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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5970**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

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

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

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

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

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

(2) Grants must be awarded to local law enforcement agencies based on locally developed proposals to incorporate mental health professionals into the agencies' mental health field response planning and response. Two or more agencies may submit a joint grant proposal to develop their mental health field response proposals. Proposals must provide a plan for improving mental health field response through modifying or expanding law enforcement practices in partnership with mental health professionals. A peer review panel appointed by the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs in consultation with fully integrated managed care organizations and behavioral health organizations must review the grant applications. Once the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs certifies that the application satisfies the proposal criteria, the state will distribute the grant funds. To the extent possible, at least one grant recipient agency should be from the east side of the state and one from the west side of the state with the crest of the Cascades being the dividing line. Grant recipients must be selected and receiving funds no later than October 1, 2018.

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

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

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

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

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

(6) Grant recipients shall develop and provide or arrange for training necessary for mental health professionals to operate successfully and competently in partnership with law enforcement agencies. 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.

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