

# Pasco Hotspotters

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## What makes your project award winning?

### City of Pasco Hot Spotters Program Background

For the Pasco Police Department, arriving on a scene involving potential mental health and substance abuse issues has become an increasingly common occurrence. Two officer-involved shootings within a year (2014-15) spurred a review of procedures in relation to mental illness and officer interaction involving use of force options. The City was dedicated to conducting an open dialog with local community groups, organizations, residents, and the ACLU to address concerns regarding how the Police Department dealt with persons with mental illness.

The gaps in communication and services available identified the need for a collaborative team to care and communicate needs and determine community partners. The result was the formation of the Pasco Hot Spotters Program.

The program is a collaboration of first responders, legal providers, city and county judges, mental health treatment providers, healthcare providers, community housing organizations, and State health and human services agencies. Hot Spotters promotes care plans for clients with complex health conditions who over-utilize the health care, emergency response, and legal systems and need special attention to help stabilize their health and living conditions and to promote community wellbeing. Additionally, Hot Spotters is committed to developing strategic plans and pursuing funding to enhance the available services.

### Program Impact

In total, Hot Spotters participants have been contacted by law enforcement 124 separate times since fall 2016. All encounters have been without incident requiring no officer involved use of force and resulting in an arrest rate of only 18.8%.

Two significant efforts have emerged from Hot Spotters:

- Embedding Mental Health Professionals in Police Department
- Lourdes Health Network, a local hospital and partner in Hot Spotters, pursued State funding (Trueblood Diversion Services) in conjunction with the City to embed mental health professionals. With the strong collaboration efforts demonstrated with Hot Spotters, the funding was awarded and the program was not only implemented in Pasco but eight additional local law enforcement agencies in the region.

### Housing Project

Hot Spotters identified housing for the chronically homeless with mental health and/or substance abuse conditions as the biggest barrier to begin efforts for stabilization.

Hot Spotters worked with stakeholders to on a survey through Catholic Charities to evaluate area homelessness and begin community engagement. The survey was completed in late January 2019. The City will create a plan to support a housing project for high risk individuals and seek funding through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

