

# Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets

## *Eugene's Mobile Crisis Intervention Program*

### ***What is CAHOOTS?***

CAHOOTS is a mobile crisis intervention service integrated into the public safety systems of Eugene and Springfield. A 24/7 free response is available for non-emergency medical care or first aid, and for a broad range of non-criminal crises, including homelessness, intoxication, disorientation, substance abuse, and mental illness problems, as well as dispute resolution and conflict mediation. Transportation to services is also provided. The CAHOOTS van can be dispatched through the cities' non-emergency police-fire-ambulance call centers. Services are confidential and voluntary. Each team consists of a trained mental health crisis worker and a certified EMT. Staffed and managed by local social service agency White Bird Clinic, CAHOOTS was formed in 1989 as a collaborative project with the city of Eugene to address the needs of marginalized and alienated populations - people who were homeless, experiencing severe and persistent mental illness, or suffering from addiction often had needs public safety couldn't meet.

### ***What services does CAHOOTS provide?***

CAHOOTS provides many different types of services, including (but not limited to): mental health crisis intervention and counseling, drug and alcohol related de-escalation, family dispute mediation, welfare checks, basic-level medical care, and transportation to social services. As CAHOOTS is designed to provide community assistance for problems related to depression and other mental illnesses, substance abuse and homelessness, we do not respond to any violent situations or life-threatening emergencies. If there is no imminent danger of harm caused to themselves or to others, we will respect the right of our clients to refuse our services and do not inflict help upon people who do not want it.



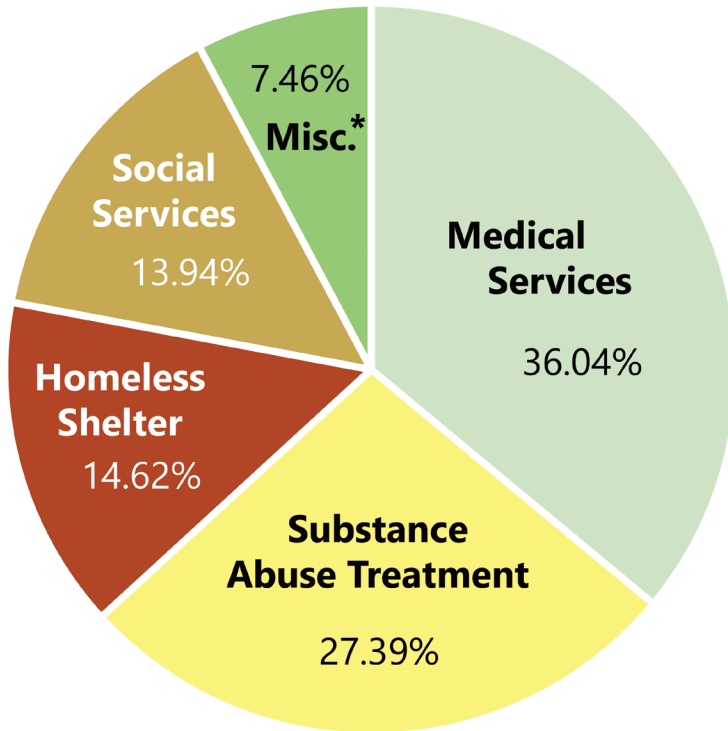
### ***What is the relationship between CAHOOTS and the Police Department?***

CAHOOTS shares a central dispatch with the Eugene 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. Our program is designed to provide an alternative to police action whenever possible for crises that are non-criminal in nature. The CAHOOTS staff do not carry weapons and have no authority to arrest or detain anyone 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.

## Transportation Calls from 2014-2017



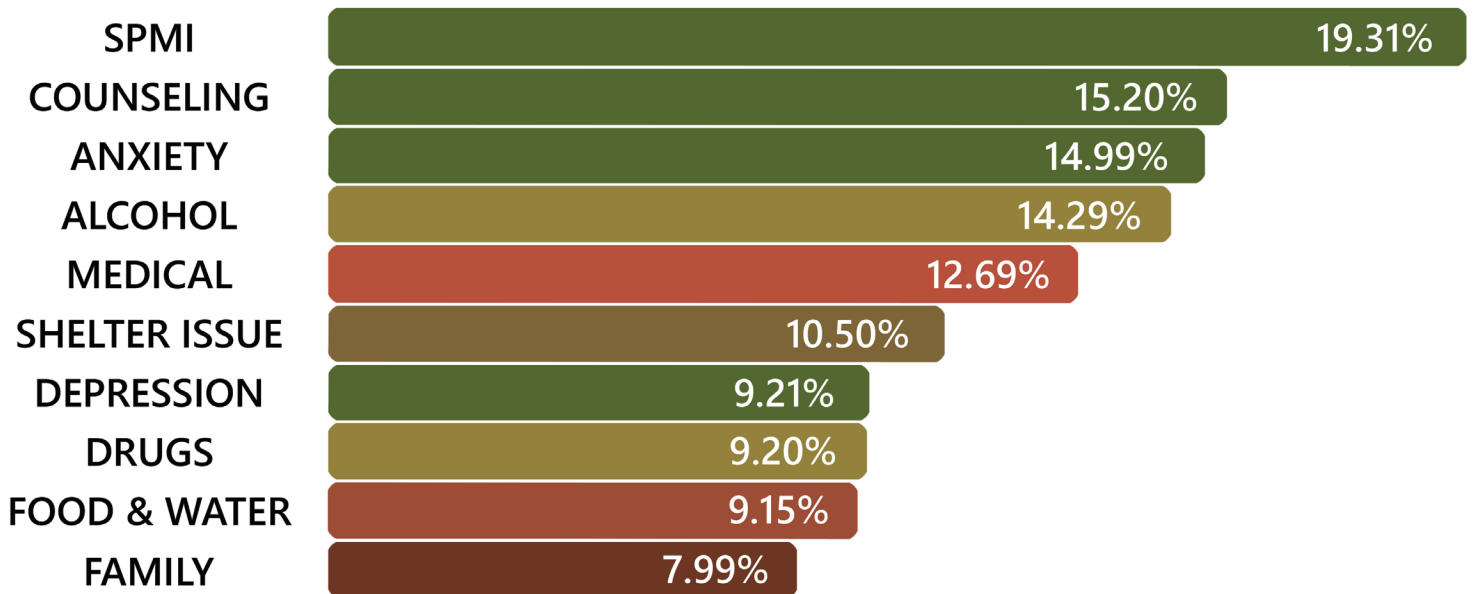
\* Other transport locations include group homes, pharmacies, downtown Eugene, etc.

## What sort of calls do we respond to?

Our calls are diverse, including requests for transportation to social services, homeless shelters, substance abuse treatment facilities, and medical care providers. We respond to calls for non-emergency medical care as well as assisting EMS. CAHOOTS provides counseling for people in crisis, and welfare checks in the community and at private residences. Over 60% of our clients are homeless, and 30% live with severe and persistent mental illness. The median age of our adult clients is 45.5 years old.

We receive over 15,000 calls a year, which averages to taking over 42 calls every day. In January 2015 we added a Springfield van, an expansion which increased our resources by 30%. The call volume in the following years has relatedly heightened. Extrapolating the call frequency trends since this expansion, CAHOOTS will take approximately 26,110 calls in 2018.

## Common Call Factors from 2014-2017



In the bar graph above, the percentage of calls for each factor reflects the frequency of that factor being at least one of the motivations for calling CAHOOTS, out of total CAHOOTS calls. The factors are not mutually exclusive with each other. These reflect both transport-and non-transport calls.

# Why Have a Mobile Crisis Intervention Program?

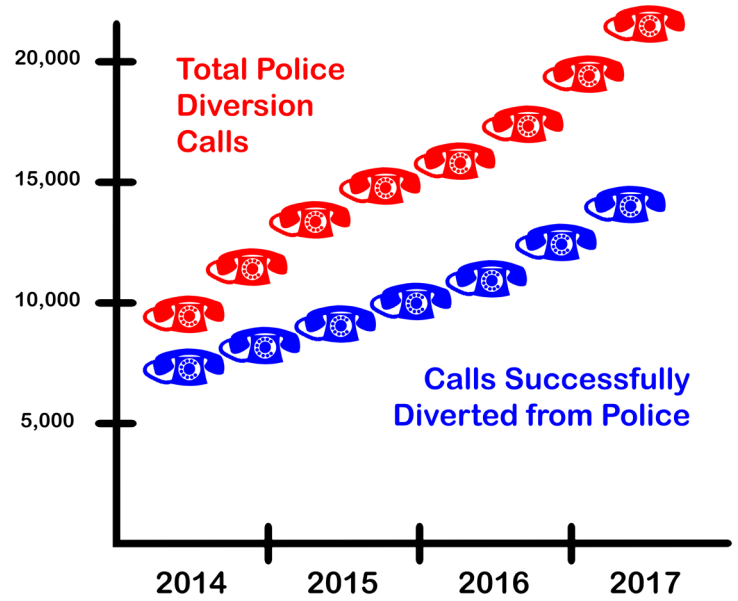
## CAHOOTS saves police time and money.

CAHOOTS is not meant to replace the police, instead, it offers a service that responds to non-emergency crises so police don't have to. Looking at CFS dispatch data from 2014-2017 (see graph at right), CAHOOTS regularly handles more than half of these cases, taking a sizable load off of the Eugene Police Department.\*

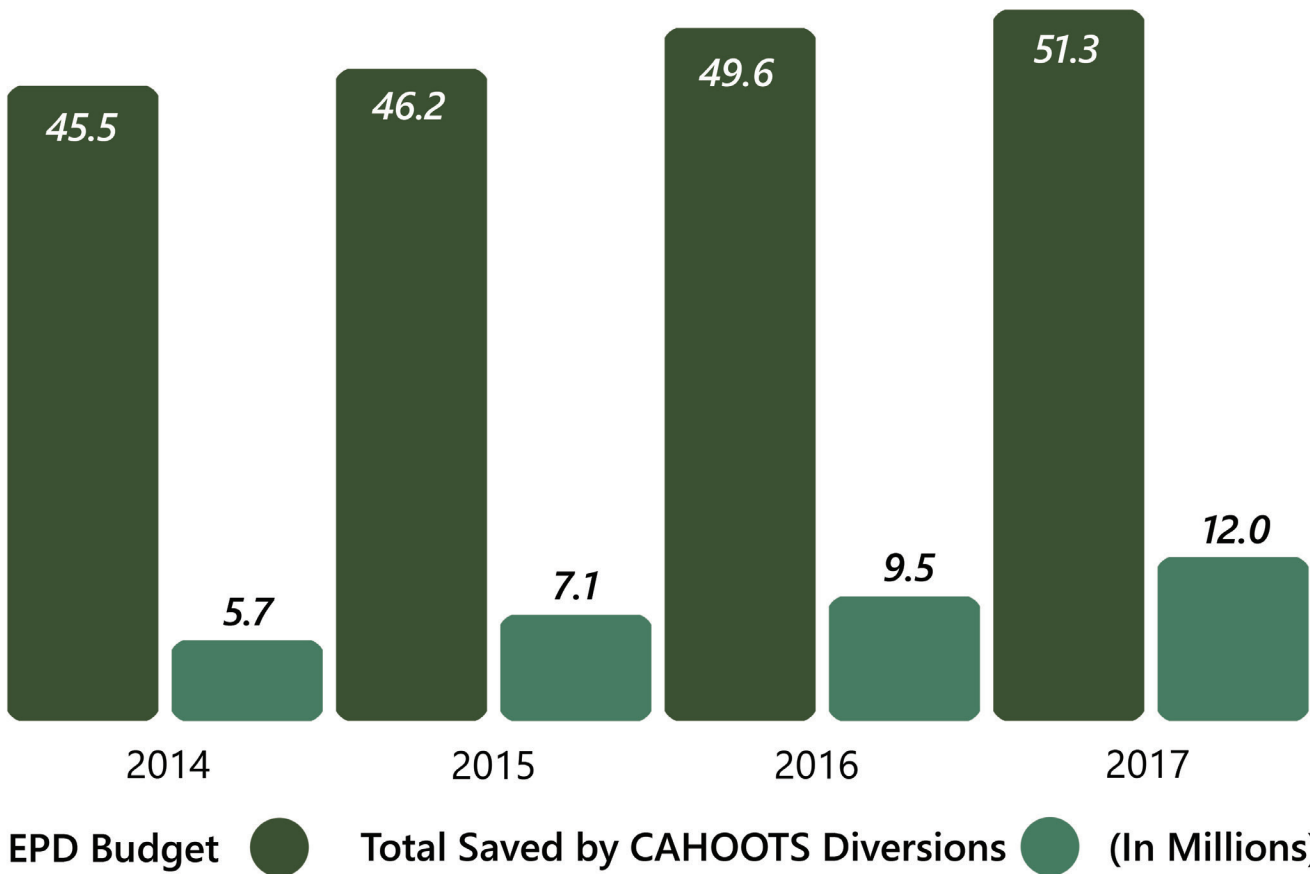
Three common types of calls CAHOOTS will divert from police are welfare checks (32.5% of all CAHOOTS calls), public assistance (66.3%), and transportation to services (34.8%).

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 \* EPD data was collected at <https://www.eugene-or.gov/archivecenter/viewfile/item/4801>

## Police Diversion



## EPD Diversion Savings Per Year



The EPD quotes \$800 per police response.\* 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 has saved the EPD an average of \$8.5 million each year from 2014-2017.

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 \*[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 attend to non-emergency medical calls that would have otherwise fallen to EMS. CAHOOTS can respond to suicide or self-harm calls, calls for basic medical treatment such as wound cleaning, and provide assistance for clients who are presenting as disoriented or delusional with an alert and oriented level of less than 4, or who have other symptoms of psychosis. Treating these symptoms in the field prevents infections, which are common among homeless populations (as many have no way of keeping wounds clean). This in turn also keeps patients out of the ER in the long term.

In 2013, The Wall Street Journal reported the average price per ER visit as \$1,233, meaning that CAHOOTS saves the public sector over \$2 million annually in emergency medical costs.\* With the inclusion of ambulance rides, which are at least \$1,600 each in Eugene, this raises savings by a further \$2.9 million per year from 2014-2017.\*\*

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\*1 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/03/02/an-average-er-visit-costs-more-than-an-average-months-rent-/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.fb50243caf8b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/03/02/an-average-er-visit-costs-more-than-an-average-months-rent-/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.fb50243caf8b)

\*\* <http://www.registerguard.com/csp/cms/sites/.../ambulance-springfield-says-eugene-fire.csp>

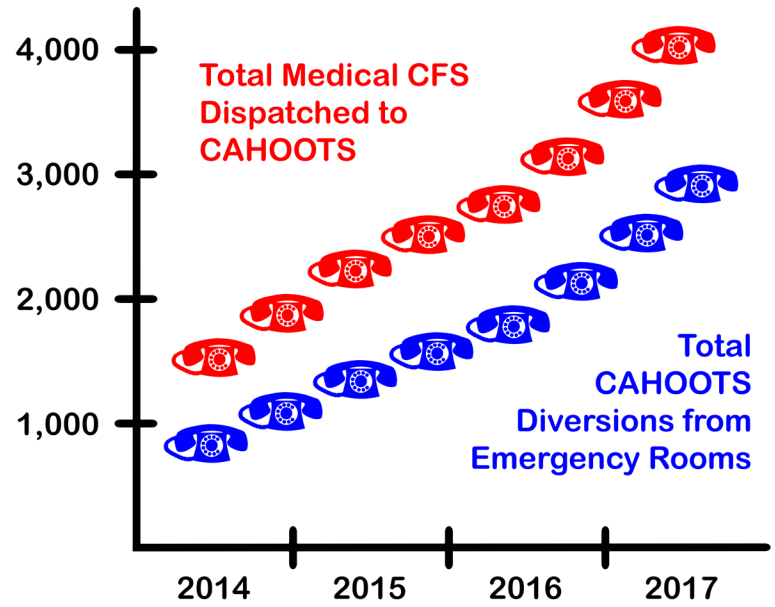
### How is CAHOOTS funded?

CAHOOTS is funded through Eugene's Public Safety, including the cost of vans, salaries, and equipment. Support is also provided by Lane county for the Metro van, which operates in Springfield and Glenwood.

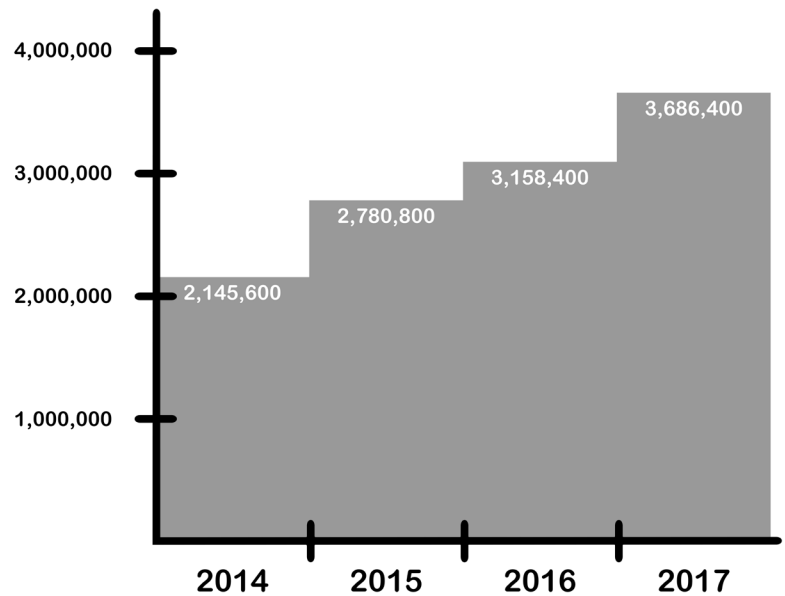
### What does the training program entail?

Training to become a CAHOOTS worker typically requires at least 500 hours of field work in addition to classroom time. 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.

## Emergency Room Diversion



## Ambulance Diversion Savings



# What is the Community Response to CAHOOTS?

## 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'd like to get."

- Officer Rankin, EPD

## Satisfied Service Providers

"CAHOOTS has not only been a pleasure to work with over this past year...they are highly informed, and I feel do an excellent job. They accurately assess the health and mental stability of our clients and communicate important information in an effective way...along with truly caring for the people we all serve. I am thankful for all they do."

-Claire Seminara, Hourglass Program Director

## Satisfied Employees

"It's not an easy job by any means. It's very challenging. Each intervention and each client are different and present their own set of challenges. But it's a very unique opportunity to connect with someone and their experience, and I honestly feel it's an absolute honor to be allowed to be a part of this and to be a part of these people's lives."

- Amy May, CAHOOTS worker

## 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



Photo by Todd Cooper / Eugene Weekly