



December 9, 2022

Mayor and Ames City Council  
PO Box 811  
515 Clark Avenue  
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Mayor Haila and members of the Ames City Council,

Across the country, communities are allocating funds to create unarmed crisis teams that respond to situations like suicide threats, substance abuse calls and welfare checks. In many cases, counselors and EMTs can de-escalate a situation, where the presence of police or emergency services does the opposite.

Every day in our community, the Mary Greeley Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team and local law enforcement respond to 911 calls that are non-emergencies, at an extraordinary cost. In addition to a significant financial impact, utilizing emergency services in non-emergency situations impacts the capacity to respond to situations that are considered true emergencies.

With support from gifts to the Mary Greeley Foundation, Mary Greeley EMS recently launched a six-month pilot of a new program called **ARCH— Alternative Response for Community Health**. This innovative program is a collaboration among several agencies in Ames, including the Ames Police Department, to establish an alternative service for individuals who utilize the 911 system as a means for initiating help during times of mental health crisis, homelessness and other non-emergent times of need.

I have included a brief overview of **ARCH**, including information gathered during the first two months of the pilot program. We have been pleased with the program so far and are already seeing a positive impact. In addition, we have prepared a draft budget for fiscal year 2024, including a funding request for your consideration.

We believe supporting the most vulnerable among us is part of being a vibrant and healthy community and trust you believe the same. The support of the City of Ames is essential for the future of this program and we look forward to partnering with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa McGarry".

Melissa McGarry, Executive Director  
Mary Greeley Foundation



## ARCH Program Overview

Alternative Response for Community Health (ARCH) is a collaboration between Mary Greeley Medical Center, Ames Police Department, ISU Police and other agencies in Ames. This specialized response unit is staffed by professionals trained in mental health and crisis stabilization.

Many 911 calls come from individuals who do not need an EMS or Police response. The two-person ARCH team (social worker and paramedic) can provide an immediate response to certain 911 calls and help connect individuals with resources in the community, thereby avoiding arrests and unnecessary Emergency Room visits.

### 6-Month Pilot Program: October 11, 2022 – April 11, 2023

Funded by Mary Greeley and gifts to the Mary Greeley Foundation

- Mon – Fri 10 am – 6 pm (40 hours of service per week)
- 90 response calls in 35 days of operation
  - 44 welfare checks
  - 15 suicidal ideations
  - 10 medical calls
- Avoidances
  - 46 calls were estimated to have avoided a police response to the scene.
  - 31 calls were estimated to have avoided EMS response to the scene.
  - 9 calls were estimated to have avoided a definite ED visit.
- Missed calls (calls that would qualify for ARCH if in service)
  - More than 100 calls would have qualified for an ARCH response during this time period.
  - This data will help us to determine optimal hours of operation and days of the week.

## Stories of Impact

- **Suicide Prevention:** ARCH responded to a suicidal youth with a knife to her wrist. In conjunction with staff where she was, ARCH was able to deescalate the situation to the point where the individual was able to safety plan with her mother present and avoid both an ED visit and PD intervention.
- **Homeless Person Support:** ARCH responded to a call for a homeless person passed out in a bus shelter. Initially the goal was to obtain housing/food resources, however medical assessment revealed that this individual was hypothermic. Ambulance was notified to transport to MGMC. The paramedic on scene provided a rapid assessment that recognized the serious situation and fire the department response was not necessary. ARCH was able to assist the Ambulance Paramedics to provide treatment on scene.
- **EMS Available for Cardiac Arrest Call:** ARCH was available to take a call that would have been a medical call, and by doing so kept the last ambulance in Ames available for service. This ambulance was able to respond to a cardiac arrest call that would have been otherwise dispatched to Story County Ambulance in Nevada.
- **Family Support with APD:** ARCH provided family support when an elderly female went missing from her daughter's house that she was visiting from Romania. The missing elderly female did not speak English and the outside temperature was in the teens. ARCH was able to stay with the family allowing APD to fully dedicate their resources to locating the individual.
- **Combined Efforts to Support Move to Iowa City:** ARCH, APD and The Bridge Home worked together to assist a female to purchase a bus ticket, pack up her belongings and ARCH provided a ride to the intermodal facility where she caught a bus to Iowa City, a destination chosen by the woman.

## Estimated Program Budget- FY24

### 60 hours of service per week\*

Personnel (includes .2 FTE coordinator)	\$280,505
Other expenses	\$27,500
<b>Total Annual Budget</b>	<b>\$308,005</b>
<b>City of Ames Funding Request</b>	<b>\$154,000</b>

\* Hours per day and days of the week will be determined in conjunction with input from Ames PD.

Additional funding partners are being sought. Introductory meetings have been scheduled with Ames and Gilbert Schools Superintendents, ISU Police and County Supervisor Faisal.

If funding for FY24 is approved, Mary Greeley and the Mary Greeley Foundation will solicit additional sources of funding to continue to support this program April – June 30, 2023 in anticipation of the City's new fiscal year beginning July 1. The bridge funding is estimated at nearly \$40,000.

### **Contact**

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