

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

April 25, 2022

Question: What is the number of FTEs needed to cover all mental health-related calls?

Response: The Alexandria Co Response Team (ACORP) is currently funded to provide 40-hours of service each week, Monday-Thursday, 12pm-10pm. While the team has been able to respond to over 150 total calls since the program launched in October 2021, they have been unable to respond to approximately 85% of mental-health related calls received by DECC staff because they were either off duty (63% of calls) or busy with another call (21% of calls).

The Manager’s proposed FY 2023 budget includes a recommendation to expand the team by an additional 40-hours each week (\$277,313) by adding one additional DCHS Senior Therapist and one additional Crisis Intervention Team Police Officer, resulting in 80 hours of ACORP service each week. To provide 24/7 hours of ACORP coverage each week (168 hours of service), staff estimate that approximately 11.5 additional staff would be needed:

- 6.0 FTEs additional DCHS clinical staff (\$120,000 average cost per FTE)
- 5.0 FTEs additional APD CIT staff (\$156,200 per FTE including uniforms, vehicle expenses, and equipment)
- 0.5 FTE Admin Support staff (\$42,590)
- Miscellaneous operating expenses – equipment, materials, training, and office supplies (\$3,800 per FTE)

It should be noted that when ACORP launched seven months ago, it was launched as a pilot program so that staff could make programmatic adjustments as needed and use outcome data to help inform future decisions about the program. The first comprehensive data analysis of the program will be presented to City Council at the May 10th legislative meeting.

One key factor to consider as part of program expansion is that not all mental-health related calls received by DECC call takers require a response from ACORP, as the primary focus of ACORP is to respond to higher-risk calls, not calls that could be better served by a less intense level of response. For example, some calls received by DECC call takers would be more appropriately handled through a different response, including a sole responder(non-police) mental health team (“Mobile Crisis Team”), a team comprised of a mental health clinician and a paramedic, or a transfer of the call to a regional call center for telephonic support.

As part of the Marcus-David Peters Act (“Marcus Alert”) passed by the General Assembly in 2020, City staff and community stakeholders are currently working to design a comprehensive, behavioral health response system that will provide individuals experiencing a behavioral health situation with the most effective and appropriate response. This work includes considering the variety of options noted above

and focuses on ensuring equitable and appropriate responses to all persons in need of behavioral health assistance. Expanding ACORP service hours will be a key part of the new behavioral health response system required by the Marcus Alert, though additional, less-intense response services will also be needed. Data from the ACORP pilot as well as input from staff and community stakeholders is currently being collected and will help inform recommendations for how to create the most equitable and appropriate behavioral health response system in the City in the coming years.

Please, [see attached](#) for a description of the City's efforts to implement the Marcus-David Peters Act.

Attachment 1