

# Mental Health Field Response Teams Grant Program

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs administers a grant program to assist law enforcement agencies in establishing and/or expanding mental health field response capabilities. The goal is to use mental health professionals to professionally, humanely, and safely respond to crises involving people with behavioral health issues, connect them with treatment, divert them from jails, and reduce overall incarceration times.

## Purpose

These innovative partnerships reduce the possibility of using force and improve public safety overall. Instead of booking people into jail, they can be connected with services or diverted to a more appropriate facility for care. This program is one way local law enforcement agencies are working to find solutions for communities.

## Requirements

Grant recipients must include at least one mental health professional, as defined in RCW 71.05.020(38), who will perform field response professional services under the plan. A mental health professional may assist patrolling law enforcement officers either in the field or in an on-call capacity. The mental health professional may also provide preventive and follow-up training on mental health field response best practices or other services at the direction of the local law enforcement agency. Nothing limits the mental health professional's participation to field patrol.

Additionally, mental health field response programs should include staff and short-term services to reduce the likelihood of people having future criminal justice system involvement. These support services could include short-term respite beds (e.g., crisis stabilization centers and evaluation and treatment centers) and other inpatient beds.

## Funding

The Washington State Legislature provided an initial \$2 million for WASPC to administer grants and support operation of the Mental Health Field Response Teams Program. WASPC is seeking additional funding over the next biennium. If granted this would support both Trueblood and non-Trueblood areas.

Following the approval of the Trueblood Settlement of Contempt Agreement, the 2019 Supplemental Operating Budget included an additional \$1.5 million for Mental Health Field Response Teams grant programs designated to only Trueblood-identified Phase 1 regions, including the Spokane region, Pierce County region, and Southwest Washington, and \$500,000 to other Mental Health Field Response programs in Washington through June 30, 2020 (initial contract term).

2019 Supplemental Operating Budget (\$1.5 million) Phase 1 areas:

- Pierce County Sheriff's Office
- Spokane County Sheriff's Office and Spokane Police Department
- Vancouver Police Department

2020 WASPC Trueblood misdemeanor diversion funding (\$650,000) non-Trueblood Phase 1 areas.

For more information please, visit [www.waspc.org](http://www.waspc.org).

## Data Collection

Grant awardees are required to use the WASPC data collection tool, a software application provided by OpenLattice Inc. The app is focused on pre-arrest diversion. It helps patrol officers and deputies to more safely and effectively provide services to those with mental illness who come into frequent contact with law enforcement.

## Additional Information

WASPC: <https://www.waspc.org/>

Mental Health Field Response Teams Programs: <https://waspc.memberclicks.net/mental-health-field-response-teams-program>

## Contact Information

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