

# Care Solace: Bridging Access Gaps to Mental and Social Services for Every Resident

**Project Description:** The City of Murrieta, CA launched a three year partnership with Care Solace to close the gaps in access to mental health care and wrap-around social, community, and medical services. In support of the 120,000 Murrieta residents, as well as the school district and city departments/agencies, Care Solace serves as a central navigation hub to connect individuals to providers and services. Through a dedicated QR code, phone number, email, and warm handoff process, every resident connects live with a Care Companion who assesses their needs, navigates the mental health care system, finds culturally relevant providers, locates wrap-around social services, secures appointments, and remains available to the resident ongoing. Care Solace's coordination services and cloud-based platform enable the City of Murrieta to aggregate access to all available behavioral, mental, social and community services, and to enable support for every resident irrespective of insurance, language, culture, and need. First responders, homeless teams, city council, city offices, libraries, parks and recreation, nonprofit organizations, churches, CBOs, and even HR refer residents and city employees to Care Solace.

The data and insights gathered through the Care Solace platform will be used to inform city programs, policies, and strategies, ensuring the ongoing wellbeing of residents and city staff.

**City Challenge:** Murrieta faced access challenges: limited providers, unavailable beds, fragmented services, static shared lists, obstacles related to no insurance and public insurance, scarcity of culturally relevant care, and obscured provider availability.

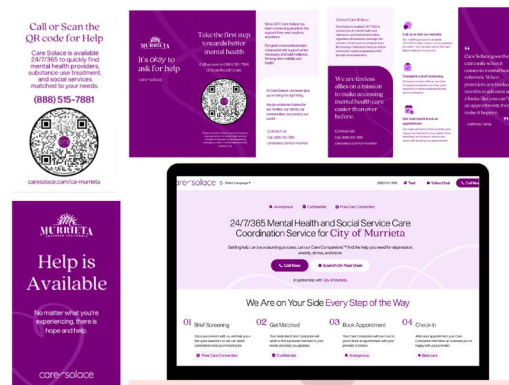
Complicating the crisis, first responders are often forced to make decisions about mental health care, with jails and hospitals as the default destinations for residents struggling. From Murrieta Mayor Lori Stone's perspective, "Our main priority is ensuring that all of our residents have access to necessary resources and solutions. Mental health is a top crisis in America, which led us to partner with Care Solace. Regardless of insurance or severity of need, Care Solace is there for our residents and those that work in Murrieta, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Anyone can speak to a live person to help navigate the care system, which is invaluable."

This partnership allows residents to quickly connect for free with mental health care, reflecting Murrieta's commitment to safety and responsive community services.

**Impact:** Care Solace provides the City with key insights, which the City Council is using to develop responsive community programs. A citywide campaign, "It's Okay to Ask for Help" was launched to let residents know about Care Solace services. The QR code, phone number and website are displayed throughout the city.

Since its launch in December 2023, Care Solace has supported over 1,200 residents, matching them with services/providers in 2.3 days and connecting them to care in 4.7 days. 55% of those assisted had public, military, or no insurance, aiding even the most vulnerable populations.

Data insights reveal that 40% sought therapy referrals, and 38% needed advanced care like hospitalization, detox, and interventions. The highest levels of anxiety and suicidal ideation were in Hispanic communities, with 69% of referrals aged 18-25 struggling with depression and 34.5% experiencing suicidal ideation and self-harm.



Branded city collateral and Care Match, a self-service tool that connects residents with care.

**How-To:** Murrieta effectively engendered community awareness of Care Solace with a comprehensive implementation plan that can be replicated by other cities. The initiative began with a launch party at a city hall meeting where the partnership was announced and materials such as business cards and flyers with QR codes were distributed to generate excitement and awareness. Developing partnerships with first responders, including the police and fire departments, was key to the strategy. This collaboration enhanced their ability to assess, triage, and support individuals facing mental health issues.

Promotion across various platforms was crucial for the success of this initiative. Murrieta utilized multiple touchpoints, including regular 30-minute training and overview sessions tailored for different groups such as city staff, first responders, mental health practitioners, and teams working with the unhoused. The strategy incorporated diverse communication channels including press releases, social media posts, a monthly mental health column in email and print communications, local TV station ads, appearances, and interviews.

Community engagement efforts were vigorous, featuring a constant presence at city events, meetings, and public outings with informational materials readily available. Materials were also distributed to local churches and community centers, and signage was placed in public bathrooms to promote the services. Partnerships with local schools and special events like the "A Day in Her Shoes" event on International Women's Day further broadened the outreach. First responders played a crucial role, equipped with flyers and business cards featuring a QR code to provide immediate access to services for those in crisis situations, such as victims of violence or substance abuse.

**General Tips:** The City recognized the keys to success were twofold: a citywide campaign that removes stigma and offers the services for free to the residents, and robust data collection to develop insights and inform policies and programs.

**Budget:** \$166,500 annual budget for the overall program to be offered free to all residents. Year 1 was funded by grants.

**Funding:** Federal Grants, General Purpose City Funds

**Tags:** Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Behavioral Health Care and Social Services Access



Mayor Lori Stone shares the Murrieta referral card.

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