



DATE: October 19, 2020

TO: David Billingsley, Chief Procurement Officer

FROM: Kevin J. Edmonds, Chief Administrative Officer

RE: Alternative Mental Health Response Pilot

The City has budgeted funds for this fiscal year to create a one-year pilot project providing for a mental health team to be dispatched to identified 911 calls which do not appear to be criminal in nature nor require a police response. At the end of the pilot period, an evaluation will be made of the success of the pilot in reducing officer involvement, reducing incarcerations and providing increased access to mental health and human services programs throughout the city.

A team with representatives from the Mayor's Office, the Police Department and the City Attorney's Office have spoken to experts in the area and explored the availability of mental health providers in Orlando who can provide the services the pilot will entail, including approximately 80 hours per week of dispatched response by teams of two mental health professionals, development of communications center protocols, training of necessary individuals and data collection and reporting.

Although there are two mental health providers in Orlando that have the size to handle a pilot of this nature, at present only one of the two, Aspire Health Partners, serves clients of all ages. The other provider currently only serves clients up to age 24. In addition, Aspire Health Partners has a robust network of mental health services from intake to patient care and will be able to provide a seamless transition to individuals needing a mental health response.

Also, time is of the essence in getting this pilot started to provide this much needed alternative response with the funds currently budgeted for this purpose. For the reasons described above, a competitive procurement procedure for this pilot is not feasible or practicable, and your approval to proceed with a negotiated procurement is requested.

A draft scope of services is attached, and once approval is received, representatives from the Police Department and the Office of Legal Affairs will meet with the provider to work out specifics of the pilot and a contract will be drafted for Council approval. Once the pilot has been in operation for several months, the data will be analyzed to determine whether to continue with this model, design a different model or to proceed on a completely different basis. At that time, if the City decides to continue to provide these services on a long term basis, a competitive procurement process is expected to be undertaken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Edmonds", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin J. Edmonds
Chief Administrative Officer

Scope of services – Alternative Mental Health Response Pilot

Overview

The City of Orlando is interested in engaging with an organization to run a pilot program designed to reduce law enforcement involvement in non-violent incidents that can be appropriately handled by mental health professionals.

The anticipated benefits of this pilot include:

- Utilization of a civilian mental health team that will deliver measurable outcomes for low-risk incidents.
- Allow distressed individuals to feel less threatened when they need services or referrals.
- Facilitate access to community-based programs (mental health, housing, & addiction treatment).
- Reduce recidivism in the criminal justice system.
- Increase access to community and human services programs (education, child care, and self-awareness centers).
- Enhance law enforcement efficiency by using mental health professionals for appropriate incidents.

The pilot is intended to run for one year, with the collection and analysis of data to determine whether the anticipated benefits can be achieved and to allow the City to evaluate the program and determine whether to proceed with this model or whether another model would better serve the needs of the community.

Categories of Responses

The Orlando Police Department has identified a number of types of calls that may be appropriate for mental health response. These calls include:

1. Attempted Suicide (No threat)
2. Mentally Ill (Non-Violent)
3. Drug Violation
4. Drunk Pedestrian
5. Person Down
6. Trespasser

The Pilot would begin its response to the categories of Mentally Ill (Non-Violent) and Attempted Suicide (No threat) and add some or all of the additional categories based on an ongoing analysis of caseloads and training needs and appropriateness.

Elements of the Pilot

The pilot is expected to include the following components:

- I. Development of dispatch protocols for potential mental health response;
- II. Training of dispatch personnel (general training for all police dispatchers and additional training for one lead dispatcher per shift is anticipated);
- III. Training of assigned mental health personnel;

- IV. Implementation of two shifts of mental health teams (two teams of two individuals) – these teams will be available for dispatch to appropriate calls, to follow up on calls initially taken by a police officer but which are appropriate for mental health involvement, for an initial referral to appropriate and indicated community services, and a follow up contact to determine whether the individual did follow up with any referred service; and
- V. Data collection (and possible analysis).

Required Personnel

It is anticipated the mental health provider will provide personnel to cover two shifts of one team (two professionals) per shift, who will be dispatched to incidents together. One professional should be a licensed mental health professional (mental health counselor or clinical social worker) and the second person can be a non-licensed professional as determined by the provider. The mental health provider should make every effort to provide diversity among the responding personnel in a manner that is fairly reflective of the diverse community that is served.

The initial proposed shifts would be (although these may be varied):

A Shift: 9 am to 5 pm Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and 2 pm to 10 pm Saturday and Sunday.

B Shift: 5 pm to 1 am Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and 2 pm to 10 pm Monday and Tuesday.

This would provide coverage from 9 am - 1 am on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday; and 2 pm - 10 pm Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Each shift works five 8 hour shifts and has 2 days off.

Additional and Optional Elements

The mental health provider will be required to furnish appropriate insurance with the City listed as an additional named insured.

Optional elements may include: 1) the transportation of individuals who are willing to voluntarily obtain treatment; 2) use (and corresponding training on use) of police radios. These elements are at the option of the provider. If transportation isn't provided by the mental health professionals, the City will seek a separate transportation provider. The provider can similarly decide whether it prefers to carry police radios or use a different method of emergency communication.