



# *Reach Out*

## *Response Network*

**An Introduction to Our Work**

# What is the Reach Out Response Network?

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- We are an advocacy-focused non-profit supporting the City of Toronto in developing a framework for a non-police alternative crisis response service
  - Our primary aims are advocacy, research, resource-sharing, and community engagement
  - Our organization is the anchor agency for the International Crisis Response Association, which is a service providers' network connecting folks across Canada and the US who are building or leading non-police crisis response services in our communities





# Our International Network

- Our international network represents over 60 cities across Canada and the United States
- CAHOOTS in Eugene, Oregon is the “gold standard” for hybrid-style (city-integrated) alternative crisis response service
- CAHOOTS has been operating for 32 years and answers about 17% of all 911 calls in the Eugene-Springfield area
- Other cities with hybrid-style services include Edmonton, Olympia, Denver, San Francisco, Rochester, and Portland
- NYC, Albuquerque, Oakland, Baltimore, Chicago, Houston, Vancouver, Ottawa, and many other cities are currently building similar teams



# International Crisis Response Models

- First responder vs. secondary responder or co-responder
- 911 integration vs. multiple access points - 911 integration is important to divert crisis calls at the source
- Staffing models including peers, clinicians, EMTs, nurses - equity is important where peers are integrated (ex. Baltimore, Denver, San Francisco, NYC's LEAD program)
- City department model vs. community agency partnership
- Funding - city funding vs. police or healthcare budget funding or a new tax (ex. Olympia's .1% sales tax)
- Principles of care - non-coercion, client-centred care, having enough time to adequately de-escalate and support
- Crisis worker in 911 comms centre model



# Safety Fact Sheet Research

- Our network conducted research into the safety of crisis workers on civilian-led teams
- We found that no team had ever experienced a serious injury or death of a staff member, client, or third party, and minor injuries, like getting rear-ended on the way to a call or a client spitting at a staff member, occurred in about 1 in 26 000 calls
- Based on 911 call data from Ontario, approximately 89% of mental health calls currently responded to by police don't involve the presence of weapons or any risk of violence - these calls can be easily responded to by a civilian-led team, without police
- Police will continue to be dispatched where substantial safety risks are present, ex. A person armed with a gun - importance of appropriate dispatch protocols



# Our Recommendations

- Our network conducted 18 virtual town halls, two large surveys, and about 150 key stakeholder interviews in summer 2020
- We developed a report outlining what communities would like to see in the new service, available on our website, [reachouttoronto.ca/resources](https://reachouttoronto.ca/resources)
- Highlights - non-police team, peer worker integration, multiple ways to access the service (including 911), rapid response times, trauma-informed and culturally competent care, harm reduction, adequate time to de-escalate a crisis, support provided to families, public education, relationship-building, and outreach



# What's Next?

- Pilots in four different catchment areas to launch in early 2022, including an Indigenous-led pilot
- RFP process beginning this month for community agencies to partner with
- Dispatch protocols being developed for 911 and 211 integration and for a separate number
- The Reach Out Response Network will support the city in implementation roll-out
- Through the International Crisis Response Association, we will continue supporting other cities in developing similar services across Canada and the United States



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## Contact Info

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