

ATTACHMENT A: PROPOSAL COVER SHEET
SALISH BH-ASO Behavioral Health Co-Responder Program

Submitting Agency

Legal name of Company/Agency:

Poulsbo Fire Department (in partnership with the City of Poulsbo)

Street Address: 911 NE Liberty Road

City, State, Zip Code: Poulsbo, Washington 98370

Authorized Representative: Jim Gillard

Title: Fire Chief

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ATTACHMENT B: ACTIVITIES/SERVICES NARRATIVE
SALISH BH-ASO Behavioral Health Co-Responder Program

Poulsbo Fire requests \$88,470 from the Salish BHASO to support its Fire CARES Program in 2022 and 2023. Funds will be used for the salary and benefits of our full time, Department of Health licensed Mental Health Professional (MHP) over a nine-month period.

Agency, service area, scope of work

The Poulsbo Fire Department provides fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services to the 26,000 residents of Kitsap County Fire Protection District #18. The fire district protects the City of Poulsbo and the unincorporated area of North Kitsap from Keyport to Port Gamble. Poulsbo Fire is a combination department; career firefighters supported by emergency response volunteers and administrative and support employees. The fire district is governed by an elected board of commissioners, and is a municipal corporation formed under RCW 52.02 for the provision of fire prevention, fire suppression services, emergency medical services, and for the protection of life and property.

Community need

We know, from Cencom/911 data, that well over three thousand calls were dispatched to first responders in Kitsap County last year to respond to individuals with behavioral health issues¹. Despite the existence of numerous behavioral health programs and providers, many people struggling with behavioral health disorders do not have access to the behavioral health care they need—and, as a result, use 911 for help resolving crisis (and non-crisis) situations.

According to Poulsbo Fire Department's records management system, the Department responded to around 400 behavioral health related calls for service in 2020 and then again in 2021. Most of the calls in 2021 involved psychological distress (73%), but many were coded

¹ Data from Kitsap County analyst Diane Rodman. According to Ms. Rodman, there were 3050 calls coded as "behavioral health" or "suicide" in 2021, but these numbers only reflect calls that were *primarily* coded as BH or SUI and only those calls that were dispatched to police agencies. The actual number of calls involving behavioral health issues is significantly higher than 3,000.

as involving alcohol consumption (20%), drug use and overdose (8%), or suicidality and suicide attempts (5%).² Hundreds of people rely on Poulsbo Fire, each year, to address their behavioral health concerns or respond to incidents caused by behavioral health symptoms.

Poulsbo Fire CARES launched in January 2021 as a partnership between the Poulsbo Fire Department and the City of Poulsbo. Since its inception, CARES has responded to individuals struggling with behavioral health issues and has helped them navigate to needed resources and services—whether that be medical attention, mental health care, substance use disorder services, or other kinds of assistance. Staffed by a firefighter/EMT, a social worker, and a substance use disorder professional, the CARES Unit is a multidisciplinary team aiming to prevent crisis by being proactive in the field. Assistance can take the form of a one time conversation or ongoing case management.

Referrals to Fire CARES are accepted for in the moment crisis response and, more typically, for follow up after a crisis occurs. Referrals can be made by fire and police as well as school and community partners. Thanks to interlocal agreements with neighboring fire departments, Fire CARES service extends (well) outside of the City of Poulsbo. Fire CARES assists residents of Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island, Kingston, North Kitsap County, and members of the Suquamish and Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribes.

We can see, through numbers served in our first program year, that there is a high level of community need for this program. Fire CARES engaged in over 700 outreach activities in 2021 and assisted 340 unique individuals. By the end of 2021, the program was assisting five to eight people with behavioral health needs *each day*, and would have assisted more if we had more staffing capacity.

According to the results of our 2021 year-end satisfaction survey, our approach is proving effective. We polled first responders and social service providers throughout North Kitsap/Bainbridge who partner with the CARES program. The results:

² Numbers based on Poulsbo Fire Department’s 2021 records system. Actual percentages may be different because of coding irregularities and cross over between categories.

- 92% of respondents are generally satisfied (14%) or extremely satisfied (78%) with the program;
- 95% of police and fire respondents think CARES reduces some people's 911/emergency system utilization;
- 85% of fire and police respondents think the program improved their own response to behavioral health calls for service;
- When asked what additional behavioral health service is most needed in Kitsap County, a majority of respondents chose expansion of CARES so the program would operate for more hours and in more locations (CARES expansion was one of seven possible choices.)³

Compliment to existing programs

One of the reasons for Poulsbo Fire CARES' effectiveness, we think, is our commitment to work with existing agencies and programs. The Fire CARES team works, on a daily basis, with the City of Poulsbo's police navigator program and the relationship is mutually beneficial.⁴ We coordinate with the Kitsap County Sheriff Office's Crisis Intervention Officer when outreach is in Kitsap County and with Bainbridge Island Police Department's Community Health Navigator when outreach occurs on Bainbridge Island. In addition to partnering with first responder/co-responder programs, we work closely with providers (behavioral health and otherwise) throughout Kitsap County. The CARES team works frequently with staff at Kitsap Mental Health, Kitsap Recovery Center, Peninsula Community Health Care, St. Michaels Hospital, Aging and Long Term Care, MCS Counseling, Fishline Comprehensive Services, Coffee Oasis, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe's Health Center, and the Suquamish Wellness Center (among others) to encourage warm hand-offs and collective impact. Our relationship with the County's DCRs is a work in progress, but—if we are awarded this grant—it may facilitate a better understanding of each others' programs and a closer working relationship.

³ Our 2021 survey was distributed to first responders and service providers in the North Kitsap/Bainbridge area. We sent out approximately 70 surveys and received 40 responses.

⁴ From Poulsbo Chief Ron Harding: "The Poulsbo Fire Cares program has quickly become an essential partner when Poulsbo Police respond to behavioral health related calls. They work closely with our Police Navigator and provide ongoing service that we can't offer. With recent changes in the law, the Fire CARES team is often the first response to a behavioral health crisis, and they build the bridge that connects people to the services they need. Fire CARES and Law Enforcement working in partnership is rapidly becoming the new normal."

Program Details

The Poulsbo Fire CARES Program is one of a very few behavioral health programs, in Kitsap, that provides assistance in homes and community settings. It is also the first program, in the County, to pair a firefighter/EMT with a mental health professional in the field, leveraging the health care expertise of a EMT with the skills of a social worker. (We have found public response to this pairing overwhelmingly positive.) We are very proud of the flexibility of the Fire CARES program, and its ability to help people regardless of mobility, behavioral health needs, or ability to pay. We are also proud that our work is not restricted by the COVID 19 pandemic, since the team remains in service regardless of COVID precautions and infection rates. This proved especially important in 2021 when many County behavioral health providers restricted and eliminated in person services.

The CARES Program is currently in service four days a week (Monday-Thursday) from 7am to 5pm. Our goal, by the end of the year, is to operate five days a week with hours that extend into the early evening. Our scope of services include in the moment crisis response (we often work collaboratively with police in crisis situations), follow up outreach after a crisis or 911 call, non-clinical case management, assessment, resource and system navigation, transportation, and warm hand off to healthcare and social services providers. The team does continual care coordination, working with physical health, behavioral health, school-based counselors, and social service providers. They often work with City staff, librarians, concerned neighbors, and business owners to assist people who seem to be in need of assistance.

As previously noted, the team will help anyone struggling with behavioral health issues regardless of age, insurance type, or ability to pay. Interestingly, around 45% of those served are older adults (65+) and almost half report receiving mental health treatment in the past year (40%). The number of homeless and unsheltered individuals we assist was relatively small in 2021 but is growing in 2022.

Fire CARES also provides relief to 911 and first responders when people reach out directly to the team or when the team relieves crews in the field. We have found this program to be an effective way to focus fire and police personnel on emergency situations.

Staffing

The CARES team has three key staff members:

Firefighter/EMT Dave Musselman (*employed full time by Poulsbo Fire*) a 22-year employee of the Poulsbo Fire Department. Firefighter Musselman has taken motivational interview training, co-responder training, and 40-hour crisis intervention team training as part of his work with the CARES Program.

Independently licensed Social Worker Julie Rogers (*employed full time by the City of Poulsbo*) has been in the mental health field for 15 years. Julie has taken, or is scheduled to take, motivational interview training, co-responder training, situational awareness training as part of her work with the CARES program. She will take trauma informed/trauma responsive training and advanced suicide prevention training within the next few months of employment.

Substance Use Disorder Professional Gabbie Caudill (*employed part time with the City of Poulsbo*) co-owns Believe in Recovery in Port Townsend. Gabbie has been in the SUD provider world for ten years. The CARES team will, through a partnership with the State Department of Health, start distributing naloxone later in the year. Gabbie has extensive training in naloxone administration. She trains our team, on an ongoing basis, in harm reduction strategies and drug user health.

The team is supervised, within the Poulsbo Fire Department, by Captain Jake Gillanders. Captain Gillanders, who also serves as the Department's Medical Officer, provides operational supervision of the team and is responsible for developing policies and procedures. Project management is provided by City Housing, Health and Human Services Director Kim Hendrickson. Kim manages external partnerships and is responsible for grant administration, data collection, and some budgetary aspects of the program. Fire CARES is a partnership between Poulsbo Fire and the City of Poulsbo, and oversight is provided by Fire Chief Jim Gillard, Mayor Becky Erickson, Fire Commissioners and the Poulsbo City Council.

Managerial/Fiscal Controls

As noted, the CARES program is a partnership between Poulsbo Fire and the City of Poulsbo. Accounting, internal controls, and program monitoring is provided by both entities through their governance structure, accounting departments, and external auditors. Siting operational management at the Fire Department and program management at the City gives us enhanced capacity to oversee the team and anticipate/address problems.

Understanding of Privacy Requirements

Poulsbo Fire is a HIPAA covered entity with a long history of receiving and protecting medical information. Protected health information connected to the CARES program is kept in the Department's password protected records software management system or in locked filing cabinets. Data collection is anonymized to protect individual privacy. We use releases of information (ROIs) to enhance care coordination, and have found that many of the people we assist appreciate the communication between the CARES team and their providers. It would be helpful for the program, at some point, to have a multi party ROI that was widely accepted in the county. We would also like to use a secure case management records system, like Julota, to facilitate appropriate information sharing and care coordination.

Ability to Track Information-Quarterly

In terms of evaluation, we currently measure outputs, outcomes, and system savings created by the Fire CARES Program. Regarding outputs, we count unique individuals served by the program, number of outreach visits, and the number of individuals receiving case management. We track connections to services, both social (benefits, shelter, housing, food, insurance, education, etc.) and healthcare related (substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, primary care). Regarding outcomes, we poll first responders and agency partners to gauge our effectiveness, and plan to start surveying individuals who receive CARES services. Cost savings for preventative services are not easy to quantify, but we track hospital diversions and the reduced use of first responders in behavioral health situations. It will be an easy task for us to report quarterly numbers our program serves to the BHASO along with successes and challenges.

ATTACHMENT C: FISCAL PROPOSAL

SALISH BH-ASO Behavioral Health Co-Responder Program

We are requesting \$88,470, from Salish BHASO, to support Poulsbo Fire Department's Fire CARES Program in 2022 and 2023. Funds will primarily be used for the salary and benefits of our full time, Department of Health licensed Mental Health Professional (MHP) that is employed by the City of Poulsbo. Funds available through this grant will not cover the annual cost of the salary and benefits of our MHP. We are requesting grant funds to pay salary and benefits over a nine-month period.

The yearly salary for our Fire CARES MHP is \$85,530 (\$41.12 per hour)

The yearly benefits cost is \$32,428

Total yearly expense \$117,958

Monthly cost \$9830

9 month cost \$88,470

The Poulsbo Fire Department and City of Poulsbo have grant funding to offset the remaining costs for the Mental Health Professional. We were given a County Treatment Tax award to cover approximately eight months of salary and benefits for 2022 and anticipate receiving a State award that can be used in mid 2023. This \$88, 470 BHASO award would help us cover a gap in our current funding between October 2022 and June 2023—and allow us to use 2023 state funds to support a second firefighter/EMT for the team. With this addition, we will be able to extend our service hours and geographic reach.