



What is COMPASS?

Elm City COMPASS

(**Compassionate Allies Serving our Streets**) is a community-based initiative of the City of New Haven to create a system of sustainable supports for people with a mental health or substance use crisis.

Through COMPASS:

- ❖ We complement and support New Haven first responders on 911 calls and through outreach by a **community responder team** of a social worker and a peer with lived experience.
- ❖ We coordinate and integrate the **crisis response system** in New Haven.
- ❖ We seek out community feedback from our **Community Advisory Board** of residents and community stakeholders.
- ❖ We conduct a **multi-level evaluation** of the Elm City COMPASS Initiative.



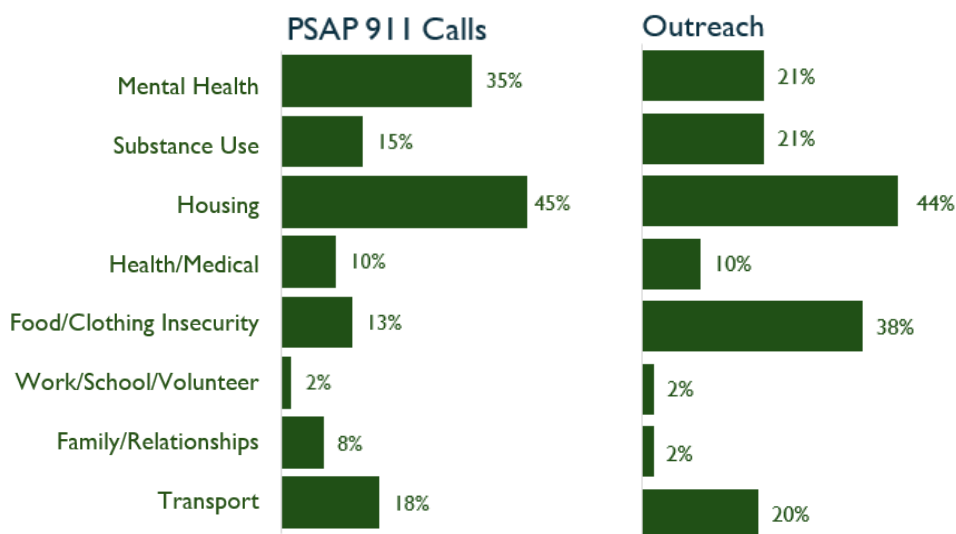
Data briefs summarize results from Elm City COMPASS quality improvement, evaluation, and research.

For more information, contact elmcitycompass@yale.edu

This Data Brief summarizes two types of services provided by the COMPASS Community Responder Team: their focus of engagement with individuals in crisis and referrals to service at the conclusion of the engagement. The data are cumulative through 3.5 years of services by the team and are for 4,380 crisis responses; 51% involving outreach responses, and 49% to 911 calls.

On average, when dispatched to a 911 call, the team arrives on scene in about 14 minutes and spends about 39 minutes assisting the individual in crisis. About the same number of responses are made each day, with 21% of responses from 8 am – 12 noon, 37% of responses from 12 pm – 6 pm, 37% from 6 pm – 12 am, and 11% from 12 am – 3 am.

Focus of Engagement



Note. Percent exceed 100 because an engagement with a person in crisis may focus on more than one issue.

The data above show that when the team engages with a person in response to a 911 call, 35% of the time the focus involves mental health, 15% substance use, and 45% involves housing. Outreach engagements differ slightly from this: 21% involve mental health, 21% substance use, and 44% housing. Notably, outreach engagements are almost three times as likely to involve food/clothing insecurity (at 38% vs. 13% respectively). Both 911 calls and outreach responses involve a similar percentage of transports from the scene by the team at 18% for 911 calls and 20% for outreach.

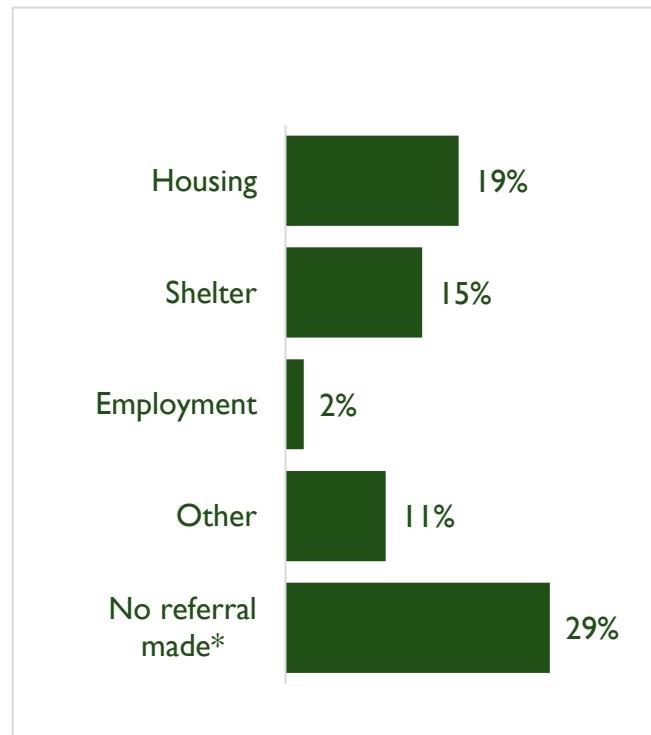
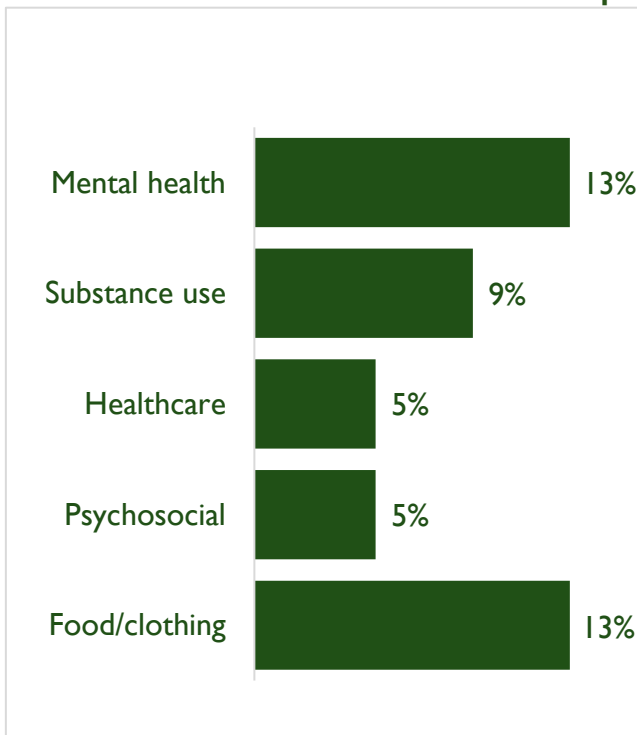


As shown below, for most crisis responses, the Community Responder Team makes a referral to services but in 29% of responses, no referral is made. That occurs because the person is already connected to a service that was the focus of the engagement or refuses services. As shown, more than one-third of the time, the team makes a housing-related referral (19% for housing and 15% for shelter). This is because 63% of individuals served by the team are unhoused.*

The next most frequent referrals made by the team are for food/clothing or mental health, each at 13%, substance use treatment at 9%, healthcare and psychosocial supports at 5% each, employment services at 2%, and a variety of other types of referrals at 11% that involve services and supports tailored to the individual's unique circumstance (e.g., grief counseling, transportation to their residence in another city/town, etc.).

*See the [website](#) for Elm City COMPASS Data Brief #2, June 2026, and recent monthly reports for more details.

Crisis Response Referrals



Elm City COMPASS is funded by The City of New Haven and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, with additional research support from the National Institute of Justice. In-kind support is provided by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Connecticut Mental Health Center, Continuum of Care, Inc., the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the Yale School of Medicine.

This Data Brief was developed by Dr. Jacob Tebes and colleagues at Elm City COMPASS. For questions or comments, please contact Dr. Tebes at jacob.tebes@yale.edu.

