

911 Analysis

EXPLORE RESOURCES

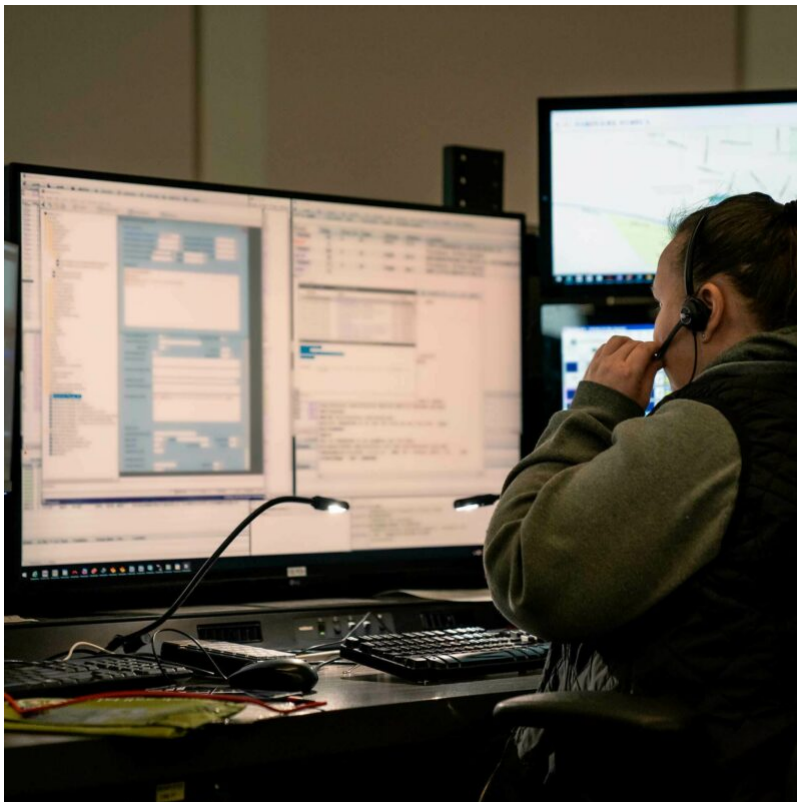
Call Data Shows We Can Rely Less on Police



How Civilian Crisis Responders Can Divert Behavioral Health Calls from Police



Methodology and Limitations



Overview

Police have long been the only first responders available to provide timely responses to health and safety issues. Yet, police are inappropriate responders for a substantial portion of 911 calls, tasked with responding to situations that pose no imminent threat or danger to others, such as mental health crises or neighbor disputes. This contributes to overpolicing and police violence. Vera analyzed 911 call data from nine cities to understand what people urgently need from public safety systems and how we can reduce our overreliance on police to meet those needs. These fact sheets include recommendations for policy makers on better practices for 911 protocols, when to employ civilian crisis responders, and how to make sure 911 centers meet community needs.

Key Takeaway

At present, police are tasked with responding to far too many behavioral health crises and safety issues, even as police cause serious harm and the public demands more non-police responses. This analysis of 911 call data underscores the considerable potential of civilian crisis responders to meaningfully shrink the footprint of police.

Publication Highlights

People typically call 911 to solve problems that pose no imminent safety risk and have little to do with crime—and thus do not warrant a default police response.

Vera analyzed 911 call data from nine cities and found that an average of 19 percent of calls for service could be answered by unarmed crisis responders.

Vera found that no more than 7 percent of calls are for situations involving violent crime, revealing the need for a variety of timely responses including unarmed civilians.