

Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) Program Expansion Overview

The STAR Program deploys Emergency Response Teams that include Emergency Medical Technicians and Behavioral Health Clinicians to engage individuals experiencing crises related to mental health issues, poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse. The STAR Emergency Response Teams will be administered by a local agency. In the near future, the STAR Teams shall also work in partnership with a network of local service providers. This network will provide Community Support Services that will address the distressed individuals' needs in the moment as well as longer term issues. The expanded STAR Program shall be available no less than 7 days per week for 16 hours daily and provide coverage to the entire City of Denver. The STAR unit can be assigned to a call for service through three general mechanisms: 1) 911 call takers flagging incoming calls and directly dispatching a STAR mobile unit; 2) Uniformed response independently requests STAR to respond on scene; or 3) STAR self-initiates a response in the field.

To make the STAR Program most effective, an ongoing Community Advisory Committee will ensure it is run according to the values identified by the community. These **Core Values*** are:

- 1) **Culturally Responsive** – a program that is culturally responsive will include responders and providers who share lived experiences and identify with Denver's diverse population. In doing so, the program will be more trustworthy and responsible to the community that it serves
- 2) **Linguistically Specific** – a program that fosters the many languages that are spoken by the community it serves will ensure that people will trust and rely on the program to serve their needs;
- 3) **Holistic Care** – key to success for the STAR program is the recognition that the van itself is just one mechanism that lives within a continuum of care and support to people who are in crisis. Holistic care ensures connecting those in crisis with long-term support, services, and treatment to reduce repeat calls;
- 4) **Do No Harm** – the STAR program shall commit to a “do no harm” approach. In addition, the STAR program itself will use a harm reductionist approach recognizing that not every crisis can be “resolved” in the moment, but rather navigated and creating trust with the person in crisis to help them continue through programs and services that meet their needs;
- 5) **Healthy De-Escalation** – the STAR program will commit to de-escalation as a guiding principle of engaging with individuals and communities in crisis;
- 6) **Problem Resolution** – the STAR program will be dedicated to identifying, navigating, and solving problems that they encounter through serving individuals in crisis;

- 7) **Healthy Outcomes** – much of what the program will respond to will be public health issues and social determinants of health. Because of that, the STAR program will be dedicated to improving the health of those they engage with as components of improving community health;
- 8) **Community Empowerment and Resilience** – STAR will be dedicated to community empowerment and resilience through building trusted relationships and connecting people to services and support;
- 9) **Self Determination** – communities are supported in self-determination to decide and build safety, survival, and thriving. The STAR program will act as a vehicle towards empowerment and support;
- 10) **Alternatives to Policing** – the STAR program sends clinicians and medically trained responders to crisis instead of armed law enforcement officers with badges and ability to arrest;
- 11) **Non-Violence** – the STAR program will be committed to non-violence and de-escalation;
- 12) **Trauma-informed** – the STAR Program should have a trauma-informed approach to incorporating the needs of individuals impacted by systemic violence and trauma that they experience as the result of both systemic and personal harm. The program will understand that individuals served by the STAR program are disproportionately impacted by violence and trauma and should be driven by their needs first and foremost.

STAR Community Advisory Committee Description

The purpose of the STAR Advisory Committee is to:

- Ensure the STAR Program’s fidelity to its Core Values*
- Advise on the integration of new, community support services into the emergency response component of STAR
- Create awareness and understanding of the STAR Program within the community
- In partnership with the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE), act as an ambassador for the program

The STAR Advisory Committee will have three functions at the monthly meetings. They are:

- Data tracking and evaluation of outcomes for the STAR Program
- Qualitative tracking and ensuring fidelity to its Core Values*
- Discuss feedback from the community regarding the STAR Program

Composition of the STAR Advisory Committee:

- Shall be composed of 15 members
- Every effort will be made to have at least one representative from each of the city's Council Districts
- The committee will prioritize membership of the following groups:
 - BIPOC
 - LGBTQ community
 - Disability community
 - People with lived experience
 - Youth
 - Harm reduction community
 - Housing advocates
 - Veterans community
 - Behavioral health treatment community
 - Denver 911
 - DDPHE
- The members must live in Denver
- The group will be facilitated by a staff person from DDPHE

Terms of Membership:

- Each member will serve a term of three (3) years, with a maximum two (2) terms. Terms of the initial members will be staggered so the entire committee does not turn over at the same time. If a member steps down before their term is over, they are charged with providing three individuals for consideration to replace them. Should a member vacate their seat due to death or other unforeseen circumstances that prevent them from nominating a replacement, the seat will open for public nomination.

Schedule of Meetings:

- The STAR Advisory Committee will have one meeting per month
- Additionally, the advisory committee will have one meeting per year with DDPHE to achieve alignment and strategy for the year

Application Deadline:

- Monday, July 12, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.