favor of a police response if the call-taker believes the call is appropriate for CRESS?
3. How important is it for the CRESS responders themselves to have relevant life experience versus specific professional certifications?
4. Should CRESS responders wear a clearly identifiable uniform and drive a marked car? (distinct from the uniforms and markings for city agencies)
5. How can we best reach community members so that they know about, support, and understand how to reach out to CRESS when appropriate?
6. What agencies, service providers, and other likely callers should we inform about the program?
7. Who should serve on the long-term oversight committee?
8. What data do you want to see gathered about the program as it is implemented?
9. How should the program measure success?

Community engagement is also an opportunity to present statistics on current police calls for service to community members. For example, it might be useful for some groups to know the racial and ethnic breakdown of current calls for service in CRESS-appropriate call types ([Figure 17](#)).

**Figure 17: Caller Race and Ethnicity, 2019**

Caller Race	Caller Ethnicity	# of Calls	% of Calls (Known)
<b>White</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2468</b>	<b>81.9%</b>
White	Non-Hispanic	1949	64.6%
White	Unknown	366	12.1%
White	Hispanic	153	5.1%
<b>Black</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>14.4%</b>
Black	Non-Hispanic	359	11.9%

Black	Unknown	52	1.7%
Black	Hispanic	23	0.8%
<b>Asian</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
Asian	Non-Hispanic	84	2.8%
Asian	Unknown	25	0.8%
Asian	Hispanic	3	0.1%
<b>Indian</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Unknown	Unknown	2903	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic</b>	<b>2393</b>	<b>93.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>7.0%</b>

### Agency Education

The best way to make the call-takers’ job easy is to educate the community about the purpose of the CRESS team and the types of calls that are appropriate, as well as the anticipated benefits of CRESS involvement, such as connection to services and avoiding arrest. Then, callers will often bring up CRESS or at least know what it is if the call-taker mentions CRESS.

Existing programs have found that the most important potential callers to educate about the program include libraries and transit agencies, businesses that interact with the public, and frequent 911 and non-emergency line callers. CRESS should seek community input on publicizing the program and invest significant effort in raising awareness both about its existence and its community benefits.

We will privately share a list of common call locations with the Implementation Committee. We recommend that CRESS reach out to contacts at these locations to explain the program, gather input, and earn their confidence.

### Documentation and Impact Evaluation

By properly documenting what occurs during calls, CRESS can identify patterns and improve the quality of service, review any interactions that lead to complaints, and demonstrate the positive impact of the program on the community. The program’s positive impact will be watched closely by political leaders and the media, as a pioneering model for Massachusetts and for smaller towns nationwide. CRESS needs to carefully develop a documentation system that allows the program to achieve these aims.

Impact evaluation has not been a priority in the past for CAHOOTS, the only long-standing community responder program, but rigorous studies are now underway. Denver’s STAR program is rapidly becoming the leader in this space, tracking data from responders and from dispatchers. Olympia tracks call types,

root causes of calls, and call line sources of calls. San Francisco’s SCRT program tracks everything from call sources to referral follow-ups and health outcomes of individuals who have frequent contact with the team.

In Amherst, basic information about the calls will be gathered in the IMC Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, just as for police and fire calls. This system records many pieces of information about each call, which we used to conduct the entire calls for service analysis included in this report. The Town can use it to evaluate several aspects of CRESS’s performance (Figure 18).

One minor issue with CRESS use of the CAD system will be recording entries for the calls that go directly to the responders’ cell phone via the CRESS responder line. In order to add these calls to the CAD system, CRESS responders can radio in the details for dispatchers to record in CAD. Radioing the dispatcher for CAD entry is already common practice -- in 2019, police officers themselves initiated about half of all police CAD entries. The process is the same for notifying dispatch of proactive encounters that CRESS initiates when they address “on view” situations out in the community.

**Figure 18: CAD-Stored Data and CRESS Evaluation Questions**

Data Stored in CAD	CRESS Evaluation Questions
Vehicle number	Which calls were handled by CRESS?
Call Type	What volume and percent of each call type is CRESS handling?
Notes from call-taker/responder	Why did call-takers screen particular calls out and send them to police/EMS? If any inappropriate calls were sent to CRESS, why weren’t they screened out? What percent of calls in each type involved behavioral health issues?
Dispatch source line	What volume and percent of each call type comes in through 911 versus non-emergency, CRESS dispatch, and CRESS responder lines? Did the volume of calls increase after CRESS launched?
Location, phone number	What recurring issues are causing repeat calls from the same locations? How concentrated are calls in common locations? Which frequent callers are reaching CRESS through 911 versus the CRESS dispatch line?
Caller gender, race, and ethnicity	What are the demographics of people reaching CRESS through 911 versus the CRESS dispatch line?
Date/time when call was received, when first responder	How many calls is CRESS handling in the morning and evening shifts? How quickly did CRESS arrive on scene? How long did CRESS remain on scene for different call types?

arrived, when incident was closed	How many CRESS-appropriate calls came in when CRESS was not available?
Outcome/disposition of call	Did any CRESS calls lead to police making an arrest, giving a citation, or taking an incident report?
Incident number	Allows analyst to merge CAD and record management system (RMS) entries to answer additional questions.

The CAD system only records certain discrete information related to each call for service; CRESS will need a record management system (RMS) to track more detailed information, since adding new fields to CAD is difficult and expensive and CAD information is shared with other agencies. The RMS system will allow CRESS the flexibility to enter more detailed information on call circumstances, referrals, and follow-ups. Every community responder program uses their own RMS to record, track, and view results of incidents.

CRESS should consider selecting an RMS system that will integrate easily with the IMC CAD system, so that CRESS managers can view all available information without having to request case-by-case assistance from program evaluators or the Town’s IT Department. If the Town has an existing RMS contract, a CRESS-specific service can be added to that system. Adding to an already existing RMS should help the Town more easily integrate the CRESS RMS system with the CAD system and respond to CRESS-related Massachusetts public records requests. Merging RMS and CAD is important, because it means that responders do not need to spend time recording information in the RMS entry that is already contained in the CAD entry (see [Figure 18](#)). The entries can be merged if the CRESS responders record the unique CAD incident number.

The RMS system should allow the responder to efficiently enter detailed narrative descriptions of calls while also guiding them to fill in key indicators by choosing from appropriate pre-set answer choices. Responders should record key indicators not included in CAD that can be used to both evaluate and improve the program’s performance ([Figure 19](#)).

**Figure 19: RMS-Stored Data and CRESS Evaluation Questions**

Data Stored in RMS	CRESS Evaluation Questions
Incident number	Allows analysts to merge CAD and RMS entries to answer additional questions.
Notes from responder	In case a complaint is filed or a related incident occurs later, what occurred during the incident? If any inappropriate calls were sent to CRESS, why weren’t they screened out?

	<p>What percent of calls in each type involved behavioral health issues?          If any calls led to police or other agency involvement, why did that occur?</p>
Root cause	<p>What portion of calls in each call type are related to which underlying issue?          (poverty, housing, mental health, substance use, family dispute, other conflict)</p>
Referral type, agency, notes	<p>How many referrals to services are responders making?          Are they making warm handoffs or just providing referral information?          How long is it taking for responders to conduct referrals?</p>
Call involves a known high utilizer?	<p>What share of calls involves known high utilizers?          Is high-utilizer case management resulting in a decrease in calls for service?</p>
Subject gender, race, and ethnicity	<p>What are the demographics of people involved in CRESS calls, both callers and subjects?</p>
Contact information and permission	<p>Were responders successful in reaching people who agreed to follow-up?          Did follow-ups lead to additional referrals or reduced calls for service?</p>
Outcome/disposition of incident	<p>Did any CRESS calls lead to police making an arrest, giving a citation, or taking an incident report?</p>
Follow-up with other service providers	<p>What percent of referrals led to treatment uptake and long-term success?          Have high utilizer individuals improved health and safety outcomes?          Why were some referral efforts unsuccessful?</p>

To set up the RMS system to most effectively answer these questions, CRESS should contract with a local researcher. The Amherst area is saturated with prominent academic researchers who would likely jump at the chance to evaluate a ground-breaking local program. The researcher should be local, so that they can visit frequently with CRESS staff not just to understand the goals and needs of the program but also to observe CRESS “dry run” operations to ensure responders are capturing the greatest amount of useful information in the least amount of time. They can also ensure that referral providers are able to share enough data to evaluate the short- and long-term success of referrals.

The researcher should evaluate the program by combining CAD and RMS data with satisfaction surveys. They should conduct interviews with CRESS staff, police, dispatch, service providers, callers who gave permission for follow-up, high utilizers, and community groups and representatives. In addition to using these results for program evaluation, they should be shared regularly with the oversight body to improve program operations.

Evaluation can be funded through the state DPH grant, which requires a detailed evaluation plan as well as both quantitative and qualitative evaluation. An evaluation plan would be a strong selling point for

private funders, many of whom prioritize academic research results. It would also elevate the program's standing in the world of academics and various service providers.

### **Oversight Body**

We recommend that a long-term oversight body meet regularly to monitor and recommend improvements to the CRESS program. The body should incorporate members of the Implementation Team, who are familiar with the program's design. It should involve members of the community, who are familiar with the program's goals. It should also involve representatives from key partners, including the police, dispatch, and important referral providers. It should include the evaluator, so that conversations can rely on data rather than anecdotes.

The oversight body should receive regular reports at these meetings from the Program Director and evaluator. The body can revisit key questions such as call screening, dispatch of appropriate call types, radio communication, officer referral, and call documentation. The body can focus on balancing the need for the program to operate safely with the goal of providing maximum impact for the community. The body can also review specific concerns or progress related to key locations, individuals, or agencies. The reviews should remain in place as long as necessary, likely long-term as the program continues to expand.

### **Implementation Plan**

Since Amherst is hoping to launch CRESS in early 2022, we wanted to provide an outline and timeline for key implementation steps to help guide the Implementation Committee's work. Preparation for the launch will likely require at least six months. It is important to prioritize the steps that will serve as a bottleneck -- for example, responder training cannot begin until the responders are hired. It is also important to decide which steps will be handled directly by the Implementation Committee, which will be assigned to others by the Implementation Committee, and which will wait to be handled by the Program Director.

We recommend thinking of CRESS implementation in three phases: program development, training, and operation.

#### **Program Development Phase**

Program development begins with the Implementation Team hiring the CRESS Program Director and grant-funded Project Manager. Both the Program Director and Project Manager need to be involved early on in most aspects of implementation. Since it may take two months from job posting to the first day on the job, this step is likely to be a bottleneck. It is also crucial to start the program off on the right track by attracting a diverse set of qualified candidates. The Implementation Team should consider who can take on the significant burden of bringing these new hires up to speed.

Another top priority is hiring the responders, starting with securing budget approval and developing position descriptions. This step can also become a bottleneck, because responders need to be

onboarded so that training can begin. The Town may want to simultaneously hire the Transitional Assistance Coordinator, in order to streamline onboarding and training.

The Implementation Team, Program Director, and Project Manager should focus on a few steps that need to be completed before the training phase can begin. A top priority is planning responder training, since it should involve significant community and stakeholder input and participation, and since trainers need to be identified well in advance of training. The Town will also need to settle on a record management system and other technology in order to train responders to operate them. The record management system needs to be set up in partnership with the researchers leading program evaluation to ensure that they will be able to use CRESS records to measure the success of the program. Finally, the program needs to solicit community feedback early and often in order to ensure community buy-in.

The Implementation Team, Program Director, and Project Manager also need to start determining the details of the program's operation. CRESS will need internal protocols for sensitive aspects of the program such as safety on scene, confidentiality, and calling for police assistance. CRESS should work with the dispatch center to develop protocols for call screening, dispatch, and IMC (CAD system) access, as well as with APD for officer referral. The Town would likely benefit from formalizing external agreements with CSO for involuntary mental health commitments and potentially hotline call transfers, with restorative justice and mediation providers for intake and referral, with the DART program for connections to peer recovery coaches, and with other key partners. CRESS should also develop relationships with other agencies that work on sensitive issues including minors and domestic disputes, such as the schools, the state Department of Children and Families (DCF), and Safe Passage. The Town should also investigate securing access to electronic health records.

We estimate that the program development phase will take 3-4 months, depending largely on the pace of hiring and onboarding for the Program Director and Project Manager. The DPH grant will likely add another major component to this phase: by the end of the third month of the DPH grant, the Project Manager has to submit the detailed "comprehensive implementation plan." This plan will require significant additional work to demonstrate that the Town is complying with the grant requirements. It also provides an important opportunity to direct funding at key complementary service gaps such as crisis stabilization, restorative justice, and low-barrier shelter space.

### **Training Phase**

The training phase begins when the responders are hired. Costs increase because the Town begins paying the salaries of the responders, in addition to paying trainers. This phase will last roughly two months. It includes operational and field training, as well as initial "dry run" tests to allow CRESS to stress-test the technology, dispatch, response, and follow-up systems before the program actually launches. It also includes community and stakeholder engagement, which are essential to build awareness of and trust in the CRESS team. CRESS can reach these goals naturally by heavily involving key community members and stakeholders in the training process. The Town should also be marketing



CRESS during this phase to let the broader community know how CRESS will help the community at large.

The Program Director needs to procure equipment and supplies for the program, most importantly a vehicle or vehicles, so that responders can conduct driving field training and prepare for the “dry run” pre-launch testing.

### **Operation Phase**

The operation phase begins when the program officially launches. CRESS responders start working full shifts and continue to promote the program in the community. The Implementation Team or a similar oversight committee should continue to meet weekly to conduct ongoing post-launch oversight of the program to ensure that operations are running smoothly and effectively.

It would not be unrealistic to expect program launch in April or May of 2022.

### **Budget**

Existing community responder programs are funded by a variety of local, federal, and private sources. The Olympia CRU team is funded by a property tax levy passed by the City Council to fund the downtown walking patrol and street response team. The CRU team also received a grant through the state association of police chiefs and sheriffs. The Baltimore BCRI team receives significant funding from state and federal behavioral health block grants, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, and Medicaid reimbursement for face-to-face services. Rochester’s PIC team is funded by the City Council through funds set aside for racial equity initiatives.

Given the program’s benefit to the Amherst community, we believe that it should be funded directly by the Town budget, as are the Town’s other first responders. However, there may be opportunities to leverage grant funding as well. We believe that Amherst can attract private grant funding because CRESS is a pioneering model. It is the most comprehensive example in terms of call types and responder experience, and it is the first to launch in a similarly small jurisdiction far from an urban center.

Indeed, Amherst has already won state grant funding connected to this program. Amherst’s \$450,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is designed to fund alternatives to policing in the area of mental and behavioral health, with a goal of lessening police interactions and connecting people to services. We outline specific opportunities to use this funding to support the CRESS program in relevant sections within the report.

Federal COVID-19 recovery funds are also becoming available for community responder programs, mental health response, and substance abuse issues.

The American Rescue Plan has allocated \$350 million dollars to first responder relief. Amherst can receive these funds directly from the state and the funds can be used on crisis intervention and other behavioral health programs, like CRESS.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) has made available Grants for Community-Based Funding for Local Behavioral Health Disorders and Substance Use Disorder Services. This program [authorized](#) \$50 million in grants for state and local governments and nonprofits to address behavioral health needs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. An [additional](#) \$30 million is available to support harm reduction services for people with substance use disorders. While Congress has authorized the funds for these programs, the specifics of these opportunities, how to obtain the funds and the requirements around spending, are still forthcoming.

Amherst should monitor these program offerings and apply for relevant grants in order to support its CRESS program, and consider expanding offerings in light of available federal funding.

The budgets for existing community responder (CR) programs are primarily staff cost. For example, about three quarters of Albuquerque's \$4 million pilot budget goes to city and contractor staffing. Aside from staff, a significant portion of community responder budgets goes to technology purchase and licensing fees, most importantly purchasing vehicles.

We provide a rough budget estimate for the first year of the CRESS program, including six months of program implementation and training, and six months of operation (see [Figure 20](#)). The estimate focuses on the CRESS program itself and does not include all components of the state DPH grant.

**Figure 20: First Year Budget Estimate**

	<b>Full Year</b>	<b>1st 6 mo. (Training)</b>	<b>2nd 6 mo. (Operation)</b>
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>\$778,967</b>	<b>\$374,967</b>	<b>\$404,000</b>
<b>Personnel cost</b>	<b>\$669,067</b>	<b>\$281,867</b>	<b>\$387,200</b>
Responder cost per month	\$6,583	\$6,583	\$6,583
Responder months	80	32	48
Director cost per month	\$7,417	\$7,417	\$7,417
Director months	12	6	6
Administrator cost per month	\$4,450	\$4,450	\$4,450
Administrator months	12	6	6
<b>Equipment cost</b>	<b>\$69,900</b>	<b>\$57,100</b>	<b>\$12,800</b>

Office space	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Vehicle purchase (1-2)	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0
Police radio	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0
Radio fees	\$600	\$300	\$300
Workstation and tablet	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0
Cell phone	\$800	\$800	\$0
Misc. Supplies	\$4,500	\$2,000	\$2,500
Uniforms	\$500	\$500	\$0
Vehicle gas/maintenance	\$8,000	\$2,000	\$6,000
<b>Training cost</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>
Office space	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0
External trainer cost	\$34,000	\$30,000	\$4,000
Internal trainer cost	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0
Training supplies	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0

## Phone Alternatives

Many jurisdictions are modernizing their operations to prevent unnecessary responses to calls that do not require an officer to show up on scene. Some calls primarily need documentation for insurance purposes -- for example, a fender bender or a phone stolen out of someone's parked car. Other calls, such as 911 hang-ups and burglar alarms, are almost always false alarms and can often be established as such without sending an officer. In Amherst, the most common call types we examined for potential phone alternatives included non-injury car accidents, commercial and residential alarms, 911 hang-ups, recovered property, and larceny ([Figure 21](#)).

**Figure 21: Call Types Examined for Potential Phone Alternatives**

Call Type	Total Calls	% of Total Calls	Calls Responded to	% Responded to
MV Crash No Injury	577	7.8%	535	92.7%
Commercial Alarm	317	4.3%	263	83.0%
Residential Alarm	181	2.4%	160	88.4%
911 Hang Up	142	1.9%	130	91.5%
Larceny	89	1.2%	85	95.5%
Vandalism	63	0.8%	56	88.9%
MV Break-in	20	0.3%	19	95.0%

## Non-Injury Car Accident Reports

In 2019, non-injury car accidents were the third most common citizen-initiated calls received and responded to by Amherst police. Police should respond immediately to accidents that cause injury, serious damage, or road hazards. When a minor accident occurs, drivers often still call 911 or the police non-emergency number, and then dispatch sends police to the scene. Drivers primarily call for insurance purposes: they want to make sure the damage will be covered by either their auto insurance policy or that of the other driver. Often, drivers simply call because they think they are required to summon an officer to the scene. Since they often recognize that their call is not a police priority, most drivers avoid calling 911 and instead look up and dial the police non-emergency number ([Figure 22](#)). Still, Amherst police respond to 93 percent of these calls, requiring a significant amount of time and energy.

In fact, many non-injury accidents can be handled without sending an officer to the scene. Officers need to respond if the accident is creating a roadway hazard and requires traffic to be diverted; if a driver appears to be intoxicated, does not have a valid license, or attempts to flee the scene; if public property

is involved; or if the accident is escalating into a dangerous conflict. Otherwise, officers do not need to respond to document the claim for insurance purposes. When police are called on to respond simply to act as insurance adjusters, it causes frustration and wastes public safety resources.

Normally, drivers can handle the incident on their own. They simply need to exchange contact and insurance information, and then they can drive away. The two insurance companies make the determination of fault, and in most cases, unless one vehicle rear-ended the other or the drivers agree on which party is at fault, each driver's insurance carrier will pay for their own insured's damages. If the accident causes over \$1,000 in damage to a single vehicle, Massachusetts state law requires drivers to fill out a [Motor Vehicle Crash Operator Report form](#). Within five days of the accident, the driver must mail the completed form to both the Registry of Motor Vehicles and the police department in the town where the crash occurred.

**Figure 22: Non-Injury Car Accident Call Sources, 2019**

Call Source	# of Calls	% of Calls
Total	668	100.0%
911	265	39.7%
Non-Emergency Line	292	43.7%
Officer-initiated	55	8.2%
Walk-in	40	6.0%
Other agency-initiated	16	2.4%

Many jurisdictions are modernizing their practices to assist drivers in reporting the accident without sending an officer. In Washington State, drivers are simply instructed to [file the report online](#). In Maryland, drivers are encouraged to carry an [insurance exchange form](#) in their car so they are prepared to gather the appropriate information themselves without having to notify an officer. In Staten Island, New York, drivers who call 911 or the non-emergency line are screened and transferred to a recording that walks them through the steps to handle the incident on their own.

We recommend that Amherst combine these alternative approaches. Since Massachusetts has not yet developed an online reporting system, the Town can develop and encourage drivers to carry a version of Maryland's [insurance exchange form](#). The dispatch center can create a screening protocol and recording similar to that in Staten Island, explaining how to find the insurance exchange form and walking the driver through the information contained in the form. The recording can also provide a phone number if the person is in need of towing assistance. The drivers can then exchange information on scene, depart, and -- if the accident caused over \$1,000 of damage to a vehicle -- complete and mail in the operator

report form within five days of the accident. The Town can make both forms easily available on its website.

To estimate the impact of this alternative approach on Amherst police resources, we reviewed a sample of non-injury accident calls. We determined that 62 percent would likely meet the criteria for a simple insurance exchange guided by the recording, with no officer response necessary. Using this rate, we estimate that the alternative could save 358 police responses per year. This program could handle 4.8 percent of all citizen-initiated calls for service, or one in every 21 calls.

To make this alternative program a success, the Town needs to educate the community. Residents have grown accustomed to receiving an in-person police response to accidents. If they only find out about the program when they are involved in an accident, they may feel unsupported. In addition to other communication, the Town could mail residents a letter explaining the program and enclosing a copy of the insurance exchange form to keep in their glove compartment. In communications with residents, the town should highlight the benefits of reducing these unnecessary police responses. The Town could also create a simple online form so that drivers could complete the information exchange on their phone instead of filling in the print version. While people are accustomed to calling the police and waiting for a response, they are also accustomed to replacing traditional in-person processes with new online processes that are faster and easier, from depositing a check to booking a flight.

### **Minor Criminal Damage Phone CAD Reporting**

We also examined Amherst's response to incidents involving minor criminal damage. When a parked car gets scratched or a cell phone is stolen from an unlocked vehicle, there is usually no evidence and not enough damage to warrant a police investigation. In Amherst, police do not investigate hit and run incidents if damage is under \$1,000 and there is no clear evidence leading to a suspect. However, when someone calls to report a hit and run, police are still dispatched to the scene even if there is no suspect, no evidence, and no significant damage. The officer speaks to the person and then records a brief explanation in a CAD entry. Often, the individual is reporting the damage just to have documentation for insurance purposes, so the officer will give them the CAD incident number.

Other jurisdictions have modernized their practices to avoid tasking police with providing documentation for minor insurance claims. In Washington State, as well as in Baltimore, for a minor hit and run or other criminal damage that will not be investigated, the individual can [report the damage online](#) and generate their documentation themselves. If someone calls 911 or the non-emergency line in Baltimore, the call-taker screens the call to ensure no investigation is necessary, then informs the caller that they will receive a call back and notifies an officer to return the call. The officer quickly gathers the narrative for CAD entry and provides the CAD incident number over the phone.

We recommend that Amherst adopt a similar "phone CAD reporting" approach. When the call-taker receives a call involving minor criminal damage, they could screen the call to confirm that the damage is under \$1,000 and there is no clear evidence leading to a suspect. If so, they could forward the call to the Station Officer on duty. The Station Officer would gather the narrative for CAD entry and notify the caller to contact their insurance company. The dispatch center already forwards other calls to the

Station Officer on duty when they do not require an in-person response, such as a caller reporting Annoying Phone Calls. Alternatively, the call-taker could quickly gather the narrative and document the incident themselves. This approach would reduce police time spent subsidizing insurance companies by documenting claims.

Phone reporting would conserve police resources. Call-takers record minor criminal damage calls in three different call types: hit-and-run calls are included with non-injury accidents; petty theft including bicycles, wallets, and packages on porch is included within Larceny; stolen phones, cash, and other items from cars is recorded as Breaking & Entering - Motor Vehicle; and other damage is recorded as Vandalism. We estimate the volume of relevant calls by reviewing a sample of calls from each category to determine the approximate percentage that could be handled via phone reporting. In total, we estimate that in 2019, 94 calls could have been handled via phone CAD reporting ([Figure 23](#)). This volume of calls constitutes 1.3% of all citizen-initiated police calls for service. Compared to other call volumes in this report, it is small, but the change would require minimal effort.

**Figure 23: Estimated Phone Reporting Call Volume**

Call Types	Phone CAD Report	Police Response	% Phone CAD Response
Total	94	75	60.3%
Motor Vehicle Hit and Run*	46	35	57.1%
Larceny	12	17	41.4%
Vandalism	17	22	43.6%
Motor Vehicle Break-in	19	1	95.0%

\*We estimated the subset of Motor Vehicle Crash - Property Damage calls specifically involving a Hit and Run by individually reviewing a sample of calls.

## False Alarm Reduction

The second, third, and fourth most frequent call types related to phone alternatives are false alarms -- commercial alarms, residential alarms, and 911 hang-ups together make up 8.6 percent of all citizen-initiated police calls for service. While an alarm call could signal a burglary in progress, or a 911 hang-up could be an assault in progress, 99 percent of these calls in most jurisdictions are false alarms. In Amherst, police responded to over 550 calls in these categories in 2019, and all appeared to be false alarms -- none led to an incident report, citation, or arrest. Most calls involved an employee who didn't have the right keycode, a faulty alarm system, or a simple mistake. These calls place a significant burden on police, often requiring two officers to spend half an hour confirming that the call is a false alarm. Jurisdictions fall into the trap of asking "Could one of these thousand calls be a crime in progress?" without asking "Is there a more efficient way to handle these calls so that more resources can be dedicated to protecting public safety?"

Many jurisdictions are modernizing their alarm responses. They are recognizing that when an automated alarm triggers a police response, the police are essentially subsidizing the alarm company by providing free professional rapid responders. Camden County, New Jersey has been a leader in reducing false alarms for ten years. Camden does not respond to any automated alarm calls (not including panic or hold-up buttons). If residents or businesses want an alarm to lead to a police response, they have to pay for an alarm company where an employee will attempt to verify the alarm with the account holder and then call the police. This approach greatly reduces false alarms, because usually the account holder picks up and explains that it was a mistake. In Dayton, Ohio, when an address is associated with three false alarms, dispatch adds the address to a Do Not Respond list and stops dispatching an alarm response. Dayton police also charge individuals an administrative fee for all false alarm responses. These changes have significantly reduced false alarms.

Jurisdictions are also avoiding unnecessary responses to 911 hang-ups. In Baltimore, Maryland and other cities, call-takers or station officers attempt to call the number back to confirm it was a mistake. If they can reach the caller and are satisfied that the call was a false alarm, they cancel the response.

We recommend that Amherst investigate strategies to reduce unnecessary police responses to these false alarms. If Amherst is currently responding to automated residential or commercial alarm calls -- not including panic buttons or hold-up alarms -- the Town should inform the community that it will no longer respond to automated calls. Dispatch should also institute a Do Not Respond list for addresses associated with three false alarms and charge property owners an administrative fee for all false alarm responses. For 911 hang-ups, if call-takers are not already attempting to confirm the call was a mistake by dialing the caller back, they should begin doing so.

With these simple changes, Amherst may be able to redirect significant resources toward public safety rather than subsidizing alarm companies. If Amherst can reduce false alarms by 50 percent, it would reduce total citizen-initiated police calls for service by 3.7 percent, or one in every 27 calls.

LEAP recommends that the CRESS Implementation Team review the potential for instituting phone recording, phone CAD, and false alarm alternatives in Amherst.



## Conclusion

In this report, we make recommendations for the design of Amherst's Community Responders for Equity, Safety, and Service (CRESS) program -- teams of two trained civilians who can be dispatched as first responders to low-risk 911 and non-emergency calls. We estimate that CRESS responders can take roughly 2,600 calls for service off the shoulders of the police every year, or 36 percent of total citizen-initiated police calls for service ([Figure 24](#)). CRESS can also handle an additional 1,800 calls, which will allow Amherst to proactively resolve crises and conflicts before they escalate into emergency calls. By preventing emergencies, Amherst can improve public health and safety, accrue savings across health and safety services, avoid negative community interactions with law enforcement, increase positive outcomes for people in need of services, both in the long and short term, and build trust with people of color.

We also recommend that Amherst institute a phone recording alternative for non-injury car accidents and phone CAD reporting for minor criminal damage, and that Amherst investigate opportunities to reduce false alarm calls. We estimate that phone alternatives can avoid unnecessary police response to about 450 calls per year. Together with CRESS, Amherst has the potential to divert about 42 percent of current police citizen-initiated calls for service ([Figure 24](#)).

We believe that in addition to benefiting the Town of Amherst and the people in it, the CRESS program will attract attention from jurisdictions around the country and from the media, because it is unique in combining behavioral health and mediation expertise to handle the greatest range of calls for service. Cities across the country are already realizing that they need to address conflict-related calls in addition to behavioral health, and they will look to CRESS for guidance. Amherst is also smaller and further from a major urban center than other jurisdictions that have developed a community responder team, so CRESS will attract the attention of other similarly-situated jurisdictions. Finally, unlike many existing community responder programs, Amherst does not need to exclusively hire responders with advanced degrees. The Town can focus on hiring a diverse group of responders with lived experiences that allow them to effectively address community needs, setting a strong example for other jurisdictions. We see tremendous potential for this program to benefit the local Amherst community and many other communities with careful implementation.

**Figure 24: Total Estimated Alternative Responder Call Volume**

	# of Calls	% of Total Police Calls for Service
<b>Total Diverted Calls</b>	<b>3,104</b>	<b>41.8%</b>
<b>CRESS Total Calls</b>	<b>4,450</b>	
Diverted from Police	2,420	32.6%
Medical Assist Calls	232	3.1%
Self-initiated Calls	823	
New Calls	976	
<b>Phone Responder Calls</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>6.1%</b>
Phone Recording Alternative	358	4.8%
Phone CAD Alternative	94	1.3%

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: General Categories of Citizen-Initiated Calls For Service, 2019

Call Type	Total Calls	% of total calls	Category
Total	7,424	100.0%	
Medical Assist	668	9.0%	Rapid assistance
Suspicious	596	8.0%	Suspicious
MV Crash Property Damage	577	7.8%	Report-taking calls
Well Being Check	537	7.2%	Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Noise Complaint	523	7.0%	Minor disturbances/needs/disputes

Assist Citizen	472	6.4% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Traffic	456	6.1% Rapid assistance
Disturbance	387	5.2% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Medical / Mental	320	4.3% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Commercial Alarm	317	4.3% Alarm
Animal Complaint	280	3.8% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Motor Vehicle Complaint	249	3.4% Police
Escort	241	3.2% Police
Domestic	185	2.5% Police
Residential Alarm	181	2.4% Alarm
Assist Business / Agency	177	2.4% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
911 Hang Up	142	1.9% Report-taking calls
Recovered Property	113	1.5% Report-taking calls
Assist Amherst Fire Dept	107	1.4% Rapid assistance
Disabled Motor Vehicle	99	1.3% Rapid assistance
Larceny	89	1.2% Report-taking calls
Suspicious Motor Vehicle	84	1.1% Suspicious
MV Crash Personal Injury	82	1.1% Police
Vandalism	63	0.8% Report-taking calls
Breaking & Entering	60	0.8% Police
Trespass	42	0.6% Police
Bank / A T M Alarm	41	0.6% Alarm
Fraud	39	0.5% Police
Shoplifting	32	0.4% Police
Fight	26	0.4% Police
Assault	24	0.3% Police
Unattended Death	24	0.3% Police
Missing Property	23	0.3% Report-taking calls

Party Registration	23	0.3% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Follow Up	22	0.3% Police
Breaking & Entering MV	20	0.3% Report-taking calls
Sex Offense	17	0.2% Police
Stolen MV	14	0.2% Police
Assist Motorist	9	0.1% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Annoying Call(s)	7	0.1% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Citizen Transport	7	0.1% Minor disturbances/needs/disputes
Follow up-domestic	6	0.1% Police
Located Person	6	0.1% Police
Missing Person	6	0.1% Police
Missing Child	5	0.1% Police
Open Door/Window	5	0.1% Suspicious
Recovered MV	4	0.1% Report-taking calls
Security Check	4	0.1% Police
MV Stop	3	0.0% Police
Rape	3	0.0% Police
Traffic Enforcement	2	0.0% Police
Abandoned MV	1	0.0% Report-taking calls
Box Alarm	1	0.0% Alarm
MV Pursuit	1	0.0% Police
Robbery	1	0.0% Police
Wireless 911 hang-up	1	0.0% Report-taking calls