
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5970

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senate Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Frockt, Saldaña, O'Ban, and Palumbo)

READ FIRST TIME 02/02/18.

1 AN ACT Relating to the mental health field response teams
2 program; and adding a new section to chapter 36.28A RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 36.28A
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
7 specific purpose, the Washington association of sheriffs and police
8 chiefs shall develop and implement a mental health field response
9 team grant program. The purpose of the program is to assist local law
10 enforcement agencies to develop and operate mental health field
11 response team capabilities, utilizing mental health professionals to
12 professionally, humanely, and safely respond to encounters involving
13 persons with mental health issues. A portion of the grant funds may
14 also be used to develop data management capability to support the
15 program.

16 (2) Grants must be awarded to local law enforcement agencies
17 based on locally developed proposals to incorporate mental health
18 professionals into the agencies' mental health field response
19 planning and response. Two or more agencies may submit a joint grant
20 proposal to develop their mental health field response proposals.
21 Proposals must provide a plan for improving mental health field

1 response through modifying or expanding law enforcement practices in
2 partnership with mental health professionals. A peer review panel
3 appointed by the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs
4 in consultation with fully integrated managed care organizations and
5 behavioral health organizations must review the grant applications.
6 Once the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs
7 certifies that the application satisfies the proposal criteria, the
8 state will distribute the grant funds. To the extent possible, at
9 least one grant recipient agency should be from the east side of the
10 state and one from the west side of the state with the crest of the
11 Cascades being the dividing line. Grant recipients must be selected
12 and receiving funds no later than October 1, 2018.

13 (3) Grant recipients must include at least one department of
14 social and health services designated mental health professional who
15 will perform professional services under the plan. A mental health
16 professional may assist patrolling officers in the field or in an on-
17 call capacity, provide preventive, follow-up, training on mental
18 health field response best practices, or other services at the
19 direction of the local law enforcement agency. Nothing in this
20 subsection (3) requires or limits the mental health professional's
21 participation in field patrol.

22 (4) Within existing resources, the Washington association of
23 sheriffs and police chiefs shall:

24 (a) Consult with the department of social and health services
25 research and data analysis unit to establish data collection and
26 reporting guidelines for grant recipients. The data will be used to
27 study and evaluate whether the use of mental health field response
28 teams improves outcomes of interactions with persons experiencing
29 behavioral health crises, including reducing rates of violence and
30 harm, reduced arrests, and jail or emergency room usage; and

31 (b) Consult with the department of social and health services
32 behavioral health administration and the managed care system to
33 develop requirements for participating mental health professionals.

34 (5) The Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs
35 shall submit an annual report to the governor and appropriate
36 committees of the legislature on the program. The report must include
37 information on grant recipients, use of funds, participation of
38 mental health professionals, and feedback from the grant recipients
39 by December 1st of each year the program is funded.

1 (6) Grant recipients shall develop and provide or arrange for
2 training necessary for mental health professionals to operate
3 successfully and competently in partnership with law enforcement
4 agencies. The training must provide the professionals with a working
5 knowledge of law enforcement procedures and tools sufficient to
6 provide for the safety of the professionals, partnered law
7 enforcement officers, and members of the public.

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