

COLUMBUS SAFETY COLLECTIVE CAMPAIGN

JANUARY 2026



The Columbus Safety Collective, comprised of advocacy organizations, directly impacted families, and community leaders, launched a campaign and submitted petitions to create a nonpolice emergency response program in the city of Columbus, Ohio. The campaign is working to place the charter amendment on the May 2026 primary election ballot. Columbus lacks a fully resourced, alternative crisis response program to meet the mental health and safety needs of our community.

Once passed to the proposed Charter Amendment will do the following:

1. Establish a division of community crisis response. This division will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the development of curriculum and training on community crisis response that is focused on person-centered, trauma-informed, culturally competent community crisis response.
- Overseeing the management and administration of services in coordination with other departments and programs, to provide staff within the City of Columbus Emergency Communications Center to assist in routing calls, and provide information to and collect input from the community.
- Training crisis response and outreach teams, that are not police officers, to respond to 911 calls and other requests for assistance.
- Establishing a training and hiring process using a hiring rubric including preferences for Columbus residents and for individuals who have lived experience with community violence, legal system contact, and mental and behavioral health conditions.

2. Task the division of community crisis response with providing the following services within the City of Columbus:

- Crisis response from teams trained to respond to calls when the presence of a police officer is not necessary, including, but not limited to, 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.
- Medical or mental health transport provided by the crisis response team where the person accessing services requests transport and such transport is authorized.
- Follow up contact for support and connection to services within 48 hours of contact with a crisis response team, as needed.

3. Create a community crisis response advisory board comprised of representatives from each city council district, the Mayor's office, and the collective bargaining unit representing community crises response employees, which will make recommendations to the division of community crisis response on the implementation and provision of services.

4. Establish a scaling funding framework informed by service usage data and the Consumer Price Index. By fiscal year 2031, the minimum annual funding for the division of community crisis response must be \$12,000,000 annually.

SUPPORT:

As part of the 2020 “Reimagining Columbus Safety” study, 80% of participants stated they would support alternate crisis response teams instead of police to handle non-violent crises.

A 2024 poll reveals that 80% of respondents agree that police are not the answer to every problem and *‘they should not be asked to be social workers or counselors in addition to the work they do to enforce the law and investigate violent crime.’* Further, 71% of respondents agreed that investing in unarmed, highly-trained, alternate crisis responses to mental health crisis calls will help rebuild community trust and reduce violence.

NATIONAL TRENDS:

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 sending police. Leading cities offer a combination of call diversion, co-response, follow-up, and alternative response.

Existing emergency services in Columbus are not enough to meet the needs of residents, and in fact result in the loss of lives. The proposed campaign provides an insurance policy for Columbus residents to ensure the city produces the programs we deserve. **Together we can reimagine public safety and prioritize community care.**

Learn more at CbusSafetyCollective.com

