

Councilmember Ben Bartlett  
City of Berkeley, District 3

## **SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA MATERIAL for Supplemental Packet 1**

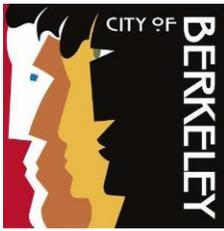
**Meeting Date:** July 14, 2020

**Item Number:** 18a

**Item Description:** **Safety for All: The George Floyd Community Safety Act - Budget Request to Hire a Consultant to Perform Police Call and Response Data Analysis (Continued from June 16, 2020)**

**Submitted By:** **Councilmember Ben Bartlett, Mayor Jesse Arreguin, and Councilmember Rigel Robinson**

Revisions include allocating \$100,000 from the General Fund to the development of a Specialized Care Unit (SCU) Pilot.



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## Supplemental Materials for Item 18a

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**From:** Councilmember Ben Bartlett, Mayor Jesse Arreguin, and Councilmember Rigel Robinson

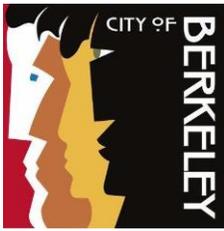
### **Recommendation**

*Allocate \$100,000 from the FY2020 General Fund Balance to develop a pilot program to explore the efficacy of re-assigning non-criminal police service calls to a Specialized Care Organization (SCO). This is intended to enhance budgetary outcomes in public safety, community health, mental health, social services, civil rights, and overall quality of life.*

### **Background:**

In the current state of policing in the United States, police have an incredibly broad range of responsibilities from responding to non-violent mental health crises to violent and criminal calls. A 24-week training academy cannot begin to cover the tools necessary to effectively handle the full gamut of non-violent and non-criminal incidences that arise. Adding to this problem, the Covid-19 pandemic has sharply stalled economic growth. The effects of which have not been seen since the Great Depression. The city of Berkeley is facing nearly a \$30 million dollar budget shortfall. At the same time, the city is projected to experience a dramatic increase in homelessness, persons experiencing trauma, and mental health crises. Each dollar must be spent to maximize the return value. Right now approximately 43% of the city budget is spent on the Berkeley Police Department, yet anecdotal data shows only 20% of police time is spent solving crime. The majority of Berkeley Police Officers' time is spent attending to those experiencing homelessness and mental health crises. The city should re-allocate resources to a Specialized Care Unit (SCU) consisting of community crises- workers tasked with responding to non-criminal calls such as mental health, people in crisis, addiction, traffic, etc.

The Specialized Care Unit would allow the police to focus on investigating and solving crimes while reducing the problem of over-policing black communities. More residents will experience better outcomes in public safety and community health.



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Crisis assistance programs have been implemented in other areas of the country with great success. In Eugene, Oregon a program known as Cahoots has been in place for 30 years. In 2019 alone the program responded to 133,000 911 calls, called for police backup only 150 times, and saved the police department an estimated 14-15 million dollars in medical and transportation costs. Additionally, the Cahoot pilot program only costs approximately \$2.1 million dollars a year, less than 3% of the current Berkeley Police Department Budget. Likewise, after weeks of recent nationwide protests calling for police reform, Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller announced the city is creating an alternative department to respond to non-violent calls, like those dealing with mental health and homelessness, addiction, and other issues. A Specialized Care Unit (SCU) pilot program could be implemented and included in the 2021 Berkeley City Budget, with test periods ranging from two to five years. Re-allocating just a small portion of the Berkeley Police Department budget, and responsibilities, to a private organization, can reduce waste in funding, and greatly improve crisis outcomes and achieving civil rights. The selected vendor would work with the Police Department, with City Oversight, and complete transparency to the public. The program's success will be specified measured including instances of de-escalation, the number of people in crisis connected to supportive services, etc.

This Specialized Care Unit (SCU) consisting of community crises-workers would deal with 911 calls that the operator deemed non-criminal, that posed no imminent threat to first respondents. The program would employ a combination of trained mental health professionals with several years of experience, as well as EMTs and nurses, none of whom would be armed with weapons. While this program would aim to deal with crises with de-escalation techniques, demonstrations of active aggression may warrant police intervention. In these situations, the pilot program could request police backup, with a peaceful resolution still being the objective.