

February 8, 2024

To: Yi-An Huang
City Manager

From: Liz Speakman
Director, Community Safety Department

Re: Update on the City of Cambridge Community Safety Department

This memo serves as an update on the work done by the Community Safety Department since our last update in September 2023. The document provides an overview of our department, updates on the Department's work over the past five months, and highlights of our plans for the coming months. You will find the following sections:

- Overview (pgs. 1-2)
- Goals (pg. 2)
- Staffing Update (pgs. 2-3)
- Operational Readiness & Scope of Activities (pgs. 3-4)
- Community Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) Team Training & Community Outreach (pgs. 4-6)
- Durham Site Visit (pg. 6)
- Operating Policies (pg. 6)
- Performance Management (pgs. 6-7)
- Software & Data (pg. 7)
- Strategic & Technical Assistance (pg. 7)
- Cambridge HEART Update (pg. 8)
- Community Engagement & Contact (pgs. 8-9)
- Appendix (pgs. 10-11)

Community Safety Department (CSD) Overview

As we shared in our last update, the Community Safety Department's Steering Committee assisted in developing the following mission and values statements.

Mission Statement:

The Cambridge Community Safety Department's (CSD) mission is to provide additional services to enhance the community's health and well-being. We value compassion in our prevention and intervention efforts.

The Community Safety Department is guided by the following values:

1. We are continuously learning, evolving and reimagining our approach in order to best meet the needs of the community we serve. Our department culture embraces a growth mindset and values curiosity, humility and our shared humanity.
2. We commit to continue exploring restorative practices in order to build empathy, compassion and help repair trust in the community in creative ways.

3. We center relationships, partnerships, authentic collaboration and joy in all of our work. We are guided by the wisdom, insights and experiences of those who came before us and those who are doing the work today to build solutions in community. We are intentionally laying groundwork for the future we envision.
4. We are consciously not reproducing systems of oppression and aim to create equitable, anti-racist and non-discriminatory ways of serving our community.
5. We acknowledge the historical implications of the criminal legal system and the harm it has done to our communities. With this understanding, we value the dignity and humanity of all people.

CSD Goals

Drawing upon input from the CSD Steering Committee, staff, and partners, CSD has also developed the following draft departmental goals:

1. Establish trust between the City's vulnerable communities and Community Assistance Response and Engagement's (CARE) holistic services through community member follow-up and feedback.
2. Through effective triaging by 9-1-1 and first responders, provide a civilian-based response for 9-1-1 calls that do not involve violence, physical safety or urgent medical issues and do not require an enforcement approach, especially for (but not limited to) cases involving mental health issues, substance use, and homelessness.
3. Improve connections to appropriate voluntary short-term and long-term community resources for those calling 9-1-1 or receiving other crisis assistance, especially for (but not limited to) high utilizers of the City's crisis services (e.g., emergency room, shelters, etc.).
4. Provide an alternative response to traditional enforcement-based approaches, reducing reliance on trips to ER and involuntary hospitalizations.

Staffing Update

The Community Safety Department's full time-staff include:

- Liz Speakman, LICSW, Director
- Marie Mathieu, LICSW, Assistant Director of Clinical Services
- Andy Lovley, Assistant Director of Administration & Operations
- Michele Scott, Program Coordinator
- Kara Blue, Administrative Coordinator
- Jeff Alger, CARE Responder
- Matt Gomes, CARE Responder
- Dimitri Virgile, CARE Responder
- Jade Young, CARE Responder
- Evelyn Lueders-Booth, CARE Clinician

In addition to the staff above, we have also been working closely with Leah Crawford, the current MSW Intern with CSD and the Cambridge Library, and Caroline LeMay, Special Assistant to the City Manager.

Since our last update in September, we have hired Marie Mathieu full-time as our Assistant Director of Clinical Services and Andy Lovley as our Assistant Director of Operations and Administration. We received 120+ applications for these roles. To facilitate these hires, we conducted a total of 26 phone screening interviews, 14 in-person interviews, six reference checks and two offers, both of which were enthusiastically accepted!

Our interview panels included: Liz Speakman, Marie Mathieu, Michele Scott, Kara Blue, as well as Deputy Superintendent John Boyle and Manisha Tibrewal from the Cambridge Police Department. We are grateful to all the community partners and City personnel who were involved in our hiring process!

Operational Readiness & Scope of Activities

We continue to be focused on launching the CARE Team's 9-1-1 response in Spring 2024. Coverage upon initial launch will be slightly modified due to a smaller than expected staff. However, the Department remains highly confident in its ability to effectively make a difference in the community through its outreach and follow-up efforts. Starting this month, the CARE Team will begin responding to Needle Pickup Calls in public spaces across Cambridge.

CSD has received the necessary approvals for the CARE Team to respond to the following incident types upon launch (for which the Emergency Communications Department (ECD) has created a CSD-specific triage protocol):

- **Check Person** – Report of welfare checks when no crimes are reported or suspected
- **Needle Pick Up** – Pick-up needles in parks or public places.
- **Notify Citizen** – Delivering emergency/death notification messages for emergencies/deaths that do not concern criminal matters, investigations, or homicides
- **Psych/Mental Health 25A1, 25A2, 25O1, 25O2** – Individual is experiencing a mental health crisis (call code varies based on presence of suicidal ideation and first-party verification)
- **Request for CARE Team Response** – Requested by Police, Fire, EMS to assist
- **Sick Person 26O19, 26A1** – First party caller reporting nervousness (26O19) OR non-priority complaints involving an unknown third party exhibiting nervousness (26A1)
- **Unsheltered Person** – Person sleeping outside, homeless; refer to services/support
- **Unwanted** – Persons on property (non-residential), no report of crime, no prior trespass order, no scene safety issues. Response will be determined by ECD triage – level of conflict, safety, nature of property, etc.

Through discussions with the Steering Committee, City Leadership, staff, and partners, CSD has determined the CARE Team's scope of activities upon 9-1-1 Response launch, which will include the below:

- Responding to approved call codes (e.g., Needle Pickup, Notify Citizen, Check Person, etc.)
- Assessing individuals' mental health, wellness, and concrete needs
- Collaborating with first responders (Police, Fire, EMS)
- Mediating quality of life concerns (e.g., smoking in public areas, loitering, noise complaints)
- Visiting homeless encampments
- Distributing supplies
- Verbally de-escalating non-violent verbal conflict, with physical distance from the subject(s), with Responders continually assessing their own personal safety
- Making referrals to community resources

- Providing warm hand-offs to community resources
- Documenting interactions and locations visited
- Mandatory reporting

CARE Team Training & Community Outreach

Training Program

Our CARE Team completed a comprehensive 12-week training program together between September and November 2023. Internally, our program and administrative team created this training program with the focus on what information would be most important and beneficial for our Responders to know and learn for their roles. Our training program was informed by best practices and research from nationally recognized alternative response programs and research organizations.

The CARE Team has received comprehensive training around the following subjects: de-escalation, conflict meditation, harm reduction, communication and structural dynamics, CPR & First Aid, sharps disposal, boundary setting, first responder training, among others. In addition to classroom training and work, our Responders have received field experience by going on ride-alongs with First Step, Pro EMS, Cambridge Fire, Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team, and the Cambridge Police. Our training program also included a host of team-building activities and chances to meet with various advocacy groups, organizations, businesses, and nonprofits in the City.

Community Outreach

Upon completing the 12-week training program, our CARE Team has transitioned to engaging in community outreach opportunities across Cambridge at the Library branches, YWCA, First Step, Food for Free, Christ Church Cambridge, Cambridge Housing Authority sites, and other community sites. Between December 4 and February 2, the CARE Team has logged 2,789 community member interactions and has distributed supplies (including hand warmers, hygiene kits, toiletries, socks, jackets, and snacks) per their outreach efforts across Cambridge. Per a daily CARE Team Responder survey, Responders have reported high average ratings on feelings of safety (4.9/5) and preparedness (4.9/5).

Our CARE Team Responders have deeply enjoyed getting to know Cambridge community members and organizations through their outreach efforts. Below are some highlights, in their own words:

“Engaging in outreach efforts with the community has been incredibly rewarding. Working at food pantries has taught me the importance of communion and breaking bread where strangers become friends. Leading programming activities for school students has opened my eyes to the creativity, joy, and leadership qualities in the next generation. And participating in community service events showcases that change is possible when communities unite. It’s been heartwarming being invited into these spaces to meet people, discuss future directions to give back to our city, and learn first-hand from those who need services most. These experiences are transforming me – and I’m sure this department – in novel and exciting ways. I can’t wait to see where we go next!” – Matt Gomes, CARE Responder

“I have really enjoyed creating meaningful connections with community partners and members and exploring the resources the City has to offer. It has been helpful participating in extensive training and knowledge-building, which has prepared us to respond to the community. We have also built trust amongst the team that will be vital as we serve the community and have been using our unique skillsets to contribute to the building of the Department and growth of our team.” – Evelyn Lueders-Booth, CARE Clinician

“My highlight from these past few months of doing community outreach was interacting with individuals from the Salvation Army Lunch. Being able to talk to community members as they enjoy a meal has been life-giving for us.” – Dimitri Virgile, CARE Responder

Our community partners across the City have also reported positive feedback around their interactions with the CARE Team:

“Your team at the MLK Day of Service and Learning was AMAZING! We can’t thank you enough. They were lifesavers (something they are already) and, truly, we could not have managed the 91+ high school students who were our Volunteer Crew without them!” – Elizabeth Bartle and Lori Landers, Many Helping Hands 365, Co-Founders

“[The CARE Team] have been awesome in helping our pantry run smoothly, treating our patrons with dignity, and helping increase our language capacity, since they speak multiple languages. They've allowed us to serve patrons more quickly, so patrons don't have to wait outside in the cold for as long and can help communicate with people who speak languages that our staff do not speak.” – Rachel Plummer, Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee, Associate Director

“It was a pleasure to host members of the CARE Team at a volunteer shift at Food for Free earlier this month! It was obvious to us that this team is incredibly invested in understanding the Cambridge community, and the resources that are available to residents as they train to take on this challenging new role. The breadth of their resource mapping makes it clear that they've put in the critical time to be well placed to start taking calls in March. We were impressed by their dedication and enthusiasm for the job ahead, and discussed ways in which Food for Free can help them in their work, and how food can often be a bridge to gain trust with vulnerable members of our community. We look forward to partnering with the whole team to not only help serve community members in crisis, but also as a resource to ensure that the necessary wrap-around services are available to them for after-call follow up as well.” – Alanna Mallon, Food for Free, Government and Community Relations Director, former Vice Mayor for the City of Cambridge

“Wanted to convey a quick thank you for your CARE Team's work at our temporary registration site yesterday. They jumped right in and were a great support. The CARE Team was awesome, a huge help to us and the families. Would love to work with them again in the future.” – Linh O and Maggie Rabidou, Cambridge Public Schools, Director of Student Registration & Enrollment Management, K-12 Summer/Vacation Programs Manager

School Registration

As the Kennedy Longfellow Elementary School models empathy and leadership in the community by opening its doors to newly incoming families, the Community Safety Department felt inspired to aid this effort. Three of our CARE Responders (Dimitri Virgile, Jade Young, and Matt Gomes) helped in the school registration effort. After guiding families to the welcome area, Dimitri and Matt translated registration information across Haitian Creole, French, and Portuguese, and collected identification documents to ensure accurate registration. Jade participated through allocating appointments to families for greater information and language testing. While our team was there, they connected with the amazing family liaisons, educators, and school leaders at Longfellow Elementary. The CARE Team was thankful for the opportunity to serve the community and looks forward to further serving the City of Cambridge.

Durham Site Visit

In late January 2024, several departments teamed up to visit the thriving Community Safety Department in Durham, North Carolina. Deputy Superintendent John Boyle (Cambridge Police Department), 911 Call Center Clinician Cara Corin (Emergency Communications Department), Jeff Alger, Kara Blue, Evie Lueders-Booth, and Marie Mathieu (Community Safety Department) spent three days learning about the operations, best practices and growing pains of building out Durham Community Safety Department's (DCD) two-and-a-half year old crisis response program [Durham HEART](#) (Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Teams).

DCSD Director, Ryan Smith and Clinical Manager Leigh Mazur kicked off the visit with an overview of the history of their department and the various iterations it has been through as they learn and grow. Smith, who describes his responsibility to the department as "ensuring that DCSD has the right plans, people, processes, and pieces in place to advance our mission." Durham HEART shared data that reflected program utilization, response times, types of calls, and anecdotes on how the department's work impacts their community members who are affectionately referred to as "Neighbors." Each person from Cambridge had an opportunity to connect with their Durham counterpart, participate in daily learning sessions and a ride-along with one of the Community Response Teams. Sporting the provided Durham HEART Ride-Along vests, Cambridge staff were able to witness firsthand as mental health professional-led teams were dispatched to various call types such as unwanted/trespassing, wellness checks and mental health emergencies.

Marie Mathieu, Assistant Director of Clinical Services with Cambridge CSD stated, "I was very pleased to witness how all the emergency response partners worked collaboratively behind the scenes and on scene to support their community members. At no point did it seem strange when various first responders were on a scene together. There was so much respect for each other's expertise, stepping up when one was needed, or stepping back when appropriate, and even calling for assistance when necessary. Knowing how much our city cares for its members, I am so excited as we all work to create a similar collaborative environment in Cambridge."

Operating Policies

Our CSD operating policies are close to being finalized, including those associated with our approved call codes, scene safety, information sharing, mandatory reporting, request for support from first responder agencies, and documentation. These policies outline appropriate protocols and procedures for various scenarios the CARE Team will encounter and have been thoroughly reviewed by the Law Department and Leadership from Cambridge Police, Cambridge Fire, and the Emergency Communications Department. The CARE Team is receiving additional training for procedures and protocols outlined in these policies, including in-depth scenario training.

Performance Management

CSD has developed a Performance Management Plan for all employees, which incorporates a performance review upon 90 days of employment, as well as recurring mid-year and annual performance reviews. For formal reviews, employees will be given opportunities to review their own performance; they will then be evaluated and given feedback from their supervisor based on their articulated goals, the Department's key competencies, and the responsibilities outlined in their job description. The CSD Director conducted 90-day reviews with all current CSD employees during the

month of January. CSD employees will also continue to informally receive feedback during regularly scheduled check-ins with their supervisor.

Software & Data

We have issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire software designed to confidentially collect our call response data and follow-up care information. This software will facilitate timely program evaluation for CSD. Collaborating with Public Safety IT, we are diligently assessing and validating various software options. Our focus is on ensuring the capability to collect data securely and seamlessly, while maintaining appropriate separation from other Public Safety agencies.

Strategic & Technical Assistance

CSD has been involved in developing external partnerships for strategic and technical assistance:

- We have been accepted into the [Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab \(GPL\)](#)'s 2023-2024 cohort of alternative response programs. Over the past few months, we have been working closely with GPL to develop our departmental goals (see "CSD Goals" section), as well as our program evaluation objectives and metrics. GPL also facilitated a debrief of learnings and insights from the Durham site visit among CSD staff.
- CSD has also been working with [Community Action Partners](#), a nonprofit organization offering pro-bono consulting services from Harvard alumni. We are working with four alumni volunteers from Harvard Business School on workstreams including a best practices survey of alternative response programs in other cities and a mental health services landscape map.

Our Director, Liz Speakman, had the honor of attending the Harvard Kennedy School's weeklong Executive Leadership Conference for alternative response program leaders, along with Christina Giacobbe (Director of the Emergency Communications Department) and Police Deputy Superintendent John Boyle.



From left to right: Gabriela Solis Torres (Director of Harvard Kennedy School GPL's Alternative 9-1-1 Emergency Response Initiative), Liz Speakman (CSD Director), Christina Giacobbe (Director of Emergency Communications Department), John Boyle (Police Deputy Superintendent), Jeff Liebman (Director of the Harvard Kennedy School Taubman Center)

Cambridge HEART Update

In December, the City of Cambridge received a proposal from Cambridge HEART, which included an organizational budget. In a meeting on December 20 with HEART, the City Manager provided feedback to the HEART team on what type of information all nonprofits, including HEART, are required to submit in order to be considered for funding. As of early February, the City has not yet received a program proposal or program budget from HEART.

As previously noted, the City finalized a \$300,000 ARPA grant with HEART in June 2023. Prior to receiving two separate invoices in early February for nearly \$24K in total, HEART had requested and already been reimbursed approximately \$30K from the City. The City has also been working with HEART to support requests they have made to update their APRA grant agreement. Funds may be used to cover eligible costs incurred during the period of performance of the grant, which ends on December 31, 2024.

Community Engagement & Contact

Based on feedback from our Steering Committee and our team directly, we officially have CARE Team uniforms! Our Responders will wear green shirts and grey jackets with our CARE logo (see below). If you see our Responders in the community, please say hello!



From left to right: Jeff, Dimitri, and Matt (CARE Responders) at Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

The CARE Team will also be hosting a few “Meet & Greet with CARE” events for City employees and community members to meet the CARE Team and learn more about their work:

- February 12: Meet & Greet with CARE and Cambridge Police
- February 27: Meet & Greet with CARE and City employees
- March 19: Community Event with CARE (see flyer in Appendix)

Contact information:

- If you’re just looking to connect, you can reach us at info@cambridgesafety.org or call our new number at (617) 349-7200. We have also launched a webpage at www.cambridgesafety.org that will be updated regularly to reflect the progress of our department.

- We have moved into our new office space at 689 Mass Ave in the lower level.

Finally, we would like to extend our tremendous thanks to all community members, City employees, and community organization partners for your support in the last year. With your help, we were able to accomplish quite a lot in just one year (see Appendix for CSD Key Highlights). We are so excited to see what the next few months will bring (especially upon launching our 9-1-1 Response operations) and remain grateful for this incredible opportunity to serve our community!

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this memo.

Sincerely,
Liz Speakman, LICSW
Director, Community Safety Department

Appendix



Jeff, Dimitri, and Matt (CARE Responders) at the Cambridge Community Fridge



Jeff (CARE Responder), Evie (CARE Clinician), and Leah (MSW Intern) at The SPOT

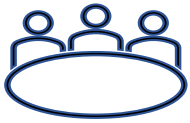


Kara (CSD Administrative Coordinator) and Matt (CARE Responder) at a Library event



Marie Mathieu (CSD Assistant Director of Clinical Services) with Durham HEART staff

Community Safety Department (CSD) – Key Highlights



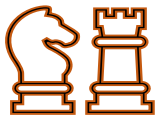
Team Building & Training

- Formed **Leadership Team** consisting of Director, two Assistant Directors, Program Coordinator, and Administrative Coordinator
- Hired **CARE Team Responders**, including a clinician
- Created & delivered **comprehensive training 12-week program** for CARE Responders



Community Engagement

- Engage in citywide community outreach – have logged **2,789 community member interactions** as of 2/2
- Played active role in **community events** including the December Community Meeting, Salvation Army lunches, MLK Day of Service, a school registration event, Cambridge Library events, and many more!



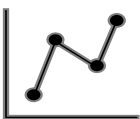
Strategic Planning

- Finalized CSD **mission statement, guiding values, and goals** with stakeholder input
- Developed **working partnerships** with Harvard Government Performance Lab (GPL) and Community Action Partners (CAP) to assist with strategic & technical planning



Operational Planning

- Finalized **911 call codes list** for CSD response
- Submitted all **CSD operating policies** for final review
- Created follow-up **case management plan**
- Developed department-wide **performance management system**
- Procured vehicles and apparel with CARE logo



Data & Evaluation

- Created **CARE Team Daily Survey** to track Responder's community outreach efforts and concerns
- Developed **program evaluation** objectives and metrics to evaluate CARE's success after launching 9-1-1 response, with help from CPD, ECC, and GPL
- Released **CSD software system RFP**

COME MEET THE COMMUNITY SAFETY DEPARTMENT'S

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE



CARE

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE
RESPONSE & ENGAGEMENT

TEAM

Information Session

Q&A with the CARE Team

Food Provided

March 19, 2024 | 6 pm – 7:30 pm

Lecture Hall
Main Library, 449 Broadway
Cambridge, MA

Please RSVP:
<https://forms.gle/C7eaWkjNy28kM8NSA>

