

Mental Health Field Response Teams Grant Program

The Washington Association of Sheriffs & 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 partner with at least one other law enforcement agency and also 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 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 court 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 \$4 million (\$3.5 million restricted to Trueblood Phase 1 & 2 regions) for WASPC to administer grants and support operation of the Mental Health Field Response Teams Program. WASPC received an additional \$840,000 from the Washington State Health Care Authority from their Trueblood Misdemeanor Diversion funding to help law enforcement agencies not in the Phase 1 or 2 regions start or expand

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programs.

2021 Supplemental Operating Budget (\$3.5 million) Phase 1 area:

- Pierce County Sheriff's Office with Bonney Lake, Buckley, DuPont, Eatonville, Edgewood, Fife, Fircrest, Gig Harbor, Milton, Orting, Pierce Transit, Puyallup, Puyallup Tribal, Roy, Ruston, Steilacoom, Sumner and University Place police departments
- Spokane County Sheriff's Office with Spokane and Spokane Valley police departments
- Vancouver Police Department with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the US Department of Veterans Affairs police departments

Phase 2 area:

- Des Moines Police Department with Algona, Auburn, Federal Way, Kent, Pacific, Renton and Tukwila police departments
- Kirkland Police Department with Bothell, Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, and Kenmore police departments

For more information

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- For more information about Trueblood, or to be added to the Listserv, email truebloodtaskforce@dshs.wa.gov
- WASPC: www.waspc.org/
- Mental Health Field Response Teams Programs: waspc.memberclicks.net/mental-health-field-response-teams-program