

**2020**

**BURLINGTON POLICE  
DEPARTMENT**

2020 Law  
Enforcement Crisis  
Counselor Annual  
Report

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# Purpose:

## Purpose of Law Enforcement Crisis Counselor:

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In 2015, the Burlington Police Department recognized an increase and the cyclical nature of Mental Health calls for services. Limited resources and a two-hour response time from the contracted Mobile Crisis provider placed officers in a difficult position to provide an adequate response to those in crisis. Lacking subject matter expertise, officers generally resorted to simply transporting subjects in crisis to the local Emergency Department at Alamance Regional Medical Center (ARMC).

The Law Enforcement Crisis Counselor (LECC) began as a full-time program in 2016. The LECC is a full-time civilian contract employee with Burlington Police Department through RHAHealth Services. The LECC position is comprised of a North Carolina board certified Licensed Clinical Social Worker – Associate (LCSW-A). Jamaal Othiossinir of RHA held this position for 2020.

The purpose of the LECC program is to assist Burlington Police Department officers in response to mental health and substance use crisis with several objectives in mind: resolve crisis on the scene, decrease the arrest of individuals in crisis, assist officers with best resource-driven response to reduce utilization of the Emergency Department and Detention Center, increase access for the and provide follow up services for referrals given by the Burlington Police Department.

With four years of proven success, the department is constantly seeking ways to enhance our response to mental health. In 2020, the department utilized grant funds to embed a Youth Crisis Counselor in the Community Relations Division. The primary intent of this position was to intercede before criminal conduct with youth who may be committing crimes or involved in delinquent behaviors. The early intervention is an attempt to divert the youth from the formal juvenile justice system.

# Overview of the Year – 2020:

## Overview and Impact of COVID:

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Due to COVID -19, CIT was not held during 2020. However, regular education was provided to officers during line-up on Zoom, information sharing, education on Behavioral Health diagnoses, and information on available services. The LECC was not required to conduct training or participate in the Junior Police Academy. The LECC was able to increase on-scene responses due to having more time.

**De-escalation and Clinical**— due to the crisis nature of the work being completed by the LECC and Youth Crisis Counselor (YCC) the scope of the work remained unchanged. Processes were developed and modified to adapt to needs during Covid-19, including but not limited to enhanced safety measures, screening questions, and strategic approaches to engage members of the community while maintaining Covid-19 guidelines.

Identification of unique needs of the population during Covid-19, including but not limited to social isolation, loss of employment, school being held virtually, housing, decreased access to in-person services, and social supports. Although the pandemic provided challenges, the LECC and YCC programs continued to impact staff positively.

# Recap of Last Year's Report Recommendations:

## Recommendations for 2020 and Actions Taken:

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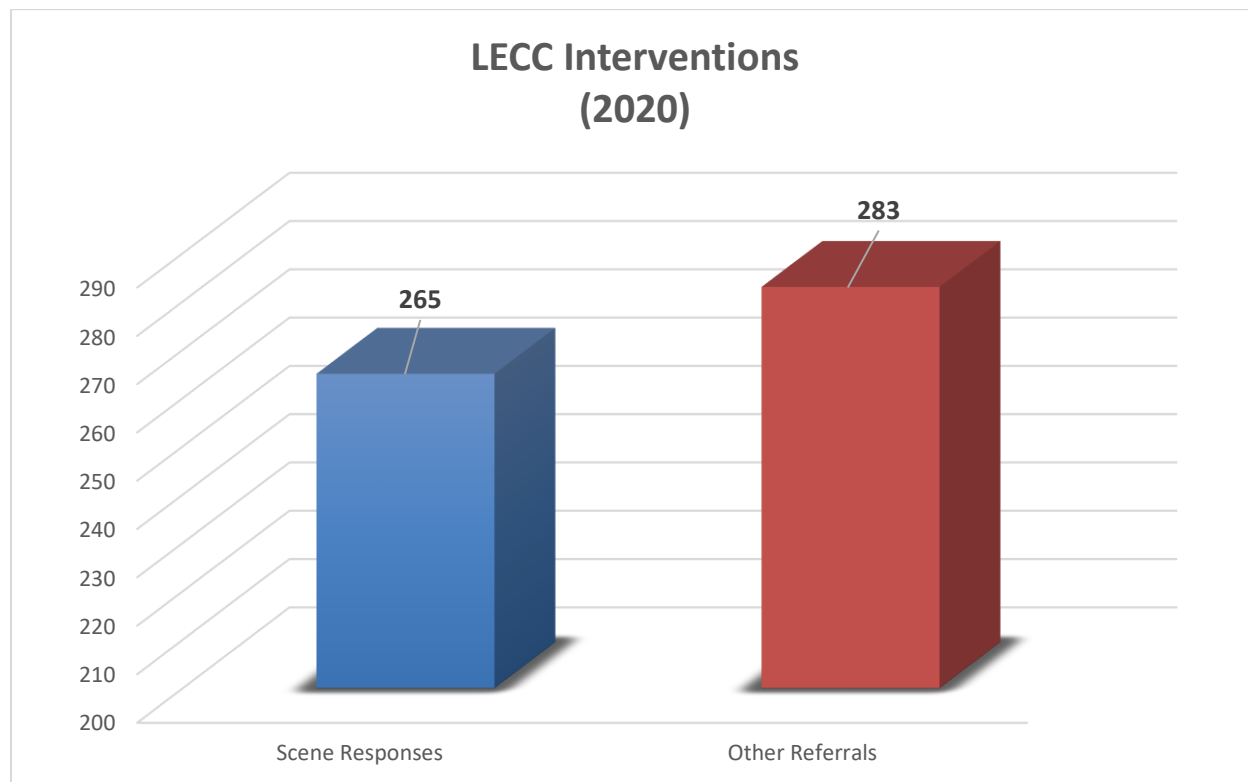
1. Continue Law Enforcement Crisis Clinician (LECC) position and program. **Completed**
2. Assessment of data needs and funding availability for additional Law Enforcement Crisis Clinician position and/or Crisis Intervention Team. **Completed and Ongoing**

## Report Data:

### LECC

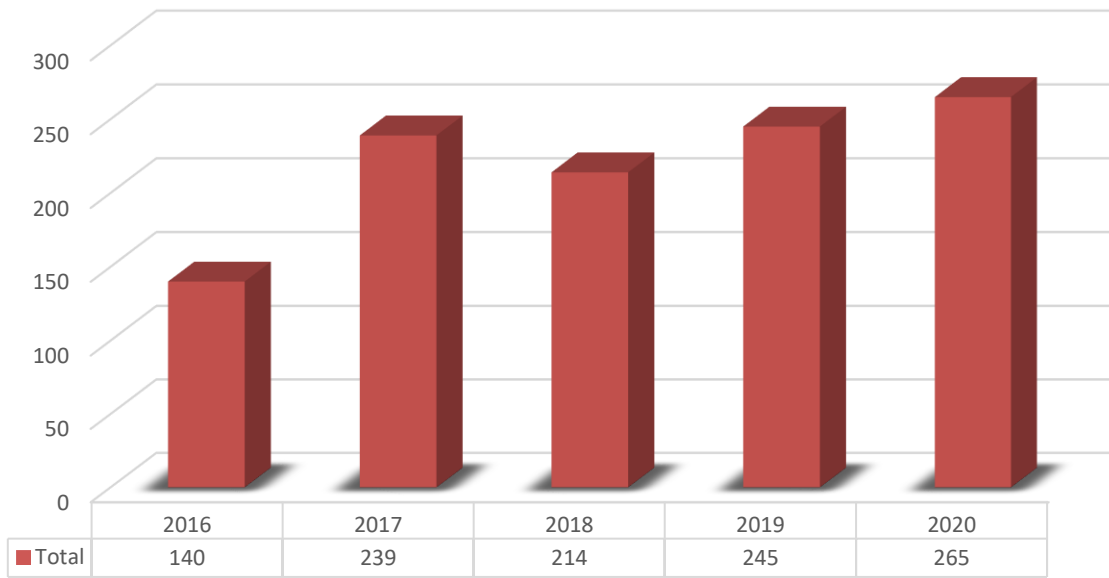
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In 2020, the Law Enforcement Crisis Counselor (LECC) directly or indirectly connected or referred behavioral health resources to 548 persons. As indicated in the chart below, two-hundred and sixty-five (265) of those interventions occurred during a direct response to a call for service. An additional two-hundred and eighty-three (283) referrals came indirectly through telephone calls or emails.



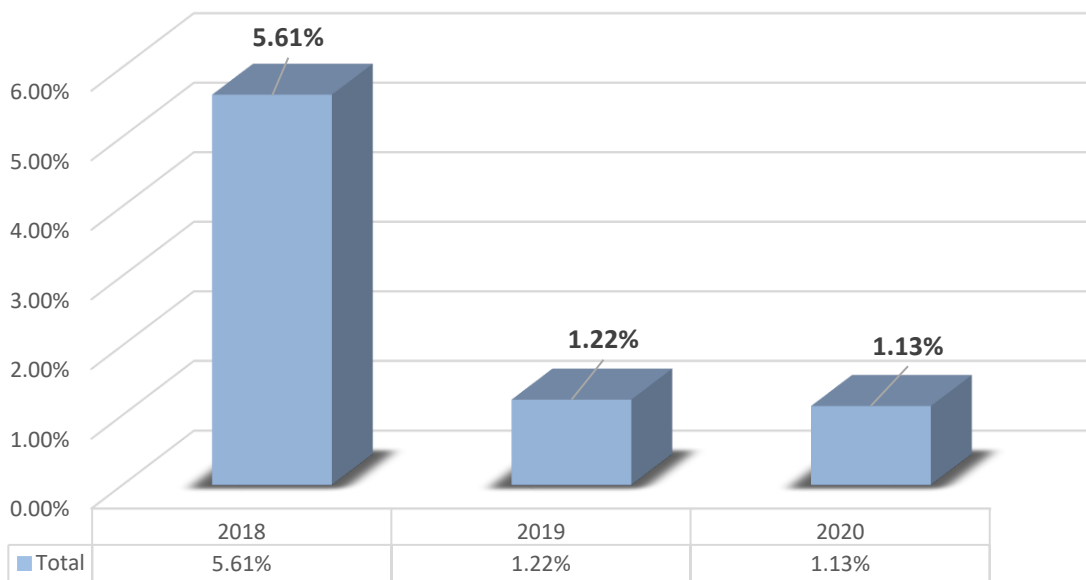
In comparing five-year data, the LECC continues to increase the number of direct scene responses to assist law enforcement during calls for service. These direct responses have increased 48% since the development of the program in 2016.

### LECC - Scene Responses 2016-2020

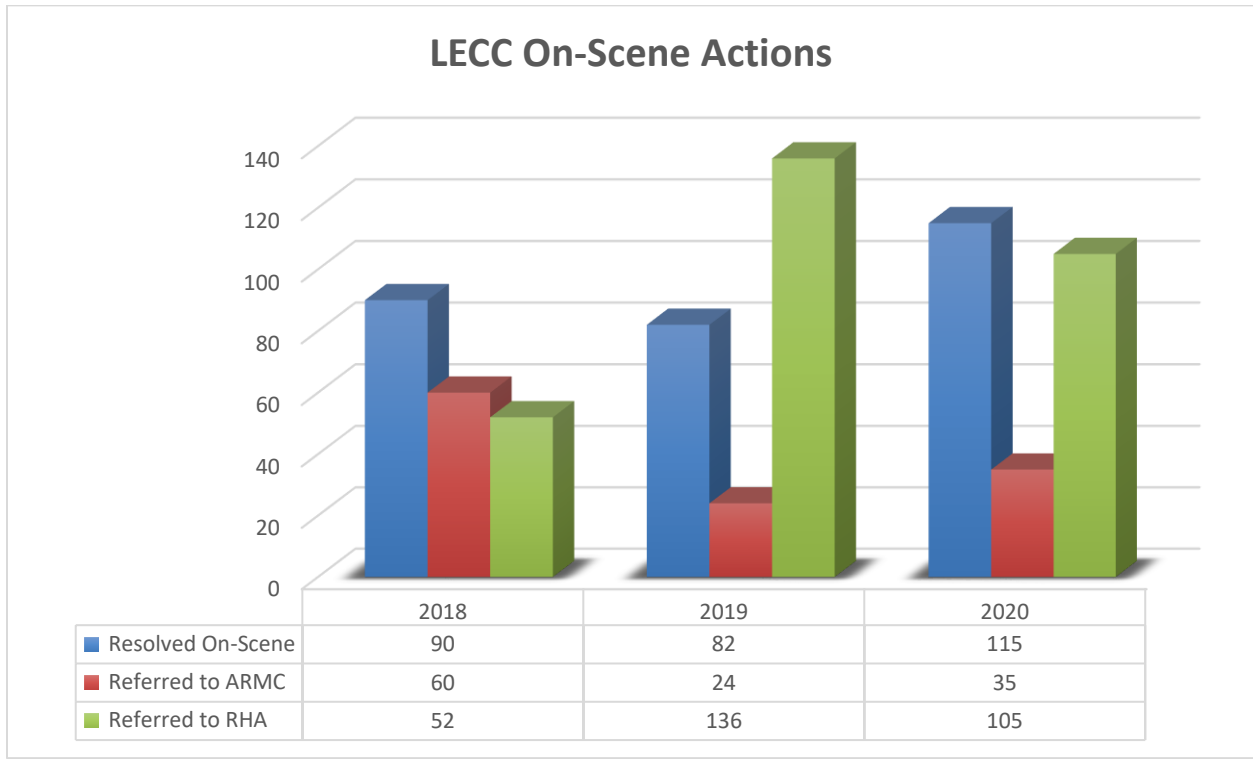


One of the primary objectives of the LECC is to divert individuals experiencing crisis to healthy and productive resources other than detention. Of the 265 on-scene interventions in 2020, only three of those incidents resulted in arrest, which is 1.13% of all on-scene encounters. Since capturing this data in 2018, this percentage continues to decline and meets the overall objective of connecting those persons to the appropriate resources.

### LECC Responses Resulting in Arrest (%)



The chart below represents the actions occurring from the LECC’s direct interventions. In 2020, forty-three percent (43%) were resolved on scene, forty percent (40%) were diverted directly to the RHA crisis center, and thirteen percent (13%) were diverted to the Cone Health emergency room.



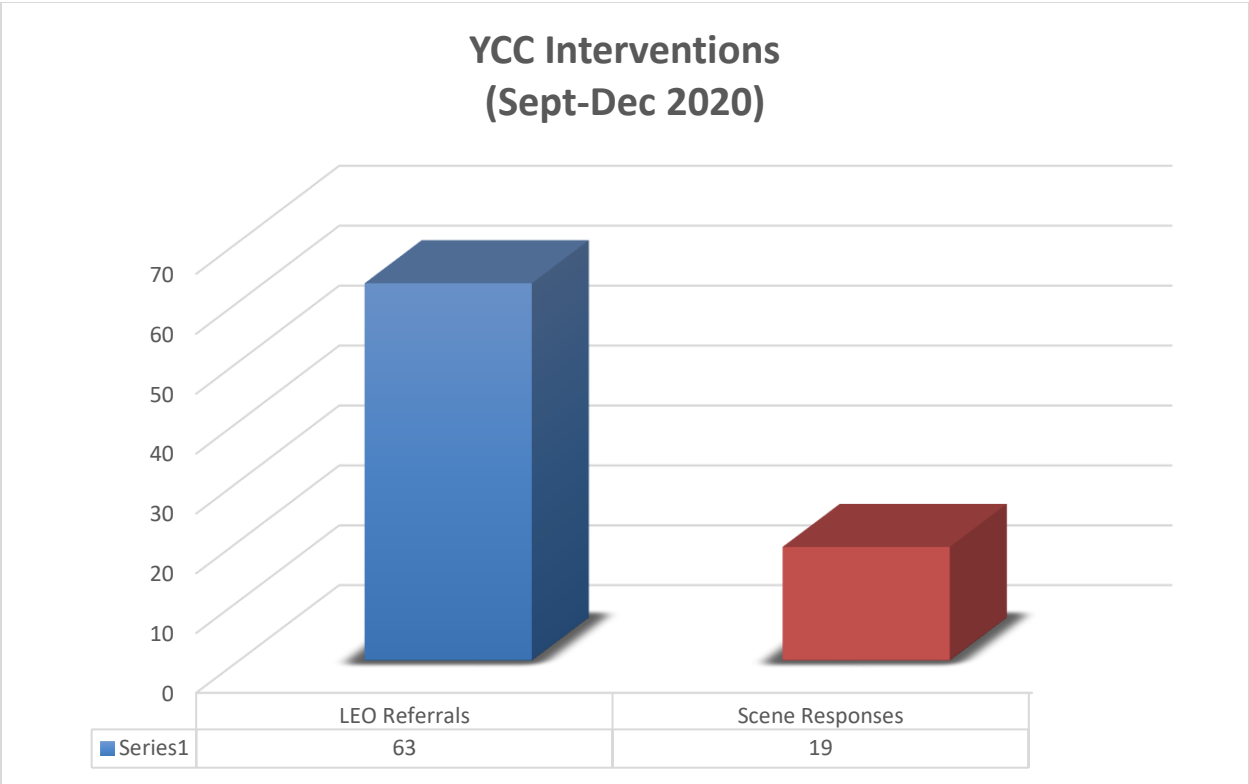
## YCC

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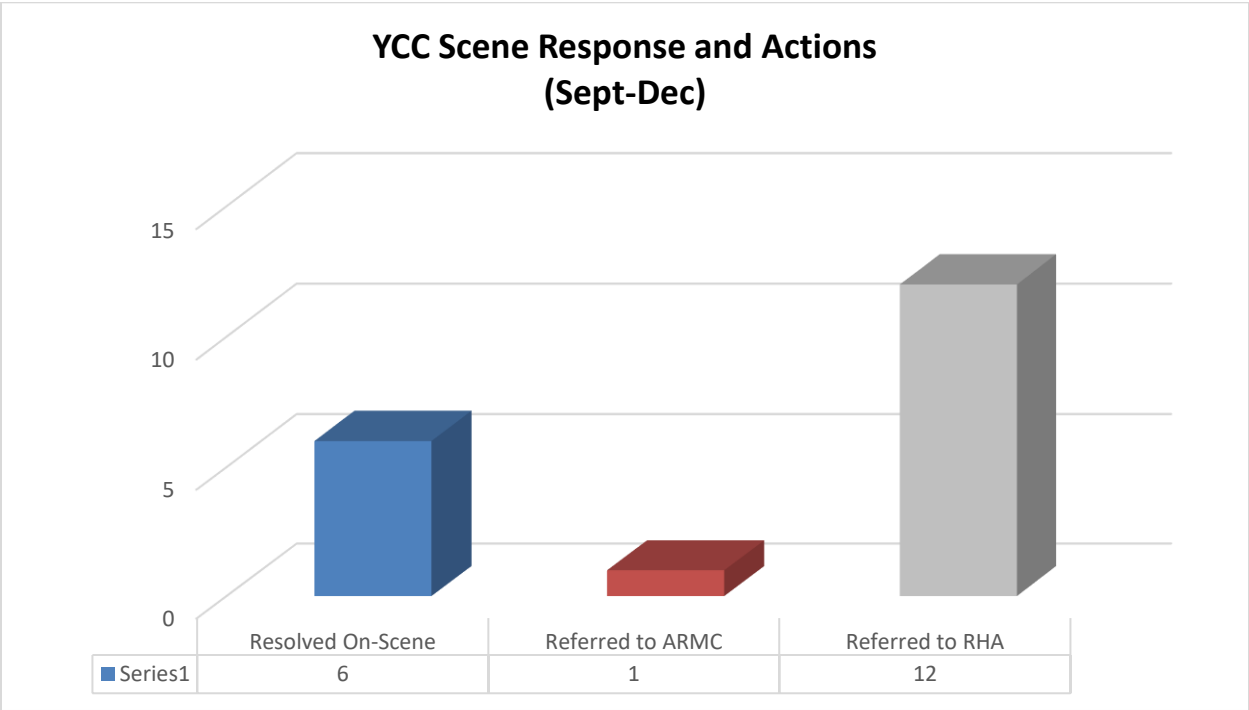
In September of 2020, the Burlington Police Department contracted with RHA Services to provide an additional law enforcement co-responder. This position was obtained through a Governor’s Crime Commission grant, specifically for serving the juvenile population within the Alamance Burlington School System (ABSS). The Youth Crisis Counselor (YCC) observed similar success as the LECC, but was restricted from daily interactions with youth due to the schools being closed from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As depicted in the chart below, these obstacles did not prevent the YCC from success. During a four-month period the YCC was able to successfully intervene with eight-two (82) juveniles, nineteen (19) of those incidents being a direct scene response and sixty-three (63) coming from other types of referrals. It is expected these numbers will increase dramatically as school returns to session and time evolves.





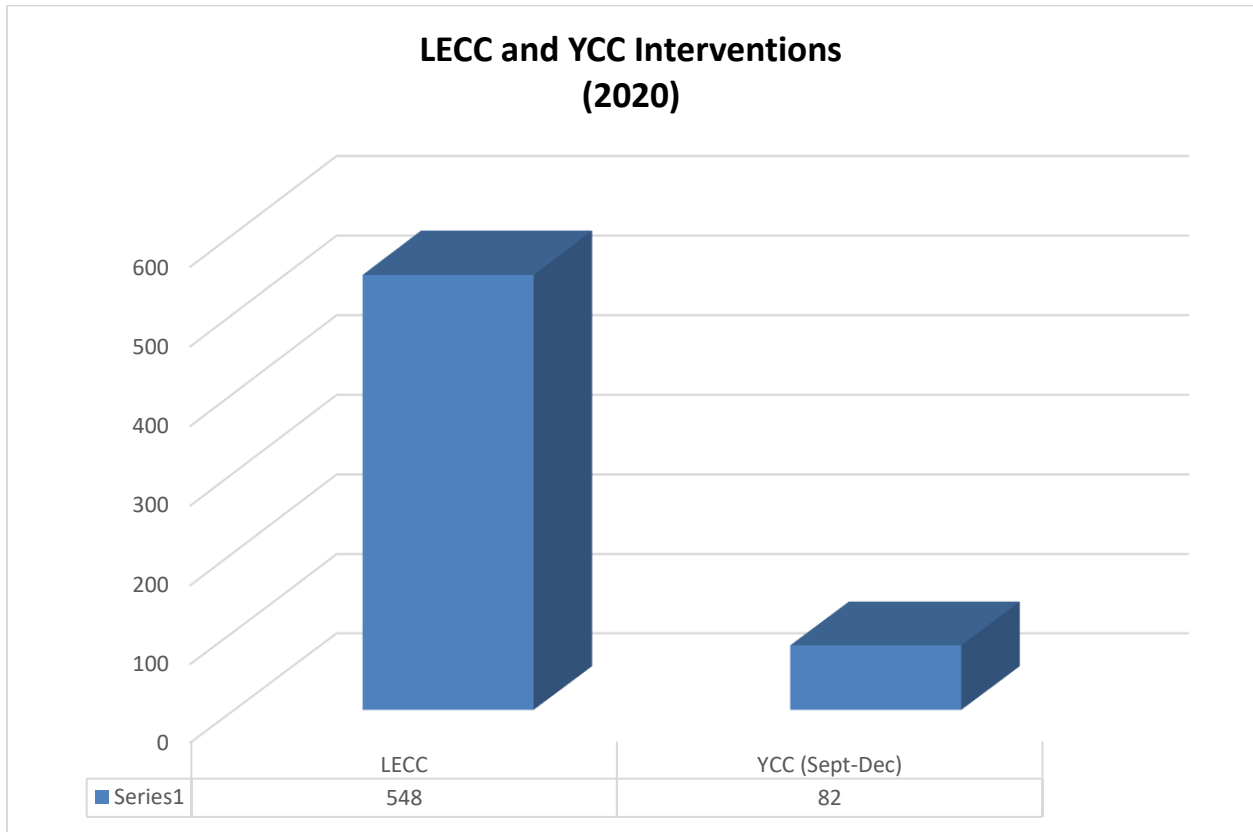
Of the nineteen (19) direct scene response interventions, the chart below depicts the outcomes of those efforts. As observed, thirty-two (32) percent of these incidents were resolved on scene, sixty-three (63) percent were referred direction to the RHA crisis center, and less than one (1) percent resulted in an emergency commitment at the Cone Health emergency room. These outcomes reflect a significant success with the YCC program thus far.



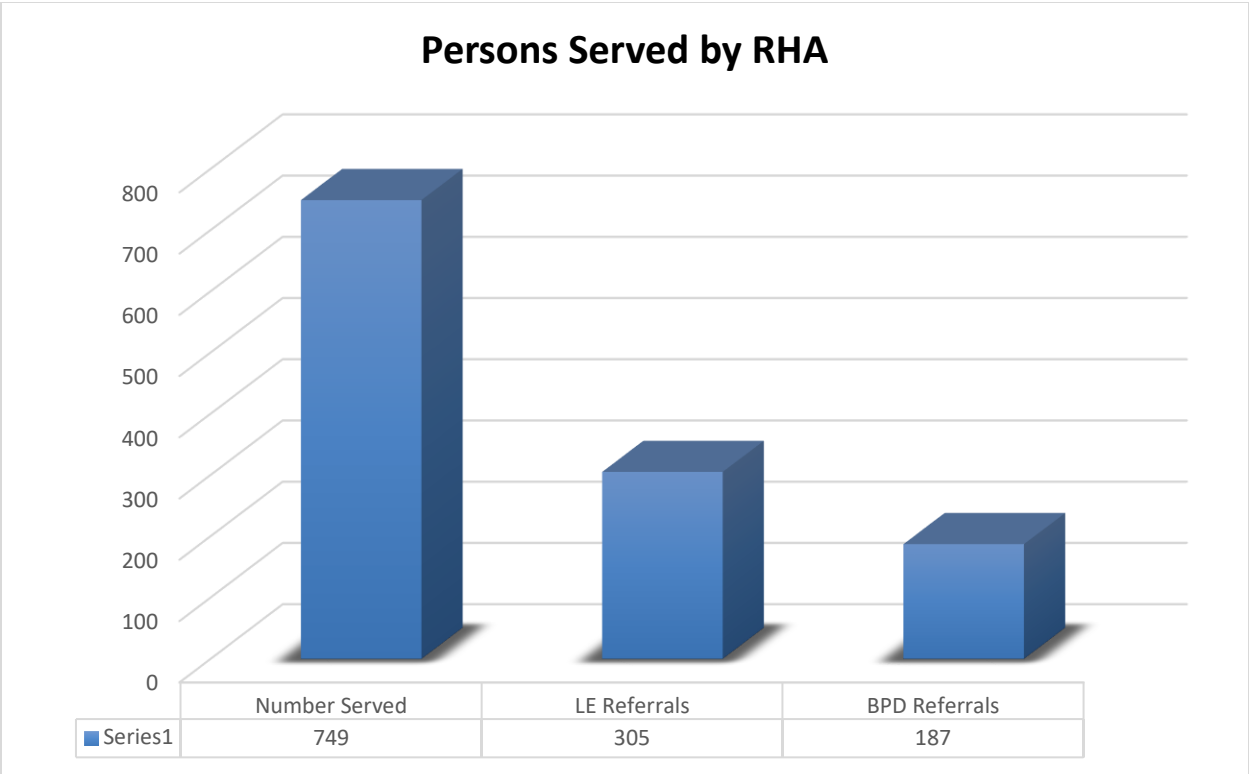
# Findings:

## Successes or Failures:

The 2020 crisis counselor co-responder program was a highly successful, with six-hundred and thirty (630) persons being referred to or connected with behavior health resources.



In reviewing the annual statistics of the RHA crisis center, the Burlington Police Department directly referred twenty-five (25) percent of all persons seeking their assistance. Of the three-hundred and five (305) law enforcement referrals, the Burlington Police Department referred sixty-two (62) of them. This speaks to the relationship established with RHA and the department's commitment to connecting individuals experiencing crisis with effective resources outside the realm of mere detention.



**Training:**

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RHA provides ongoing training to their staff that are sent as contracted employees with the department. This training aligns with the training required to maintain certifications. The LECC attends line-ups with patrol daily and provides training concerning recognition of those suffering from mental health and substance misuse issues. The LECC continual makes officers aware of new resources available to them in the community.

**Fiscal Component:**

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The department funds the LECC position through it normal budgeting process and contracts with RHA in the amount of \$60,000 per year for the LECC. Grant funding in the amount of \$60,216 was secured in 2020 that allowed for the YCC position to be filled by contracting with RHA.

# Policy, Procedure, and Technology Review:

## Policy/Technology/ Software:

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In 2020, policy development began concerning involuntary commitment as a part of a larger policy conversion project. The policy speaks to the programs involving both the LECC and YCC and is anticipated to be completed in early 2021.

The LECC and YCC are provided with a computer loaded with software that allows them to perform their job requirements. The computers also allow the LECC and YCC to see pending or in progress calls for service, allow them to be proactive in response, and see prior calls for service. Access to these systems allows for the best outcomes for the individual in crisis.

The collection of personal and clinical information is stored independently of BPD records. This way HIPPA related information is not transferred to BPD from RHA.

# Recommendations for 2021:

## Recommendations for 2021:

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1. Assessment of data needs and funding available for additional Law Enforcement Crisis Clinician position and/or Crisis Intervention Team.
2. Finalize all LECC and YCC related policies and disseminate.
3. Continue to seek grant funding specifically to carry on the YCC position.
4. Implement a background check for all contract employees consistent with City of Burlington HR practices, state and federal law.



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