

# A Toolkit on Alternative Response for Journalists

This toolkit is designed to improve and expand journalism on alternative response, an increasingly common component of municipal 911 systems whereby mental health professionals, mediators, EMTs, or peers are deployed to handle situations that don't require armed police.

In recent years, especially since the protests of 2020, there has been increasing media coverage of these programs by both local and national media. As experts in the field, we often are asked for certain resources and encounter several common misconceptions in reporting. At the same time, we believe this field is significantly under-reported on, and that effective coverage has been so far limited by a lack of easily accessible information and resources.

This toolkit aims to close that gap. It provides basic information, including data, public opinion polling, and statements from police leaders, to help journalists understand and accurately represent alternative response as an expanding and vital part of the public safety ecosystem.

## Toolkit Components:

- FAQ: What is Alternative Response? Common questions and answers about what alternative response is – and is not.
- Evidence on Implementing Alternative Response: A guide to existing academic evidence on whether alternative response is effective, efficient, and safe.
- What the Public Thinks About Alternative Response: A repository of public opinion polls about alternative response across the country.
- What Police Think About Alternative Response: A repository of quotes from police leaders supporting the development of alternative response.