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Contact: Marcela Mendoza | 505-768-4909
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ACS Takes over 16,000 Calls During First Year of Operation

Third branch of public safety wraps up first year of responding to 911 calls, diverting calls from police and fire

ALBUQUERQUE – The Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) Department has just completed its first year of service to the City of Albuquerque. ACS Behavioral Health Responders began taking calls in September of 2021 after the department was created to be an alternative response to mental and behavioral health calls to 911. The department reflects more than a year of research, discussion, and planning with a wide range of experts and community members to understand the needs and gaps in public safety.

“We are grateful for the growing support and contribution from our service providers and the community who make this work possible. We invite you to engage with us as we continue to work toward a safer and stronger Albuquerque for everyone,” said **ACS Director Mariela Ruiz-Angel**.

ACS is a first-of-its-kind cabinet-level branch of public safety that works with police and fire departments and has responded to over 16,000 calls for service while having 0 deaths or serious injuries. The department has six programs, ranging from high acuity co-response with police to mid to low behavioral health calls, and our newest addition, the Violence Intervention Program.

“We’re leading the way in transforming public safety by sending behavioral health experts and folks with lived experience to calls that involve behavioral health, homelessness or addiction,” said **Mayor Tim Keller**. “This first year of service and the thousands of calls that have been diverted from police and fire show just how much this type of response is needed in our communities.”

“Mayor Keller’s decision to create an alternative response to non-violent calls is making a real difference in Albuquerque,” said **APD Chief Harold Medina**. “Our community needed a third branch to our public safety response and already ACS has helped decrease APD’s call volume and is freeing up our officers to respond to higher priority calls.”

“ACS has proven to be an amazing tool in the City’s workforce to help give residents the right help at the right time. I am excited to see how truly effective the program will be once running at full staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. As we all know, emergencies of all types have no set time for when they occur,” said **AFR Chief Gene Gallegos**.

Monthly reports on calls taken and other information about ACS can be found [here](#).

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About the Albuquerque Community Safety Department

ACS is the third branch of public safety in Albuquerque, along with the Police and Fire Rescue. ACS dispatches unarmed, first responder teams trained in behavioral health. Calls for service involve behavioral health, homelessness, addiction, and other non-medical/non-criminal issues. Visit us at cabq.gov/acs for more information.