AN ACT Relating to the crisis intervention response team pilot project; adding new sections to chapter 43.101 RCW; creating a new section; and providing expiration dates.

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

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature recognizes the need to address the impact of behavioral health crises on individuals, communities, and state and local institutions. By virtue of their position, law enforcement officers are often the first called to respond to or assist individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The legislature recognizes that law enforcement has made efforts to respond appropriately to such calls through crisis intervention training and other measures focused on behavioral health. However, violent interactions between persons in crisis and law enforcement remain an issue of significant state and national concern. While crisis intervention training and techniques are critical to reducing violence and harm, there is no substitute for the experience and skills of licensed mental health professionals. Results from new programs used in other states demonstrate that partnerships between law enforcement and mental health professionals improve outcomes for safety and also address the needs of those in crisis. Accordingly, the legislature hereby establishes the crisis

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SENATE BILL 5970

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By Senators Frockt, Saldaña, O'Ban, and Palumbo

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intervention response team pilot project to deploy law enforcement and mental health professionals as partners in the field. The allocation of grant funds will facilitate the implementation of this innovative approach, and also create an opportunity to measure possible outcomes through a study conducted by the Washington state institute for public policy. The legislature aims to foster peaceful resolution to volatile situations, and ultimately save taxpayer dollars, by directly acknowledging and addressing behavioral health crises with the combined efforts and expertise of law enforcement and mental health professionals.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 43.101 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the crisis intervention response team pilot project is created within the commission. The purpose of the project is to create crisis intervention response teams composed of qualified law enforcement and mental health professionals to respond professionally, humanely, and safely to crises involving persons with behavioral health issues.

(2)(a) The commission shall award two grants, one to an eligible applicant west of the crest of the Cascade mountains and one to an eligible applicant east of the crest of the Cascade mountains.

(b) Eligible applicants include law enforcement agencies with: A need for crisis intervention professionals for responding to calls for service in the field; a commitment to improving crisis intervention through modifying or expanding upon law enforcement practices; and a commitment to partnering with mental health professionals. In evaluating grant applications, the commission shall consult with the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs and behavioral health organizations. Grants must be reviewed and awarded through peer review panels.

(c) Grant recipients must be selected and receiving funds no later than June 30, 2018.

(3) Grant recipients must:

(a) Establish at least four and no more than twelve crisis intervention response teams with grant funds;

(b) Include on each crisis intervention team one experienced law enforcement officer who has completed enhanced crisis intervention training under RCW 43.101.427 and one person designated as a mental health professional.
health professional by the department of social and health services who has completed training under section 3 of this act; the officer and mental health professional must be assigned as partners and patrol together;

(c) Use crisis intervention teams to: (i) Assist law enforcement officers with service calls necessitating crisis intervention; (ii) conduct proactive and follow-up investigations related to crisis intervention; (iii) appropriately correspond to calls involving special weapons and tactics teams or other enhanced teams; (iv) directly lead and handle the agency's most serious crisis intervention calls; and (v) where appropriate, educate and train other officers in the agency on best practices for crisis intervention.

(4) The commission shall:

(a) Adopt policies and procedures necessary to administer the project, including for evaluating and selecting grant recipients, monitoring use of grant funds, and collecting and evaluating data to assess the effectiveness of the project;

(b) Consult with the Washington state institute for public policy to establish data collection and reporting guidelines for grant recipients in order for the institute to conduct the study under section 4 of this act; and

(c) Consult with the department of social and health services to develop requirements for mental health professionals participating in the project.

(5) The commission shall submit an annual report to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature on the project, including information on selected grant recipients, use of funds, number of teams, and an assessment and input by the commission and grant recipients, by December 1st of each year the project is funded.

(6) This section expires July 1, 2022.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 43.101 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The commission shall provide training for mental health professionals participating in the crisis intervention response team pilot project under section 2 of this act.

(2) The commission shall develop and provide training necessary for mental health professionals to operate successfully and competently as part of crisis intervention response teams. The
training must provide the professionals with a working knowledge of law enforcement procedures and tools sufficient to provide for the safety of the professionals, partnered law enforcement officers, and members of the public.

(3) All mental health professionals participating in the project must complete the training under this section prior to operating in the field with a crisis intervention response team, unless the commission provides a written waiver to the professional. A written waiver may only be provided if the professional demonstrates a full understanding and competency of the training materials and curriculum.

(4) The commission shall provide the training required in this section, together with facilities, supplies, materials, and the room and board for noncommuting attendees.

(5) This section expires July 1, 2022.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 43.101 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The Washington state institute for public policy, in consultation with the commission, shall develop data collection and reporting guidelines for the commission to require of grant recipients under section 2 of this act. The institute shall conduct a study on whether the use of crisis intervention response teams improves outcomes of interactions with persons experiencing behavioral health crises, including reducing rates of violence and harm and other measurable effects identified by the institute.

(2) This section expires July 1, 2022.

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