



Columbus Safety Collective Campaign (March 2025)

Frequently Asked Questions + Talking Points for Volunteers and Partners

The Columbus Safety Collective Campaign is a coalition of statewide health, and justice organizations working to implement a fully resourced, alternative crisis response program to meet the mental health and safety needs of our community in the City of Columbus. We are working together to put this common-sense amendment on Columbus' municipal ballot in November 2025.

This Campaign is founded by:

- ACLU of Ohio
- Ohio Families Unite for Political Action and Change
- Ohio Voice
- Working Families Party

The Campaign is supported by:

- Columbus Stand Up
- League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus
- National Association of Social Workers - Ohio Chapter
- Ohioans Against Extremism
- Ohio Families Unite Against Police Brutality
- Ohio Women's Alliance
- Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio
- Policy Matters Ohio

We need your help to gather the necessary petition signatures to make this campaign successful! To learn more about the work ahead and how you can get involved, visit CbusSafety.org

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is *The Community Crisis Response Amendment*?

- a. A city charter amendment that will provide the Department of Public Health the authority to establish a division of community crisis response that will:

- i. Respond to 911 calls and other calls for assistance with non-violent crisis calls, such as behavioral, housing insecurity, and wellness checks.
- ii. Oversee the management and administration of services in coordination with other departments and programs; within City government and coordinate City programs with other community programs.
- iii. Conduct community outreach
- iv. Establish the community crisis response advisory board to make recommendations to the Department of Public Health regarding the implementation of this amendment and provision of its services and funds the division.
- v. Oversee the training of community responders.

2. What will the alternative-police emergency response system handle?

- a. The system will handle 911 calls related to non-violent crisis situations, such as, calls involving mental and behavioral health crises, substance use, wellness checks, issues related to homelessness, and connection to services for situations that do not involve imminent danger, including conflict mediation services.
- b. Services will be person-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent community crisis responses. Responders will provide on-site screening, assessment, stabilization, and de-escalation.

3. What will the response system *not* handle?

- a. The system will not handle calls when there is known risk of bodily harm to the individual or to other individuals.

4. Who will respond to these calls?

- a. Social workers, mental health professionals, peer supporters (people with lived experience), and EMTs will respond to these 911 calls when police presence and use of force is not necessary.
 - i. Mobile crisis units comprised of social workers, peer supports, and EMTs, will be dispatched to the scene to handle urgent crises. Examples of urgent crises would include drug overdoses, severe mental health issues needing immediate assistance, or a need for a wellness check.

5. When will the response system be available?

- a. 24/7. Depending on the urgency of the calls, trained staff will be able to handle some calls by telephone, such as referrals, follow-ups, and caring contacts.

6. How will the response system interact with other programs?

- a. The Community Crisis Response System will coordinate its services with existing City of Columbus programs, and programs in the Franklin County continuum of care, such as 988, the Crisis Center, Netcare's mobile crisis unit, and Nationwide's Mobile Crisis Unit.

7. Have any other cities implemented similar programs?

- a. Though this type of program will be new to Columbus, it is not new on the national stage. Nearly half of the country's 50 largest cities have launched programs to send unarmed responders to a selection of 911 calls, instead of police. Leading cities offer a combination of call diversion, co-response, and follow-up.

- i. Other cities across the United States, such as Denver and Durham, have implemented similar or aligned programs. In Ohio, Cincinnati, Dayton, Cleveland, and Shaker Heights have community crisis systems.
- ii. Existing programs have not reported harm to the responders.

8. How many signatures are needed to get this issue on the November 2025 municipal ballot?

- a. The Columbus Safety Collective Campaign must collect nearly 25,000 valid signatures by July 6 in order to get the proposed amendment on the November 4, 2025 ballot.