

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1501

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety

Title: An act relating to a proactive policing grant program.

Brief Description: Concerning a proactive policing grant program.

Sponsors: Representatives Klippert, Goodman, Barkis, Lovick and Irwin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety: 2/5/19, 2/14/19 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a proactive policing grant program administered through the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs that provides funding to law enforcement agencies to address the individual public safety needs of their communities.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Davis, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Sutherland, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Graham, Lovick, Orwall, Pellicciotti and Pettigrew.

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) is a statewide organization consisting of executive and management personnel from law enforcement agencies. Membership includes sheriffs, police chiefs, the Washington State Patrol, the Department of Corrections, and representatives of a number of federal agencies. The 1975 Washington Legislature made the WASPC a statutory entity by designating the association as a "combination of units of local government."

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The WASPC has been tasked with managing certain statewide programs, such as the Jail Booking and Reporting System. Additionally, it has been given administrative responsibility for several state-funded grant programs, including grant programs addressing gang crime, graffiti and tagging abatement, denied firearm purchase attempts, sexual assault kits, metal theft, and mental health field response.

Summary of Bill:

When funding is provided, the WASPC must develop and implement a proactive policing grant program. Grants must be awarded to local law enforcement agencies based on locally developed proposals to address public safety needs in their respective communities.

Basic criteria for grant proposals are outlined. Proposals must: demonstrate the public safety problem to be addressed; identify the strategy for addressing the problem; and identify specific data elements to measure the current state of the problem and the success of the action taken to address the problem. Two or more agencies may submit a joint grant proposal.

A peer review panel appointed by the WASPC must review grant applications. Priority may be given to applications that include local matching funds. To the extent possible, grants should be awarded on a two-year cycle.

The WASPC must report annually to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature with certain information relating to the grant program. The report must include information on the grant recipients, use of funds, and feedback from the grant recipients.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The purpose of this bill is to provide additional funding to law enforcement agencies to address the public safety needs of their individual communities. Washington ranks last in the country in terms of the number of commissioned law enforcement officers. Law enforcement agencies are struggling to meet public safety demands, and these grants would create a small pool of money to deal with the different pressing issues that are affecting different agencies. Agencies will have to compete for the money and demonstrate how they will use it. This will be an innovative program that will help identify best practices that can be used elsewhere in the state.

Under the bill, the WASPC will identify those agencies whose needs are the greatest. Examples of why these grants are needed include the fact that the boat patrol on the Columbia River is using 10-year-old boats. The boats are subject to a lot of wear and tear, and there was an instance in which a citizen had to assist law enforcement officers whose boat engine had died. Another agency had to use patrol deputies to do a lengthy and complicated marijuana investigation at the same time they were taking patrol calls. Other agencies are dealing with violent crime and shootings or issues related to the opioid epidemic. Agencies could use additional assistance with purchasing expensive items they need in order to serve the public.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Klippert, prime sponsor; and James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.