

Resolution DC019-2026-001

Resolution Regarding the Selection of Chicago's Next Police Superintendent and the Future of Alternative Response

WHEREAS, the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (the Commission) plays a critical role in the selection of the Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department by reviewing applicants, conducting interviews, and submitting three finalists to the Mayor for consideration;

WHEREAS, under the ordinance establishing the District Councils, District Council members are charged with providing recommendations to the Commission on matters related to public safety and policing, including priorities that should guide the work of the Chicago Police Department;

WHEREAS, alternatives to police response can improve public safety by connecting residents with the responder best equipped to meet their needs, improving outcomes for people in crisis, reducing the likelihood of recurring crises, and allowing police officers to focus on the responsibilities for which they are uniquely trained;

WHEREAS, Chicago should continue building a modern public safety system that expands alternative response through mental health clinicians, violence interrupters, rapid response parking enforcement aides and other trained professionals;

WHEREAS, the Chicago Police Department has identified goals that include reducing response times, strengthening community policing, enabling patrol officers to spend 40% of their time engaged in proactive policing rather than responding to calls for service, and improving officer wellness, all of which can be supported by building strong, effective alternative response programs;

WHEREAS, achieving these goals will require leadership that embraces collaboration across city departments and recognizes that public safety is strengthened when police officers and civilian responders work together as partners;

WHEREAS, the next Superintendent of Police will play an essential role in helping to build and support an integrated public safety system that delivers the right response at the right time;

WHEREAS, cities that have successfully implemented meaningful alternative response programs have done so with the partnership, cooperation, and support of police departments;

WHEREAS, alternative response programs have been successfully implemented in cities across the country. For example, Denver's STAR program safely responds to more than 300 calls for service each month, Durham's HEART program has diverted more than 12,000 calls from police to trained civilian responders since 2021, and Albuquerque's Community Safety Department responds to approximately 3,500 calls each month while requesting police backup only about 1% of the time, demonstrating that civilian responders can safely and effectively handle appropriate 911 calls while allowing police officers to focus on the responsibilities for which they are uniquely trained;

WHEREAS, CPD's commissioned report for "Operationalizing Community Policing at the Chicago Police Department" recommends that CPD "[m]eet the call for 'right response at the right time' by educating community and CPD members on nonemergency response tools, like 211 and CHI 311, and explore expanding alternate response offerings, like 988 and the Chicago Alternative Response Engagement ("CARE") program, in partnership with the Mayor's Office;"

WHEREAS, through community meetings, outreach, and engagement with residents, District Council members have heard substantial and consistent interest from constituents in expanding alternative response programs that connect Chicagoans with the most appropriate responder for their needs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the members of District Council 019, call for the Commission to include the following question as part of its interview process for all Superintendent candidates:

What responsibilities currently assigned to police officers do you believe could be better handled by other professionals, and what will you do as Superintendent to help build and strengthen those alternatives?

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, the members of District Council 019, urge the Commission to ensure that every finalist nominated for Superintendent demonstrate a clear understanding of the role of alternative response within a modern public safety system and a commitment to supporting the continued development of alternative response as part of a public safety system that better serves Chicago residents while allowing police officers to focus on the responsibilities for which they are best trained.