AN ACT Relating to providing quality behavioral health co- 
response services; adding a new section to chapter 71.24 RCW; and 
creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that behavioral 
health co-response has experienced a surge in popularity in 
Washington state in the past five years. The legislature recognizes 
the importance of training for those involved in co-responder 
programs to promote high standards within programs and to enhance the 
skills of those already working in this field. The purpose of this 
act is to develop best practice recommendations and a model training 
curriculum relevant to first responders and behavioral health 
professionals working on co-response teams, to create ongoing 
learning opportunities for emerging and established co-response 
programs, and to develop the workforce to fill future co-responder 
hiring needs.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 71.24 
RCW to read as follows:
(1) Subject to funding, the University of Washington shall, in 
consultation and collaboration with the co-responder outreach 

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alliance and other stakeholders as appropriate in the field of co-
response:

(a) Establish regular opportunities for police, fire, emergency
medical services, peer counselors, and behavioral health personnel
working in co-response to convene for activities such as training,
exchanging information and best practices around the state and
nationally, and providing the University of Washington with
assistance with activities described in this section;

(b) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
specific purpose, administer a small budget to help defray costs for
training and professional development, which may include expenses
related to attending or hosting site visits with experienced co-
response teams;

(c) Develop an assessment to be provided to the governor and
legislature by June 30, 2023, describing and analyzing the following:
   (i) Existing capacity and shortfalls across the state in co-
response teams and the co-response workforce;
   (ii) Current alignment of co-response teams with cities,
counties, behavioral health administrative services organizations,
and call centers; distribution among police, fire, and EMS-based co-
response models; and desired alignment;
   (iii) Current funding strategies for co-response teams and
identification of federal funding opportunities;
   (iv) Current data systems utilized and an assessment of their
effectiveness for use by co-responders, program planners, and
policymakers;
   (v) Current training practices and identification of future state
training practices;
   (vi) Alignment with designated crisis responder activities;
   (vii) Recommendations concerning best practices to prepare co-
responders to achieve objectives and meet future state crisis system
needs, including those of the 988 system;
   (viii) Recommendations to align co-responder activities with
efforts to reform ways in which persons experiencing a behavioral
health crisis interact with the criminal justice system; and
   (ix) Assessment of training and educational needs for current and
future co-responder workforce;

(d) Beginning in calendar year 2023, begin development of model
training curricula for individuals participating in co-response
teams; and
(e) Beginning in calendar year 2023, host an annual statewide conference that draws state and national co-responders.

(2) Stakeholders in the field of co-response may include, but are not limited to, the Washington association of designated crisis responders; state associations representing police, fire, and emergency medical services personnel; the Washington council on behavioral health; the state enhanced 911 system; 988 crisis call centers; and the peer workforce alliance.

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