

# Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets

## White Bird Clinic's mobile crisis intervention program

### *What is CAHOOTS?*

CAHOOTS is a mobile crisis intervention service integrated into the City of Eugene's public safety system. Free response is available for a broad range of non-criminal crises, including homelessness, intoxication, disorientation, substance abuse and mental illness problems, as well as dispute resolution. Non-emergency medical care, first aid, and transportation to services is also provided. The CAHOOTS van can be dispatched through the City's non-emergency police-fire-ambulance call center. The service is confidential and voluntary. It is staffed and managed by White Bird Clinic, a local social service agency. CAHOOTS was formed in 1989 as a collaborative project of White Bird Clinic and the city of Eugene public safety system to help address the needs of marginalized and alienated populations, specifically the homeless and those suffering from addiction or severe and persistent mental illness. Each team consists of a certified EMT and a trained mental health crisis worker.

### *What services does CAHOOTS provide?*

CAHOOTS provides a broad range of free services, including but not limited to: crisis intervention & counseling services, mediation, transportation to social services, and first aid and basic-level emergency medical care. CAHOOTS is designed to assist the Eugene community with problems related to depression, mental illness, substance abuse, poverty and homelessness. CAHOOTS is not designed to respond to violent situations or life-threatening medical emergencies. Except in the case of imminent danger to themselves or to others, we always respect the right of our clients to refuse our services and will not inflict help upon people who do not want it.



## **White Bird Clinic**

### *What is the relationship between CAHOOTS and the Eugene Police Department?*

CAHOOTS shares a central dispatch with the police department, and responds to assist the police (and many other agencies) with certain types of behavioral emergencies, such as family disputes, suicidal threats, and public intoxication. Police sometimes assist CAHOOTS in situations when danger may be present. CAHOOTS is designed to provide an alternative to police action whenever possible for non-criminal substance abuse, poverty, and mental health crises. The CAHOOTS staff do not carry weapons and have no authority to arrest or detain persons against their will.

### *Between CAHOOTS and other social service agencies?*

CAHOOTS is able to refer clients to and connect them with social service agencies throughout the community. By being able to assess what a client may be in most need of, and by providing transportation to that service, we are able to facilitate the connection between clients and services.

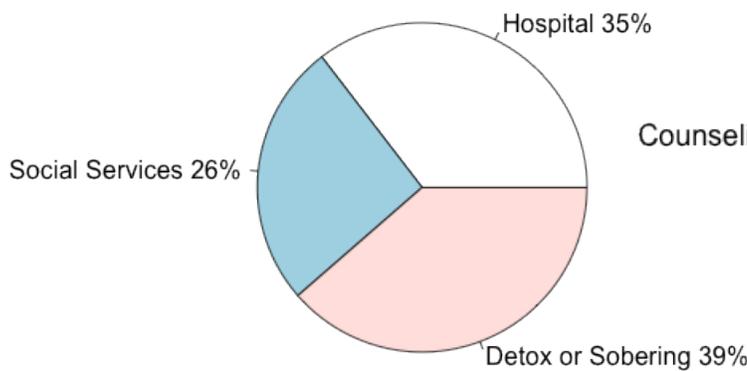
We also provide trainings and presentations in the community to improve client care. Additionally, we facilitate better coordination of care between agencies. We also function as client advocates at other agencies, providing mediation between staff and clients.

### What sort of calls do we respond to?

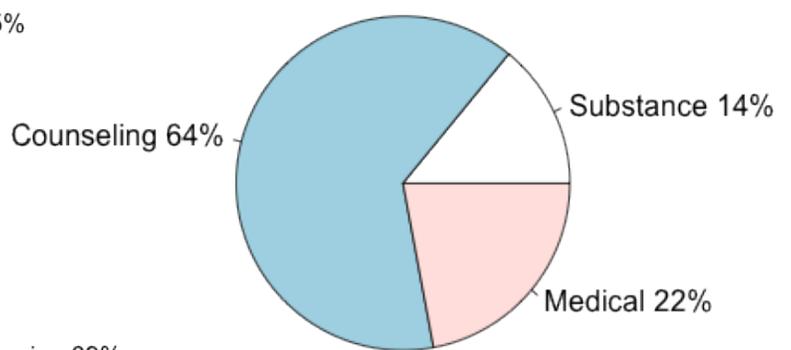
We take an average of 34 calls a day and over 9000 calls a year, even before our Springfield expansion in October 2014. The Springfield van increased our resources by 30%, which is reflected in the call volume from 2015. Extrapolating the 2015 data collected from January 1st - June 8th, CAHOOTS will take approximately 15,000 calls this year. Our calls are diverse, including straightforward transports to social services, welfare checks in the community and at private residences, counseling for

people in crisis, and non-emergency medical care. We also assist police and EMS when requested (in 2015, 11.4% of our calls involved providing direct assistance to the Eugene police and 3.6% involved providing direct assistance to EMS). 60% of our clients are homeless.

#### Transports 2015



#### Non-Transport Calls 2015

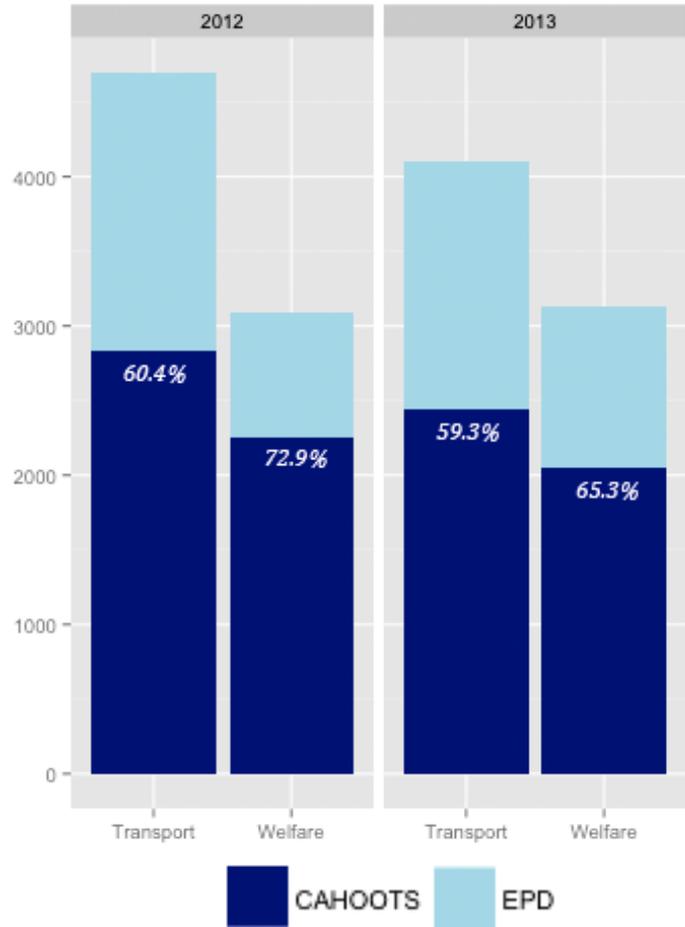


## Why Have A Mobile Crisis Intervention Program?

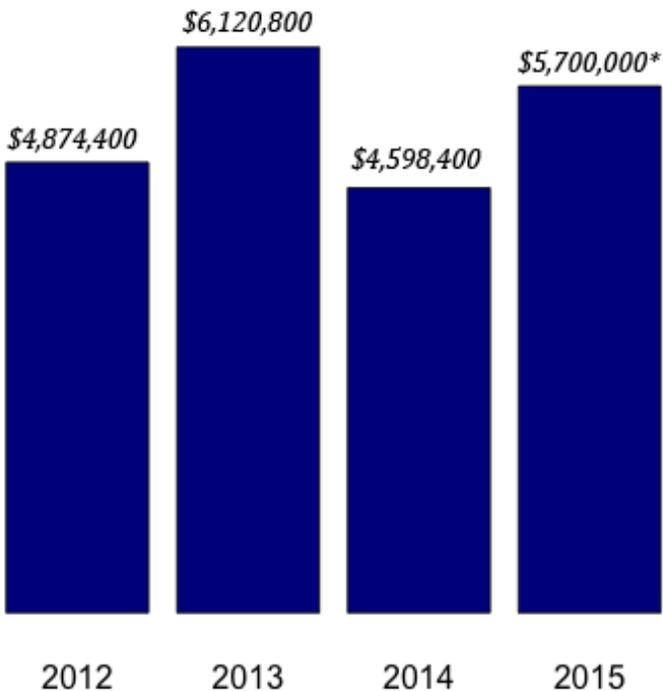
CAHOOTS saves police time and money.

CAHOOTS is not meant to replace police, instead, it offers a service that responds to non-emergency crises so police don't have to. Two common situations are welfare checks and transport to services. Looking at dispatch data for 2012 and 2013, CAHOOTS regularly handles more than half of these cases, taking a sizable load off of the Eugene Police Department<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17409](http://www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17409)



### EPD Diversion Savings per Year



\*2015 data extrapolated from January 1st - June 8th

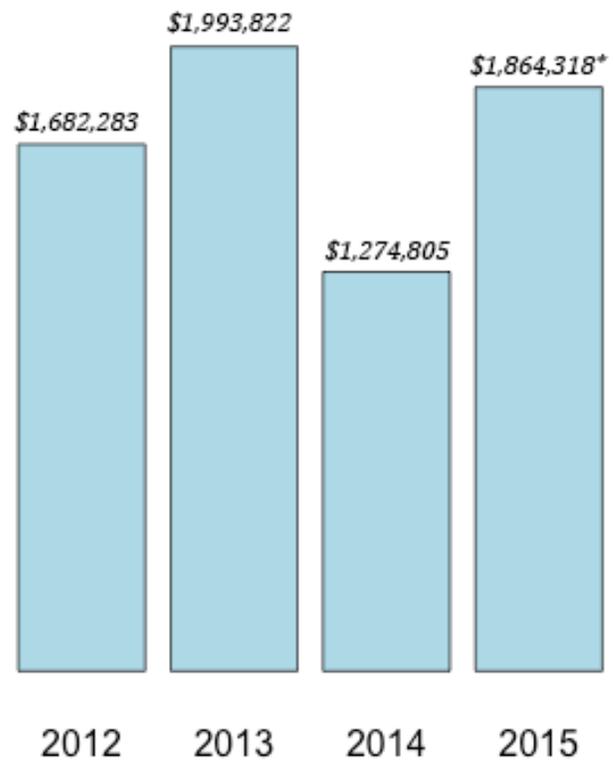
The EPD quotes \$800 per police response<sup>1</sup>. Using the number of calls that would otherwise be handled by police, including suicide risk, homicide risk, self harm, intoxication, rage, welfare, and transport, CAHOOTS saves EPD over \$4.5 million annually.

<sup>1</sup> [www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10635](http://www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10635)

### *CAHOOTS saves EMS time and money.*

Similarly, CAHOOTS is able to respond to non-emergency medically related calls that would have otherwise fallen to EMS. Examples include suicide or self-harm calls, basic medical treatment such as wound cleaning, clients presenting as disoriented, delusional, or with an alert and oriented level of less than 4, and other symptoms of psychosis. Treating these symptoms in the field also keeps patients out of the ER by preventing infections, common amongst homeless populations that have no way of keeping wounds clean. The National Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (NMEPS) quotes an average of \$1,349 per ER visit, a cost that would otherwise fall on the public sector. Even without the inclusion of ambulance costs, CAHOOTS saves over \$1 million annually in emergency medical costs.

### ER Diversion Savings per Year



\*2015 data extrapolated from January 1st - June 8th

## *What is the Community Response to CAHOOTS?*

### *Satisfied Clients*

“The staff I have interacted with are kind, reassuring, and helpful. You know they are always there if you need them. On the whole, this is a great community-supporting service.”

-G, CAHOOTS client

### *Satisfied Service Providers*

“CAHOOTS is critical to the operations of the Eugene Mission... We call on CAHOOTS several times daily to provide solutions to extremely complicated guest issues. They are top notched professionals in handling these urgent cases.”

-Jack Tripp, Director of the Eugene Mission

### *Satisfied Employees*

“The humanistic approach to crisis intervention allows for us to really be able to work with clients and meet them where they’re at.”  
- Robert Parrish, CAHOOTS medic

### *Satisfied First Responders*

“[Without CAHOOTS], it would be really tough because there would be calls that we would have to deal with that would tie up more time, and it would be tough for the citizens because they wouldn’t be getting the level of service that they would like to get.”

- Officer Rankin, EPD

### *What does the Training Program Entail?*

Training to become a CAHOOTS worker lasts 6 months to a year. A non-judgmental and client-centered approach to communication and service delivery is emphasized. Trainees begin as observers, watching trained team members handle a variety of calls. They also attend weekly debrief sessions to promote better client care as well as address issues of boundaries, rescuing, and worker self-care in order to avoid burnout. Workers must also pass an extensive background check.

### *How is CAHOOTS funded?*

CAHOOTS is fully funded through Eugene Public Safety, including the cost of vans, salaries, and equipment.



CAHOOTS is happy to assist you in starting your city's own mobile crisis intervention program. Contact Ben Brubaker, outreach coordinator, at [benjahwbc@gmail.com](mailto:benjahwbc@gmail.com) or at (541) 342 – 8255.

