
Sponsor: Social Services

Meeting Date: 5/3/2022

Title: Amended Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Maplewood for Co-responder Pilot Program

File Number: 2022-230

Background and Rationale:

In the fall of 2018, the Maplewood Public Safety Department created a Mental Health Outreach Team (MHOT). The purpose of this team is to provide a proactive approach committed to assisting residents in crisis while helping individuals and their families navigate the healthcare system. Ramsey County Social Services and MHOT proposed a pilot program that embedded a Mental Health Professional or Mental Health Practitioner classification within MHOT. Due to the success of the program and community need, another embedded social worker was recently added. One Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position in the Mental Health Professional or Mental Health Practitioner classification is paid for by Ramsey County and the other by the city of Maplewood. This will not increase the personal complement in Social Services department. Social Services was able to use a current the position within the complement. Currently, the embedded workers provide short-term case management to help with stabilization and connect residents in need of mental health support with specialty services. In 2021, the Maplewood Police Department responded to 1,167 emergency calls where mental health was the primary issue. Officers responded to 502 calls for a person in crisis and 39 calls for suicides in progress.

MHOT was created based on data analysis that revealed the high number of mental health-related incidents the Maplewood police and fire departments respond to annually. In Ramsey County, Maplewood receives the second largest number of calls to police for mental health responses after Saint Paul. Nearly 700 incidents annually have a primary mental health component, and over 2,000 other calls have a high likelihood of a mental health component. Some residents' mental health issues result in multiple police interventions. In 2019, 16 individuals with mental health issues were involved in 150 Police Department contacts. MHOT includes five representatives from the Police Department and three representatives from the Fire Department. They have established program objectives, inclusion criteria, administrative/legal procedures, potential partnerships, referral and reporting mechanisms and training opportunities. The goals of the pilot program are:

- Reduce the amount of public safety resources needed to mitigate mental health and crisis-related incidents.
- Reduce the use of force and the number of adverse events.

The city of Maplewood and Ramsey County staff need to continue to share data to support individual and community health and wellness. The program exceeded initial expectations and further benefits are being assessed. Data sharing is governed by the Joint Powers Agreement between the two government entities.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the Amended Joint Powers Agreement with the city of Maplewood to govern data sharing in the operation and evaluation of the Co-Responder Pilot Program, to be effective on date of final execution through May 3, 2027.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the Amended Joint Powers Agreement.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner McGuire, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Motion passed.

Aye: - 5: Carter, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

Absent: - 2: Frethem, and MatasCastillo

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board