

## Alternative Response Teams program

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### Overview

In a collaborative effort to support counties and municipalities, Alternative Response Teams (ARTs) build co-responder models into first responder response and existing diversion programs.

ARTs can take several different forms, with the common element of connection to behavioral health and other service needs. ARTs are meant to interrupt the cycle of legal system involvement and prevent over-utilization of crisis resources by addressing unmet needs of individuals in crisis.

This model of response allows those 911 calls that can be safely diverted from first responders to be addressed with a visit by ARTs. ARTs include behavioral health, medical professionals, and social service specialists, in addition to or instead of first responders, who support in connection to behavioral health services and other needed resources.

### Eligibility requirements

Priority populations for ART grant monies include those cities or regions with documented capacity to meet crisis triage and stabilization needs. Cities are encouraged to partner with each other to create a regional response model.

### Authority

ARTs were designed and a seed grant fund initially established through Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5693; Section 215(103)(a); Chapter 297; Laws of 2022.

Ongoing appropriations for ARTs covering state fiscal years 2024-2025 were included in Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5187; Laws of 2023. The Washington Health Care Authority (HCA) contracts with AWC and Whatcom County, who contract with subrecipients to carry out the ART model.

The biennial budget includes dedicated funding to support the Whatcom County ART program and resource center.

### Funding

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) receives funding from HCA to administer a grant program to reimburse the cost to implement ARTs regionally across Washington. HCA also contracts with Whatcom County to support their ART program.

### Budget

#### Association of Washington Cities

- \$2,000,000 General Funds State- Fiscal year 2024
- \$2,000,000 General Funds State- Fiscal year 2025

#### Whatcom County

- \$587,000 General Funds State- Fiscal year 2024
- \$587,000 General Funds State- Fiscal year 2025

### Participating agencies

In state fiscal year 2024, 14 municipalities applied for and received funding from AWC (HCA's subcontractor) to operate ARTs. There are active ARTs in the following locations:

- Anacortes (Skagit County)
- Bellingham (Whatcom County)
- Everett (Snohomish County)
- Kirkland (Regional Crisis Response) (King County) \*
- Monroe (Snohomish County)
- Moses Lake (Grant County)
- Port Angeles (Clallam County)
- Port Townsend (Jefferson County)
- Poulsbo (Kitsap County)
- Puyallup (Pierce County)
- Renton (King County)
- Seattle (King County)
- Tacoma (Pierce County)
- Tukwila (King County)

Whatcom County contracts directly with HCA to support operating costs for their ART. Due to how new the program is, participant outcome data is not yet available.

## People served

Program participants in cities contracted with AWC to provide ART services in SFY24:

Agency	Participant count
Anacortes	337
Bellingham	1,543
Everett	985
Kirkland (RCR)*	1,277
Monroe	96
Moses Lake	32
Port Angeles	45
Port Townsend	216
Poulsbo	363
Puyallup	481
Renton	202
Seattle	557
Tacoma	196
Tukwila	168

## Key partners

Association of Washington Cities (AWC)  
Whatcom County Health and Community Services

## Oversight

HCA's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery has authority over ARTs.

## More information

Contact: [HCADBHRInformation@hca.wa.gov](mailto:HCADBHRInformation@hca.wa.gov)

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Diversion Services Program Manager

\*The Regional Crisis Response Agency is a multi-jurisdiction agency formed under a collaborative effort between the cities of Bothell, Kenmore, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, and Shoreline. Kirkland serves as the fiscal agent for the agency.