

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT:
Steve Strachan
(206) 486-2380

\$4M IN GRANTS TO AID MENTAL HEALTH FIELD RESPONSE AND ARREST AND JAIL ALTERNATIVES PROGRAMS ALLOCTED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES

(Lacey, WA) --- Several Washington law enforcement agencies and community based organizations will receive grants to expand or maintain alternatives to arrest programs and mental health field response capabilities in their communities. The grants were awarded by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) with funds from the Washington State Legislature and the Washington State Health Care Authority.

Mental Health Field Response (MHFR) grants will assist local law enforcement agencies in expanding response capabilities, by utilizing mental health professionals to professionally, humanely, and safely respond to encounters that involve people with behavioral health needs. The annual report for this program can be found [here](#).

Arrest and Jail Alternatives Law Enforcement Grants (AJA) will support local initiatives to properly identify criminal justice system-involved persons with substance use disorders and other behavioral health needs and engage those persons with therapeutic interventions and other services. The annual report for this program can be found [here](#).

Washington's MHFR and AJA programs have captured national attention with law enforcement from the Athens, GA area touring the Chelan, Spokane, Kitsap County and Olympic Peninsula Community Clinic's REdisCOVERY programs in early October.

MHFR Grants:

Chelan County Sheriff's Office \$175,503.74
Hoquiam Police Department \$120,214.47*
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office \$108,994.25
Kirkland Police Department \$79,687.00
Kitsap County Sheriff's Office \$109,339.00
Longview Police Department \$209,620.00
Port Angeles Police Department \$259,020.00
Spokane County Sheriff's Office \$2,146,220.10
Total \$3,208,598.56

*Final award amount pending.

Multiple grantees awarded funds in the prior fiscal year were able to secure local funding to support co-responder programs.

Behavioral health remains a priority public safety issue for communities across Washington. People experiencing behavioral health crises are not necessarily committing crimes, but communities continue to rely on law enforcement to respond to those crises. These grant funds will assist local law

enforcement agencies to focus on facilitating help where help is needed. Mental health professionals will be working in the field alongside law enforcement. This improves the safety and effectiveness of interactions between the public and law enforcement. Instead of booking someone into jail, they may be connected with services or diverted to a more appropriate resources.

Grant recipients must include at least one mental health professional who will perform services. Mental health professionals may assist patrol officers in the field or in an on-call capacity, provide training on best practices, or provide other services.

AJA Grants:

Catholic Community Services (Olympia): \$279,247.36

Olympic Peninsula Community Clinic (Port Angeles): \$243,635.20

Comprehensive Healthcare (Walla Walla): \$281,694.17

Total \$804,576.73

The anticipated outcomes that grantees will address are:

1. To reduce arrests, time spent in custody, and/or recidivism for clients served by the program
2. To increase access to and utilization of non-emergency community behavioral health services
3. To reduce utilization of emergency services
4. To increase resilience, stability, and well-being for clients served; and
5. To reduce costs for the justice system compared to processing cases as usual through the justice system

Also of note, WASPC is in the process of contracting with Washington State University's Division of Governmental Studies and Services to conduct a thorough program evaluation to assess the efficacy, potential cost savings, and other outcomes of the AJA Program. The evaluation will be completed by June 30, 2023.

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WASPC was founded in 1963 and represents executive and top management personnel from law enforcement agencies statewide. With more than 900 members it includes the 39 elected county sheriffs, and 240 police chiefs, as well as the Washington State Patrol, the Washington Department of Corrections, and representatives of several federal agencies.