

Homelessness and Mental Health  
Response

# Tulsa Fire Department



# Tulsa Fire Department Programs Addressing Mental Health and Homelessness



## First Response

The Tulsa Fire Department to a record number of incidents in 2022 at 75,000. 55,000 of those incidents were medical in nature. 14% of first response was categorized under mental health related or for a homeless individual.

TFD provides first response to medical incidents with a mix of advanced life support (paramedics) and basic life support (emergency medical technicians).

TFD, when fully staffed sits at 725 members and 31 Fire Stations.



## TFD C.A.R.E.S.

TFD C.A.R.E.S. stands for Community Assistance Referrals and Educational Services. TFD C.A.R.E.S. addresses members of our community calling 9-1-1 three or more times in the last four months or in distressed living conditions. TFD C.A.R.E.S. has been operating since 2016. Approximately 20% of C.A.R.E.S. clients are unhoused. 75% have some type of behavioral health history.

TFD C.A.R.E.S. is staffed with a Social Worker from MHA and a TFD Paramedic.



## Community Response Team

The Community Response Team (CRT) responds to acute mental health crisis calls. The TFD paramedic provides a medical evaluation and clearance, the TPD Officer provides for scene security and an EOD according to 43A, and the COPES Clinician provides a clinical assessment and navigation. TFD and TPD members on the team attend Crisis Intervention Training to better assist member experiencing a mental health crisis. CRT has been in service since 2017.

CRT is staffed with a TFD Paramedic, TPD Officer, and a COPES Clinician.



## Fire Marshalls Office

Fire Investigators interact with homeless individuals during fire cause determination for structure fires, vehicle fires and open burns. Community Risk Reduction provides inspection of buildings during weather extremes for sheltering.

TFD staffs 8 Investigators who work 24 hour shifts. CRR staffs 13 code enforcement officers.

# How much in annual resources goes towards addressing homelessness through your various programs?

## First Response

- Number of Calls: 2,750 Mental health related Calls, 4,500 request for homelessness response.
- Staff Time: 1,628 Hours
- Funding: \$450,000 (Department Budget)

## TFD C.A.R.E.S.

- Number of Calls in 2022- 900 Encounters with Clients (This does not include interactions with 9-1-1 responders or community resources). Of those approximately 20% or 180 were homeless encounters.
- Staff Time: 456 Hours (client interaction time, not administrative functions)
- Funding: \$31,000

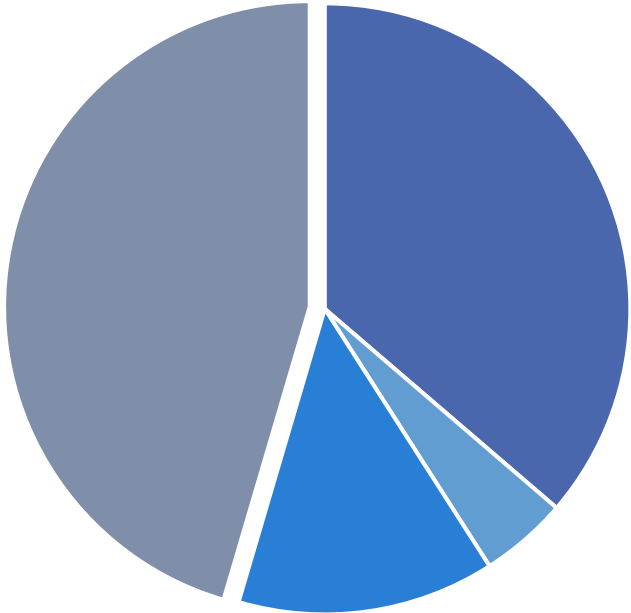
## CRT

- Number of Calls: 1,083 calls for CRT in 2022, with approximately 20% or 216 calls to homeless individuals.
- Staff Time: 2,080 hours for CRT. 416 hours accounted for homeless individuals.
- Funding: \$101,000

## Fire Investigators

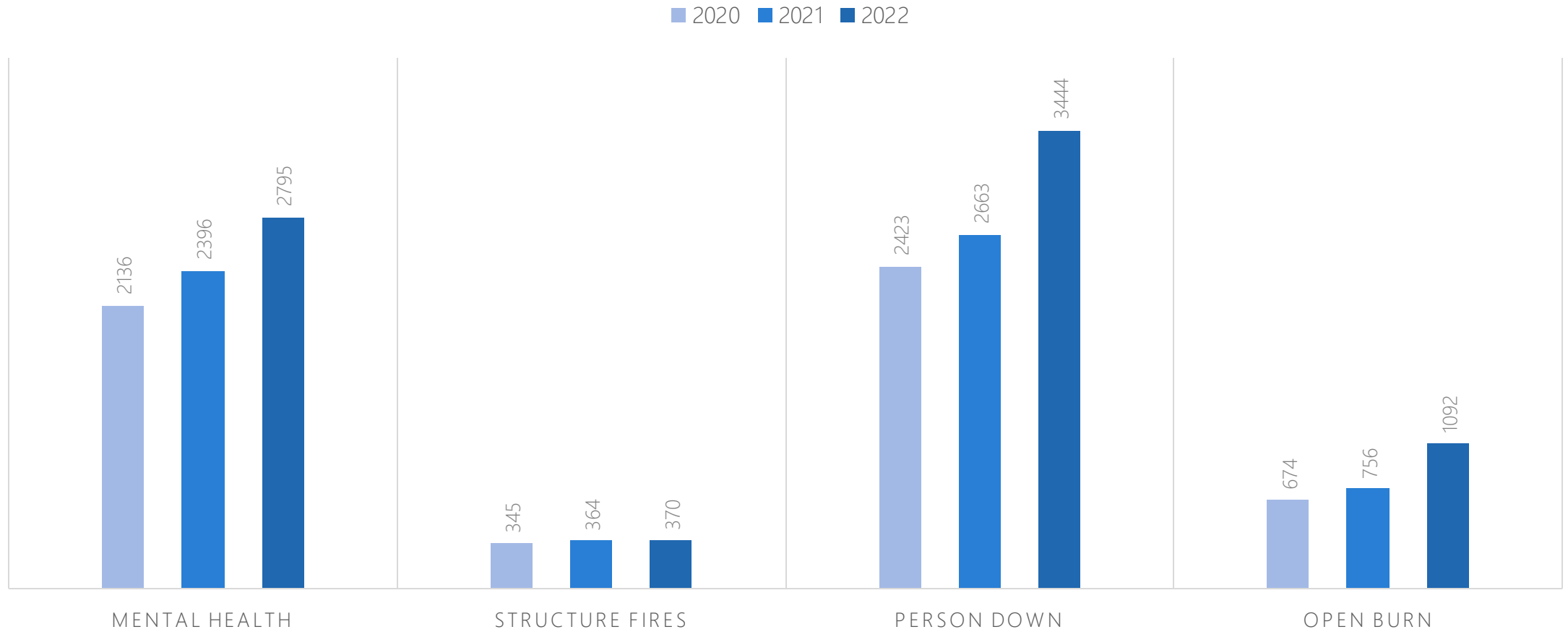
- Number of Calls: Structure/Vehicle Fires- 21% or approximately 250 incidents. Open Burn- 90% or approximately 197 Incidents.
- Staff Time for 2022- Approximately 3,700 hours
- Funding: Through Department budget

First Response



- Mental Health Related Calls
- Structure Fires
- Open burn
- Person Down

# Mental Health and Homelessness Response



# What barriers prevent your organization's ability to better assist people experiencing homelessness?

## Staffing

- Fire Department programs are limited by capacity. We could be more proactive with the right staffing for community engagements.
- Efficiencies can be implemented with the improved infrastructure.

## Resources

- Lack the resources to provide quick, life saving supplies.
- Facilities during weather extremes.

## Communication

- Communication between all community partners.
- Solution in progress.

## Transportation

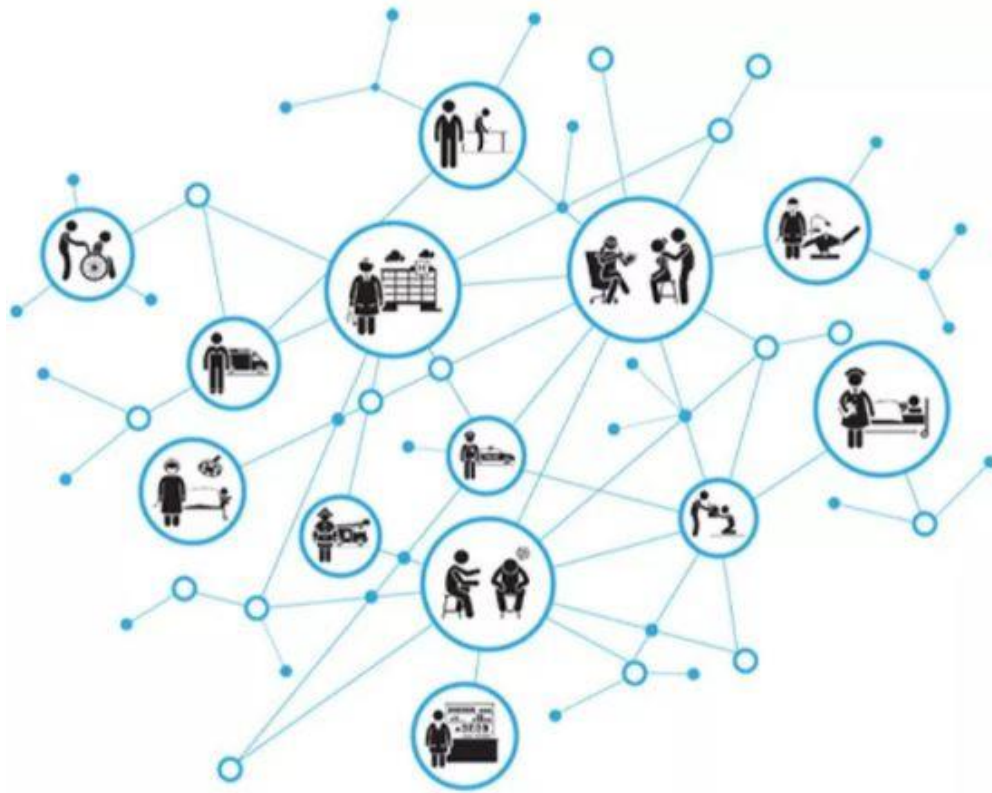
- The ability to assist in getting these individuals to the right place. Weather extremes.

## Social Barriers

- Don't all fit into one category
- Homeless members are landing in multiple lanes of resources in the community.

## What can the City do to support the Tulsa Fire Department to more effectively address the individuals needs and community impacts of homelessness?

- Convening Among Community Partners and Broader Public
  - Successful navigation requires all invested to be on the same page.
  - Working with community resources, 9-1-1 response and Hospitals to develop an accurate view of client services.
  - Stakeholder accountability.
- Financial Resources for Programs, Services and Staff
  - Staffing enables a more proactive approach with members calling 9-1-1.
  - Successful implementation of community health programs can improve public health in our community and reduce 9-1-1 utilization.
  - Central hub with invested partners to improve communication.



## Alternate Response Team (ART)

- TFD Paramedic and a COPES Clinician from F & CS.
- A mobile response unit that responds to low-acuity mental health crisis calls and behavioral health related incidents.
- ART provides a reserve unit for CRT. Will have staggered hours.

## Julota

- Case Management Platform
- Just started implementation in 2023
  - TPD
  - WIN
  - Tulsa Day Center
  - THD
  - Life Senior Services



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