



Assemblymember Sydney Kamlager, District 54

AB 2054 - Community Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems (C.R.I.S.E.S.) Act

IN BRIEF

AB 2054 will establish the Community Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems (C.R.I.S.E.S.) Act pilot program which will promote community-based responses to local emergency situations.

BACKGROUND & PROBLEM

In many cities across the state, community organizations successfully are responding to emergency situations involving unhoused people, people experiencing a mental health crisis, people exposed to intimate partner or community violence, people experiencing substance abuse, and people impacted by natural or climate disasters.

Despite the positive impact and cost savings of community-oriented responses to emergencies, California has done little to support and scale these efforts. Instead, law enforcement officers respond to emergencies that would be better suited to address by community organizations. These organizations have trained peer support experts, mental health providers or crisis counselors.

For example, the San Francisco Police Commission recently approved a resolution encouraging city officials to find alternatives to a police response to homelessness. Furthermore, the San Francisco Police Department estimates that up to 80% of calls for service in the city are for people in mental crisis and that police officers bring close to 4,000 people per year to psychiatric facilities.

Many law enforcement officers serve as the means of transport to an emergency room, jail, or psychiatric facility, and in the case of natural or climate disasters are serving evacuation orders or working at shelters, but police are not mental health or crisis counselors or service providers with a track record of successfully working with vulnerable people. While many well-intentioned law enforcement officers, many times, police involvement increases the feeling unsafe, risk of arrest, harm to the individual experiencing the crisis, and unnecessary costs including the time spent by the responding officers.

The presence of armed police officers can escalate a crisis. In worst case scenarios, officers use force in response to a person in crisis, resulting in unnecessary and unjust deaths and serious bodily injury to those who simply need the care and support of trained professionals.

SOLUTION

AB 2054 establishes the C.R.I.S.E.S. Act pilot grant program, promoting community-based responses to local emergency situations, including, but not limited to, situations related to:

- People Experiencing Homelessness
- Mental Health Crisis
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Community Violence
- Substance Use
- Natural Disasters

AB 2054 will be a step forward to provide stability, safety, and culturally informed and appropriate responses to immediate emergency situations as well as in the follow-up to those emergencies by involving community organizations with a deeper knowledge of the emergency.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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