

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROGRESS

OKLAHOMA CITY'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Challenges, Innovation, and Solutions



July 1, 2024



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Glossary of Acronyms

ART: Alternative Response Team

CAD: Computer Aided Dispatch

CAP: Community Advocacy Program

CCBHC: Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

CCD: Crisis Call Diversion

CIAG: Crisis Intervention Advisory Group

CIT: Crisis Intervention Team

CRT: Crisis Response Team

CLEET: Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training

DCDT: De-escalation, Control, and Defensive Tactics

HOT: Homeless Outreach Team

ICAT: Integrating Communications, Assessments, and Tactics

MIH: Mobile Integrated Health

MHQA: Mental Health Quality Assurance Program

ODHS: Oklahoma Department of Human Services

ODMHSAS: Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

OKCFD: Oklahoma City Fire Department

OKCPD: Oklahoma City Police Department

ORT: Overdose Response Team

PERF: Police Executive Research Forum

QA: 911 Communications Quality Assurance Program

RBT: Reality Based Training Unit

RFP: Request for Proposal

TRUST: Triaged Resources Urgent Support Team Program

URC: Urgent Recovery Center

VMET: Veterans Mental Evaluation Team

Executive Summary

Transformational progress is occurring in Oklahoma City. The City is implementing new and improved programs designed to deliver the best mental health services to residents while ensuring safety.

2020 marks a significant year for these efforts. Mayor David Holt launched the Oklahoma City Law Enforcement Policy Task Force to evaluate de-escalation policies and community oversight systems. City Council also adopted a resolution sponsored by Ward 2 Councilperson James Cooper directing the City Manager to create a Community Policing Working Group tasked with developing innovative crisis response models and officer wellness services.

With the assistance of 21CP Solutions—an expert in public safety services—these groups engaged in information gathering, public outreach, and analysis and ultimately presented 39 recommendations to City Council. The City appointed a dedicated manager to implement the recommendations and has been making significant improvements ever since.

The City has increased membership of its Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) and is sending officers with this specialized training to incidents involving a mental health crisis. Employees are receiving enhanced training, new record systems have improved program analysis, and innovative quality assurance programs are ensuring services are meeting best practices.

Key partnerships with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS), mental healthcare providers, and community stakeholders are allowing the City to connect residents to services earlier and in more effective ways. The City is diverting mental health 911 calls to 988, connecting residents to on-location virtual consultations with mental health professionals, calling mobile crisis teams to the field, and making referrals for follow-up services through the Triaged Resources Urgent Support Team (TRUST) program.

Big projects are still on the way. The City has allocated \$44 million to establish a City-dedicated restoration and crisis center and is launching a multi-million-dollar mobile integrated health program, including mobile crisis teams and placement of mental health professionals in the 911 Communications Center.

Finally, the City has created the Crisis Intervention Advisory Group—a multi-disciplinary community-based group—to review and provide guidance on the City’s mental health services.

The City continues to evaluate the need for mental health services, research best practices, and develop innovative solutions. With community input, the City strives to ensure the residents of Oklahoma City receive the highest quality of services and care.

Overview

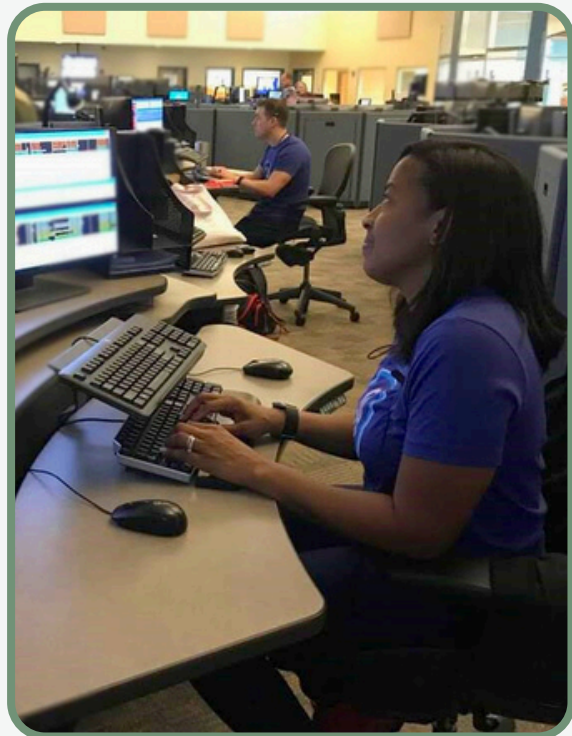
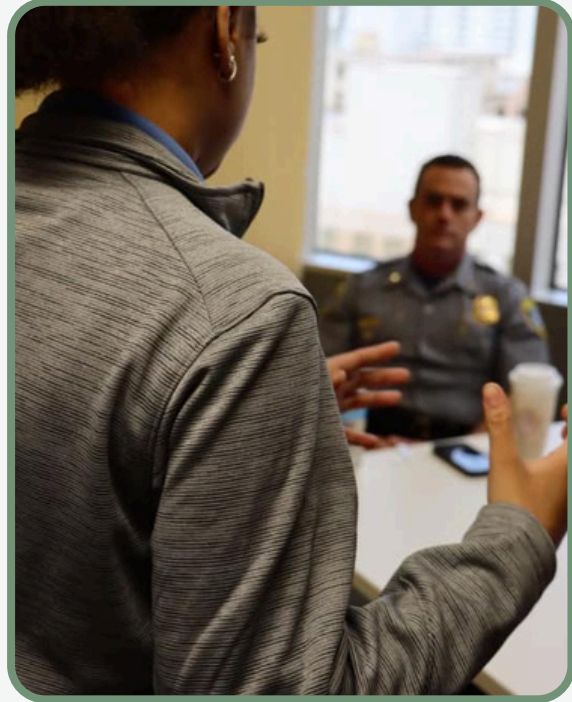
Mental health is a community issue. Residents receive the best services when everyone works together. With community input, partnerships with mental health care providers, assistance from expert consultants, and unyielding determination, the City is enhancing mental health service delivery on a transformational level.

This report is part of a larger effort to keep residents informed about the City's mental health-related programs and services. It illustrates the City's dedication to enhancing mental health services for all and showcases the City's innovative mental health and public safety initiatives. The following sections describe the City's goals, core programs, and compliance with national standards, and provide 50 real-life examples of mental health response.

Goals

Goals have been established through various programs to guide efforts to deliver exceptional mental health-related services. These goals include the following:

- Increasing diversion of mental health requests to mental health professionals when possible;
- Educating residents on where to find mental health resources;
- Developing innovative methods to peacefully resolve interactions with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis;
- Connecting individuals experiencing a mental health crisis with appropriate services;
- Tracking mental health encounters to identify trends, gaps in services, and needs;
- Using technology to deliver important information to responding officers to aid interaction with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis;
- Researching and implementing evolving best practices for mental health response across city services; and
- Working toward a comprehensive, collaborative, whole-city strategy that includes residents, first responders, and service providers.



Core Programs and Services

Alternative Response Options

Over the past few years, alternative response resources have expanded, and plans are in place to supplement those resources. Currently, OKCPD officers and 911 call takers and dispatchers have the following alternative resources available to assist with mental health response:



- **211 Hotline**
- **Youth Crisis Mobile Response**
- **Mobile crisis teams (ODMHSAS-contracted teams through 988 and VMET)**
- **Tele-med access with providers through iPad program**
- **TRUST referrals**
- **911 call diversion to 988**
- **Community Advocacy Program (CAP)**
- **Overdose Response Team (ORT) in partnership with HOPE**

Core Programs and Services



Mental Health Matters

The City has many programs, services, and partnerships designed to improve outcomes for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. They are housed across City departments and delivered to residents in a variety of ways.

The following sections highlight some of the City's programs and services. *For a comprehensive review of the City's mental health programs and services, refer to Addendum B attached to this report.*

Virtual Assessment

In 2020, in partnership with ODMHSAS, HOPE, NorthCare, and Red Rock, OKCPD launched an iPad program, enabling CIT officers to connect individuals experiencing or approaching a mental health crisis to an on-location virtual assessment with a mental health professional through videoconferencing on an iPad. The program started small and technical difficulties had to be addressed. Nevertheless, the program persevered and has been growing ever since. In 2023, OKCPD also began issuing the program iPads to non-CIT officers.

TRUST Program

In 2019, OKCPD partnered with Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and NorthCare to create the TRUST program, empowering officers to refer individuals to essential social and mental health services. Recently, Red Rock and HOPE joined the program.

The CIT Unit manages TRUST referrals and promptly connects individuals to appropriate service providers. Many of the referrals are based on mental health concerns. Yet, officers also make referrals for a range of community needs, including housing, food insecurity, and transportation.

Core Programs and Services

OKCPD CIT Program

OKCPD’s Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), established in 2002 and based on the national standard “Memphis Model,” is dedicated to assisting people in mental health crises. It improves crisis response, advocates for services, and builds community partnerships.

The CIT program trains a select group of officers in crisis intervention techniques. The City’s goal is to fill 200 CIT member positions. As of June 2024, there are 172 members, which amounts to approximately 35 percent of active patrol officers. This percentage is nearly 10 percent greater than CIT International’s standard.

Training is a five-day, 40-hour program covering mental health, communication, de-escalation, and emergency response. While not all OKCPD officers are on the CIT response team, 460 have completed the full CIT course. Since 2023, all newly-hired officers receive the full CIT training in the police academy, ensuring all active officers will eventually have received the training.

The CIT Unit is led by the CIT commander. The CIT Unit prepares monthly reviews and distributes them to OKCPD leadership for analysis. The CIT commander briefs leadership on trends and issues, encouraging discussions aimed at improving mental health programs and services.

The CIT commander meets with ODMHSAS monthly to discuss crisis response. The meetings have resulted in improved communication between the City and 988, use of co-response with police and mobile crisis teams, and a better understanding of mobile crisis team capabilities.

In response to a 21CP recommendation, in 2023 the City instituted its inaugural eight-hour CIT in-service training for CIT members. The training consisted of eight hours of mental health law and written directives, suicide prevention, mental health disorders and symptoms, self-regulation, and scenarios, among other topics. CIT members are required to attend CIT in-service training each year to maintain their status on the team.

Core Programs and Services

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

In 2022, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK converted to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Locally, ODMHSAS launched enhanced 988 services for Oklahoma callers. 988 directly connects callers with professional mental health assistance and resources.

When appropriate, the 988 call center dispatches ODMHSAS-contracted professional mobile crisis teams to callers for on-site professional assessment and stabilization. The mobile crisis teams are available 24/7 and include a licensed clinician and peer recovery support specialist or case manager.

Although Oklahoma City does not operate the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, the City has integrated the line's use into its operations, both at 911 call intake level and in the field. When the 911 Communications Center receives calls from residents only in need of mental health assistance, in the absence of a safety threat or crime, call takers hand off those callers to 988 for assistance, without dispatching officers. Officers in the field that encounter individuals in need of mental health services may also contact 988 and request mobile crisis team services or other professional assistance.

The City is diverting 911 calls involving mental health to 988 when the call does not involve a crime or a safety threat. The transfer option allows residents to immediately connect to professional mental health services. The City is also diverting 911 calls to the 211 hotline for community services and Youth Crisis Mobile Response and making TRUST referrals for follow-up services as needed.

Mobile Crisis Team Options

Mobile crisis teams—comprised of licensed clinicians and peer recovery support specialists or case managers—allow officers to connect residents in the field with professional mental health services, with the goal of stabilization. The teams conduct assessments, connect people to treatment, transport to treatment facilities in some cases, and provide follow-up care.

OKCPD first started using mobile crisis teams in 2022, when it partnered with NorthCare to create the CHAMPIONS program. Since then, mobile crisis team options have expanded, including ODMHSAS-contracted teams dispatched by 988 and the Veterans Mental Evaluation Team (VMET). Teams are available 24/7 and enable officers to request professional mental health assistance in the field.

Refer to Mobile Integrated Healthcare on page 13 for upcoming City mobile crisis team services.

Core Programs and Services



Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) - Key to Home Partnership

Since 2014, OKCPD has operated a Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). HOT works closely with social service professionals with the Mental Health Association Oklahoma and Key to Home Partnership members to respond to requests made through the City's Action Center and offer services to unhoused residents.

The Key to Home Partnership is a public-private partnership of over 40 organizations dedicated to providing housing and wrap-around social and mental health services to unhoused residents. The partnership is currently focused on rehousing 500 chronically unhoused individuals by the end of 2025. Since September 2023, 153 people have been rehoused through the initiative.

MAPS 4 Mental Health and Addiction Project

Significant funding from the MAPS 4 Mental Health and Addiction project will improve the City's mental health services. This project includes \$44 million for a new mental health crisis center, a restoration center, and mental health housing.

NorthCare and ODMHSAS have already been selected to operate the crisis center and restoration center. The restoration center will provide a public inebriate alternative, medically supervised detox, substance abuse counseling, and medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction. Funding is also set for temporary housing directed towards unhoused residents experiencing mental illness while transitioning out of a crisis center.

Core Programs and Services

Mental Health Response Protocol Guide

OKCPD created a Mental Health Response Protocol Guide to implement growing mental health programs and services. The guide provides OKCPD employees with a single, up-to-date resource that provides guidance and useful information related to mental health response.

See the full Mental Health Response Protocol Guide in Addendum C.

Reality Based Training

In 2021, OKCPD supplemented traditional training with the Reality Based Training (RBT) Unit. RBT prepares officers to respond to volatile situations, including individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. RBT instructors train officers by simulating real-life stress and realistic interactions.

Through the RBT Unit, officers receive training in Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT). ICAT training focuses on decision-making, crisis recognition and response, communications, and safety tactics, and consists of lectures, case studies, and scenario-based training. Nearly 500 officers have been trained in ICAT.

Officers also receive annual training in de-escalation tactics, focusing on slowing down and stabilizing situations so that more time, options, and resources may become available. De-escalation is reinforced through review processes and corrective action when appropriate.

Supervisor Training and Debriefings

After promotion, new OKCPD lieutenants and captains take part in a supervisor school. They receive training in management, planning, leadership, conducting debriefings, and evaluating and investigating employees, as well as additional tactical and operational training.

In 2020, OKCPD implemented debriefings to analyze the objectives and results of any significant incident as determined by supervisors or requested by officers. Debriefings foster positive communication, shared learning, and constant improvement. This process helps to improve future outcomes of similar incidents and identify gaps in training or directives.

Core Programs and Services

Mental Health Contact Forms

A mental health contact form was built into OKCPD's new records system in 2023. Officers interacting with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis are required to complete the form. The form documents resources used or requested, the use of de-escalation tactics, the disposition of the interaction, and any relevant diagnoses or conditions, among other information.

This data helps the City identify gaps in services and needed resources, demonstrates community needs, identifies individuals with frequent interaction that would benefit from individualized response plans, and helps the City appropriately deploy mental health resources geographically.

Additionally, the records management system vendor is in the process of integrating the information from the forms into OKCPD's Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, giving officers access to the information to develop more informed approaches and service delivery plans before arriving on scene.

911 Communications Quality Assurance Program (QA)

The City instituted a quality assurance program in the 911 Communications Center in the fall of 2023 and filled a new position to lead the program. The QA manager ensures call takers collect appropriate information from callers, properly divert calls to 988, and accurately prepare calls requiring police response.

Performance is evaluated monthly through the random sampling of 911 calls. Call takers and dispatchers receive feedback on their evaluations and additional training as needed.

Training 911 Call Takers and Dispatchers

In early 2023, the 911 Communications Center began providing an eight-hour course on mental health to all call takers and dispatchers. The course focuses on crisis recognition and response. As of January 2024, all call takers and dispatchers have completed the course.

In addition, call takers and dispatchers receive at least two hours of mental health response training annually. The City has also begun sending call takers and dispatchers to CIT International's CIT Support Training for 911 as schedules and availability allow, aiming to ultimately have all call takers and dispatchers receive the training.

Core Programs and Services

Mental Health Quality Assurance Program

In February 2024, OKCPD developed and implemented a Mental Health Quality Assurance Program (MHQA) to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness, and safety of police interactions with residents experiencing a mental health crisis. Every month, CIT supervisors review randomly selected mental health calls, evaluating whether responses complied with City procedures and providing feedback to officers and training as needed.

A key part of this program is the MHQA working group, which convenes monthly to assess mental health call data. The group also makes program recommendations and intervention plans for individuals who frequently contact 911. The group includes members from OKCPD, OKCFD, and local Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC).

Alternatives to Physical Arrest

The City has empowered officers to connect residents to mental health services and address underlying mental health conditions in lieu of arrest when the interests of all involved, as well as the community, are best served. *Refer to Addendum C for more details.*

In cases of physical arrest, mental health services are provided at the detention facility, and some who qualify may be offered mental health court and related services as an alternative option.



In 2023, out of 18,614 mental health-related calls received, less than

<1%

(0.96%) resulted in an individual getting arrested.

Mental Health and Outreach Statistics



2023 HOMELESS OUTREACH TEAM

4,137

Unhoused
resident contacts

587

HOT team contact
referrals

2,884

Calls for service
(HOT) related

73,049

Jan 2023 - Dec 2023

Youths served in OKCPD outreach programs such as FACT, PAL, YES.



Calls transferred
to a crisis hotline

489

TRUST
Referrals

728

Calls transferred
from a crisis
hotline

501

Jan 2024 - May 2024

27%

Oct 2023 - May 2024

27% reduction in mental health-related calls dispatched to the field, dropping from 1,361 to 990.



Services in Development

Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH)

OKCFD is developing a Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) program, allowing for more effective emergency response to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The program will include four units. Two of the units—the Community Advocacy Program and Overdose Response Team—are already active.

- **Community Advocacy Program (CAP)** - Established in 2019, CAP offers alternative support to residents who frequently rely on 911 services. When identified by OKCFD crews, a referral is sent to CAP for assessment. Collaborative efforts may involve partnering with ODMHSAS or a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) for behavioral health concerns. CAP also actively engages with OKCPD’s Mental Health Quality Assurance Working Group.
- **Overdose Response Team (ORT)** - Launched in July 2023, ORT is dedicated to assisting patients who have survived an overdose. This team consists of an OKCFD paramedic paired with a certified peer specialist from a CCBHC. ORT provides post-overdose medical care and directs individuals to assessment and treatment services.

The two remaining units are in development and are aimed at enhancing community-centered healthcare solutions and ensuring residents receive appropriate care and support as early as possible.

- **Crisis Call Diversion (CCD)** - Currently in development, CCD aims to embed mental health professionals within the 911 Communications Center. This initiative will enable immediate professional mental health service delivery to 911 callers potentially experiencing a mental health crisis. CCD will operate as an in-house call center, with 988 serving as an overflow for assistance. The objective is to stabilize individuals over the phone, facilitate referrals to appropriate services, or dispatch a mobile crisis team for further assistance.
- **Crisis Response Teams (CRTs)** - Crisis response teams are being developed to respond to 911 calls involving individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Staffed by an OKCFD paramedic and a behavioral health navigation responder, the teams will be able to transport individuals to crisis and urgent recovery centers, coordinate warm handoffs to CCBHC mobile crisis teams, and assist patients with referrals for follow-up services. CRTs may be dispatched in the first instance or at the request of OKCPD or OKCFD personnel.

Police Involvement in Mental Health Response

The role of police officers extends far beyond mere law enforcement. While enforcing the law is a significant police function, it represents only a fraction of the comprehensive services they provide to the community. Officers offer a wide array of services addressing the diverse needs of residents. Officers are frequently the first point of contact for residents seeking assistance.

While some of the City’s new mental health programs reduce reliance on police officers in situations involving mental health, officers will inevitably interact with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis simply because they must interact with people in the course of their duties. Some individuals also still prefer and request help from police officers despite the availability of alternative resources such as 988.

Determining whether a 911 call involves mental health or a safety risk is extremely nuanced and difficult. Nevertheless, the City has implemented procedures and systems to aid the assessment and strives to provide the most effective resources for every call.

In partnership with mental health professionals, the City has equipped officers with more training and more resources, emphasized compassionate and safe methods for dealing with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, and implemented new ways to more effectively deliver mental health services.

911 calls are being diverted to 988. Officers are calling out mobile crisis teams from the field. Officers are connecting residents with mental health professionals through iPads. TRUST referrals are being made and follow-up resources are being administered. Officers are slowing down, strategizing, and in appropriate cases even disengaging in situations involving mental health crisis. Transformational progress is occurring.

RESOURCES

State of Oklahoma
988

North OKC
Red Rock | (405) 424-7711

South OKC
Hope | (405) 634-4100

Central OKC
NorthCare | (405) 481-2700
Veterans Affairs | (405) 456-1000
Crisis Center | (405) 522-3100

For instances of violence and/or an immediate safety threat, citizens are encouraged to call 911

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

The Oklahoma City Police Department is dedicated to crisis response that is compassionate, accountable, respectful, and equitable to all.

OKLAHOMA CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mental Health Crisis
What you need to know...

Contact

Non-Emergency | (405) 231-2121
Emergency | 911
Mental Health Services | 988

The photograph shows a police officer in uniform standing next to a shopping cart filled with items, including a large blue bag and a brown bag. The officer is interacting with a person wearing a brown jacket. The scene is outdoors, possibly in a parking lot or a public area.

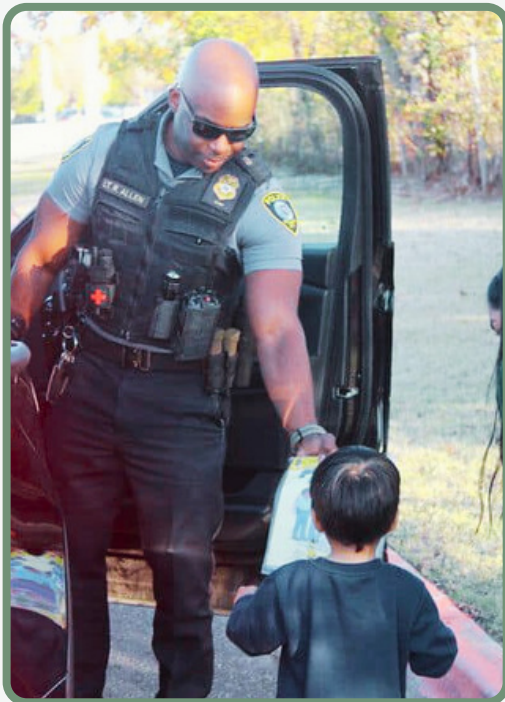
Evaluation of the Mental Health Guidelines to Behavioral Health Emergency Response

On May 25, 2022, President Biden issued Executive Order 14074, directing the Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to consult with stakeholders and to issue guidance regarding best practices for State, Tribal, local, and territorial officials on responding to and interacting with persons with behavioral health or other disabilities.

On May 31, 2023, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services responded by publishing a report titled Guidelines for Emergency Responses to People with Behavioral Health or Other Disabilities (“Federal Guidelines”). The Federal Guidelines effectively provide the City with a checklist of what the federal government considers to be best practices for emergency response to people with behavioral health or other disabilities.

After extensive review, the City can report that it has already implemented, or is in the process of implementing, all recommendations applicable to the City. Only one applicable recommendation has not yet been completely fulfilled—staffing a mental health provider in the 911 Communication Center. However, as explained above, OKCFD is in the process of making this a reality as part of its MIH program.

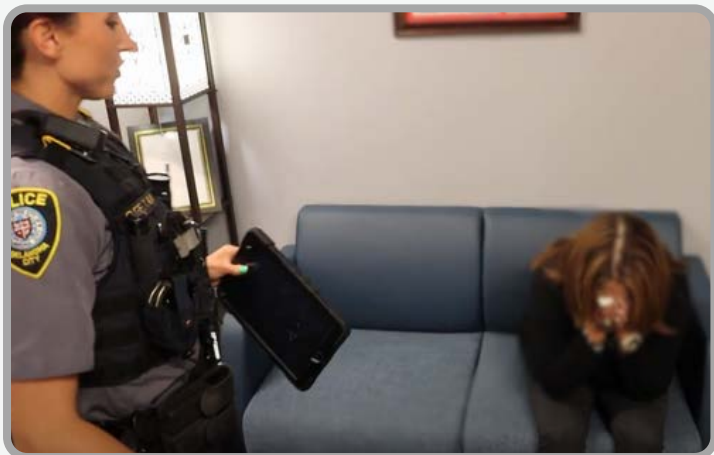
See Addendum A for the City’s full comparison report.



Mental Health Services in Practice

The City has implemented many programs designed to peacefully resolve potentially volatile situations and effectively connect individuals experiencing a mental health crisis with services. To demonstrate the application of these programs and services and other innovative approaches, the City wants to share 50 real-life OKCPD incidents.

See Addendum D for the fifty mental health responses.



Conclusion

The City is working toward a truly comprehensive and collaborative city-wide program that meets residents when they need help and provides them with the care they deserve. In partnership with mental health care providers and input from the community, the City is implementing new and improved programs designed to deliver the best mental health services to residents while ensuring public safety.

The City is pleased with the transformational progress that has been made and excited about services in development. Nevertheless, the City will remain adaptable and focus on continued improvement, communication, community engagement, and evaluation to connect residents with the best mental health services possible. The City is excited about its growing mental health programs and hopes you are too.