

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5644

C 232 L 22
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning providing quality behavioral health co-response services

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Wagoner and Frockt).

Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care

Senate Committee on Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on College & Workforce Development

Background: Co-Response Programs. A co-response program is a program in which non-law enforcement personnel, such as a mental health worker, responds alongside a police officer, fire fighter, or EMS worker, to the scene of an emergency or other situation that would traditionally be responded to solely by law enforcement. The state of Washington has created grants to fund co-response programs, including \$10 million for the 2021-2023 biennium for a Mental Health Field Response Team program administered by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Co-Responder Outreach Alliance. The Co-Responder Outreach Alliance (CROA) is a statewide organization of first responders, behavioral health professionals, and project managers working in co-response programs. CROA was formed in 2018 by co-response teams in Bellevue and Everett. Its governing board was created in 2021.

Summary: Subject to funding, the University of Washington must consult and collaborate with CROA and other stakeholders to:

- establish regular opportunities for police, fire, EMS, peer counselors, and behavioral health personnel working in co-response to convene for activities such as training and exchanging best practice information;
- administer a small budget to help defray costs for training and professional development, subject to funding;
- develop an assessment to be provided to the Governor and Legislature by June 30,

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- 2023, describing current capacities, shortfalls, alignments, data systems, training practices, and funding strategies for statewide co-response teams and recommendations for the future state crisis response system;
- develop model training curricula for individuals participating in co-response teams, beginning in calendar year 2023; and
 - host an annual statewide conference that draws state and national co-responders, beginning in 2023.

Stakeholders in the field of co-response are specified to include, but not be limited to, the Washington Association of Designated Crisis Responders; state associations representing police, fire, and EMS personnel; the Washington Council on Behavioral Health; the state enhanced 911 system; 988 crisis call centers; and the Peer Workforce Alliance.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	96	0	(House amended)
Senate	49	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 9, 2022