CAHOOTS Program Analysis 2021 Update

PURPOSE:

To gain a clear understanding of the CAHOOTS program regarding the nature and levels of activity CAHOOTS personnel are involved with, both in conjunction with, and independent of, other emergency services, and provide a synopsis of significant response changes in 2021.

In order to provide the most consistent and up to date information, the EPD Crime Analysis Unit conducts an annual analytic review to gauge the impact the CAHOOTS program has on the Eugene Police Department’s (EPD) activity levels.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- CAHOOTS divert rates remain between approximately 3% to 8% of EPD Calls For Service (CFS)
- CAHOOTS called for backup from EPD in 301 instances in 2021
  - CODE 3 Cover, or an immediate police emergency response with lights and siren, was needed in ~8% of the backup calls
  - Backup rates are higher in natures of calls that are traditionally dispatched to police, like Criminal Trespass, Disputes, Etc.
- Public demand for CAHOOTS program resources grew at a higher rate than the program response
  - Public CFS with CAHOOTS associations increased by 8% in 2021
  - The number of CFS arrived at by CAHOOTS resources increased by ~1%

METHOD:

Two tools have been created by the EPD Crime Analysis Unit to help examine data from the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Anecdotally, these two tools are referred to as the “CAHOOTS tool,” and the “Annual Stats tool.” Both are interactive and reside on a closed EPD network, pulling their data from the Eugene CAD system.

Due to the complexities and numerous variables, every effort will be made to be as thorough as possible when describing various filters applied to the data to better understand the nature of CAHOOTS involvement in the public safety system.

The examined data is inclusive from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.
DISCUSSION:

CAHOOTS is a partner organization with the City of Eugene and is run through the White Bird Clinic. It is currently dispatched via the same system as EPD and Eugene Springfield Fire (ESF) to a variety of calls, diverting some from EPD and other emergency services, as well as handling a subset of unique calls that wouldn’t normally be responded to by law enforcement. Calls for CAHOOTS come in through either the emergency 911 system or the non-emergency line. Additionally, there are some calls that are self-initiated, or calls where CAHOOTS vans are flagged down by individual members of the community. The initial step in this analysis is to look at the nature and frequency of Calls for Service (CFS) within the CAD system as they relate to CAHOOTS.

ALL CAHOOTS ASSOCIATIONS:

In 2021 CAHOOTS had some level of activity in 22,055 public-initiated CFS. This number is not indicative of a response, dispatch or arrival, simply an association between a CAHOOTS unit designator and an event in CAD. Figure 1 shows all CAHOOTS associations by call nature. This chart includes calls that may also have an association with other emergency services.

Compared to the prior year, CAHOOTS-related CFS increased with 1,561 (8%) more calls. The prime drivers of the change were an increase in “CAHOOTS Centric” CFS: Check Welfare, Assist Public – Police and Transport. These will be examined in greater depth later in the document. The increase in CAHOOTS CFS is in-line with an overall increase in public demand for services.

ALL CAHOOTS DISPATCHED CFS:

In 2021, CAHOOTS was dispatched to 18,106 public-initiated CFS. This includes calls that are both CAHOOTS only and a joint response with other emergency services. It is a subset of the calls in Figure 1. Lack of dispatch can be for a variety of reasons ranging from a call not requiring a response, to a caller not providing complete information, or a caller calling back and canceling a call. CAHOOTS dispatch rates are higher than EPD due to the nature of the calls they receive. CAHOOTS calls are generally not for information only or calls to report a past crime, those types of calls, which are common for EPD, are often not dispatched.
Dispatched CAHOOTS calls increased by 1% (or 224 more) over the previous year. The 2021 change in dispatch rates are disproportional to the increase in overall CFS associations (Figure 1). This may be indicative of a capacity issue. Both Check Welfare and Assist Public calls saw increases of ~5% per year while dispatched CFS for Transports dropped by 24%. Dispatched CFS for Suicidal Subjects saw an increase 18% (+243).

**ALL CAHOOTS ARRIVED CFS:**

In 2021 there were 16,218 public-initiated CFS (Figure 3) where CAHOOTS was both dispatched and arrived. This number is a sub-set of Figure 2 and includes CAHOOTS-only activity as well as CAHOOTS activity in conjunction with other emergency services. A variance in dispatch and arrival rates is common with service calls. It is often caused by the call being canceled after dispatch and is not indicative of a non-availability of services. Due to the delay between a call being received, dispatched, and resources arriving on scene, a caller may call back and report the subject of the call is no longer on scene.

CAHOOTS’ overall arrival rate is 89% of all dispatched CFS, and 89% for the top 3 CFS natures they typically respond to. Their arrival rate for Suicidal Subject calls is slightly higher at 91%. The response rates are nearly identical to 2020 numbers. In 2021 CAHOOTS arrived at 317 more CFS than in 2020 (+2%), as noted in the “Dispatched CFS” section this is not proportional to the 8% overall increase in associated CFS (Fig 1).

**ALL CAHOOTS ONLY CFS ASSOCIATIONS:**

Figure 4 shows all 2021 Public-initiated CFS where only CAHOOTS has an association to the call in the CAD system. There are no other emergency services associated to the call. These calls are a subset of Figure 1 (All CAHOOTS Associations). This does not indicate either dispatch or arrival.

Associated CAHOOTS-only calls increased by 7% (+1,202), this is in-line with the 8% overall increase in associations (Fig 1) Their main increases were in CFS for Assist Public – Police (+560), Check Welfare (+814) and Suicidal Subject (+287) Transport CFS decreased by 17% in 2021 which follows a 39% decrease in 2020. While Transports remain one of the primary CFS for CAHOOTS, the nature has been halved since 2019 when it
made up 25% of their total call volume. It is likely that the pandemic, and associated stay-at-home orders and reductions in service, had a significant impact on the service requests.

**CAHOOTS ONLY ARRIVED CFS:**

Figure 5 indicates 2021 public-initiated CFS where CAHOOTS was the only unit that was both dispatched and arrived on scene. There were 14,212 CFS that fit these criteria, that is an increase of 207 CFS over 2020. The difference between dispatch (15,781) and arrival is 1,569. The ARRIVED calls are a subset of Figure 3 (all CAHOOTS arrived). These numbers do not include calls where CAHOOTS called for backup from other emergency services after arriving on scene. Divert rate will be discussed later, however 14,212 should be the base-line number for beginning any divert calculations. It indicates a call that may have gone to emergency services but was diverted to CAHOOTS, without intervention or support from emergency services.

While CAHOOTS-only calls with any association (Figure 4) saw a 7% increase in total volume, those calls where a CAHOOTS unit was dispatched and arrived only experienced an increase of ~1%. Further, this subset of calls had a similar shift in volume and rankings of its largest three categories, although they still contributed 82% of total volume, this has remained consistent since 2019. These shifts consisted of a 496 (23%) reduction of Transports and increases in the other two – Assist Public-Police and Check Welfare at 223 (5%) and 278 (6%), respectively. In addition, the arrival rate for CAHOOTS-only dispatched CAHOOTS-only CFS remained steady at approximately 90% which is unchanged since 2019.

**JOINT CAHOOTS / EPD CFS:**

Figure 6 shows the 1,958 joint CFS where both CAHOOTS and EPD dispatched and arrived at the call. These calls are a subset of calls in figure 3 (all CAHOOTS arrived) and include CFS where CAHOOTS called for backup from EPD. These gross joint CFS numbers do not differentiate which units arrived on scene first.

Unlike the preceding categories of calls, joint calls between CAHOOTS and EPD saw no shift in total volume, with >1% more (+1) CFS. There was an increase in joint Check Welfare, and a decrease in the number of both Suicidal Subject and Dispute CFS with a joint response.
CAHOOTS BACKUP CALLS:

Figure 7 illustrates 301 CFS where CAHOOTS called for backup from law enforcement. The calls are a subset of Figure 6 (joint calls).

To be included in the backup category, ALL of the following criteria had to be met:

- The call was dispatched to CAHOOTS ONLY
- CAHOOTS arrived on scene
- EPD was dispatched and arrived after CAHOOTS arrived on scene

The percentage of calls beginning as a CAHOOTS ONLY response and then requiring backup remained consistent staying at approximately 2% overall since 2019.

In the initial 2019 analysis we identified that looking outside of the CAHOOTS typical top ten call types increased the percentage of calls requiring backup from EPD. When looking at the majority of activities within the top 10 natures, the percent of backup requested remained steady at approximately 2%, with the only exception being “Disorderly Subject” calls that required backup 11% of the time in 2021. For example, “Criminal Trespass,” backup was requested 29 times out of 38 CAHOOTS responses where they arrived and located the subject. That equates to CAHOOTS requesting backup in 76% of the CAHOOTS ONLY Criminal Trespass CFS. For the top 3 natures making up the bulk of CAHOOTS responses, the backup rate has remained a consistent 2% average. The term backup does not indicate an emergency response, it simply indicates that after CAHOOTS arrived on scene it was determined additional police response was required.

EXPLANATION OF CAHOOTS TOP NATURES:

1. **ASSIST PUBLIC- POLICE (5,791 dispatched)**: This nature is not considered a traditional police call. It generally involves non-emergency service requests from the public, from counseling, to injury evaluation after a person declined to be evaluated by a medic, to providing general services. CAHOOTS arrived at 5,058 of the Assist Public calls. They make up 36% of the total call volume that CAHOOTS is dispatched to.

2. **CHECK WELFARE (5,546 dispatched)**: The CAHOOTS Welfare Check nature is generally separate from the EPD Welfare Check. Dispatch makes the determination at the time of the call that the caller does not appear to require a law enforcement response, or the caller specifically requests CAHOOTS. CAHOOTS arrived at 5,022 of the Welfare Checks. They make up 35% of the total call volume CAHOOTS is dispatched to.

3. **TRANSPORT (1,781 dispatched)**: A CAHOOTS transport call generally involves moving an individual, often unhoused and in need, or dealing with mental health issues, from one location to another for non-emergency services. For example: an individual may need to get from a dusk-to-dawn site to a hospital for non-emergency issues. CAHOOTS arrived at 1,587 of the Transport calls. Transport calls make up 11% of the total call volume CAHOOTS is dispatched to.
To better understand the natures, the following are random samples from the calls of these natures, which were dispatched to CAHOOTS personnel. These calls are indicative of those in the nature, although not all inclusive, the CFS details below have been shortened:

1. **Assist Public**
   - (20218100) SEE INC # 20-217964 CALLER (C/) BACK ON THE LINE STILL REQUESTING CAHOOTS LOC/ IN FRONT OF MENS SIDE OF MISSION, C/ REQ CAHOOTS FOR HOUSING OPTIONS. C/ WAS AT THE WOMENS MISSION
   - (20163284) LOC/ NEAR THE PLAYGROUND I/ 29YOF IS DAUGHTER OF COMP COMP REQ CAHOOTS COME TO COUNSEL AND ASSESS HER MENTAL HEALTH

2. **Check Welfare**
   - (20108031) MALE SEEMS TO BE HAVING AN ARGUMENT WITH HIMSELF SEEMS UNSTABLE. NO WEAPONS OBS C/ THINKS HE NEEDS SOMEONE TO CHECK ON HIM. LOC/ WANDERING AROUND AT THE INTERSECTION NOT IN THE ROAD WAY. {4J79} SUBJ REFUSED SERVICES
   - (20274898) I/ APPEARS TO BE HAVING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS I/ MAKING STATEMENTS THAT DON`T MAKE SENSE SAYING HUNDREDS OF DOGS ARE OUTSIDE TRYING TO EAT HIM C/ REQ CAHOOTS C/ REQ CAHOOTS DO WELFARE CHECK. {1J77} SUBJ REFUSED SERVICES

3. **Transport**
   - (20108189) I/ REQ CAHOOTS DECLINES MEDIC, TRAN TO UDH I/ WILL BE WAITING OUTSIDE ON THE SOBERING SIDE. NO COLD, FLU, OR COUGH, NO FEVER, NO SOB. C/ BACK ON THE LINE, ADVI I/ IS REQUESTING MEDICS NOW, LEFT HOSPITAL AMA YESTERDAY, NOW REQ MEDICS BECAUSE HE IS IN A LOT OF PAIN. CAHOOTS IS ON THE WAY, PT OKAY WITH WAITING FOR CAHOOTS.
   - (20043253) I/ REQ CAHOOTS FOR TRAN, UNK WHERE I/ NEEDS TO MOVE. C/ BACK ON LINE ADVI THAT I/ IS NOW ACROSS THE STREET BY STOP SIGN I/ HAD FALLEN WHEN HE WAS MOVING BUT STILL C&B

**CAHOOTS DIVERTS:**

*Divert Criteria:* For a call to be considered a divert, ALL of the following criteria must be true:

1. The call is received by call center
2. Police are normally dispatched to the call nature
3. The call is dispatched to, and arrived at by, an outside agency
4. No EPD resources are dispatched to the call

*Dispatch versus non-dispatched calls:* This is one area where CAHOOTS and EPD numbers differ significantly. The term “dispatched” indicates that physical resources (individuals) have been sent to the scene of activity in order to render assistance or investigate activity.

For CAHOOTS, a non-dispatched call indicates there is no activity that occurs, or no response. A typical example of this is when a member of the public calls in, the call is placed in the queue waiting for available resources, and due to a time lapse from the initial call, the caller calls back and states the subject is no longer there, or no longer in need of assistance. The call is never dispatched to CAHOOTS.

For EPD a non-dispatched call often still carries a burden of activity, including the filing of reports, the gathering of information and possible future activity. A typical example of this is a call for Theft From Vehicle. In 2021 there were 2,624 CFS to EPD of this nature and the agency dispatched personnel to approximately 104 (~3%) of those calls. Officers are generally not needed on scene to file a report.
Despite personnel not being physically sent to the scene, the agency still has multiple individuals and staff-hours dedicated to these events.

The distinction between the two agency responses becomes important when calculating diverts. We must look first at all CFS dispatched, and arrived at, by CAHOOTS only (Fig. 5: 14,212); that number must be compared to the total CFS volume for both agencies (Fig. 8 below). In 2020 there were 109,854 Public CFS placed to the call center.

Calculating the divert rate of CAHOOTS for EPD activity is not as simple as removing all calls associated to CAHOOTS from the total number of CFS received by the call center. It needs to be capable of answering the question: “If CAHOOTS services weren’t available, how many additional calls would EPD need to handle?” To address that specific question, the four divert criteria listed at the beginning of this section must be met.

If we incorrectly assume that ALL calls associated with (Figure 1: 22,055), dispatched to (Figure 2: 18,106), or handled by only CAHOOTS (Figure 5: 14,212) would be dispatched to police if CAHOOTS services were not available, then we have gross divert rates of: ~20%, ~16%, or ~12% respectively.

However, as discussed when examining call natures, the top 3 CAHOOTS CFS natures: Assist Public (5,058), Check Welfare (5,022), and Transport (1,587) are not traditionally law enforcement calls and would likely not be dispatched to police. The majority of these calls are received by the call center because of the partnership with CAHOOTS; the public is aware that CAHOOTS services are accessed through calling 911 or the non-emergency number and it artificially inflates the total call volume to emergency services.

If all calls in the top three CFS which are CAHOOTS-centric (11,667 sum from above), are removed from the total of CAHOOTS only responses, we are left with 2,545 CFS (Fig. 5 – 11,667), which are likely diverts. This equates to an overall divert rate of ~2%

If we look only at dispatched calls for both agencies (68,427) and subtract out the removed CAHOOTS natures (11,667) we are left with 56,760 total dispatched CFS, of which 2,545 were handled by CAHOOTS, which would equate to ~4% divert rate of dispatched calls.

Check Welfare calls, handled solely by CAHOOTS, are the most challenging call nature to differentiate from traditional law enforcement CFS. A 2019 analysis of a random sample of 200 Check Welfare calls by dispatchers, estimated that approximately 74% (148 of 200) of these types of calls would likely be dispatched to police if CAHOOTS resources weren’t available. If we apply this percentage to the larger group of Check Welfare CFS dispatched to CAHOOTS in 2021 (5,546), we are left with 4,104 CFS that may be sent to police (diverts). Using this methodology, the number of divert calls for CAHOOTS has remained steady year-over-year, ranging between 3% and 8%, for overall and dispatched CFS, respectively.

**SUMMARY:**

CAHOOTS is a valued partner within the city of Eugene and provides a needed service within the community. In examining interplay between EPD and CAHOOTS, they are partner organizations where they both meet specific and unique needs. Additionally, CAHOOTS and EPD are often jointly dispatched to CFS to meet those needs.
CAHOOTS diverts calls from EPD, however it is not the 17-20% reported by just looking at the total number of CAHOOTS associated calls compared to all EPD calls. Even with a full and comprehensive study of calls responded to by CAHOOTS, it is not possible to find an exact divert rate for a specified time period. **It is likely that the true divert rate falls between approximately 3% - 8%.**

Additionally, EPD does provide backup for some CFS where CAHOOTS was the only unit initially assigned. **EPD rates of CAHOOTS requesting backup are higher than what has previously been reported in the news media.** “Traditional” CAHOOTS-centric calls: Check Welfare, Assist Public and Transport had relatively low divert rates, whereas traditionally police-centric calls, like Criminal Trespass, had significantly higher instances of CAHOOTS requiring backup from the police.

Further, the COVID19 pandemic did little to change this relationship in 2020 or 2021, merely shifting the mix of activities as a result of a new landscape. Many activities considered to be exclusively “outside” and “inside” saw decreases and increases, respectively. While this modified where CAHOOTS and EPD partners met public need, overall demand for CAHOOTS services, the programs contribution to EPD workload, and overall responsiveness by CAHOOTS personnel changed little.

Compiled by: Eugene Police Crime Analysis Unit

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Contact: Ryan Skiles, CAU Manager // rskiles@eugene-or.gov