
Sponsor: Social Services

Meeting Date: 5/12/2026

Title: Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Maplewood for the Mental Health Outreach Team

File Number: 2026-155

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 two mental health professional/practitioners (MHP)s within MHOT. At that time, 1 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position in the Mental Health Professional or Mental Health Practitioner classification was paid for by Ramsey County and the other by the City of Maplewood. These positions provide short-term support to connect to residents in need of mental health support and 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.

In 2025, the Maplewood Police Department responded to 13,611 9-1-1 calls, accounting for 33,964 total incidents. Among these, 502 calls involved individuals in crisis, and 35 were calls for suicides in progress. Completed suicides are categorized as death investigations and are not included in these figures. Officers also handled 956 calls primarily driven by mental health concerns, reflecting the ongoing prevalence of mental health issues in the community.

During 2025, the MHP not only conducted follow-up on all calls involving mental illness, but also followed up with victims of domestic violence, families who experienced a suicide or violent loss, and community members in need of additional assistance, including stable housing, food, utilities, and other basic needs. The MHP connected with community members on 1,579 incidents. In addition to the initial incident, the MHP provides ongoing short-term follow-up, helping ensure community members did not fall through the cracks of often confusing and siloed systems. The MHP also can refer through peer-to-peer outreach with Community Responders in the Appropriate Responses Initiative (ARI). This communication further desiloes work that is done both in the mental health division and ARI.

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. 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 joint powers agreement with the city of Maplewood to govern data sharing in the operation and evaluation of the Mental Health Outreach Team to be effective on date of final execution through May 3, 2027.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the Joint Powers Agreement.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Jebens-Singh, seconded by Commissioner Xiong. Motion passed.

Aye: - 5: Jebens-Singh, McMurtrey, Miller, Ortega, and Xiong

Excused: - 2: McGuire, and Moran

By: 

Jason Yang, Chief Clerk - County Board