

Have questions about Portland Street Response?

You're not alone! Below are frequently asked questions we get asked. We'll continue to update this page with new information as it develops.

| QUESTIONS | ANSWERS |
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| When will the Portland Street Response pilot launch? | The Portland Street Response pilot is expected to launch in January/February 2021. |
| Where will the pilot operate and why in just that part of the city? | The Portland Street Response pilot will operate in the Lents area. Lents was designated because it is not saturated with existing resources and services like that found in the downtown corridor, and the growth in the volume of calls is outpacing the growth of calls across the rest of the city. |
| Who will be on the team and how many teams will there be? | Portland Street Response will start with one team of three that will include a Firefighter EMT, a Licensed Mental Health Therapist, and a Community Health Worker. They will work Monday through Friday 10am-6pm, and then a similar second team of three will be added six months later to cover the same area but respond at night and on the weekends. |
| Can I volunteer or help out in some way? | At this time, we don't have a formal structure in place for volunteers to assist us. We will update this form and reach out to communities to let you know how you can help, after we launch and have a better understanding of the program needs and opportunities for volunteers. |
| Can I call 911 and request Portland Street Response? | No. 911 dispatchers have a list of questions they will ask to determine which responder is most appropriate to send: Police, Fire, Portland Street Response, or AMR. If the call fits the criteria for Portland Street Response to respond, dispatchers will alert the team and send them to the call. |
| City Council approved the launch in November 2019. Why is it taking so long to launch the pilot? | Portland's Public Safety Bureaus were impacted by the global pandemic and it required the City to shift resources and priorities to address the demand of the current public health crisis. Like so many, we were disappointed that the onset of COVID caused a six month delay, but we are excited and confident in our ability to launch in early 2021. |
| Council approved a budget of \$4.8 million. Why is it starting with only 2 teams and in one area of the city? | In order for the City to support an expanded first responder program, further infrastructure needs to be built out with our radio systems, dispatchers, and apparatus. Another reason we're keeping it small is that a pilot is intended to be a representative sample of the larger population so that challenges can be easily addressed before the program expands to the entire city. |
| Will Portland Street Response address the homeless crisis? | The goal of Portland Street Response is to update our first responder system by providing an additional compassionate first response option when 9-1-1 is called on someone experiencing homelessness or behavioral health issues, not to solve homelessness. |
| How will the City determine whether this program is a success? | Portland Street Response is partnering with Portland State University's Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative to help provide external program evaluation. Frequent updates on program outcomes will be posted on the Portland Street Response webpage and will be presented to Council during and after the pilot. |
| Why is Portland Street Response housed under Portland Fire & Rescue? | Portland Street Response is housed under Portland Fire & Rescue for several main reasons: 1) the program needs infrastructure that is connected to the current 9-1-1 system; 2) Portland Fire & Rescue's Community Healthcare Assessment Team (CHAT) has already built the foundation for Portland Street Response; and 3) the directive to keep this program separate from police. |