

FY 2021-22 Budget Board of Supervisor Inquiry Form

Deadline: April 30, 2021

Please email: CAO-Budget@sonoma-county.org

Board Member	
Gorin	
Rabbitt	
Coursey	X
Gore	
Hopkins	

Department: Sheriff's Office

Date: 5/4/21

Inquiry Number: BIR-06

Request/Question:

How will implementation of a CAHOOTS-type response system impact the pressure on what you refer to as "core services" of the department? Will you be able to reduce response time or focus more effort on community policing, for example, if deputies are responding to fewer calls for mental-health issues or homelessness?

Response:

It is difficult to predict what impact a CAHOOTS type response system will have on core law enforcement services. There are various models and systems for this kind of service provision, which all have different approaches and service expectations. This is particularly true when assessing which models are best suited for large rural areas. Much of the data available today is based on law enforcement–mental health collaborations in suburban and urban areas. To-date, no information on specific program models being considered by the County have been shared with the Sheriff's Office. Therefore, it is unknown what volume of calls will be diverted towards this type of response system, and of the ones diverted, which ones will still require some level of deputy response.

It stands to reason, that if there are a significant number of calls for services diverted to a CAHOOTS type of response system and the calls do not require any kind of sworn deputy response, that additional time will be freed up or made available. This additional time could allow deputies to: decrease response time to other pending calls for service, proactively police and patrol the 1,575 square miles of unincorporated area, and conduct activities to connect with the community, build relationships, and work to prevent crime from occurring.

It will be important to assess the community's needs and resources to determine which approach is most appropriate for the unincorporated area of Sonoma County. It may be most beneficial to incorporate different elements from multiple approaches. The Sheriff's Office very much looks forward to working with our County partners to explore the most appropriate, collaborative approach to responding to emergency calls for service. Until more work has been completed in identifying, designing, and narrowing down a specific program approach as well as determining the details of how the chosen approach will actually operate, the Sheriff's Office is unable to predict exactly how it will impact the provision of core law enforcement services.